



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# **COUNCIL MEETING**

**14 July 2020**

**7.30 pm**

**Virtual meeting**

## **Contact**

Sandra Hancock  
[democraticservices@watford.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@watford.gov.uk)  
01923 278377

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**Publication date: 6 July 2020**

6 July 2020

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 14 July 2020 starting at 7.30 pm at the virtual meeting to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects, namely: -

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Disclosure of Interests**

**3. Minutes**

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 19 May 2020 to be submitted for approval.

**4. Official Announcements**

**5. Mayor's Report (To Follow)**

**6. Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0**

**7. Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0**

**8. Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0**

**9. Business especially brought forward by the Chairman or the Head of Paid Service which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency.**

**10. Amendment to the Council Scheme of Delegation (Pages 6 - 19)**

Report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance

**11. A new Council Plan for Watford (2020-24) (Pages 20 - 71)**

This report is due to considered at Cabinet on 6 July 2020, Cabinet's recommendations to Council will be forwarded as soon as possible.

**12. Budget update for 2020/2021 (Pages 72 - 83)**

This report is due to considered at Cabinet on 6 July 2020, Cabinet's recommendations to Council will be forwarded as soon as possible.

### **13. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0**

#### **1. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Ezeifedi and seconded by Councillor Bashir –**

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our Watford Community. According to a recent Hertfordshire Public Health report Watford and Hertsmere has both the highest rate of COVID 19 cases and the highest crude mortality rate of COVID 19 registered death per 10,000 population in Hertfordshire.

Watford Borough Council has risen boldly to the unprecedented challenge of COVID 19 through an effective partnership with various agencies, the voluntary sector and the wider community. It is great to note that over the past months, political differences have been put aside in pulling together to support our community.

However, the Public Health England (PHE) review confirmed that death rates from COVID-19 were higher for Black and Asian ethnic (BAME) groups when compared to white ethnic groups. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities presents an opportunity to create a fast but sustainable change that would mitigate further impact.

As part of it's COVID 19 recovery strategy,

This council resolves to:

1. Review the PHE report and track progress against the issues raised within it affecting the Watford BAME Community as a matter of urgency.
2. Liaise with PHE to implement culturally competent COVID-19 education and prevention campaigns, working in partnership with local BAME and faith communities to prepare the communities to take full advantage of interventions including contact tracing, antibody testing and ultimately vaccine availability.
3. Update it's Equalities and Action Plan to ensure that COVID-19 recovery strategies actively reduce inequalities caused by the wider determinants of health to create long term sustainable change.

#### **2. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Khan –**

**Changing Street names - celebrating the rich diverse heritage of Watford.**

The Council notes that Watford has a rich, diverse and positive history which

must be celebrated. One way to celebrate this is to ensure that street names, buildings, statues and monuments reflect our town and that they do not contain any the negative history which this town abhors. The Black Lives Matter campaign has rightly focussed on the serious concerns of symbols of oppression and slavery.

The council also notes that there are street names that are named after people who were involved in the slave trade, colonisation and oppression, which does not reflect the forward thinking, outward looking Britain and our town.

The council notes that it is not tenable to continue to have these existing names for these streets.

Watford has been enriched by its ethnic minority citizens that have come from right across the world or born in UK. The likes of Luther Blissett, Anthony Joshua, John Barnes are but a few, who have made contributions to our town, but there are many more.

Council resolves to

1. Rename street names such Rhodes Way, Clive Way, Colonial Way and Imperial Way.
2. Consult with the Royal Mail, local businesses and residents to ensure that their views are considered.
3. A task and finish group is set up to report back with suggested names to replace these street names.
4. When naming new buildings, street names, statues or monuments that the council ensure that they reflect our town and its history and diversity.

**3. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Sharpe and seconded by Mayor Taylor –**

Council notes that the government have placed significant pressure on Watford Borough Council to deliver more homes, tripling the council's housing target to deliver 793 dwellings a year.

Council notes that the government, as part of the National Planning Policy Framework, are planning to meet their promise to build 300,000 new homes a year by building heavily on brownfield land. Watford is made up of 95% brownfield land, meaning we will be under increased pressure to build more homes. The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Robert Jenrick MP recently stated he wanted 'much greater building in urban areas' particularly 'above and around major train stations.'

Council notes the recent proposed changes to in the government's Planning for the Future White Paper. These include handing powers away from Development Management Committees and to government run development corporations and a further expansion of permitted development rights, including the right for developers to build upwards without planning permission.

Council believes that we have a housing crisis across the country and therefore we should build more good quality homes, particularly for local families and young people who may otherwise find it difficult to get on the housing ladder.

Council believes that the government's current National Planning Policy Framework seriously constrains council's powers to insist that developers provide affordable housing or infrastructure such as schools, doctors surgeries or improved public transport in new development.

Council believes that effective planning policy should require improvements to public transport and to infrastructure such as schools, health facilities etc. as part of new development to ensure there is a good quality of life for existing and new residents.

Council calls on the government to reform its current rules surrounding development to give councils more power to:

- Challenge unrealistic targets.
- Insist on improved infrastructure with new developments.
- Challenge viability assessments that allow developers to get away without providing adequate affordable housing for local young people.
- Scrap permitted development rights that lead to substandard homes being built, such as the recent case of windowless flats in Wellstones.

Council resolves for the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to call on reform to planning rules to give councils more powers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Nolan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Donna Nolan, Managing Director**

# Agenda Item 10

Part A

**Report to:** Council

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday, 14 July 2020

**Report author:** Group Head of Democracy and Governance

**Title:** Amendment to the Council Scheme of Delegation

## 1.0 Summary

1.1 The Head of Planning and Building Control has requested that council agrees to the extension of the council scheme of delegation to extend the delegated powers to determine planning and other related applications to Principal Planning Officers and in the case of enforcement to the Planning Enforcement Team Leader, and to alter the delegation from the Head of Development Management to the Head of Planning and Building Control.

## 2.0 Risks

### 2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
The changes are not agreed	Increased pressure on those currently with delegated authority	That the amendments are approved	treat	2

## 3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the amendments to the council scheme of delegation as set out in appendix 1 be approved.

### Further information:

Carol Chen

carol.chen@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278350

## 4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 The Head of Planning and Building Control has requested that the council scheme of delegation be amended to extend the number of officers able to take delegated

decisions relating to Development Management Functions. Attached at Appendix 1 is the scheme with the proposed changes highlighted in red.

- 4.2 One amendment is to extend delegated powers to determine planning and other related applications to Principal Planning Officers within the Development Management Team. Under the existing scheme such powers are delegated to the Group Head of Place Shaping, the Head of Development Management and Development Team Leader. Given current work priorities and the change of role in which the Head of Development Management is now Head of Planning and Building Control (having taken on management of the Planning Policy Team), in practice, the majority of delegated decisions are now being taken by the Development Management Team Leader. In order to free up that post holders capacity and to ensure greater resilience within the decision making process it is recommended that Principal Planning Officers are also given the same delegated authority. It is proposed therefore that those posts be added to the current delegation with a further caveat that no individual can take a delegated decision relating to a case where they are the case officer.
- 4.3 The second amendment is required as the Development Management service has created a new Planning Enforcement Team Leader role. In order to fulfil the responsibilities set out in the role that post holder needs to be assigned the same delegated powers in relation to enforcement as currently held by the Group Head of Place Shaping, Head of Development Management and Development Management Team Leader. It is therefore recommended that that post be added to the current delegation with a further caveat that no individual can take a delegated decision relating to a case where they are the case officer.
- 4.4 Finally in order to reflect the change of job title the Head of Development Management is amended to Head of Planning and Building Control.

## 5.0 **Implications**

### 5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report.

### 5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the amendments will allow greater resilience in the service but will prevent an officer being able to determine a matter for which that are the case officer, thus protecting officers from allegations of undue influence and pre-determination.

### **5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered there are no equalities implications in this report.

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

### **5.4 Staffing**

5.4.1 This proposal will expand the numbers of officers available to take delegated decisions

### **5.5 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 There are no implications

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - proposed amendment to the council scheme of delegation

### **Background papers**

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

## 2.0 Responsibility for Council Functions

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
<b>A Relating to Town &amp; Country Planning and Development Control</b>	Council	<p>To approve, for the purpose of its submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination under Section 20 of the Planning &amp; Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a development plan document.</p> <p>To adopt Local Development Documents after consultation and independent public examination and subject to any direction imposed by the Secretary of State.</p>
<p>1 In connection with the discharge of functions under Sections 28-31 of the Planning &amp; Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to:</p> <p>a) Agree to the making of an Agreement to prepare one or more joint development plan documents</p> <p>b) Agree the making of an Agreement to establish a joint committee to be for the purposes of Part 2 of the 2004 Act to be the Local Planning Authority</p>	Council	<p>To determine all matters referred to in 1(a) to (c)</p>

Function	Body/Individual with Delegation	Terms of Delegation
c) Agree the making of a request to the Secretary of State for the revocation as the Local Planning Authority for any area or in respect of any matter		
2 Power to determine applications for planning permission	Development Management Committee	To exercise all powers referred to in paragraphs A2-A36
3 Power to determine applications to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached	Group Head of Place Shaping, <b>Head of Planning and Building Control</b> , and Development Management Team Leader	To exercise all powers referred to in paragraphs A2-A14 and A26- A34 except (in the case of paragraphs A2-A4): 1 where more than 4 objections have been received unless the application is to be refused or
4 Power to determine applications for planning permission for development already carried out		2 where the development is for non-residential purposes (whether an increase of an existing use or a new development) of more than
5 Power to decline to determine application for planning permission		1,000 square metres or
6 All matters relating to the processing of applications and their determination and the making of any appropriate administrative charge related to the	<b>Principal Planning Officers</b>	3. where the development is for 10 or more residential units 4. <b>Where the Development Management Team Leader is the case officer</b>  <b>To exercise all powers referred to in paragraphs A2-4,A7-8 A10,A12,A26-29,A35 and A37 except (in the case of A2 -4):</b>

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
<p>exercise of these powers (as provided for by s303 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and s 93 of the Local Government Act 2003) including:</p> <p>a) the giving of directions requiring additional information from an applicant in accordance with s63(3) of the Town &amp; Country Planning Act 1990.</p> <p>b) determination as to whether an application requires to be referred to the County Planning Authority as a “county matter” under s.1 and Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.</p> <p>c) determination as to whether the County Planning Authority requires to be consulted on an application under s.1 and Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.</p>		<p><b>Terms of Delegation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. where more than 4 objections have been received or</li> <li>2. where the development is for non residential purposes (whether an increase of an existing use or a new development) of more than 1,000 square metres or</li> <li>3. where the development is for 10 or more residential units or</li> <li>4. where the Principal Planning Officer is the case officer</li> </ol>

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
d) determination of the appropriate fee for planning and other applications.		
e) determination as to whether and how planning or other applications are required to be advertised.		
f) all powers and duties under the Town and country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011		
g) determination as to whether and what material open to public inspection should be permitted to be copied, and the making of reasonable charges for copies supplied.		
h) determination as to whether the Council's case at an appeal should be dealt with by way of public inquiry, hearing or written representations.		
i) responding to consultations on		

Function	Body/Individual with Delegation	Terms of Delegation
<p>planning and other applications from neighbouring planning authorities under Article 16 the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010</p>		
<p>j) responding to consultations concerning development with government authorisation under s90 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990</p>		
<p>k) responding to consultations from the Forestry Commission under the Forestry Act 1967 and related legislation.</p>		
<p>l) responding to consultations under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.</p>		
<p>m) the making of a Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General</p>		

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended)		
7 Power to determine applications for planning permission made by a Local Authority, either alone or jointly with others		
8 Power to make determinations, give or refuse prior approvals and agree other matters relating to the exercise of permitted development rights set out in schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995		
9 Power to enter into agreements and accept unilateral undertakings regulating development or use of land under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990		
10 Power to determine applications for a certificate of existing		

Function	Body/Individual with Delegation	Terms of Delegation
or proposed lawful use or development		
11 Power to serve a completion notice		
12 Power to determine applications for the display of advertisements		
13 Power to authorise entry onto land under the Planning Acts		
14 Power to require the discontinuance of a use of land or the alteration or removal of buildings or works		
15 Power to serve a planning contravention notice, breach of condition notice, stop notice or temporary stop notice	Group Head of Place Shaping, <b>Head of Planning and Building Control</b> and Development Management Team Leader	To exercise all powers referred to in paragraphs A15-A25
16 Power to issue an enforcement notice	<b>Planning Enforcement Team Leader</b>	<b>To exercise all powers referred to in paragraphs A15-25,A32 and A37 except where the Planning Enforcement Team Leader has been the case officer</b>
17 Power to make an application for a		

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
planning enforcement order		
18 Power to apply for an injunction restraining a breach of planning control		
19 Power to serve a notice to require the proper maintenance of land		
20 Power to authorise the execution of works required by an enforcement notice, a listed building enforcement notice or an enforcement notice in relation to the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, or for the enforcement of a discontinuance order		
21 Power to issue a listed building enforcement notice		
22 Power to issue an enforcement notice in relation to the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area		
23 Power to enforce control over		

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
<p>advertisements in accordance with ss224-225E of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and related legislation</p>		
<p>24 Power to remedy defacement of premises in accordance with ss225F-225J of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and related legislation</p>		
<p>25 Power to determine that no enforcement action be taken either because either (a) there is no breach of planning control (b) it would not be expedient to pursue any action or (c) the breach of planning control previously identified has been remedied</p>		
<p>26 Power to determine applications for hazardous substances consent and related matters</p>		
<p>27 Power to determine applications for conservation area</p>		

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
consent and related matters		
28 Power to determine applications for listed building consent and related matters		
29 Duties relating to applications for listed building consent and conservation area consent		
30 Power to serve a building preservation notice and related matters		
31 Power to acquire a listed building in need of repair and to serve a repair notice		
32 Power to apply for an injunction in relation to a listed building or a building in a conservation area		
33 Power to execute urgent works under s54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and related matters		
34 Power to approve or refuse the issue of certificates of appropriate alternative development		
35 Power to determine applications for (a) the	Group Head of Place shaping,	To exercise all powers referred to in paragraph A35

<b>Function</b>	<b>Body/Individual with Delegation</b>	<b>Terms of Delegation</b>
discharge of planning and listed building conditions and (b) non material amendments to permissions and consents	<b>Head Planning and Building Control</b> Development and Management Team Leader	
36 Powers relating to the preservation of trees	Group Head of Democracy and Governance	To make, seal and confirm Tree Preservation Orders
37 Powers relating to the administration of the Community Infrastructure Levy under the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended) or any subsequent legislation repealing or replacing those regulations	Group Head of Place Shaping, <b>Head of Planning and Building Control</b> and Development Management Team Leader	To exercise all powers relating to the collection and enforcement of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

# Agenda Item 11

Part A

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 6 July 2020

**Report author:** Donna Nolan – Managing Director  
Kathryn Robson – Group Head of Strategy and Communications

**Title:** Council Plan – 2020-2024 / Delivery Plan – 2020-22

## 1.0 Summary

1.1 The Council Plan 2020-2024 is presented to Cabinet as part of a framework developed to ensure an integrated approach to addressing the challenges of the post COVID-19 era. The framework includes:

- The Council Plan, which has been developed to reflect ambitions and commitments relevant to our community, businesses, visitors and workforce post COVID-19, ensuring a successful, resilient future.
- The 'Our Road to Renewal' Plan, which has been developed to deliver a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the revival of the town and the Council.
- An Organisational Development Strategy, which has been developed by our learning over the past few months and shapes a new approach to supporting our staff and the operations of the organisation.
- A recast Budget for 2020/21 which reflects income falls and the alignment of resource to delivery of the commitments contained within the Council Plan, ensuring that our limited resources are directed to areas most important to our community, businesses and our staff.

1.2 This report is specifically to present the Council Plan 2020-2024 to Cabinet for approval, and recommendation to the Full Council on 14 July 2020. The Council Plan sets the future direction for the Council and how we will achieve our ambitions and commitments.

1.3 The report also presents our Delivery Plan 2020-22, which underpins the Council Plan as it sets out our programme of work for the next two years and, therefore, how we will measure our achievements.

1.4 The successful delivery of the commitments in the Council Plan 2020-24 is critical to the Council's success and to ensuring that we are focused on what is important to the town and our residents. The report proposes regular monitoring of the Plan and

Delivery Plan, with quarterly reports to Cabinet and an annual report to our community on our progress and achievements.

- 1.5 The report also provides an update on the realignment of the senior management team to ensure focus on the delivery of the commitments contained within the Council Plan 202-24. Additionally, it presents a proposal regarding the establishment of the new role of Group/Executive Head Assistants, and the establishment of an Executive Programme Management Office.

## 2.0 Risks

### 2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Failure to agree the Council Plan and Delivery Plan	Potential for the Council to be deflected from what is important to the town and residents. Lack of clear direction for the organisation and staff and failure to set clear expectations for delivery. Lack of clarity for residents, our community and partners on the Council's future direction, ambitions and priority areas of work.	A plan based on intelligence and engagement.  Clear timetable and sign off processes	Treat	4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4
Failure to identify key themes and commitments in the Council Plan and associated	Failure to respond to what is important to the town and residents and to focus on less important areas of work.	A plan based on intelligence and engagement.  Clear timetable and sign off processes	Treat	4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4

Delivery Plan actions / areas of work	<p>Lack of clarity on priorities.</p> <p>Resources not allocated to the right areas that deliver our ambitions and what is important.</p> <p>Potential for the Council to be deflected by non-priority areas</p> <p>The plans fail to drive the Council forward.</p>			
Failure to link the Council Plan and Delivery Plan to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and financial planning effectively.	Risk of insufficient financial resourcing for areas of work identified.	Early engagement and discussions so the links are established and agreed	Treat	4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4
Failure to identify the staff resources needed to deliver the plans	Risk of insufficient staff resource or lack of skills / experience in key areas	Early engagement with the development of the OD Strategy so the OD Strategy clearly links and supports delivery		4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4
Failure to identify dependencies	Risk to delivery / slippage	Early understanding across the	Treat	3 (severity) x 2

between areas of work effectively		organisation of where work requires support from a number of teams to allow this to be built into service business plans.		(likelihood) = 6
Slippage on delivery	Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for our town and residents.  Potential impact on the reputation of the Council.	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet  Robust project and programme management	Treat	4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4

### 3.0 Recommendations

#### Cabinet is recommended to:

- 3.1 Approve the Council Plan 2020-2024, at appendix 1 to this report and recommend it (subject to any amendments) to Council.
- 3.2 Approve the Delivery Plan 2020-2022, at appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.3 Recommend to Council that the Managing Director be authorised to make minor amendments to the Council Plan 2020-2024 in consultation with the Elected Mayor.
- 3.4 That the Managing Director be authorised to make minor amendments to the Delivery Plan 2020-2022 in consultation with the Elected Mayor
- 3.5 Note that progress on delivering the Council Plan 2020-2024 will be reported on a quarterly basis to Cabinet, with an annual report being published.
- 3.6 Note the actions outlined in this report that will contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan 2020-2024.
- 3.7 Agree the establishment of the new role of Executive/Group Head Assistant.

**Further information:**

Donna Nolan

[donna.nolan@watford.gov.uk](mailto:donna.nolan@watford.gov.uk)

Tel: 01923 278185

Kathryn Robson

[kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk](mailto:kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk)

Tel: 01923 278077

**Report approved by:** Donna Nolan

#### **4.0 Detailed proposal**

4.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan covers the period 2020-21. As with previous plans, it focuses primarily on a one year period, with a significant emphasis on external projects and areas of work. Whilst corporate plans have always been published, they have tended to be more internal working documents rather than providing a strong and compelling narrative for our residents, businesses partners, community and staff. Additionally, the current plan was published as COVID-19 impacted and, therefore, does not tell the story of Watford and the Council's response to the pandemic and how we will steer the town and the organisation through current challenging times to a successful, resilient future.

4.2 The new Council Plan, which covers the period 2020 – 2024, is designed to be strategic, high level and outward-facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments. It describes the Council's post COVID-19 era to the workforce, our communities and our partners by resetting our strategic commitments.

#### **4.3 The New Council Plan – Overview**

4.4 The Council Plan 2020-24 outlines the Council's strategic themes and commitments. It acts as a key part of the Council's 'golden thread', setting the overarching strategic basis for all of the Council's other strategies and policies, including the budget and Organisational Development (OD) Strategy.

4.5 The new Council Plan enables the Council's leadership to demonstrate, and assert, its aspirations and priorities for both Watford Borough Council and the town it serves. It is designed to be forward-looking, high level and outward-facing with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments. The plan has been developed to provide the Council with an opportunity to further demonstrate its role as a leader of place, and show its strategic and operational excellence.

4.6 By resetting our strategic commitments, the new Council Plan reflects the Council's post COVID-19 era to the workforce, our community and our partners. The new Plan will guide us over the next four years through this renewed strategic

focus. It will mean that we can ensure our limited resources are directed on the areas most important to our community, businesses and our staff.

4.7 The Plan is underpinned by a range of information, intelligence and data including: the Elected Mayor's manifesto pledges, the Local Government Peer Review in 2017; outcomes of community and staff surveys; and feedback following engagement with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

4.8 The Plan has been developed around three key objectives:

- What we are trying to achieve - our themes
- What we are going to focus on over the next four years - our commitments
- How we will go about our work - our principles.

4.9 The proposed themes are as follows:

- A Council that serves our residents
- A thriving, diverse and creative town
- A healthy and happy town

4.10 The delivery of these themes will be underpinned by the proposed principles of excellence; promotion; impact; enterprise; leadership and caring.

4.11 As the plan is outward facing and a clear statement of the Council's intentions over the next four years, it has been designed to mirror a bold new approach, with a fresh design that is built on the Council's corporate identity (the bold shield). Elements from the shield have been woven through the design including the hart of Hertfordshire, the shells from the Earl of Clarendon's coat of arms and the colour blue to represent the 'ford' in Watford .

#### **4.12 Delivering the Council Plan – Delivery Plan**

4.13 The Delivery Plan at Appendix 2 shows how the Council will focus our work to bring the Council Plan to life, making sure we deliver what we said we would over the next 18 months.

4.14 Under each theme and commitment, we set out our key priority areas of actions, which we are focused on achieving by 2022. The Delivery Plan will be monitored and a report on progress will be reported to Cabinet quarterly, and, annually, we

will prepare a report for residents, businesses and partners.

4.15 In this time of great uncertainty, the approach of focusing on delivery over a period of 18 months, with regular reports to Cabinet means that the Council can be flexible and agile to respond to emerging and future challenges and opportunities. The initial Delivery Plan has a steadfast focus on the work to support our community, businesses and staff as they recover from COVID-19. Therefore the Delivery Plan is intrinsically linked with the Council's 'Our Road to Renewal' Plan which is also presented to Cabinet as part of the agenda for 6 July 2020.

#### **4.16 Delivering the Council Plan – Budget**

4.17 This year has presented us with unprecedented challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is now unable to proceed with the budget planned for 2020/21 and at item 7 is a reset budget. The reset budget has been developed cognisant of the commitments contained within the new Council Plan and, in particular, those activities that will stimulate our economy and help our town recover from the pandemic. In the current dynamic environment the Council's budget will be kept under review in line with the quarterly reviews of the Delivery Plan.

#### **4.18 Delivering the Council Plan - Realignment of the Senior Management Team**

4.19 Due to the exceptional circumstances relating to the challenges of COVID-19, a realignment of some roles in the senior management team has been required in order to provide more clarity on responsibilities, embed the approach of continuous improvement and to meet the commitments of the new Council Plan and the Organisational Development Strategy. As a result Head of HR will have a greater focus on Organisational Development and the role title has changed to reflect this, namely Executive Head of HR & Organisational Development. Whilst the Head of Strategy and Communication, will be retitled the Executive Head of Strategy and Communications, to emphasise the importance of the role in supporting the delivery of the Council's strategic direction.

4.20 The modifications have been made in order for the Managing Director to be able to work even more closely with key managers to develop and deliver the commitments in the Council Plan.

4.21 A revised structure plan is being prepared to reflect this approach. It will show how the Council's senior leaders will operate as one team, ensuring a strategic focus on the Council Plan and the successful delivery of our commitments through the Delivery Plan. The approach will ensure that all senior leaders will be more agile and resilient, in order for the Council to recover quickly from the impact of COVID-19, and to enable the delivery of our commitments to support the economy and

our communities as they recover and look forward.

#### **4.22 Delivering the Council Plan – an Executive Project Management Office**

4.23 A key change to ensure the successful delivery of the Council Plan is the establishment of an Executive Project Management Office (EMPO). The EMPO (comprising members of the PMO) is a small team that will centrally co-ordinate and manage all projects and initiatives contributing to the delivery of the Council Plan. The EMPO will operate at a strategic level and provide Council wide support on governance, project portfolio management best practices, mentoring, tools and standardized processes. The EMPO will ensure strategic alignment between the commitments contained within the Council Plan and projects executed. The EMPO will report to the Managing Director.

#### **4.24 Delivering the Council Plan – Group/Executive Head Assistant roles**

4.25 In alignment with the objectives of the Organisational Development Plan, and to ensure that the Group and Executive Heads are strategically focused, 5 new roles of Group and Executive Head Assistants (GEHA) are proposed, which will involve current staff undertaking work one day a week to assist the Group Heads and Executive Heads whilst continuing in their existing substantive role

4.26 The GEHA will have a high level of autonomy and will be responsible for supporting the management of a diverse range of services and/or leading initiatives and projects. This opportunity will help develop staff who possess the potential and aspiration to fulfil a future senior management role and will aid the development of leadership competencies within a supportive environment, whilst contributing to succession planning across the council.

4.27 The opportunity is not a substantive position and will not be offered on a secondment or acting-up basis. The opportunity will be rotational and offered for a 12 month period. The initial cohort of GEHAs will be appointed following a competitive process.

#### **4.28 Delivering the Council Plan – Supporting our People**

4.29 The work undertaken by Council staff in responding to COVID-19 has been immense. All staff have worked at pace through complex, challenging and difficult decisions, developed new ways of working and delivered great change. Staff are the Council's greatest asset and to support and equip them to be their very best an OD Strategy has been developed.

4.30 This OD Strategy is at item number 6 on this Cabinet agenda and is recommended for approval by Cabinet.

## **5.0 Implications**

### **5.1 Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that considerations of the Council's budget position is outlined in paragraph 4.16 of this report, setting out that, as a result of COVID-19 and the financial pressures this has placed on the Council, the Council is proposing recasting its budget. This is for Cabinet's consideration as agenda item 7.

Whilst the Council's budget underpins the whole of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, the importance is recognised under the theme 'A Council that serves our residents' with the related commitment: 'Focus our budget to deliver on our commitments and secure investment to work for Watford'.

### **5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the Council Plan is one of the policy framework documents listed in the constitution that has to be approved by Council. The plan will be presented to Council on 14 July.

### **5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

- 5.3.1 The Council Plan is informed by the Watford context, including an understanding of the demographic make-up of the borough's community and feedback from local people on the issues that are important to them. An overall equality impact analysis has been undertaken on the Council Plan (Appendix 3) and impact analyses will be undertaken on specific projects/programmes where relevant.

The equality impact analysis takes into account that under s149 (1) of the Equality Act the Council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them
- foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.

Having had regard to the Council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

## 5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 The Council Plan sets the Council's strategic direction, and is, therefore, a key document for our staff, enabling them to understand our commitments and priorities and allowing them to contribute fully to our success and achievements. As the overarching plan for the Council, it provides the framework for all our strategies and policies and links, through the Delivery Plan, to service business plans and individual staff objectives and outcomes.

The principles demonstrate how we go about our work and are an important guide for staff on the Council's expectations recognising it is not just what we deliver but how we deliver that is a measure of our organisational culture.

This report, in paragraphs 4.28-4.30, explains how the Council Plan and Delivery Plan will be supported by a new OD Strategy Staff to support and equip them to be their very best.

## 5.5 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.5.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to give due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of its functions on crime and disorder in its area and to do all it reasonably can to prevent these. Our theme: A happy and healthy town, underpins our commitment to 'Work even more closely with the voluntary and community sector, to build a resilient community where people support each other' and the associated action to 'ensure a safer Watford;' by working with partners and using our statutory powers.

## 5.6 Sustainability

5.6.1 The Council's commitment to sustainability runs through the Council Plan and a range of actions to deliver our climate change commitments are identified within the Delivery Plan. These range from pushing forward with delivering greener ways to travel in Watford to promoting Watford's transition to a low-carbon economy.

## Appendices

Appendix 1:	Watford Borough Council: Council Plan 2020-24
Appendix 2:	Watford Borough Council: Delivery Plan 2020-22
Appendix 3:	Watford Borough Council: Council Plan 2020- 24 – equality impact analysis

## Background papers

Watford Borough Council: Corporate Plan 2019/20

# Watford Together

OUR TOWN. OUR FUTURE.

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**COUNCIL PLAN**  
2020-2024



**WATFORD**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

# Thinking bigger,

# to be the best

**FOREWORD BY PETER TAYLOR,  
OUR ELECTED MAYOR**

**W**elcome to our new Council Plan. We pride ourselves on thinking bigger for Watford. Our focus is, and has always been, to achieve the best for our town, our residents and our community. In what have been some of the most challenging times we have ever faced, it is now more important than ever that our big ideas can set the right direction for Watford and accomplish great things for the future.

We know what it is that makes Watford such a special and popular place to live, work and visit. We have outstanding communities that embrace our town's diversity and creativity, and who have a genuine passion for Watford. We care about our neighbours and, this year in particular, we have seen so many amazing examples of people pulling together to help others during difficult times. A true demonstration of everything that makes Watford the place we are all proud to call home.

Our town is uniquely positioned as a gateway to London, but also enjoys the benefits of its own strong identity, and heritage, as a market town. This makes us extremely popular and successful as a place not just to live, work or visit, but above all, to thrive. People beyond our borders look to Watford as their 'go-to' town and we have an exceptional pull, with 'Greater Watford' serving a population of over half a million. Across the life of this plan we will harness Watford's unique energy and enthusiasm, to create the opportunities that will put us proudly on the map for generations to come.

Our council is recognised as one of the most forward-looking and creative district councils in the UK. We thrive on thinking differently, pushing the boundaries where we can, to achieve more for Watford, and we are seriously ambitious for our town and our people.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis we hope we have shown how we can respond to difficult circumstances, whilst maintaining a high level of performance across those services you rely on every day. We adapted quickly to what was needed. We provided strong leadership and united as a council and a town, so we could work quickly, knocking down hurdles and coming up with better ways of doing things that really made a difference. We want to take this experience of going beyond the traditional way of working, and build upon what we have learnt, to move to the next level.

## **RENEWING OUR COUNCIL PLAN SHOWS JUST HOW WATFORD PULLS TOGETHER AND RESPONDS.**

It is different and ambitious, and clearly demonstrates our promises to our residents, and our town. There can be no doubt our world has changed. We know for our residents and businesses there is no going back to how things were before COVID-19; it is not an option for our future. The challenge now, and importantly, the opportunity, is to start the process of thinking about our 'new normal'. We will build it together; we will grasp the opportunities ahead that will ensure our town flourishes and emerges stronger and more united than ever before.

Over the next pages we outline what we have delivered since I was elected in 2018. It demonstrates our boldness, that we are prepared to be a dynamic and pioneering council, always looking for new ways to deliver more for our community that is the heart of Watford.





# Delivering success and transformation

We are a council that delivers. COVID-19 has meant we have had to step up, and in a way that no one could have imagined. We have made it work - bringing together our ambitious plans for the town, but also keeping our residents and businesses at the heart of everything we do, whilst allowing our kindness and care to shine through. We're not the happiest place in the East of England for no reason!

## **Bikes, buses and apps - Pioneering greener ways to travel**

We have successfully launched a ground-breaking package of greener and cleaner ways to travel around the town. Our mint-green Beryl Bikes launched in March, the first bike-share scheme in Hertfordshire. Over 35,000 rides covering 150,000 miles have been taken so far. Electric bikes are also on their way, putting Watford way ahead in providing real, active travel choices. We are the first district council in the country to launch on-demand buses, giving people the choice of a flexible service across the town, initially, in three ArrivaClick fifteen-seater buses - increasing to seven by the end of the year. These buses respond to passenger needs and, in these challenging times, offer a great alternative to traditional public transport. The innovative TravelWatford transport app, another first for Watford, is a digital one-stop shop for getting around the town quickly, safely and with the lowest environmental impact.

## **Family matters - Investing in a family-friendly town**

Watford stands out as a town that welcomes families - with twelve award-winning, green flag parks. Following millions of pounds of investment, Cassiobury Park, with its paddling pools, play areas, miniature railway and cafés, attracts millions of visitors each year, with everyone finding their own, special way to enjoy our outstanding park. We have created a thrilling new facility for skateboarding, BMX and cycling, as well as a new café and community hub in Oxhey Park, which opens this autumn. We have championed the work of Watford Cycle Hub by investing in a new hub building and have upgraded our parks, open spaces and leisure centres so they remain best in class.

## Welcome to Watford - Promoting our outstanding town centre

Our town centre is the largest and most successful in the area. We have brought in millions of pounds of investment to renew the High Street to keep it vibrant, welcoming and packed with high-quality shops, restaurants and things to do. To match the investment in the stunning extension to the town's shopping centre, we have upgraded the High Street, making it more cycle and walker-friendly, as well as an attractive place to enjoy and spend time. We are now extending this investment to Clarendon Road, the gateway from Watford Junction to the town centre. As a home for many of Watford's largest businesses, we want it to be an appealing area, with more green and friendly spaces.

## All walks of life - Caring for our community

Watford is a town where no one is left behind. We recognise the value of all our residents' voices and have launched a Dementia Friendly Alliance to help those in our town with dementia, and their families and carers, live fuller, happier lives. Our lively Pensioners' Forum provides a way for our older residents to have their say and our Healthy Hub offers wraparound care to those in our community needing support with their mental health.

## Doing more during COVID-19

We delivered our own response to COVID-19, covering not just our responsibilities, but looking at where we could step up and do more for our town and community. Critical to this effective response are our Watford Together and Watford Helps initiatives. Both show the council at its best - creative, caring and focused, driven by the needs of our residents and our ambition to make a difference.

“  
**WATFORD  
IS A TOWN  
WHERE  
NO ONE  
GETS LEFT  
BEHIND.**

## Watford Together

Lockdown provided a real challenge for those working in the entertainment, culture and leisure sectors; we saw that these groups had the potential to be a real beacon of hope for Watford, keeping people connected and helping them feel happier through hard times. We brought them together, using their diverse skills to create a terrific programme of activities and events, physical activities, quizzes and competitions. By successfully uniting our community, we have also been able to use Watford Together to raise, and address, important issues around mental health.

## Watford Helps

As the pandemic hit, there was a tremendous outpouring from people keen to volunteer and offer support. The council set up Watford Helps to bring together the charities and community groups leading the volunteer effort in our town. Early on it became clear that many charities and voluntary groups could be forced to close, just when they were needed the most. Through Watford Helps, the Elected Mayor has championed a COVID-19 appeal, with a target to raise £250k. This is providing practical help to charities and a lifeline to our residents in need.

A NEW COUNCIL PLAN

# WATFORD TOGETHER – OUR TOWN. OUR FUTURE.

# Our next steps

We are proud of what we have achieved, but we want to go further. We are ambitious for our town, our residents and our businesses, and want to see them flourish, now more than ever.

**W**e want Watford to be a place for people to enjoy, from childhood to old age, and for our residents to lead healthy and happy lives in a safe, clean and green town. At the same time, we want our businesses to thrive and prosper, and to make an important contribution to a strong economy that provides jobs for local people. This means continuing to provide excellent services at the best possible price.

## **A plan for prosperity with purpose**

A new plan gives us the chance to look at our commitments to the town and our community for the next four years. It links our long-term goals and what we know is important to Watford now, given everyone's experiences of COVID-19. As our future roadmap, it informs our budget setting,

is an essential tool for the planning and delivery of services, and helps our staff understand how the work they do makes a real difference to the people of Watford. We know our success will be achieved through:

- the dedication of our councillors and the link they provide between our community and the council and its partners;
- the commitment of our staff, who are prepared to go the extra mile for our residents, customers and businesses;
- the backing of our partnerships across the private, public and voluntary sectors;
- the support of our residents and businesses.

# Our themes

We want Watford to be an outstanding place for everyone: residents, business owners and visitors alike. Our plans have created a thriving and attractive town, but we know we cannot stand still.

We must always look to the future and be ambitious for Watford, to guarantee our continued success and prosperity. This has never been more important as we look to thrive post COVID-19.

# Be bold

## A COUNCIL THAT SERVES OUR RESIDENTS

**W**e are a different kind of council – pioneering and always searching for better answers; a bold council that gets things done, focuses on opportunity and challenges old-fashioned thinking. We work as ‘one team’ and everything we do is to make our town successful and improve the lives of our residents.

We recognise that the talent and commitment of our staff are the engines that drive us forward. We want our people to be the best they can be and to stretch themselves to achieve even more. We know how proud they are to work for Watford;

they want to make a difference, deliver for our residents and businesses, and blend all that is best about public service, while embracing learning from the private sector.

Our councillors have been called on to provide leadership for our community as never before. They have risen to this brilliantly and we will continue to support them in their important role.

We will focus on: leadership; collaborative working; growing our own talent; learning; being best in field; recognising success and achievements.

## Our commitments

- Make sure our council is a caring and collaborative organisation that puts **what matters to people at the heart of everything we do.**
- Deliver **high-quality, sustainable services.**
- Empower leaders at all levels in our council to **inspire our organisation and our community.**
- Focus our budget to **deliver on our commitments and secure investment** to work for Watford.
- Welcome **innovation, technology and new ways of working** to continuously improve.

## A THRIVING, DIVERSE AND CREATIVE TOWN

**W**e want to shape Watford for future generations, making it a great place, where people want to live, work and visit; a town where no one gets left behind; where everyone benefits from well-planned growth and opportunity; and that leads the way in creativity and better environmental choices. Watford has a rich history and we want to protect the strong local identity of our town, successfully blending our past with our future.

We will focus on: diverse and friendly neighbourhoods; a good range of housing choices; better local transport; high-quality design and development; cultural and creative opportunities; business and entrepreneurial success; and a cleaner, greener environment.

### Our commitments

- Promote Watford as an enterprising town where **businesses can invest, grow and succeed.**
- Create **thriving and affordable neighbourhoods** and the right environment for businesses to flourish.
- Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments to **create successful, well-designed new communities.**
- Make sure we have **quality homes to meet the needs of residents,** including housing that is affordable through ownership, private rental and social housing.
- Build on our **new, greener ways to travel** in and around Watford and promote the transition to a low-carbon economy.

## A HEALTHY AND HAPPY TOWN

**O**ur community is the strength and the heart of Watford. We know they have great civic pride and enjoy getting involved in the life of the town. We have seen them care for each other like never before and we want this great spirit to be the launchpad for something very special for Watford in the years to come. Our diverse town inspires us every day and we want its community to really feel a part of our joint future.

We recognise that not all of our residents share the same life experiences. We know we are at a turning point and want to work with our community to tackle issues to make a real difference.

Our town is a happy place. People value our excellent, good-value services; our safe, well-kept neighbourhoods; our culture, entertainment and creative organisations; and all the fantastic things there are to do in Watford - whatever your age or interest. We want to build on what makes our town special.

We will focus on: culture, leisure and heritage; excellent services for residents and customers; health and wellbeing; tackling homelessness; challenging inequalities.

### Our commitments

- Celebrate our **diversity, heritage and culture,** to make Watford a place for people to succeed from childhood to old age.
- Enable our **cultural and creative sectors** to flourish.
- Ensure we have **quality events, recreational opportunities and outdoor spaces** for people to get together, feel part of the town and boost their health and wellbeing.
- Work even more closely with the voluntary and community sector, to build a **resilient community where people support each other.**
- Work with partners to end rough sleeping and **help people enjoy better lives.**

# Mapping the future

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES UNDERPIN HOW WE DELIVER ON OUR THEMES AND COMMITMENTS.

## Excellence

Work with partners to deliver excellent outcomes for our customers and community.

## Promotion

Promote Watford widely to maximise our town's potential.

## Impact

Use our resources wisely to maximise financial, social and environmental impact.

## Enterprise

Challenge ourselves to be ambitious and entrepreneurial.

## Leadership

Bring people who care about the town together to get things done.

## Caring

Respond thoughtfully to show our readiness to help others.



# Keeping our commitments

Our plan will be translated into action through everything we do. It forms the basis for a detailed Delivery Plan, setting out what we will do to make sure our commitments are delivered.

We will rigorously monitor this plan to measure how well we are doing, and we will report back to our residents and community.



**/watfordcouncil**

**T:** 01923 226400  
**W:** [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)  
**E:** [customerservices@watford.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@watford.gov.uk)



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# Watford Together

OUR TOWN. OUR FUTURE.

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**DELIVERY PLAN**  
2020-2022



**WATFORD**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

# Watford is a council that gets things done.

WE MAKE BOLD CHOICES  
AND FOCUS ON WHAT  
MATTERS TO OUR TOWN  
AND RESIDENTS.



**WE PRIDE OURSELVES  
ON THINKING BIGGER FOR  
WATFORD. OUR FOCUS  
IS AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN  
TO ACHIEVE THE BEST  
FOR OUR TOWN, OUR  
RESIDENTS AND OUR  
COMMUNITIES.**

**IN WHAT HAVE BEEN  
SOME OF THE MOST  
CHALLENGING TIMES WE  
HAVE EVER FACED, IT IS  
NOW MORE IMPORTANT  
THAN EVER THAT OUR BIG  
IDEAS CAN SET THE RIGHT  
DIRECTION FOR WATFORD  
AND ACCOMPLISH GREAT  
THINGS FOR THE FUTURE.”**

**Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor**  
*Watford Borough Council Plan 2020-24*



**O**ur Council Plan 2020-24 sets out our ambitions and our three overarching themes for Watford over the next four years – a council that serves its residents, delivering a thriving, diverse and creative town, and a healthy and happy town. We know that our plans are ambitious, but we are driven by our shared purpose to make Watford even better for everyone.

This Delivery Plan shows how we will focus our work to bring the Council Plan to life, making sure we deliver what we said we would over the next 18 months.

Under each theme, we clearly set out our key priority areas of action, which we are committed to achieving by 2022. These actions cut across and support the delivery of our themes, linking together to shape a bright future for Watford.

Everyone in the council has a part to play in the success of this Delivery Plan and we will regularly check how well we are doing through quarterly reports to our Elected Mayor and Cabinet. We will also publish an annual update to our residents and community, so they can be confident that we are keeping our promises.

Whilst not everything we do is captured in this plan, we apply the same rigour and high standards to all our work so we continue to achieve more for Watford and our residents. Sitting alongside both our Council Plan and Delivery Plan is our Organisational Development Strategy, which shows how we will support our staff to reach their potential and rise to the challenges of working at Watford, and our Financial Plan, which makes the vital link between our budget and our ambitions.

THEME 1:

# A council that serves our residents

MAKE SURE OUR COUNCIL IS A CARING AND COLLABORATIVE ORGANISATION THAT PUTS WHAT MATTERS TO PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

OUR ACTIONS

WHAT WE'LL DO

1

**Provide an excellent customer experience**

We will deliver a new Customer Experience Strategy covering the next five years to ensure that we provide an excellent end-to-end customer experience across all our services.

2

**Ensure a continual focus on customer needs**

We know our customer needs constantly change, so we will continually review the services we are providing to our residents and businesses, ensuring we make the most of new technology without overlooking those who require a personal service.

3

**Address digital isolation**

We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to support residents who do not have access to technology, or do not currently have the skills to use IT, so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town.

DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

OUR ACTIONS

WHAT WE'LL DO

1

**Deliver a new waste and recycling offering for Watford**

We will deliver the new waste and recycling service to cut waste, increase recycling and ensure the sustainability of our service.

2

**Embed a continuous improvement approach across all of our services**

We know that our customers value great and easy access to excellent services. We will develop a new approach to ensure we learn from leading practice and our changing customer needs, and challenge ourselves to continually improve to deliver excellent, high-quality services to our residents and businesses.

3

**Manage our organisational renewal post COVID-19**

We will support the council to bounce back from COVID-19, addressing any backlogs and learning from ways of working during the emergency to ensure that we make the most of new opportunities to meet our resident and customer expectations.

**EMPOWER LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS IN OUR COUNCIL  
TO INSPIRE OUR ORGANISATION AND OUR COMMUNITY**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE'LL DO**

**1**

**Introduce a new Organisational Development approach**

We want to make sure that we develop, motivate and inspire our staff, whilst ensuring they feel supported and empowered to do their best for our residents and businesses. To do this, we will develop a new approach to Organisational Development, which will recognise the strengths and commitment of our staff, whilst helping them to work as one team in the best interests of our town, residents and businesses. We will ensure that our approach protects their health and wellbeing, and that it provides opportunities for genuine two-way engagement.

**2**

**Improve our internal decision-making so that it is agile and effective**

Learning from the experience of COVID-19, we will ensure our internal governance structures allow us to make well-considered, transparent decisions as quickly as possible to support our ambition to react efficiently to deliver our commitments to our residents and community.

**3**

**Improve succession planning and talent management and recruitment**

We will ensure we open up opportunities for staff to build their skills, experience and knowledge so that working for our town can be a fulfilling career. Where we do need to recruit, we will ensure we recruit the very best candidates from those that apply and seek to ensure they represent the diverse backgrounds of our residents.

**FOCUS OUR BUDGET SO WE CAN DELIVER  
ON OUR COMMITMENTS AND SECURE  
INVESTMENT TO WORK FOR WATFORD**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE'LL DO**

**1**

**Ensure our investment portfolio delivers maximum value to the council**

We will ensure we are actively managing our investment portfolio, including exploring new opportunities to protect our income levels, manage risk and maximise value over the longer term, so that we can continue to provide high-quality services to our residents and businesses.

**2**

**Assess the feasibility of Growth Fund**

We will assess the feasibility of using our financial strength to support economic growth and provide an investment return through investing in start-up and growth opportunities.

**3**

**Deliver the council's financial recovery**

We will reset our finances in the light of the pressures created by COVID-19 and based on insight about possible future pressures, which will allow us to fund priorities to help Watford recover.

**4**

**Manage the council finances**

We will ensure that our budgets align with our priorities and that budget management is robust, forward-looking and supports the best possible service outcomes for the money we have available.

OPPORTUNITY

**WELCOME INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND NEW  
WAYS OF WORKING TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE’LL DO**

1

**Ensure that our use of digital technology matches our ambition to deliver the best possible service to our residents**

We will deliver a new ICT strategy for the next five-year period to ensure that we are making the most of new ICT and digital opportunities.

2

**Deliver our Business Intelligence Strategy**

We will improve how the council uses data and information to support well-informed decisions, improve performance and provide a better customer experience. We will use this information to monitor the delivery of our services for customers and to take action if something needs improving.

3

**Ensure that the council’s future office accommodation is fit for purpose**

Learning the lessons from COVID-19 and listening to our staff, we will develop plans to ensure the council has modern, fit for purpose, sustainable and good value for money offices to work from.

4

**Enhance agile ways of working for our staff**

We will ensure that our staff are able to provide high-quality and efficient services to customers when they want them by opening up opportunities for staff to work remotely or in an agile way, helping the council to become an employer of choice.

5

**Embed resilience across the organisation**

We will ensure that our staff are planning ahead and have the necessary information, understanding and agility to manage any future disruption to services and learn from this.



THEME 2:

# A thriving, diverse and creative town

CREATE THRIVING AND AFFORDABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS TO FLOURISH

OUR ACTIONS

WHAT WE'LL DO

1

**Progress our plans for the High Street North and Cultural Hub**

We will take forward plans to revitalise the High Street North area to create a vibrant and attractive neighbourhood for all our residents to enjoy, as well as establishing a new area in the town for culture to flourish.

2

**Develop Watford Business Park**

We will develop Watford Business Park to create new, high-quality business space and employment opportunities for local people.

3

**Create new neighbourhoods at Riverwell**

We will continue to develop the new and vibrant neighbourhood at Riverwell with a high-quality mix of new homes, jobs, open spaces and community facilities, including a new car park for Watford General Hospital. The work at Riverwell will support the opportunity for West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust to deliver its ambition for our local hospital.

4

**Make the best use of our small sites**

We will renew sites owned by the council through the creation of new facilities for our community and new homes for local people to ensure that we are doing all we can with the land we own to provide what residents want and need.

PROMOTE WATFORD AS AN ENTERPRISING TOWN WHERE BUSINESSES CAN INVEST, GROW AND SUCCEED

OUR ACTIONS

WHAT WE'LL DO

1

**Drive the economic recovery of Watford**

We will develop our Watford 'Survive, Revive and Thrive' Recovery Plan to support the economic engine of our town as it survives COVID-19, revives and once again thrives. The Plan brings together a number of work streams to support our town through the immediate challenges that have arisen during lockdown and will help us all plan for the future in a very uncertain landscape to ensure Watford remains a vibrant economic hub in south west Hertfordshire.

2

**Re-mobilise our town centre and local economy and support its recovery**

We will continue our close working with Watford BID, intu, our businesses and other partners to position Watford town centre as the town centre of choice for our local people as well as the wider region, making it safe, welcoming and somewhere people know they can visit to socialise, dine-out, shop and enjoy.

3

**Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town**

We will speak regularly to our smaller and medium-sized businesses and local business owners across the town. We will understand their strengths and concerns and, based on this, we will produce a package of practical help, support and advice to enable them to bounce back and thrive following the impact of COVID-19 and to support them through exit from the EU.

4

**Attract and retain big business in Watford**

Recognising the importance of big businesses to employment in the town, we will introduce new ways to engage with the town's larger businesses and major employers to give them a strong voice in Watford's economic future and to support their business plans for growth. This will include moving to a key account model for our top 50 firms, providing them with a direct link to the council.

5

**Maximise opportunities for Watford**

We will work closely with local partners, including the Hertfordshire Growth Board, to maximise opportunities for Watford within the county and wider sub-region. This will include joint working on schemes to benefit the whole town, such as improving the town's travel options, public spaces and schools. Our aim is to make Watford the obvious option for public investment in infrastructure to encourage economic prosperity to improve the lives of our residents and opportunities for our businesses, which will support the wider communities in Hertfordshire.

**ENSURE THE RIGHT MIX OF FACILITIES, SERVICES AND TRANSPORT LINKS AS PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS TO CREATE SUCCESSFUL, WELL-DESIGNED NEW COMMUNITIES**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE’LL DO**

**1**

**Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town**

We will produce, and deliver, a comprehensive new Local Plan for Watford, which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 20 years and make sure that key development sites are underpinned with creative and well-considered masterplans. We will also work with other Hertfordshire councils on long-term spatial plans for Hertfordshire.

**2**

**Champion high-quality design in Watford**

Through the creation of a Place Shaping Panel, use of our 3D model and developing planning guidance, we will expand how the council’s planning function ensures that any development proposal designs are of a high quality.

**3**

**Develop the Watford Junction Quarter**

Recognising the importance of the Watford Junction area for so many of our residents and businesses, we will bring landowners together so we can move forward with our plans to create a new Watford neighbourhood that successfully combines new homes, station facilities, jobs, public space, school provision and community facilities for both our existing and new residents.

**MAKE SURE WE HAVE QUALITY HOMES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS, INCLUDING HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE THROUGH OWNERSHIP, PRIVATE RENTAL AND SOCIAL HOUSING**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE’LL DO**

**1**

**Deliver our Housing Strategy**

We will produce and deliver a forward-looking Housing Strategy so that Watford continues to offer affordable and good-quality homes in thriving and sustainable neighbourhoods.

**2**

**Delivery of Private Sector Housing Renewal activity**

We will work to support the improvement of the standard of the town’s privately owned homes, including ensuring regulatory compliance, particularly where this can help people’s health and wellbeing.

**3**

**Review our strategic partnerships**

To ensure that we are making the most of our opportunities to deliver quality homes that meet the needs of local people, we will review our strategic housing partnerships and ensure that we all work together to provide quality homes for our residents.

COMMUNITY

**BUILD ON OUR NEW, GREENER WAYS TO TRAVEL IN AND AROUND WATFORD AND PROMOTE THE TRANSITION TO A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE’LL DO**

1

**Position Watford as a Sustainable Travel Town**

We will consult with a range of stakeholders to develop a Sustainable Transport Strategy. The Strategy will position Watford as a Sustainable Travel Town that promotes greener ways to travel, reduces congestion, helps people to make healthy travel choices and stimulates economic growth.

2

**Implement a demand-responsive transport scheme**

We will launch the ArrivaClick on-demand bus service for Watford and make sure it links effectively with all of Watford’s greener ways to travel so that we can reduce congestion, improve air quality and provide another sustainable, but innovative, way for our residents, visitors and commuters to get around.

3

**Improve the cycling and walking network in Watford**

We will work with Hertfordshire County Council and our cycling community on our Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan to improve the cycling and walking network across our town so more people choose to cycle and walk around it. This will promote health and wellbeing, encourage residents and visitors to enjoy our public places, and ensure that our town becomes greener and cleaner for everyone, both now and for years to come.

4

**Champion proposals for a Mass-rapid Transport Scheme for Watford**

As part of our plans to encourage sustainable transport options, we will work closely with Hertfordshire Growth Board to secure the best Mass-rapid transport system for our town, providing a further option for our residents, visitors and commuters to travel sustainably.

5

**Continue to investigate opportunities to create a Low Carbon Transport Hub**

We will continue to investigate the potential for a Low Carbon Transport Hub in Watford town centre to encourage more use of public transport, reducing congestion and improving air quality for everyone.

6

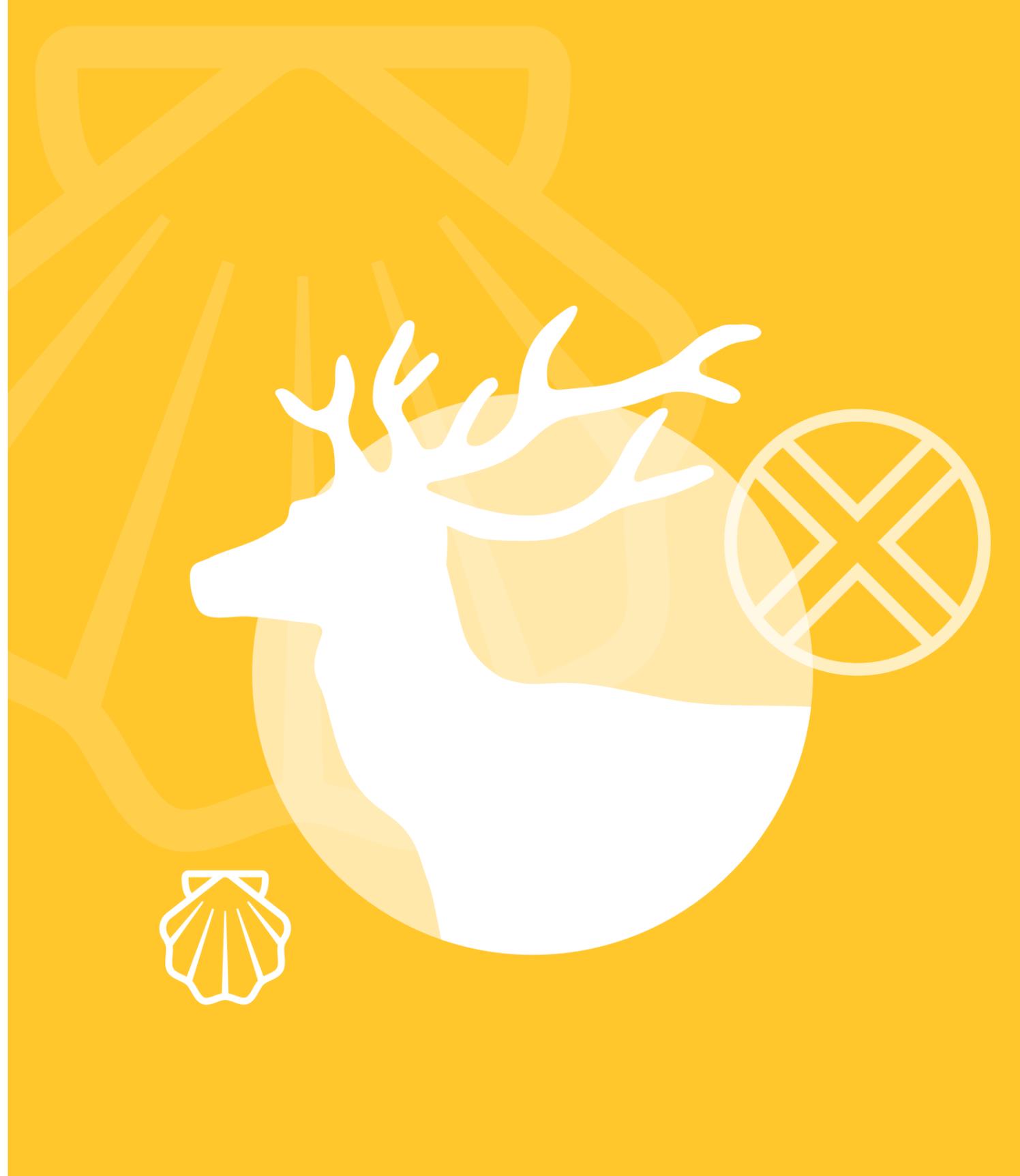
**Make Watford a sustainable town**

Working with our partners, businesses and residents, we will, together, make Watford a more environmentally-friendly town that meets the target of net zero carbon by 2030. We will continue to implement sustainable transport initiatives, support low income households and the community to improve energy efficiency, implement our Tree and Green Spaces strategies to increase biodiversity, promote clear air campaigns and increase domestic recycling rates.

7

**Ensure that the council is a greener organisation**

We will ensure that the council is active in reducing its environmental impact and carbon footprint through our staff, our buildings and our operations. Sustainability will be integrated into our plans, we will reduce our use of single-use plastics, lead by example on low carbon travel, and carry out energy audits of our council buildings.



THEME 3:

# A healthy and happy town

ENABLE OUR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS TO FLOURISH

OUR ACTIONS

WHAT WE'LL DO

1

**Maximise the cultural opportunities for the town**

We will refresh Watford's Cultural Strategy to ensure our cultural and creative sectors can flourish, help to bring our community together, and provide a vibrant, diverse and exciting offer to residents and visitors.

2

**Making the most of the town's cultural and entertainment venues**

We will ensure that council-owned entertainment venues continue to provide a high-quality, varied and diverse entertainment programme for all in our town and further enhance the buildings so that they are modern and sustainable.

3

**Enhance our cultural partnerships**

We will work together with Watford's cultural partners and the South West Herts Growth Board on shared initiatives to build on the strength of the town's creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit and provide a strong cultural offering for the town and our residents which works to attract people to the town and supports businesses.

CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSITY, HERITAGE AND CULTURE TO MAKE WATFORD A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO SUCCEED FROM CHILDHOOD TO OLD AGE

OUR ACTIONS

WHAT WE'LL DO

1

**Ensure that everyone living in our town has the opportunity to achieve their potential**

We will work with all parts of our diverse community to ensure that we tackle inequality so that background is not a barrier to success in our town and all of our residents have the same opportunity to reach their potential.

2

**Develop a heritage trail for Watford**

Recognising Watford's rich culture and past, we will celebrate the town's heritage through developing a new innovative, digital heritage trail to bring Watford's past to life.

3

**Review and reinvigorate how we celebrate our local heritage**

Develop proposals for a modern and inspiring heritage service and museum that engages and educates our residents and visitors by telling the story of our town and its rich, diverse history.

4

**Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing, including those with mental health issues**

We will work closely with our partners to ensure that the right support is available for our residents who need it across the town. This will include Watford's Healthy Hub which will strengthen the health support available for local people, including mental health help and guidance.

5

**Create a Dementia-Friendly Community**

Working with businesses, partners, carers and residents living with dementia, we will champion Watford as a place where people living with dementia are understood, respected and supported.

6

**Commemorate Watford's response to COVID-19**

Building on the community spirit and outstanding work across the town during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will evolve Watford Together so that it commemorates Watford's response to the pandemic, recognises the invaluable contribution of our frontline workers, and provides opportunities for reflection for all parts of our community.

7

**Enhance the town's character and its physical heritage**

We will produce a refreshed Conservation Area Management Plan which ensures that we continue to protect the character of our town and enhances its future for local people.

**ENSURE WE HAVE QUALITY EVENTS, RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTDOOR SPACES FOR PEOPLE TO GET TOGETHER, FEEL PART OF THE TOWN AND BOOST THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE'LL DO**

- |          |                                       |   |
|----------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Complete Oxhey Activity Park</b>   | We will deliver Oxhey Activity Park, an exciting new venue for skateboarding, BMX and cycling, combined with a café and community facilities.   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Create Woodside Sports Village</b> | In order to provide modern and attractive facilities for sports and leisure for all the community, and our young residents in particular, to enjoy, we will deliver a new vision for Woodside that makes best use of the space available to provide new sports and leisure facilities in the town.  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Revitalise the River Colne</b>     | We will improve the River Colne through Watford to make it a more appealing place for local people to enjoy and a better environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Improve our local parks</b>        | We will upgrade Watford's much-loved parks and open spaces, including Meriden Park, Lea Farm Recreation Ground, Cassiobury Park performance space and the town's outdoor playgrounds, so that they provide opportunities for our residents to exercise and spend time together, and enhance the biodiversity of the town.                             |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Enhance our public spaces</b>      | We will improve public spaces across the town to provide excellent, safe and attractive outdoor spaces that support a greener Watford. This work will include the enhancement of key areas of our town such as St Albans Road, Clarendon Road and the Watford Junction Gateway, as well as other local street and open space improvement initiatives. |

**WORK EVEN MORE CLOSELY WITH THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR, TO BUILD A RESILIENT COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE SUPPORT EACH OTHER**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE'LL DO**

- |          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need</b> | We will build upon the success of our Watford Helps initiative and harness the community spirit established during the COVID-19 crisis to work in partnership with charitable, community and voluntary organisations focused on helping our vulnerable residents live healthy, happy and independent lives. |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Ensure our community buildings benefit local residents</b>                                 | Through our Community Asset Review, we will make sure our community buildings are well maintained, and we will work with our community tenants to make sure the buildings maximise the benefits for our local people.   |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Ensure a safer Watford</b>   | We will work with partners and use our statutory powers to ensure that Watford is a safe place for all our residents.   |

**HEALTH & WELLBEING**

**WORK WITH PARTNERS TO END ROUGH SLEEPING  
AND HELP PEOPLE ENJOY BETTER LIVES**

**OUR ACTIONS**

**WHAT WE’LL DO**

1

**Achieve and maintain  
zero rough sleepers on  
the streets of Watford**

We will agree a new Homelessness Strategy for Watford, which will be reviewed on an annual basis and adapted regularly to ensure that it remains valid and supporting those in our community to achieve and maintain zero rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.

2

**Support our residents with  
more complex needs and  
housing requirements**

We will develop a focused scheme to help those with more complex needs, looking at areas such as housing and other targeted support, and working with partner organisations to ensure that these services are provided.

3

**Continue partnership  
working**

We will work with partners to ensure that there are no rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.



# Staying focused on what matters



[/watfordcouncil](#)

**T:** 01923 226400  
**W:** [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)  
**E:** [customerservices@watford.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@watford.gov.uk)



**WATFORD**  
**BOROUGH**  
**COUNCIL**



# Equality Impact Analysis

<b>Title of policy, function or service</b>	Council Plan 2020-24 (and associated Delivery Plan 2020-22)
<b>Lead officer</b>	Donna Nolan – Managing Director
<b>Person completing the EIA</b>	Kathryn Robson
<b>Type of policy, function or service:</b>	Existing (reviewed) New/Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Version</b>	v.01- 12 June 2020

## 1. Background

### Council Plan 2020-24 – Watford Together – Our Town. Our Future.

Watford Borough Council has developed a bold and ambitious new Council Plan for 2020-24. This is underpinned by a more detailed Delivery Plan with a timeframe 2020-22. The development of the plan is part of the council's integrated approach to addressing the post COVID-19 era, linking together a range of key documents that will shape our organisation and drive us forward.

It has been designed to reflect the council's ambitions and commitments for our community, businesses, visitors and workforce and to make sure the town has a successful and resilient future. The plan is strategic, high level and outward-facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments.

The Plan takes into account a range of information, intelligence and data including: the Elected Mayor's manifesto pledges, the Local Government Peer Review in 2017; outcomes of community and staff surveys; and feedback following engagement with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

It sets out the direction for the council to 2024 and guides how we use our resources and how we will measure our achievements. It also provides a framework for all our strategies, plans and directs everything we do as a council.

As our key strategic document, the plan's impact on the town and community is fundamental to ensuring we meet our commitment to equalities and diversity and our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of the Council Plan 2020-24 on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

### **COVID-19**

Given the significant impact of COVID-19, this EIA will also review the impact of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan across the protected characteristics based on what we currently know about how it has affected our community.

### 3. What we know about the Watford population

#### Population

The current population of Watford is 96,600 (ONS mid-2019 estimate). This was slightly less than estimated in 2018 (96,800 rounded). The slowing of population growth across the UK (marked by a fall in Watford) is attributed to the lowest number of births for 14 years alongside an increase in emigration and a fall in international immigration.

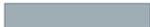
Watford's population is currently projected to increase to 105,000 by 2025 and 110,300 by 2035, a rise from 2016 of 14.2%. This growth will be a challenge for Watford, given our tight borough boundaries and is recognised within the Council Plan, shaping a number of our commitments and areas for action in the Delivery Plan.

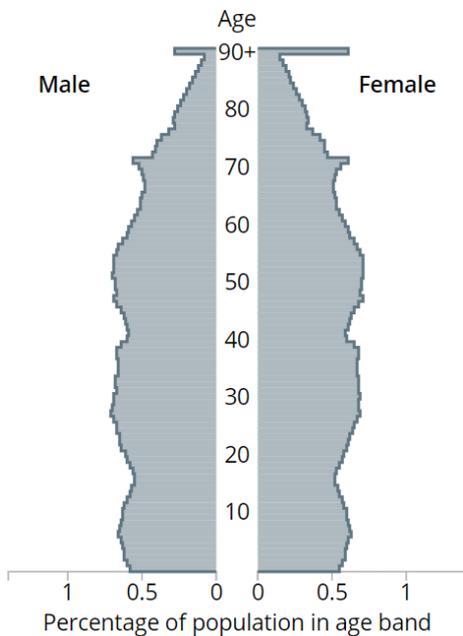
The graphs below show a comparison between the sex and age profile of England's population with that of Watford. (ONS 2018).

#### ENGLAND

**55,977,178** people in 2018

All ages

**27,667,942** males 49.4%   
**28,309,236** females 50.6% 

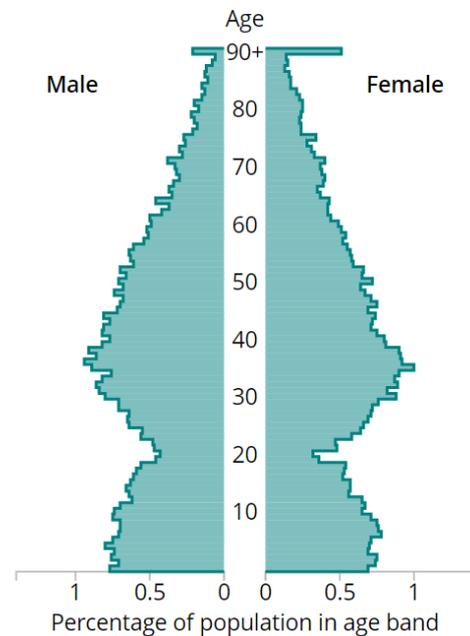


#### WATFORD

**96,767** people in 2018

All ages

**48,011** males 49.6%   
**48,756** females 50.4% 



Overall, this comparison shows that Watford is a relatively young town. This is particularly the case in the 0 to 19 age range where 26.5% of the population are between those ages, compared with 23.6% nationally. Similarly the 30 to 49 cohort accounts for a significantly higher proportion of the Watford population at 32.1%, compared to 26.1% nationally. This means that we are a town which is popular with families and, whilst we are a town for all, we recognise that our plans need to reflect our large number of young people and families.

## Population density

The population density for Watford is circa 4,600 people per square kilometre. This makes it the most densely populated district area in Hertfordshire and in the country (432 per square kilometre). This is a reflection that we are an urban district, with many characteristics of a metropolitan borough. In comparison with many metropolitan boroughs, particularly those in and around the outskirts of London, our density is relatively low.

## Ward level populations (mid-year 2018 estimates)

The ONS publishes experimental data on ward level populations. The last release date was for mid-year 2018. This showed Central ward had the highest population (9,447) and Tudor the lowest (6,825). Further analysis shows that Nascot ward had a significantly higher number of elderly residents than other wards in Watford, whilst Central a significantly higher number of under 20s. The age profile of Nascot ward was recently highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, when it experienced the highest death rate of any ward in Watford.

Ward	Mid-year 2018
Callowland	7,928
Central	9,447
Holywell	8,610
Leggatts	7,757
Meriden	7,972
Nascot	8,815

Ward	Mid-year 2018
Oxhey	6,847
Park	8,698
Stanborough	7,403
Tudor	6,825
Vicarage	8,854
Woodside	7,611

*ONS experimental data (Ward Level Mid-Year Population Estimates (experimental), Mid-2018)*

## Households

### Number of households

The ONS data, based on the census, says that there were 36,681 households in Watford at the time of the Census; as of 31 May 2020 the figure was 40,275 (council tax base).

The average household size in Watford is currently 2.45. This is currently average for the region. Nationally, there is downward trend in household size projected over the next 20 years. The Watford average household size is envisaged to drop to 2.33 person household in 2039, which this is larger than that projected for the English average (2.21 in 2039) and the Hertfordshire average (2.29 in 2039). These projections have implications for Watford in terms of development and growth.

### Household size

The 2014 projections estimate that, between 2014 and 2039:

- Watford's average household size will decrease from 2.45 to 2.33
- Hertfordshire's average household size will decrease from 2.42 to 2.29
- England's average
- household size will decrease from 2.35 to 2.21

## Household Composition

From the 2016 projections, one person households see the biggest increase in household growth in Watford, representing 44% of the total household growth.

However, households with dependent children see the next biggest rise, with 35% of household growth; couples with other adults make up 9%; other (multi-person adult) households make up 7% and couple households (without children or other adults) make up the remaining 6% of all estimated growth.

## Ethnicity

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire; it is one of the strengths of our town and what makes us such a vibrant and d

For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%) and British other Asian 4.4%).

**National insurance registration:** Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant. The National Insurance Registrations for January – March 2020 shows there were 2,194 registrations in Watford, of which 640 were from Romania and Bulgaria, 527 from South Asia and 395 from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden

**Language spoken at home:** Other data sources, including school language survey on the languages spoken by Watford school children at home, endorse the National Insurance findings that Watford remains a town with a diverse community with English still the predominant language (at around 60%) followed by (in order of self-selection by Watford families): Urdu, Polish, Tamil, Romanian, Gujarati, Pahari, Gujarati and Hindi.

**Births and origin of parents:** In 2018, nearly 60% (59.6%) of children born to Watford based parents, had one or both parents born outside of the UK, with 42% having both parents born outside of the UK. 52% of new mothers in Watford were born outside of the UK (1397 births in total, with 667 to mothers born in the UK and 730 born outside of the UK. Of these 257 mothers were born in the 'new' EU countries – those that had joined since 2004) and 252 in the Middle East and Asia.

**Electorate:** The electorate on the electoral register (as published on 1 December 2018 was 70,544, with a further 3,642 identified as potential electors. The main ethnicity groups have been identified as:

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
British	58,329
Romanian	1,842
Polish	1,560
Rep of Ireland	1,289
Indian	1,062
Italian	805
Portuguese	703
Pakistani	652
Sri Lankan	418

Spanish	364
French	337
Bulgarian	215

### Age

The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

- 35-39 years (8,537)
- 30-34 years (7,921)
- 40 -44 years (7,458)
- 5 -9 years (7,027)

Compared with other districts in Hertfordshire, Watford has fewer 65+ years residents. The age profile of the borough is more comparable with cities who have younger age profiles and where younger people are attracted by lifestyle opportunities, affordable housing and good transport links.

**Median age:** the median age in Watford is 37 years. This compares to 40 for England (mid-year 2019 population estimates)

### Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have ‘good health’ and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but they will include a wide range of physical and mental health disabilities or impairment (Census 2011).

The 2019 NHS Health Profile’s summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is ‘varied’ compared with the England average. About 12% (2,300) of children live in low income families – this is an improvement on 2016 (14% / 2,700). Life expectancy for men at 65 is similar to the England average but for women it is significantly worse (2016-18).

The profile also shows that Watford is below average for a number of important health indicators, which may have had some impact on the town’s rate of deaths from COVID-19. These include: residents eating the recommended 5 a day portions of fruit and vegetables, over-18s who are obese and physically active adults. All reported cancer screenings were below average for Watford and emergency admissions for falls from the age of 65 plus were worse than for the England average.

### Religion / belief

The religious breakdown in the Census 2011 of the main religions in Watford was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

### Sexual orientation / Transgender

Watford has no specific data on the transgender community within the borough or for the sexual orientation of its community. It is anticipated that these questions will be asked in the Census 2021.

### Education and skills

A skilled workforce supports the economic development and employment aspirations for Watford.

There has been a mostly increasing trend in educational attainment in Watford over the last few years.

Watford’s working age population has the fourth highest percentage (44.4%) in Hertfordshire of those with qualifications at NVQ 4 and above (Three Rivers is the highest with 63.5%, St Albans the second highest at 58.5% and East Herts third highest with 45.7%); this is close to the Hertfordshire average of 42% average but higher than the Great Britain average of 40.3%.

83.7% of Watford residents have achieved 5 A\*-C or equivalent. This is the better than the England average of 75.6 (Jan – Dec 2019)

## **Homelessness**

Whilst this is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the council recognises that the particular circumstances of people without their own home might be a factor in their taking an active role in our community. We currently have 15 statutory homeless (March 2020) and 153 households in temporary accommodation (March 2020).

## **Deprivation**

The English Indices of Deprivation (IoD) 2019 were published by the Government in September 2019, and updates the previous 2015 Indices, published in September 2015. The Indices of Deprivation measure relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 small areas or neighbourhoods, called Lower-layer Super Output Areas, in England

The IoD2019 is based on 39 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined and weighted to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

In the IMD 2019, Watford is ranked 195 out of 317 authorities, putting it in the 7<sup>th</sup> decile nationally. This means that, overall, Watford is less deprived than half the authorities in England.

Watford is the third most deprived authority in Hertfordshire. (Stevenage and Broxbourne are the most deprived.) However, three Hertfordshire authorities are among the 10% least deprived authorities in England (Three Rivers, East Herts and St Albans).

Overall, Watford is not an area with significant deprivation issues and the majority of the LSOAs within the town are in the bottom 50% of LSOAs nationally for deprivation; the borough's position has improved relative to that of 2015.

The combined deprivation index, which weights income and employment more heavily than the other domains, obscures the more deprived areas in Watford, which are affected by crime, living environment deprivation, health and disability, and education, skills and training deprivation in particular. This is, at least in part, because income and employment deprivation are less of an issue for Watford than for other areas.

The ten most deprived LSOAs in Watford, as ranked in the IMD 2019 are as follows (the ranking for the last IMD data in 2015 is shown in brackets in the first column). Deprivation has also been identified as an indicator for poorer COVID-19 outcomes so understanding our areas of deprivation, particularly if we apply greater granularity around health and income deprivation. The LSOA, which contains some of Whippendell Road, Chester Road and Durban Road West is within the second most deprived health and disability quartile does not feature in the top 10 most deprived LSOAs

Watford rank	Ward	LSOA code	Hertfordshire		England	
			Rank	Decile in Herts (1st = most deprived)	Rank	Decile (1st = most deprived)
1 (1)	<b>Central</b> (Water Lane, Gladstone Road, Grosvenor Road, part of Radlett Road, Brockleberry Close, Raphael Drive, top part of Queens Road)	E01023860 (009B)	5 (5)	1st (1st)	5055 (5005)	2nd (2nd)
2 (3)	<b>Holywell</b> (Caractacus Green, part of Charlock Way, Moor View, Jellicoe Road, Stripling Way, Rose Gardens)	E01023865 (011C)	21 (22)	1st (1st)	7239 (7800)	3rd (3rd)
3 (2)	<b>Meriden</b> (Garsmouth Way, Aldbury Close, Harvest End, part of York Way)	E01023876 (003D)	26 (19)	1st (1st)	7924 (7590)	3rd (3rd)
4 (4)	<b>Holywell</b> (Ascot Road, Greenhill Crescent, Caxton Way, Croxley View)	E01023866 (011D)	27 (30)	1st (1st)	8294 (9203)	3rd (3rd)
5 (7)	<b>Woodside</b> (Haines Way, Queenswood Crescent, Sheriff Way, Nottingham Close)	E01023906 (001C)	61 (41)	1st (1st)	10719 (10062)	4th (4th)
6 (10)	<b>Oxhey</b> (Deacons Hill, Blackwell Drive, Riverside Road, Eastbury Road, Thorpe Crescent)	E01023883 (012B)	62 (49)	1st (1st)	10758 (10710)	4th (4th)
7 (13)	<b>Callowland</b> (Maude Crescent, St George's Road, Breakspere Close, Nicholas Close)	E01023857 (006C)	67 (56)	1st (1st)	10894 (10812)	4th (4th)
8 (9)	<b>Meriden</b> (Gaddesden Crescent, Bovingdon Crescent, Garston Lane)	E01023877 (003E)	73 (75)	2nd (2nd)	11225 (11837)	4th (4th)
9 (12)	<b>Leggatts</b> (The Harebreaks, Chestnut Walk, Foxhill, Brushrise, Elm Grove)	E01023870 (004C)	78 (52)	2nd (1st)	11515 (10734)	4th (4th)
10 (5)	<b>Stanborough</b> (Clarke Way, Rushton Avenue, Orbital Crescent, Harris Road)	E01023891 (002B)	92 (31)	1st (1st)	11970 (9377)	4th (3rd)

## MOSAIC profile

Our MOSAIC profiling of the borough enhances our understanding of our population and provides valuable context for our decision-making as well as underpinning our communications and engagement. It confirms we are a young and diverse borough.

	Mosaic Code	Name	Description	Number of Household	2017 Watford %	2016 Watford %	Difference	Trend	Rank (last year)
1	J40	Career Builders	Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties	4,045	12.5%	11.9%	0.6%	▲	1
2	I36	Cultural Comfort	Thriving families with good incomes in multi-cultural urban communities	3,321	10.3%	8.7%	1.6%	▲	2
3	D14	Cafes and Catchments	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs	2,499	7.7%	8.0%	-0.3%	▼	3
4	D17	Thriving Independence	Well-qualified older singles with incomes from successful professional careers living in good quality housing	2,422	7.5%	5.4%	2.1%	▲	7
5	M56	Solid Economy	Stable families with children renting better quality homes from social landlords	2,172	6.7%	6.4%	0.3%	▲	6
6	J44	Flexible Workforce	Young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs	1,954	6.0%	7.0%	-1.0%	▼	4
7	H35	Primary Ambitions	Forward-thinking younger families who sought affordable homes in good suburbs which they may now be out-growing	1,550	4.8%	6.8%	-2.0%	▼	5
8	B08	Premium Fortunes	Influential families with substantial income established in large, distinctive homes in wealthy enclaves	1,237	3.8%	3.2%	0.6%	▲	10
9	I37	Community Elders	Established older households owning city homes in diverse neighbourhoods	1,128	3.5%	4.1%	-0.6%	▼	8
10	I39	Ageing Access	Older residents owning small inner suburban properties with good access to amenities	1,099	3.4%	3.4%	0.0%	◊	9

**Key issues identified from our borough profile for our Council Plan 2020-24:**

- A young population with a higher proportion of those under 50, which, given the higher proportion of under 20s indicates Watford is a town with a high number of families
- A growing population where there will be more smaller households but where there will still be a need for family homes
- A very diverse population and a town that continues to attract people from across the globe and with a high proportion of BAME residents
- Some underlying health related issues, particularly around preventative health measures and healthy living
- Areas where residents are experiencing less positive outcomes – often as a result of multiple issues but which could be impacting on life chances and opportunities

#### **4. What local people have said is important to them**

Our regular Community Survey is one way we test what we are doing and our future plans. The Community Survey 2017 received over 1,100 responses, which indicates the level of interest our residents have in the town and its future. A new survey will be conducted later in 2020, to provide additional insight into the council's planning and the development of the next phase of its Delivery Plan.

#### **COMMUNITY SURVEY 2017: HEADLINE RESULTS**

**Views on the council**

- 77% of respondents are satisfied with the way the council runs things
- 80% agree the council is working to make Watford a better place to live
- 82% think we provide value for money and the same percentage are satisfied with the way we spend our proportion of your council tax
- 85% agree we are working to make Watford economically successful

**Top council services**

These are the services that local residents think we do really well:

- Waste and recycling
- Parks and open spaces
- Sports and leisure facilities

**Views on Watford**

- 74% of respondents are satisfied with Watford as a place to live
- 80% are proud to be a Watford resident
- 84% think that where they live people from different backgrounds get on well together
- 91% agree Watford is a safe town

**Top five things that respondents said make somewhere a good place to live**

- Feeling safe in my home and the local area
- Good quality hospital and health services
- Cleanliness and tidiness of the town
- Good access to public transport
- Rubbish collected on a regular and reliable basis

**Where we need to do even better**

- Ensuring that new homes are supported by good infrastructure such as school places, GP surgeries, better transport links
- Keep local people informed about decisions
- Provide more opportunities for people to find out what is going on and share their views
- Explaining why well-planned growth is important to the town
- Explaining housing targets and the need for new homes

**Key issues identified from our resident feedback:**

**Priorities for the borough**

The survey also asked people about their priorities for the borough.

The top choices were:

<b>Ensuring a vibrant and prosperous local economy that offers a range of jobs and opportunities for local people</b>	48.5%
<b>Keeping the town clean and our streets free from litter</b>	38.6%
<b>Working with community safety partners to tackle issues and make Watford even safer for our communities</b>	38.0%
<b>Creating a well-connected borough with good infrastructure such as better transport links</b>	37.4%
<b>Supporting our more vulnerable residents so that they can live independent lives</b>	35.5%
<b>Protecting and enhancing our parks and open spaces</b>	31.5%
<b>Helping to provide a range of new homes that meet local needs, including more affordable homes</b>	30.2%

*Total responses: 1,095*

Residents were also able to provide their views on other priority areas for Watford not identified within the answer choices. Of the comments received, the most commonly cited issues were **parking and congestion**.

## 5. The impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the world, the UK and on our town. Whilst all areas have been affected by the virus, Watford has experienced a higher number of deaths and rate of deaths than many other places. As home to a major hospital, it has experienced the full force of the pandemic and the Council Plan 2020-24 acknowledges the very changed world we now face both in terms of revitalising our town but also in supporting those of residents and in our community who have been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

As of 6 June 2020, 111 Watford residents had died of COVID-19. Nearly a third of these were in care homes, indicating that, like in all areas, the elderly were hit hard by the virus. Statistics from England show more people from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are dying from COVID-19 more than those from white ethnic groups and that men were more likely to die than women. Whilst there is substantially more research needed as to why some people are experiencing worse outcomes than others, Public Health England (PHE) found people from black ethnic groups are most likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19, and death rates were highest among people of black and Asian ethnic groups. Its report published in June 2020 states "historic racism and poorer experiences of healthcare or at work" meant black and Asian people were less likely to seek care when they needed or speak up if they had concerns about risk in the workplace.

The PHE report said the unequal impact may be explained by social and economic inequalities, racism, discrimination and stigma, differing risks at work and inequalities in the prevalence of conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and asthma, which can increase the severity of COVID-19.

The report recommendations were strongly focused on the health sector but there are lessons we can adopt and support our health partners to address.

Key for us are:

- Better data collection about ethnicity and religion
- Improve engagement and participation of BAME community, particularly around reducing risks related to COVID-19
- Risk assessments for BAME workers – particularly those on the frontline
- Producing culturally sensitive campaigns to help people access services
- Support health partners to target health messages
- Ensuring COVID-19 recovery / renewal strategies actively address inequalities to create long-term change

We also know that the significant majority of those who requested support during COVID-19 lockdown were 60+, reflecting their potential vulnerability.

### Key issues identified from COVID-19 research:

- The virus does not affect the population uniformly with certain groups / communities likely to experience worse outcomes than others
- Many of the risk factors associated with COVID-19 relate to protected characteristics (age, sex, ethnicity, disability)
- COVID-19 has significant implications for our community both those with protected characteristics and the wider community and these need to be reflected in our strategic planning and delivery
- Communications and engagement need to reflect our diverse community and we need to work with them to work with them to understand their issues and identify solutions

## 6. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through the Council Plan 2020-24 and associate Delivery Plan

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the Council Plan:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

The Council Plan 2020-24, as the council's main strategic planning document, underpins all other council strategies and plans and everything we do. Therefore, it is fundamental to our meeting our equality duty but, more importantly, to creating a town and community where everyone is valued and can reach their potential, irrespective of their background or any protected characteristic.

Our Council Plan 2020-24 makes a clear statement that our strategic direction is: Watford Together – Our Town. Our Future, emphasising that we are 'one town' and that all our community has a share in our future success.

The plan is designed to be strategic, high level and outward-facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments. It describes the Council's post COVID-19 era to the workforce, our communities and our partners by resetting our strategic commitments.

The Plan has been developed around three key objectives:

- What we are trying to achieve - our themes
- What we are going to focus on over the next four years - our commitments
- How we will go about our work - our principles.

The proposed themes are as follows:

- **A thriving, diverse and creative town**
- **A healthy and happy town**
- **A Council that serves our residents**

The delivery of these themes will be underpinned by the proposed principles of **excellence; promotion; impact; enterprise; leadership and caring.**

The Council Plan is underpinned by a robust and focused Delivery Plan, which shows how the Council will focus our work to bring the Council Plan to life, making sure we deliver what we said we would over the next 18 months.

Through the Delivery Plan, specific projects and areas of work are identified that set the corporate work programme and demonstrate how we will deliver against the three themes priority to 2020.

All of our commitments, and the work set out to deliver them, impact on our community to some extent. Indeed, the underlying driver for the plan is to ensure we are working in a way that benefits all our community; we seek to identify where the council can contribute to improving the town and make a difference to issues that matter to local people.

### **EIA commitment**

As part of its commitment to the Equality Act 2010, Watford BC expects EIAs to be undertaken on all new strategies and policies and where a strategy or policy has been reviewed and significantly revised. Therefore, there are a number of areas of work identified in the Delivery Plan where separate EIAs will be carried out. The councils Corporate Leadership Team will oversee the Delivery commitment to ensure EIAs are undertaken and equalities impacts considered.

How our priorities will support our public sector equalities duties under the Equality Act 2010 is described below, with some of the individual projects /areas of work identified:

#### **1. A council that serves our residents**

We recognise that the talent and commitment of our staff are the engines that drive us forward. We want our people to be the best they can be and to stretch themselves to achieve even more. We know how proud they are to work for Watford; they want to make a difference, deliver for our residents and businesses, and blend all that is best about public service, while embracing learning from the private-sector. Our councillors have been called on to provide leadership for our communities as never before. They have risen to this brilliantly and we will continue to support them in their important role.

**We will focus on:** leadership; collaborative working; growing our own talent; learning; being best in field; recognising success and achievements.

#### **Our commitments**

- Make sure our council is a caring and collaborative organisation that puts what matters to people at the heart of everything we do.
- Deliver high-quality, sustainable services.
- Empower leaders at all levels in our council to inspire our organisation and our communities.
- Focus our budget to deliver on our commitments and secure investment to work for Watford.
- Welcome innovation, technology and new ways of working to continuously improve

### **What this means for equalities**

This theme focuses on our people and we will look to be an employer of choice in our community that treats our staff with dignity and respect and offers everyone opportunities to succeed, build their careers and flourish. We will focus on our customers, meeting their individual needs, and ensuring there is no barrier to enjoying our services or enjoying what our town has to offer. We want to use new technology to open up our council and to provide all our community – not just the young – engage and become involved in the life of the town

## **2. A thriving, diverse and creative town**

We want Watford to be an outstanding place for everyone: residents, business owners and visitors alike. Our plans have created a thriving and attractive town, but we know we cannot stand still. We must always look to the future and be ambitious for Watford, to guarantee our continued success and prosperity. This has never been more important as we look to thrive post COVID-19.

We want to shape Watford for future generations, making it a great place, where people want to live, work and visit; a town where no one gets left behind; where everyone benefits from well-planned growth and opportunity; and that leads the way in creativity and better environmental choices. Watford has a rich history and we want to protect the strong local identity of our town, successfully blending our past with our future.

**We will focus on:** diverse and friendly neighbourhoods; a good range of housing choices; better local transport; high-quality design and development; cultural and creative opportunities; business and entrepreneurial success; and a cleaner, greener environment.

### **Our commitments**

- Promote Watford as an enterprising town where businesses can invest, grow and succeed.
- Create thriving and affordable neighbourhoods and the right environment for businesses to flourish.
- Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments to create successful, well-designed new communities.
- Make sure we have quality homes to meet the needs of residents, including housing that is affordable through ownership, private rental and social housing.
- Build on our new, greener ways to travel in and around Watford and promote the transition to a low-carbon economy.

### **What this means for equalities**

Jobs and homes are important to all backgrounds at some point in their life. This theme highlights how important these are to the town and how a flourishing local economy supports all our community. Jobs are particularly critical for those of working age but all ages and backgrounds benefit if there are employment opportunities that allow families to settle and grow here and the town benefits from the prosperity they bring.

Many of those needing a home in our town are young people or those with families and so we need to ensure we are a town that offers housing choices for our residents. We want new homes to be high quality and affordable.

Another area where we need to focus is private rented accommodation, which data tells us is an extremely important sector in our town. Whilst this is the right solution for many local people we know that the role of the private landlord in the town is critical to our community and population. A significant amount of the rental sector is accessed by those aged 20 -35 years and so the work we do with the town's landlords has an important impact on this age group.

Our Local Plan provides the spatial planning for the borough and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. It provides the framework for development in the borough and has to be underpinned by a sound evidence base, including an understanding of our local communities and its various needs. A separate EIA is undertaken on the Local Plan to ensure it is meeting the council's equality duties and our own equality objectives.

We recognise successful neighbourhoods need good infrastructure such as public transport, active transport links, schools and GP surgeries. Facilities and services like good public transport links are important to all the community but particularly for those too young to drive or with a disability or age-related impairment that means driving is not an option.

### **3. A healthy and happy town**

Our communities are the strength and the heart of Watford. We know they have great civic pride and enjoy getting involved in the life of the town. We have seen them care for each other like never before and we want this great spirit to be the launchpad for something very special for Watford in the years to come. Our diverse town inspires us every day and we want its communities to really feel a part of our joint future. We recognise that not all of our residents share the same life experiences. We know we are at a turning point and want to work with our residents to tackle issues to make a real difference.

Our town is a happy place. People value our excellent, good-value services; our safe, well-kept neighbourhoods; our culture, entertainment and creative organisations; and all the fantastic things there are to do in Watford – whatever your age or interest. We want to build on what makes our town special.

**We will focus on:** culture, leisure and heritage; excellent services for residents and customers; health and well-being; tackling homelessness; challenging inequalities.

#### **Our commitments**

- Celebrate our diversity, heritage and culture, to make Watford a place for people to succeed from childhood to old age.
- Enable our cultural and creative sectors to flourish.
- Ensure we have quality events, recreational opportunities and outdoor spaces for people to get together, feel part of the town and boost their health and wellbeing.
- Work even more closely with the voluntary and community sector, to build a resilient community where people support each other.

- Work with partners to end rough sleeping and help people enjoy better lives.

### **What this means for equalities**

This theme recognises the diversity of our town and how important our community, from every background, is to the vibrancy and success of Watford. The BLM movement this year, and the inequalities identified by COVID-19, highlighted that life chances are not the same for everyone and we will work with our community to secure better outcomes.

Health and wellbeing are often linked to protected characteristics and, again this has been reinforced, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **A. Positive impacts**

### **Potential positive effects**

Our Council Plan and Delivery Plan are designed to move our town and council to the next level. They are influenced by what we know about Watford from data and intelligence and feedback from residents, staff and partners. These have come together to shape ambitious plans for the town and to make a difference in those areas that matter to our residents, businesses and community,

Through the commitments and associated actions in the Delivery Plan the council will continue to ensure it embraces and promotes its equality duty through taking how we can advance equalities in everything we do – we will support this through a renewed focus on

Some of the positive impacts include:

- Our focus on our staff's development and on innovative and focused recruitment will support us meet our duties as an employer and promote us as a place to work where equalities and diversity is taken seriously and championed
- Our ambition to provide customer excellence will mean the needs of those with protected characteristics will be understood through the way we engage with our customers, ensuring people recognise that we are a council who are serious about delivering high quality services that matter to people
- All equality groups should benefit from activities to strengthen the local economy through attracting and supporting local businesses, which supports job opportunities and ensures local businesses thrive
- The work to deliver new homes, including affordable homes, in attractive, well-designed neighbourhoods will have a positive impact on young adults and families. Work to increase the number of affordable homes will have a positive impact on many BME groups in the town as there is a higher rate of people in social housing from a BME background compared to the Watford population overall
- We recognise the importance of health and wellbeing, including mental health and our committed to making Watford a dementia friendly town
- Fostering good relations within the community will be supported through a number of actions including our commitment to ensure we have quality outdoor spaces and vents for people to get together – we believe this to be particularly important for our post COVID-19 town

- Service excellence and a focus on better data and intelligence means we will continue to

**Recommendation 1: Continue to build a comprehensive picture of the Watford community through feedback from consultations and engagement and updating the Watford context on a regular basis, particularly through the Census 2021 information we expect in the next couple of years**

**Recommendation 2: Ensure EIAs are undertaken on all relevant Council Plan / Delivery Plan commitments and actions and that they are underpinned with quality data and intelligence and community feedback / engagement**

**Recommendation 3: Ensure our consultation and engagement with our staff and community continues to collect relevant equalities data so we have a better understanding of the impact of our work, strengthening our explanation of why we need to collect this and explaining how the information is used to support our work and better community outcomes**

**Recommendation 4: Continue to review any research findings on COVID-19 that offers insight into the impact of the virus on our community and particularly those with protected characteristics**

**Recommendation 5: Review the council's equality objectives to ensure they reflect our ambitions and commitments, updating our website as necessary**

## **B. Negative impacts**

### **Potential negative effects**

These would arise if equalities and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are not considered through the delivery of the Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22.

The main ways of mitigating these potential negative effects:

- Training and communication – an online training programme is offered to all staff; this addresses both the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the council's own commitment to equalities and diversity. This training will be reviewed within the year
- Staff Ambassador Group – provides feedback and support to the organisation and can be asked to champion equalities within their services
- Corporate Leadership Team to receives reports on equalities to inform of progress and any issues
- Our website has a Browsealoud facility which translates information into a range of languages and provides audio services too
- Working with our community either through established groups or making new connections if necessary, find out what is important to them and to hear their views

**Recommendation 6: Review staff equalities training and make sure this is rolled out to staff and members**

**Recommendation 7: The need to conduct EIAs has been outlined in Recommendation 1 above – the council needs to ensure staff are confident to undertake robust EIAs and it is recommended that additional training be undertaken to support staff in this area if needed**

**Recommendation 8: Ensure the council’s project and programme management frameworks identify equalities as an area for consideration to highlight where necessary**

**Recommendation 9: Promote the council’s website Browsealoud facility both internally and externally**

**Recommendation 10: Ensure the council is responsive and listens to its community, opening up channels of engagement and giving people an opportunity to have their voice heard and influence outcomes for local people**

## **6. Overall conclusion**

### **Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty**

This EIA has taken into account the council’s public sector equality duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is intended to assist the council in meeting its duty.

The information within this report and an assessment of both the positive and negative impacts together indicate that the Council Plan and Delivery Plan will, overall, deliver positive impacts for the Watford community. This is because the ambitions and strategic direction set out in the plans seek to make Watford an even better to live, work, enjoy life and visit. We want Watford to be a place where people, businesses and the community can grow and thrive and have set out a programme of work that will deliver this.

We will make sure we meet our equalities duty, champion diversity and address any issues our community identifies which prevent people making the most of what our town has to offer or which prevent them reaching their potential.

## Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
Delivery of the Council Plan through the Delivery Plan commitments and actions to improve outcomes across all equality groups / protected characteristics	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build a comprehensive picture of the Watford community through feedback from consultations and engagement and updating the Watford context on a regular basis, particularly through the Census 2021</li> <li>• Ensure learning from COVID-19 is built into our planning and that we respond to what emerges from research in terms of inequalities and impact on protected characteristics</li> <li>• Ensure EIAs are carried out and are effective and support decision making</li> <li>• Continue to identify equality issues within committee reports and highlight where EIAs have been completed</li> </ul>
Ensure our consultation and engagement with our staff and community continues to collect relevant equalities data so we have a better understanding of the impact of our work	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure consultations seek feedback from our communities in terms of their demographics and protected characteristics, where relevant</li> <li>• Ensure feedback is considered in decision making where relevant and appropriate</li> <li>• Make sure we explain why we are collecting information on protected characteristics and show how it can make a real difference</li> </ul>

## Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
Potential if individual areas of work do not fully consider equality impacts as part of planning and delivery	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective training so staff and members understand the importance of considering the equality impacts of decision making and the council’s public sector equality duty</li> <li>• Leadership to champion equalities and challenge decisions and proposals in the context of equalities and diversity</li> </ul>
Lack of understanding of the community and issues that are affecting those with a protected characteristic	All (potentially) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethnicity (e.g. impact of COVID-19)</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build a comprehensive picture of the Watford community through feedback from consultations and updating the Watford context on a regular basis</li> <li>• Ensure learning from COVID-19 is built into our planning and that we respond to what emerges from research in terms of inequalities and impact on protected characteristics</li> <li>• Work closely with our community to understand from them about issues and what matters to them</li> <li>• Build greater understanding through engagement with our community and work with them to support</li> <li>• Ensure EIAs are carried out, are effective and support decision making</li> </ul>

**This EIA has been developed by:**

**Kathryn Robson**

..... **Date .....22.06.22**

# Agenda Item 12

Part A

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** Monday, 6 July 2020

**Report author:** Director of Finance

**Title:** 2020/21 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

## 1. Summary

1.1 The emergence of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown has had a significant impact upon the finances of the council both in terms of additional expenditure and reductions in income levels. The Council has continued to monitor the position closely and this report set out the latest forecast of the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances along with proposed actions to rebalance the budget and fund recovery activity during the remainder of the year.

1.2 The table below summarises the additional costs and income losses as result of Covid-19 along with the additional funding the government has made available and savings identified.

	£
Additional costs of Covid-19 response	724,540
Forecast reduction in income levels	2,437,372
Expenditure not incurred due to Covid-19	-1,107,120
Government funding to mitigate Covid-19 impact	-1,023,132
<b>Amount to be met from the Economic Impact Reserve</b>	<b>1,031,660</b>

The Economic Impact Reserve was originally forecast at £2.981M at the 31 March 2020, taking into account the 2019/20 underspend. Taking into account the impact of Covid-19 identified above the balance at 31 March 2020 is now forecast to be £1.950M.

1.3 A review of existing earmarked reserves has been undertaken to identify a Recovery Fund of £1.2M to meet the one-off costs of the council's work on the recovery of Watford from Covid-19, the suggested use of Earmarked Reserves is set out at Appendix 3.

1.4 In addition to the impact identified in 2020/21 there will be a longer term impact both in terms of the time it will take income levels to recover and the longer term impact on the council tax base and income from non-domestic rates. This position will become clearer as the year progresses and a further report will be brought

forward in the autumn detailing the longer term impact and the outcome of the Autumn Spending Review along with a detailed strategy for closing the gap.

## 2. Risks

### 2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Watford as a place and as a council does not recover from the impact of the incident	<p>Serious impact on the economy and vibrancy of the town.</p> <p>Reduction in the ability of the council to deliver the requirements of residents and businesses and fulfil its statutory obligations.</p> <p>Impact on long term financial sustainability of the Council</p>	<p>Recovery cell established led by the Group Head of Commercial to ensure that plans are put in place as early as possible with action taken as early as possible and to ensure the decision-making during the incident is cognisant of Recovery.</p> <p>The recovery cell includes the Shared Director of Finance and will have a focus on financial as well as economic recovery.</p> <p>An updated Financial Strategy to be brought alongside Q1 Budget Monitoring</p>	Treat	3 x 3 = 9

## 3. Recommendations

### 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Note the financial impact of Covid-19 and the work being done to balance the budget.
- Recommend to Council that the Director of Finance be authorised to make the necessary adjustments to individual budgets to reflect the expenditure and loss of income arising from Covid-19 contained in the report, including the expenditure savings set out in Appendix 1 and the capital programme changes set out in Appendix 2.

- Recommend to Council the use of Earmarked Reserves as set out in Appendix 3 in order to create a Recovery Fund and that Council delegate the approval of expenditure from the Fund to the Managing Director in consultation with the Mayor.

**Further information:**

Nigel Pollard, Head of Finance

Nigel.pollard@threeivers.gov.uk

**Report approved by: Alison Scott, Director of Finance**

## Detailed Report

### 4. Covid 19 Expenditure and Reduction in Income

4.1 The emergence of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown has had a significant impact upon the finances of the council both in terms of additional expenditure and reductions in income levels. The table below sets out the latest position in terms of additional expenditure and forecast loss of income in relation to Covid-19.

#### Summary Table

<b><u>Loss of income</u></b>	<b>£</b>
Pest Control	50,000
Car Parking	401,667
Wavier of Leisure Provider (SLM) management fee costs	344,000
Community assets rents	200,000
Market rent	43,850
Delay in charging for Garden waste	65,556
Estimated reduction in Planning fees	159,000
Citipark loss of rent (repayable in 2025)	224,000
Commercial rent income	1,730,000
Croxley Park income covered by sinking fund	<b>(800,000)</b>
<i>Other smaller items</i>	<i>19,300</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,437,372</b>
<b><u>Additional Expenditure</u></b>	
Additional CSC staff	49,500
Cost of housing rough sleepers for 4 months	290,000
Additional Recycling costs	19,500
Additional IT costs	27,220
Home working allowance to staff	25,620
Contribution to Leisure Provider (SLM) for building support costs	150,000
Additional costs of death management	9,600
PPE Taxi Screens	42,000
Additional project management resource	40,000
W2020 Savings not achieved	25,000
<i>Other smaller items</i>	<i>46,100</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>724,540</b>
<b><u>Government Funding</u></b>	
Emergency COVID 19 Funding	<b>(1,009,132)</b>
Rough sleepers	<b>(14,000)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1,023,132)</b>

## **Leisure Contract**

- 4.2 The council is currently in negotiation with SLM over the impact of Covid-19 on the leisure contract for the remainder of the year. The expenditure figures above only include the income loss to the end of June.

## **Commercial Income**

- 4.3 Commercial income is collected for quarters in advance on what are known as 'quarter days'. The last quarter day was in March and income has held up well for that quarter with the main pressure being from occupiers looking to spread payments monthly rather than paying the quarter up front. June quarter will be difficult and in some cases business won't have traded for a solid 3 months, September quarter may also be impacted as business may still be recovering. It is predicted that the effect of business failures and defaults may not actually materialise until the 3rd quarter of the year.
- 4.4 The council has estimated that it could lose £1.8M in commercial income from the commercial investment portfolio, Intu and Croxley Park during the remainder of the year. When it entered into the Croxley Park lease, the Council received cash up front to cover any shortfalls in rent within the park. This cash will be used to mitigate the impact of any rent shortfalls as a result of Covid-19 and the impact of this is reflected in the table above.

## **Government Funding**

- 4.5 To date the Council has received £1.009m from local government's £3.2bn of Emergency funding and £14k towards rough sleepers. This is to support the additional revenue implications that the Council is facing.

## **5. Expenditure Reductions and Capital Programme Re-phasing**

- 5.1 There are a number of savings in expenditure that will arise directly from the Covid-19 crisis as a result of activities that have stopped due to lockdown or affected by social distancing and other restrictions. These savings total £1.0M and are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 The capital programme has been reviewed for savings and re-phasing into future years as a result of Covid-19. **Appendix 2**, shows the detail of this on a scheme by scheme basis. There is a £1.1M saving for 2020-21 and £14.8M of re-phasing into future years. The next impact of these changes is a £0.4M reduction in projected capital financing charges for 2010-21, of which £0.06M will also be saved in future years. This saving is reflected in para 2.1 above.

## **6. Reserves**

6.1 The Economic Impact Reserve was forecast to stand at £2.981M at the end of 2020-21. If all of the proposed savings were taken the balance at the end of 2020-21 is forecast at £1.988M.

6.2 In order to create a Recovery Fund to cover any one-off costs associated with the implementation of the recovery plan, a review was undertaken of all earmarked reserves held by the Council. The proposed reductions in existing earmarked reserves are set out at Appendix 4 and would create a Recovery Fund of £1.2M. It is proposed that authority to agree expenditure against the Recover Fund is delegated to the Managing Director in consultation with the Mayor.

## **7. Longer Term Outlook**

7.1 In addition to the impact identified in 2020/21 there will be a longer term impact both in terms of the time it will take income levels to recover and the longer term impact on the council tax base and income from non-domestic rates.

7.2 The Government has made funding available both for the additional Retail, Hospitality and Leisure reliefs given to business rate payers and the additional support for those of working age who are entitled to Council Tax Relief Support(CTRS). However these reliefs are not expected to completely mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 on Council Tax and NDR. Any impact on collection rates will feed through the Collection Fund to impact on council spending power in 2021-22.

7.3 In addition to falls in collection rates the MTFS assumes a level of growth in both the council tax base and NDR base as a result of new developments. With the general slowdown as a result of Covid-19 it is likely that this new development will be delayed with a result impact on the council's tax base. The council is expecting there to be an increased number of working age people applying for CTRS as a result of increasing unemployment.

7.4 The Government has announced that proposed changes to the system of business rates retention planned for April 2021 will be delayed. It has also given indications that issues surrounding councils' tax collection rates and revenues from taxation will be considered as part of the autumn spending review along with new Homes Bonus.

7.5 The measures set out in this paper, therefore, address the immediate impacts of Covid-19 on the council's 2020-21 budget and provide resources for the initial work contained within the Recovery Plan. Continued work will be needed to realign the future years of the MTFS and a further paper will be brought forward in the autumn alongside the spending review outcomes.

## 8.0 Implications

### 8.1 Financial

8.1.1 These are covered within the report.

### 8.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

8.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no specific legal implications in this report.

### 8.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

8.3.1 Under s149 (1) of the Equality Act the council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to –

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them
- foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.

This report deals with the financial implications of the Renewal Plan. The report on the Renewal Plan is elsewhere on this agenda which contains equalities implications.

8.3.2 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

### 8.4 Staffing

8.4.1 Where necessary some staff have been redeployed. To date no member of staff has been furloughed. The proposals include holding some existing vacant posts vacant for the remainder of the financial year.

### 8.5 Accommodation

8.5.1 There are no accommodation implications arising from this report.

### 8.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

8.6.1 There are no community safety/crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **8.7 Sustainability**

8.7.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Expenditure reductions

Appendix 2 – Capital Programme re-phasing

Appendix 3 – Review of Reserves

### **Background papers**

There were no background papers used in this report

## Expenditure Reductions

		£	£
Arts and Events	Imagine Watford - now Commemorate Watford, reflects revised budget	(15,000)	0
	Big Beach and Big Sports - in order to support the local town centre economy by ensuring the outdoor space in the Parade can be fully utilised for outdoor eating / drinking / queuing / the market etc it is recommended that the Big Beach and Big Sports do not happen this year. Budget remains for smaller events in the town centre.	(50,000)	0
Leisure Centres	Grounds maintenance, repairs & surveys project has been delayed for a number of reasons - reduction in cost for works for the Community Asset Review	(60,000)	0
Community Centres	Reduction in survey work for community centres and Colosseum	(29,470)	0
Grants Admin	Savings in printing and surveys	(4,000)	0
CSC	MacFarlane telephony system budget - Remove this from CSC budget as system replaced by 8x8	(9,000)	(9,000)
	Printing - reduce number of MFD's across the organisation - Have 1 MFD on each floor to reduce fleet from 12 to 6 / 8 devices (including depot, Cemetery, Museum). Will discourage excess printing and staff are now used to printing less since they have been working from home.	(10,000)	(10,000)
Non -operational building	One year reductions in planned maintenance and reactive repairs.	(40,000)	0
Town Hall	Lift compliance checking ILECS - No longer required - permanent saving	(2,400)	(2,400)
	Vending machine maintenance - No longer required - permanent saving	(1,600)	(1,600)
	Reduction in consumable and equipment budgets as a result of Town Hall not being occupied.	(3,800)	0
Corporate Asset Management	Savings in costs	(29,000)	
Buildings, Projects & Facilities	Building surveyor - Move to fund from Capital - permanent saving	(29,000)	(29,000)
	Training - Not required this year - one year only	(12,000)	0
	Reduced van maintenance costs - No longer required - permanent saving	(1,700)	(1,700)
ICT	Infrastructure & Security Manager - Current vacancy within this role. This is covered with a contract resource. Vacancy can remain, and the costs for the cover of the role can be capitalised for 2020/21. Shared post WBC achieve 60% saving	(48,600)	0
Partnership & performance	Take final savings from deleted post	(4,000)	(4,000)
	Bring community engagement/consultation entirely in house.	(22,500)	0
Strategic Finance	Lower Borrowing costs due to capital programme rephasings	(400,000)	0

Watford 2020	Savings in project management costs through changes to the way the final Watford 2020 projects are delivered.	(52,000)	0
	Reduce scope of Business Intelligence project £122,000 budget carried over from 2020/21 -	(60,000)	0
Democracy and Governance	No borough elections in 2020/21	(76,500)	
	Other reductions in costs	(14,380)	
Vacancy Savings	Various savings from vacancies not filled	(132,170)	
		(1,107,120)	(57,700)

## Capital Programme Re-phasing

Cost Centre	Scheme and Service	Original Budget	Budget with rephasing from 2019/20	Estimated Spend this year £	Potential Saving	Rephased to 2021-22 £	Comments	Future Years	
								2021-22	2022-23
<b>WA4900</b>	<b>WBC Capital Programme</b>	<b>119,737,722</b>	<b>139,957,826</b>	<b>124,288,104</b>	<b>1,148,388</b>	<b>14,771,334</b>		<b>36,477,003</b>	<b>16,265,250</b>
WA5510	Service Transformation	5,415,000	6,144,167	5,774,167	0	370,000		1,430,000	1,530,000
<b>WA5520</b>	<b>Community &amp; Environmental</b>	<b>12,625,490</b>	<b>15,096,796</b>	<b>6,912,074</b>	<b>848,388</b>	<b>7,586,334</b>		<b>4,456,260</b>	<b>825,230</b>
WAB972	Tree Planting Programme	15,000	23,388	15,000	8,388	0		15,000	15,000
WAB986	Cassiobury Park Perf'ce Space	40,000	40,000	0	0	40,000	Move project to next year	0	0
WAB987	Garston Park Sculpture	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0	This project could be terminated and, if required, revisited in the future	0	0
WAB990	Parks Litter Bin Replacements	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	0	No investment in bins this year	10,000	10,000
WAB991	Meriden Park Improvements	50,000	50,000	0	0	50,000	Move project to next year	50,000	50,000
WAB984	Vicarage Rd Cemet'y Feas Study	5,000	21,406	16,406	5,000	0	This is the residual budget from the feasibility study so no longer needed	0	0
WAA302	Leisure Centres (SLM)	250,000	3,021	253,021	0	0	Bid for £250K for 2020/21 to be funded from Structured Leisure maintenance reserve	0	0
WAB981	Woodside Sports Village	6,800,000	6,571,688	650,000	0	5,921,688		2,150,000	0
WAA195	Watford Museum	247,000	200,396	0	0	200,396	Move project to next year	0	0
WAA983	Cultural Quarter Ph 1	30,000	30,000	10,000	20,000	0	Retain £10k for now	0	0
WAB973	Little Cassiobury Match Fund	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0	Little Cassiobury now returned to HCC ownership	0	0
	Watford Market	0	750,000	100,000	500,000	150,000	£500k not required	0	0
WAM001	Delivery of Cultural Plan	400,000	400,000	0	0	400,000	Cultural Strategy (and so action plan) currently being revisited so project could be re-phased.	300,000	0
WAJ300	Decent Homes Assistance	100,000	100,000	25,000	75,000	0	With the exception of a small budget ( circa £25k) for reactive decent homes assistance the focus for 2020/21 will be on the £200k within the Private Sector Renewal programme elsewhere in the capital programme..	100,000	100,000
WAJ311	Street Improvement Programme	100,000	187,796	87,796	100,000	0	This can be saved as the underspend from last years SIP has been carried forward to this current financial year and there are plans to undertake a SIP this financial year	100,000	100,000
WAJ306	Paddock Road Depot Enhncmts	1,300,000	1,299,250	500,000	0	799,250	Re-phase depot construction and woodland burial works to next year. Complete community storage	0	0
WAJ307	Derby Rd Skate Park Blockade	25,000	25,000	0	0	25,000	Leave skate park open until there is a development project on the ground for the site	0	0
WAB992	Departmental Vehicle Renewal	74,000	74,000	24,000	50,000	0	This can only be taken if the current lease vehicles being used are purchased out right along with a maintenance plan to last the next 2 years and then a new procurement undertaken then.	0	0
<b>WA5540</b>	<b>Place Shaping &amp; Performance</b>	<b>100,992,762</b>	<b>117,712,393</b>	<b>110,922,393</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,790,000</b>		<b>29,885,003</b>	<b>13,228,000</b>
WAA186	Watford Business Park Phase 2	7,800,000	9,200,000	3,400,000	TBC	5,800,000	Savings expected once value engineering of scheme is completed and construction contract tendered.	300,000	0
WAJ122	Scenery Store Redevelopment	1,000,000	1,000,000	10,000	0	990,000	Project is subject to approval by Cabinet and for a reduced contribution from WBC - note overall spend will change and will need to be revised	500,000	0
<b>WA5545</b>	<b>Corporate Strategy &amp; Comms</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,000</b>		<b>25,000</b>	<b>0</b>
WCC000	Town Boundary Signage	25,000	25,000	0	0	25,000	Project delayed to 2021-22	25,000	0
<b>WA5570</b>	<b>Strategic Finance</b>	<b>679,470</b>	<b>979,470</b>	<b>679,470</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>680,740</b>	<b>682,020</b>
	Professional Fees	0	300,000	0	300,000	0	Project budget carried forward that is not needed	0	0

## Review of Reserves

Description	Balance at 31 March 20 £000	Purpose	Amount to be reduced by? £000	New Balance	Comment
<b>Revenue Reserves</b>					
Area Based Grant	(86)	Extremism and anti-social behaviour prevention	86	0	
Charter Place Tenants	(93)	Tenants' contributions to major works	93	0	
Climate Change	(56)	Energy saving initiatives	56	0	There is now a one off £50k allocation in the revenue budget for 2020/2021
Crematorium	(150)	Funding repairs and maintenance	0	(150)	
Housing Planning Delivery Grant	(266)	Improve planning outcomes and delivery of housing	0	(266)	
Invest to Save	(689)	Support expenditure producing savings	689	0	We would have no capacity to support future proposals
Le Marie Centre Repairs	(11)	Funding Council obligations as landlord	11	0	Can be covered from existing revenue budget
Leisure Structured Maintenance	(423)	Funding unforeseen maintenance not covered in contract	173	(250)	£250 required to fund capital scheme in 2020/21
Local Development Framework	(178)	Support local plan production and inspection	0	(178)	
Multi-Storey Car Park Repair	(181)	Funding major structural works	0	(181)	
Parks, Waste & Street Strategy	(60)	Support Street Projects	60	0	Not required
Performance Reward Grant	(28)	Grant allocated by Local Strategic Partnership	28	0	
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	(100)	Assist in providing homelessness accommodation	0	(100)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>(2,321)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>(1,125)</b>	
			<b>To Recovery Fund</b>		