



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

CABINET

9 November 2020

7.00 pm

Virtual meeting

Contact

Sandra Hancock Democratic Services Manager

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk .

01923 278377

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Cabinet Membership

Mayor	P Taylor	(Chair)
Councillor	K Collett	(Deputy Mayor)
Councillors	S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin and T Williams	

Agenda

Part A – Open to the Public

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Disclosure of interests (if any)**
3. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 to be submitted and signed.

4. **Conduct of meeting**

The Cabinet may wish to consider whether there are any items on which there is general agreement which could be considered now, to enable discussion to focus on those items where the Cabinet sees a need for further debate.

5. **Petition - Benskin Road**

A petition has been received and signed by 36 Watford residents. The petition requests the council to take action against the misuse of an advisory bay on Benskin Road.

The lead petitioner will attend the meeting to present the petition.

6. **Watford BID ballot - February 2021 (Pages 4 - 79)**

Report of the Executive Head of Strategy and Communications

- 7. Progress report on the delivery of the council's strategic framework; Council Plan, Organisational Development Strategy and Road to Renewal Plan (Pages 80 - 195)**

Report of the Managing Director, Executive Head of Strategy and Communication and Head of Executive Programme Management Office

- 8. Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group report (Pages 196 - 214)**

Report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer and Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group

- 9. Voluntary and Community Strategy (To Follow)**

Agenda Item 6

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 9 November 2020

Report author: Executive Head of Strategy and Communications

Title: Watford BID ballot - February 2021

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposals for the Watford Business Improvement District (BID) Ballot, which will take place in February 2021.
- 1.2 Watford Borough Council will need to agree on the named voter/representative who will be responsible for casting the votes on behalf of the council. The council has four hereditaments within the BID area, each of these hereditaments will have a separate vote. The hereditaments include: Watford Town Hall and car park and the Avenue car park. Only hereditaments with a RV of £10,000 or more will have an eligible vote in the ballot.
- 1.3 Under national Business Improvement District Regulations, Watford BID Ltd can only operate for a period of up to five years. Watford BID's first five year term comes to an end on 31 March 2021. Prior to the end of this term the company can go back to businesses, through a ballot, to see if those hereditaments in the proposed levy area wish to continue with the BID as outlined in the renewed five year Business Plan. If the ballot achieves 50% or more votes in favour and 50% or more of the rateable value, of those votes cast, the BID will continue to operate, as outlined in the Business Plan for a second five year term.
- 1.4 Watford BID is not proposing to change the BID area for the next five year term. It is also proposing keeping the levy the same as the first term in years 1 & 2 (at 1.25% and 1% for those paying a service charge to the shopping centre, former intu), rising to 1.5% and 1.25% in years 3, 4 and 5. There will be no inflation increases. In the first term Watford BID secured on average 24% additional income, in addition to the levy collected.

Over the past five years over £3m additional funding will have been invested in Watford town centre, as a result of Watford BID.

- 1.5 This report also presents:
 - the responsibility of the council;

- the governance of the BID;
- operating principles of the BID,
- the BID area (including a list of streets); and
- projected budgets and expenditure.

Further detail is contained within the Appendices to this report.

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)
Council does not ratify the business plan and recommendations	<p>BID ballot may not take place. Watford BID ceases and proposed business plan will not be implemented. Could be an appeal and could be called in by the Secretary of State – reputational damage and financial costs.</p> <p>Breakdown in relationship between Council & BID</p>	<p>Conduct due diligence to ensure the Business Plan is fit for purpose, that it complies with the BID Regulations and does not conflict with council strategies, plans or policies.</p> <p>Early engagement with Electoral Services to schedule ballot and correct governance arrangements are in place.</p> <p>Involvement of all affected council officers to ensure council responsibilities are met and correct governance arrangements</p>	Treat	<p>8 4 (severity) x 2 (likelihood)</p>

<p>Failure to secure a positive outcome at ballot</p>	<p>Significant loss of investment in the town centre. Business community in Watford lose their collective voice Loss of regional and national lobbying voice for town centre based businesses</p> <p>The BID will be required to make preparations for winding up and Watford BID. Could present a further risk that the directors/staff may resign before this date.</p>	<p>Extensive business liaison work will take place from November onwards – this supports the existing work the BID team does on a day to day basis. The team will be limited in the approach taken due to COVID 19, but will endeavour to reach all businesses in the town. Those businesses who support the BID will act as BID champions, and ambassadors.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate consultation has been undertaken by Watford BID. Inclusion of Business Plan with ballot papers to inform voting businesses</p>	<p>Treat</p>	<p>8 4 (severity) x 2 (likelihood)</p>
<p>Failure to secure partner support</p>	<p>Limits ability of BID to deliver projects. Loss of investment into the town centre</p>	<p>Partners involved and kept informed of proposals</p>	<p>Treat</p>	<p>6 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood)</p>

3.0 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 3.1 Support the renewal of the Watford Business Improvement District (BID) and agree that the proposed Business Plan 2021-2026 (Appendix 3) meets the required regulatory requirements;
- 3.2 Instruct the Ballot Holder to formally manage the ballot process in accordance with the BID Regulations;
- 3.3 Authorise the Group Head of Place Shaping to vote 'Yes' in relation to the council's votes as a National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) levy payer in the BID ballot;
- 3.4 Subject to a 'Yes' vote at ballot, confirm that the council as the relevant local billing authority will manage the billing and collection of the BID levy and its transfer to the BID Company in accordance with the BID Regulations, and will recharge the BID Company for the collection costs of the levy, as estimated in Appendix 2; and
- 3.5 Authorises the Executive Head Strategy and Communications to ensure that the legal arrangements are appropriately formulated, the council will continue to hold a Service Level Agreement together with a data protection arrangement with the BID Company.

Further information

Kathryn Robson, Executive Head of Strategy and Communications
kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk Tel: 01923 278077

Report approved by: Donna Nolan, Managing Director

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Background – Responsibilities of the Council in relation to Watford BID

- 4.1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 sets out the operation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) as a means of enabling businesses to invest in their local trading environment.
- 4.1.2 A BID is a statutory designation which can come into being following a successful ballot in which all eligible business ratepayers (known as hereditaments) in a defined geographic area (known as the BID area) are invited to vote on proposals to invest collectively in local improvements, projects and activities that are additional to those currently provided by local government and other public service providers.

- 4.1.3 Business ratepayers are asked to vote on agreeing and paying an additional levy based on the rateable value of the hereditament, if supported, will be collected by Watford Borough Council, and retained in a ring-fenced account, and is then paid to the BID to be used to finance the delivery of projects, services and activities detailed in the Business Plan.
- 4.1.4 A BID is most commonly managed by a not-for-profit company, directed and funded by businesses.
- 4.1.5 The council has had previous experience of the BID process with the Watford ballot in 2015.
- 4.1.6 When the Council receives a BID proposal, or proposal to renew a BID, the council has a responsibility to ensure that:
- (1) The Business Plan contains the information as required by BID Regulations (2004).
 - (2) The BID proposal does not conflict with any of its strategies, plans or policies for that area.
 - (3) The BID proposer has undertaken a satisfactory level of consultation with the relevant business communities.
- 4.1.7 It is considered that the Watford BID renewal proposal meets the requirements of the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 and does not conflict with any of the council's policies or plans for the proposed BID renewal area. The council is also satisfied that businesses in the Watford BID area have been made aware of the BIDs renewal proposal.
- 4.1.8 If approved to go to ballot, it is proposed that the BID ballot will be conducted by the council's Electoral Services Team on behalf of the Ballot Holder, with any associated costs related to printing and postage being covered by Watford BID through their existing budgets. The Ballot Holder is defined by the Regulations as the Returning Officer for the purposes of elections of the council, namely the Managing Director (Returning Officer).
- 4.1.9 The council's responsibility, should the ballot return a majority 'Yes' vote, is to collect, administer and distribute the BID levy, which is collected separately from business rates.
- 4.1.10 The BID is anticipating that it will invest in a new software system to support the council collect and administer the levy, which will make the process more efficient and easier to administer. The BID also covers print and postage costs related to

administering the BID levy bills

4.1.11 The council must agree the existing baseline services with the BID, which sets out the standard services provided by the council within the BID area, and must also sign an operating agreement which governs the process for collecting the levy.

4.1.12 The BID Company would continue to be responsible for the implementation of the Business Plan and would be accountable to the BID members through its constitution and Articles of Association.

4.2 **The benefits of a BID for Watford Town centre**

4.2.1 Business ratepayers in Watford Town Centre originally voted to establish a BID in 2015 and the Watford BID Limited came into existence from 1 April 2016. Statute governs the length of a BID term to 5 years and the current term expires on 31 March 2021.

4.2.2 Watford BID Limited is now seeking a second term of the BID.

4.2.3 A BID provides businesses with the opportunity to decide what happens in the BID area and to influence key stakeholders, such as the council, as to what they want to see happen in this area. By acting together, business in the town will have a stronger, collective voice.

4.2.4 Each identified business will pay a levy to the BID. It is the businesses who will decide where, and how, the money is invested over five year term of the BID. This is outlined in the five year business plan. It will also mean that by buying in certain activities collectively businesses may get more for their money.

4.2.5 The BID does not replace existing statutory services (those services the Council and other agencies such as the Police are legally obliged to provide), although it is recognised that these agencies may well continue to be under pressure to reduce spend on activities they are not statutorily obliged to provide. The town and its businesses need to be well placed to face the challenges presented by Covid-19, EU Transition and other economic circumstances as they emerge.

4.2.6 Overall, the BID seeks to facilitate and encourage investment in the town while also building on the opportunities provided by the ongoing developments within the town. A BID will also provide the town and businesses with stability and support the Council in its ambitious plans for the future of the town.

4.3 **The BID Proposer**

4.3.1 The 'BID Proposer' for the Watford town Business Improvement District is Watford BID Ltd. Watford BID Ltd is a not for profit, company limited by guarantee. It is

funded via an annual BID levy placed on each hereditament within the BID area, collected by the council on behalf of the BID. The BID delivers projects and activities as identified in its 5 year business plan.

4.4 **BID management**

4.4.1 Subject to a successful vote, the Watford BID will be managed by the existing Watford BID Limited, which has its own legal identity, corporate structure and accounts.

4.4.2 If a BID ballot is successful the second term of the Watford BID will commence operation from 1 April 2021, and be in operation for a 5 year period. There will be a smooth transition from the current BID to the new 5 year term.

4.4.3 Watford BID Limited has a Board. If the ballot successful the existing Board will be retained, but will include new members if deemed appropriate by the Board i.e. if a sector representative is required.

4.5 **The BID's vision for Watford town centre**

4.5.1 It will be a town where everyone feels safe, confident and comfortable, and where businesses thrive and prosper. Watford town centre should continue to be competitive and dynamic, a place that is attractive to businesses and investors.

4.5.2 The Watford BID will do this by delivering projects and activities against three key theme areas:

- **Working together to secure the future of the town** – building on opportunities and developments ensuring the town is future proofed; working in partnership with the public sector and other organisations and agencies to develop the aspirations of the town; developing and assisting social and community enterprise and entrepreneurship; supporting business and skills development in the town; managing vacant units and information; supporting the town with the development of new technologies; benchmarking and maintaining the quality of the town centre.
- **Enhancing the look and feel of the town centre** – managing the Retail Business Against Crime Scheme, improving the environment of the town centre, through items such as floral displays, and Christmas lights; enhancing pedestrian routes and access to and from car parks; improving facilities in the town to meet the aspirations of the town its businesses and customers. Supporting the early evening and night time economy and maintaining reputation of town as a welcoming and safe place to spend time and do business.
- **Promotion, marketing & events** - improving perceptions & raising awareness of the town; developing a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy

supported by relevant branding, campaigns and activities, including the creation of an employee app. Supporting and enhancing existing events and projects (such as the Gift Card and Visit Watford), and developing new, relevant events and promotional activities.

4.5.3 Further details are outlined in the BID draft Business Plan (Appendix 3).

4.6 **A statement of baseline services**

4.6.1 Much is already being achieved through the activities and resources of Watford Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary. For the purpose of this BID, the services provided by Hertfordshire County Council are excluded from the resourcing baseline. These will be monitored and managed through the on-going relationship with Watford Borough Council. It should be noted that not all resources are listed, there are some activities that may be delivered as part of on-going partnership agreements with other agencies and will be monitored through these.

4.6.2 To ensure BID resources are directed towards delivering real added value Service Level Agreements (the agreements) have been prepared to secure the ongoing commitment of Watford Borough Council and define a baseline service specification and performance monitoring arrangements. Watford BID will not only be committed to monitoring these baseline standards, but also to pursuing higher standards where possible.

4.6.3 The agreements will, in practice, provide an essential input into the annual BID business planning process. The baseline services cover the following categories:

- CCTV
- Footfall counters
- Street cleansing & maintenance of street furniture
- Christmas lights
- Hanging baskets
- Town Centre Events

4.6.4 Watford Borough Council provides other services, which, while not possible to baseline for their specific impact on the BID area, will have significant implications for existing and future investment in the area. The agreement seeks to promote effective engagement and dialogue between Watford BID and Watford Borough Council on matters of mutual interest.

4.6.5 Copies of the Service Level Agreements can be found at Appendix 1.

4.7 **The proposed BID area**

4.7.1 It is not intended to change the BID area for this ballot.

List of Streets in the BID Area:

- Albert Road South
- Cambridge Road
- Carey Place
- Charter Place
- Church Street
- Crown Passage
- Clarendon Road (Numbers: 1-35 & 2-24)
- Escort Road (only Sutton Car park)
- Exchange Road (East side of road, including: the British Telecom Exchange buildings, Church Car Park, and Wren House (numbers 15-23))
- Gaumont Approach
- George Street
- Granville Road
- Halsey Road
- Hempstead Road (up to and including the Leisure Centre & Avenue Car Park)
- High Street (down to numbers:165 & 174)
- King Street
- Market Street (from the High Street to numbers: 24 and 25)
- New Street
- Peace Prospect
- Peace Drive (The Peace Hospice and Prospect House)
- Queens Road (Numbers: 1-19A)
- Rickmansworth Road (Numbers 1-5 and up to Peace Drive)
- Rosslyn Road (Numbers: 13-27, plus Gade Car Park and Halsey House)
- Smith Street
- St Mary's View
- St Mary's Close
- St Mary's Churchyard
- The Cloisters
- The Crescent
- The Parade including Rigby House
- Upton Road (Numbers: 14-20)
- Watford House Lane
- Water Lane (the section west of Beechen Grove)
- Wellstones
- Wilmington Close
- Meeting Alley

4.7.2 Map of the BID area can be found at Appendix 2.

4.8 **Statement of who is within the BID area and how the BID levy is calculated**

- 4.8.1 Any NNDR business rate payer for a hereditament will be liable to pay the levy in respect of that hereditament if at time on the Chargeable Day the hereditament is in the BID area and is on the Rating List. If a hereditament becomes empty, the liability for the BID Levy will fall on the organisation or person entitled to possession on the relevant day, or the administrator for any business that has ceased trading. For this purpose 'entitled to possession' shall have the same meaning as under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It is compulsory to pay the BID levy if a yes vote is secured, regardless of whether or not you voted in the ballot, or how you cast your vote.
- 4.8.2 The levy rate is set against the rateable value of a property or hereditament.
- 4.8.3 The BID levy rate is set locally at 1.25% of the rateable value for each property as at 31 March 2021. The levy will be a fixed charge per annum for 2 years of the BID term, increasing in years 3,4,5 to 1.5%, based on the rateable value (RV) as at the 31 March for each subsequent year, for all businesses within the BID area excluding those businesses within the intu shopping centre who already pay a service charge. Those businesses in the intu shopping centre who are paying an annual service charge will receive a discount of 0.25% on the headline levy rate, meaning the levy payable by those businesses is 1% in years 1 and 2 rising to 1.25% in years 3, 4 and 5.
- 4.8.4 Local charities (Peace Hospice, YMCA and Homestart and Shopmobility), where the business is not in a retail premise will be charged at a reduced levy of 0.5% over the course of the BID term. Retail premises associated with the charities will be charged at the standard levy rate of 1.25% increasing to 1.5%.
- 4.8.5 The Watford BID area includes 465 hereditaments with a rateable value of £10,000 and over. Their combined rateable value (RV) is a calculation based on the existing RV survey information. The combined rateable value is £38,920,900. This should raise £428,841 per annum in years 1 and 2 and £514,143 in years 3, 4 and 5 or £2,400,111 over the 5 years of the Watford BID.
- 4.8.6 Re-ballot BID development work or ballot costs will be met through the BID core costs, and Watford Borough Council will make charges for setting up the collection of the BID levy on behalf of the Watford BID, this involves setting up the template and other works related to the pre-collection works. It is estimated these works will cost £30,000 with an annual charge for updates of £5,000.
- 4.8.7 The Watford BID will not be limited to income derived from the BID levy and can expect to raise further funds from:
- Voluntary contributions
 - Grants

- Sponsorship and advertising revenue
- Other extra income

4.8.8 The BID levy is calculated for each hereditament for each Chargeable Day as follows:

Amount payable by the hereditament = $0.0125 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March each year (excluding those businesses listed within the intu centre), for years 1 & 2, rising to $0.0150 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March for years 3, 4 & 5.

For those businesses listed within the intu centre the Amount payable by the hereditament = $0.01 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March years 1 & 2, increasing to $0.0125 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March in years 3,4 & 5.

4.9 **Costs associated with going to ballot**

4.9.1 The costs for the printing and distribution of the ballot papers will be met from existing BID core budgets.

4.9.2 If the ballot is successful there will be costs associated with purchasing the relevant levy collection software, licence costs, setting up templates for billing. These are estimated to be in the region of £30,000 but will be confirmed if the ballot is successful.

These costs will be met by Watford BID.

4.10 **A statement of any relief (threshold, discounts etc)**

4.10.1 The BID levy will be applied annually from 1 April 2021 to all NNDR business ratepayers within the defined area of the Watford BID before any discounts or exemptions have been applied to the individual account and above with no exceptions.

4.10.2 In other words charitable organisations who receive 80% mandatory discounts and in some cases an additional 20% discretionary rate relief, meaning they have no NNDR liability, will still be required to pay a levy on the original RV as outlined above.

4.10.3 In the case of an empty, partly refurbished or demolished hereditament the property owner will be liable for the BID levy, and they will be entitled to vote. There will be no void period and every property will pay for all 365 days of the year.

4.10.4 The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period to be April to March each year starting in 2021. The levy will then be calculated on the RV as at 31 March each subsequent year. No refunds will be made.

4.10.5 Those hereditaments that are within the intu shopping centre (still the name of the centre at the time this report was written) and are subject to a service charge for services such as security and cleaning will receive a reduction of 0.25% of the levy rate payable.

4.10.6 The following hereditaments will be eligible for a discounted levy rate of 0.5%:

- Peace Hospice (non retail)
- YMCA
- Home Start
- Shopmobility

4.10.7 The Ratings List (including the 2021 list) will be examined for new entries each year prior to the issue of levy invoices. There will be no other reduction to the BID levy other than specified above.

4.11 Other associated costs with collecting the BID levy

4.11.1 Watford Borough Council will issue an annual bill to each business, which is separate from the normal NNDR bill. The council will endeavour to collect all outstanding amounts of the levy, using the same processes and mechanisms for collecting the usual NNDR liability. This includes charging businesses where a summons is issued and passing debts to bailiffs, for which the bailiffs will make a charge.

4.11.2 The recovery processes for the NNDR liability and the BID levy are separate processes. Businesses will be liable to pay two sets of costs where they are summoned for each debt. The costs that are collected by the council are retained by the council to meet its additional administrative costs and are not passed to the BID levy company.

4.12 A statement of any alteration/variation provision

4.12.1 The BID Board will develop projects that meet the three theme areas, these must be appropriate to the prevailing state of the economy.

4.12.2 All budget headings and project costs can be altered within the constraints of the revenue received through the levy, and the BID Board will be empowered to move the funds between budgets providing the BID's aims are adhered to.

4.12.3 Any proposed variance to budgets and significant projects must be agreed by the Board and reported in the annual financial report and action plan.

4.13 A statement of the duration of the BID

4.13.1 If the BID is approved then it will commence operation on 1 April 2021 for a period of five years. At this date all occupiers of eligible properties will be required to pay the BID levy on receipt of an invoice from Watford Borough Council.

4.13.2 A postal ballot of business ratepayers in the BID area based on the list of non-domestic ratepayers will take place between 8 January and 4 February 2021. The result of the ballot will be published on the Watford Borough Council website and Watford BID website on 5 February 2021.

4.13.3 If successful in 2021, the Watford BID will seek a renewal ballot in 2026. From August 2025 the BID Board will allocate funds to manage the required consultation for the re-ballot in 2026.

4.14 Start date of the BID

4.14.1 If successful at ballot, the new BID company will continue delivery of services on 1 April 2021 and will continue for a period of 5 calendar years to 31 March 2026.

4.15 Voting

4.15.1 As the council has rateable hereditaments within the BID area it has one vote for each eligible hereditament. It is recommended that the votes be delegated to the Group Head of Place Shaping as the Managing Director is on the BID board as a council representative.

4.15.2 It is also recommended that the council support a further BID period and that the Group Head be directed to vote in favour of the BID.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications for the council contained within the body of the report. However it should be noted that if successful at ballot, the BID will continue to operate for another five years and the council, as an owner of four hereditaments within the BID area, will need to continue making budget provision for the levy payable.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the legal implications are that the council's electoral services team will run the postal ballot process.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Service Level Agreements
- Appendix 2 – Map of the BID area
- Appendix 3 – Watford BID 2021 – 2026, Draft Business Plan
- Appendix 4 – Notification of intention of going to ballot

Background papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

- Watford BID Business Plan 2016 to 2021

BASELINE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Baseline activity: Street Cleansing and Horticultural works

Responsible authority: Watford Borough Council

Head of Service: Chris Fennell, Head of Leisure & Environmental Services

<p>Current level of service provided including aim of service, number of staff, equipment and frequency of service provision</p>	<p>1.0 STREET CLEANSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To maintain the current base line cleansing standards across the Town Centre• To ensure standards of cleanliness and the requirements of the contract are continuously monitored in order to proactively apply the Zonal Performance and rectification timescales and to ensure standards of cleanliness and public satisfaction are maintained through the primary process of timely re-emptive action <p>This includes all areas within the town centre:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All highway maintainable at public expense including all hard surfacing and soft verges planted or vegetated including tree pits in the town centre.• All town centre water features maintained at the Authority's expense (High Street Pond)• All the town centre car parks, private roads, garage areas service yards and its other land open to the public not identified elsewhere as Parks or Open Space• All land forming part of a shop front entirely open the highway up to the building line only (for the purpose of litter and detritus cleansing throughout and weed control of hard surfaced areas only)• All adjoining soft verges and all open commercial frontages and private roads up to and within one metre of the adopted highway or the Authority's land (litter cleansing only)• All private roads, garage and parking areas, service areas, recreational open spaces as identified as part of the service within the appendices or service level agreements attached to this specification <p>Tasks include the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Street cleansing (including street washing and gum removal)• Litter control• Waste and arisings removal• Gritting and snow clearance• Deep cleansing• Annual spring clean• Blossom and leaf fall removal• Maintenance of street furniture• Event clean ups• Removal of graffiti and flyposters• Subway cleansing• Emergency cleansing• Weed control• Animal carcasses• Sharps and drug related litter• Abandoned shopping trolleys• Maintenance of the town centre pond <p>The number of staff is variable but is generally 4 FTE sweepers in the morning and 3 FTE sweepers in the afternoon until 6pm. They all operate manual barrow beats although there is also a mechanised sweeper that covers the Town Centre.</p> <p>1.1 STANDARDS</p>
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- All bagged waste or arisings collected within zones 1A, 1B and 1C (Town Centre) shall only be left for collection immediately adjacent to a litter bin and collected for transportation within not more than 30 minutes.
- Working hours are Permitted working hours shall be from 06.00 hours until 20:00 hours
- The Partner shall provide a Cleansing Services within the Contract Areas in order to meet the specification and performance requirements. This as a minimum shall be:- A 7 day week service in Zone 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d (Town Centre) between the core times of 06:00 to 18:30.
- The Partner is required to grit high priority pedestrian areas in discussion with Hertfordshire Highways Authority (includes town centre). Work on all high priority pedestrian routes shall commence no later that 08.00hrs.
- The Partner shall ensure all town centre areas are grade A after cleansing.
- The Partner shall ensure that Zones 1A and 1B shall be at a grade A by 08.00hrs and Zone 1C also at grade A by 10:00hrs every day.
- The Partner undertakes an annual Spring Clean within the town centre each year as part of the Service. The Partner submits a program for the annual Spring Clean in February for Authority approval. The Spring Clean includes but is not be limited to the cleansing or other enhancement of surfaces, public structures, water features, signage and other street furniture, which is completed between March and May.
- All events within Zone 1 (Town Centre) are cleansed in accordance with the standard rectification times until 20:00 hours. The Partner has to resume cleansing to achieve Grade A by 08:00 hours the next day unless the Authority instructs additional cleansing.
- The Partner, by the 1st August of each year, prepares and submits Cleansing Schedules to the Authority detailing their proposals and any additional the resources to be provided for the clearance and removal of leaves from all relevant land across the town centre during the leaf fall season which is defined as the period from 15th September to 21st December each year.
- All litter bins are emptied prior to or as soon as their contents reach 75% of the liner capacity (as measured from the base of liner to the lowest point of any mouth or opening)
- All litter bins in contract zone 1A, are completely emptied by 08.30hours and again between 17.30hours and 19.30hours each day except for the p.m. requirement on Christmas Day
- In addition to the general bin emptying requirement, all litter bins in contract zone 1B and 1C, are completely emptied by 10.00hours each day excluding Christmas Day.
- All ashtrays attached to litter bins are emptied on each occasion and washed weekly in zone 1A .
- All bins are washed on an annual basis as a minimum and weekly within contract zone 1A and more frequently if they become odorous.
- All liquids, spillage or dried residue on or within 2 metres of any bin are removed as part of each in emptying operation and within 1 hour when notified by the Authority. Where the nature and/or the amount of liquid or spillage cannot be safely or immediately flushed and cleansed it be treated with sufficient approved absorbent material to contained and allow its removed which is completed prior to vacating the site and prior to final flushing and cleansing which shall be completed within 2 hours or before the end of the working day, whichever is the sooner.
- The Partner carries out annual refurbishment works on not less than 50% of all seats and benches in contract zone 1A on an annual basis during the period April to September. Works to all seats and benches shall include repainting all painted metalwork and sanding and re-staining timber slats. The Partner ensures all surfaces are adequately cleaned and keyed prior to retreatment and that all timber slats are free of engraved graffiti, splinters and snags.

- The Partner undertakes street washing of any ground level surface, natural or built elevated surface including subway or bridge soffits and any item of street furniture including any column post signage up to 2.4 metres high and any highway bridge or subway soffits up to 3 metres high and undertakes the following works as part of the specified works
 - Washing down all highway spillages using approved absorbent materials, emulsifiers or dispersants as required
 - All ad hoc internal or external service requests to cleanse offensive matter including bodily fluids and dog fouling
 - All superficial food waste stains within contract zone 1A
 - High pressure pavement washing of up to 1000 sq metres per month to remove algal, aphid or other ingrained deposits from up to 5 locations within contract zones 1A and 1B
 - Weekly external washing of all litter and recycling bins within contract zone 1A
- The Partner ensures the Water feature in the town centre is maintained to a B+ standard and rectified in accordance with Zone 1A

The Partner shall carry out the following specific cleansing activities:-

- Gum and stain removal - There shall be annual gum and stain removal which shall be carried out in accordance with SC06

Pond

- General routine maintenance as specified in section 43 of the SC specification
- Pressure wash the deck and new steps and the coping with its upstand to prevent it becoming slippery - Bi-monthly
- Tending to planted areas, wading into the pond, including replacing plants - Three times a year
- Cleaning of fountains- twice a year or as required

Materials/paving

- Weekly or as required, cleansing of paving / ground surface by mechanical sweeper with water or agreed alternative
- Removal of stubborn stains with approved detergents and stain removers with neutral pH suitable for repeated use on limestone and other porous natural and artificial stone surfaces – weekly or as required

Furniture

- Re-stain timber furniture and touching up furniture paintwork - annually
- Washing bins, bollards, seats – monthly or as required.
- replacement of damaged timber slats and whole units due to vandalism – as required in accordance with SC04

Vegetation – the Partner will be required to

- water and tend to the trees 20 times a year or as required to ensure they flourish
- cut grass to ensure they meet amenity grass specification as detailed in the Parks and Open Spaces Specification
- repair of grass to ensure there is no balding

2.0 HORTICULTURAL WORKS

There are a few areas in the town centre that are classed as horticultural and include the following:-

- St Marys Churchyard
- High Street trees
- Flower towers

- Grass verges
- Shrub beds
- Town Hall Roundabout
- Bedding displays

This Service Element area required by the Authority is that necessary to manage and maintain those areas of land ranging from formal to informal landscaped, recreation, and horticultural provisions situated in the Town Centre. The main operations involved are grass cutting, tree, shrub and hedge maintenance, weed control to soft and hard areas, litter management and collection, the planting of trees, shrubs, hardy perennials, bedding plants and bulbs, seeding and turfing.

2.1 STANDARDS

Parks Furniture

- All parks furniture in the town centre is inspected and maintained in a clean condition, free of graffiti and free of any stickers, posters and chewing gum without using abrasive or corrosive materials that may cause damage to surfaces and equipment where possible. Parks furniture includes: seats, benches, picnic tables, litter bins, signs, fences, post and rails, footbridges, signposts, signboards, noticeboards, drinking fountains, statues, memorials, monuments, sculpture, public art work bollards, cycle stands and dog bins.

Trees

- The Partner manages the maintenance and inspection of trees in the town centre to ensure that the Authority's duty of care responsibilities is met in a proactive and resource efficient manner.

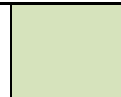
Grass

- The Partner shall include in its P&OS Plan an annual programme of grass cutting in accordance with the standards stated in section 28.1 of the Service Element of the P&OS Specification. Grass areas in the town centre are categorised as:

- **Amenity Grass (verges and open spaces)**

	Amenity
Equipment	C/R
Height after cutting	20mm
Arising's collected and removed	No
Maximum height of growth	60mm
Grass edge surrounds	60mm
Grass edge horizontal	60mm
Maximum vertical formal grass edge	
Maximum turf edge re-growth	

Maximum height around
obstacles



Bedding, Flower Towers and Troughs

- As part of the Partner’s annual P&OS Plan, the Partner shall submit proposals for seasonal bedding, roses, bedding, flower towers, hanging baskets and troughs for approval by the Authority. The plan shall include:-
 - Design of spring and summer bedding schemes;
 - Location; and
 - Maintenance of seasonal bedding rose beds and hanging baskets, including all necessary fertilizer applications, pest and disease control, pruning, dead-heading, supply of stakes, ties etc irrigation and the replacement of plants as required to maintain the quality standard.
- The Partner shall supply and fund all plants for seasonal bedding, rosebeds and hanging baskets that conform to BS 3936-7:1989 or a standard recognised by a member state of the E.C. or an equivalent international standard.

Seasonal bedding shall be supplied and maintained in accordance with the table of requirements below.

Feature	Summer	Spring
Formal beds	✓	✓
Flower towers	✓	x
Hanging baskets	✓	x
Troughs	✓	✓

The Partner shall in accordance with table below:-

- Make-up, maintain, store and fund replacement of flower towers, hanging baskets and troughs as necessary to maintain the current quantities;
- Position planters and troughs at agreed locations during the first 2 weeks of June or as directed for autumn/winter planting;
- Remove planters and troughs from the agreed locations upon completion of the summer flowers bedding seasonal displays;
- Provide storage for planters and troughs when not in use and be responsible for any loss or damage whilst in storage; and
- Annually safety test all hanging basket and planter support brackets to ensure they are fit for purpose. The Partner shall notify the Authority immediately of any concerns and shall ensure the brackets that present a safety risk or are of concern are replaced immediately.
- The hanging baskets, troughs and flower towers shall have mixed colours in each one.
- The hanging baskets, troughs and flower towers shall have mixed trailing and upright plants.
- The hanging baskets, troughs and flower towers shall flower from May to September.
- A list of plants to be planted in the hanging baskets, troughs and flower towers shall be supplied annually within the Annual Service delivery Plan
- Should the loss of any plants be as a result of the Partners negligence, the cost of any replacement plants and their planting will be met by the Partner.

	<p>Shrubs and Herbaceous Borders</p> <p>The Partner shall:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate and maintain all shrubs, hedges, herbaceous borders and the associated beds or planted areas, including pruning and annual cutting down and removal of herbaceous growth; the Partner shall provide any necessary stakes/pea sticks, ties, etc., as appropriate to the specie and growth patterns to ensure the establishment of strong, healthy, vigorous, well balanced plants, which are capable of continually producing the maximum amounts of flowers and or decorative foliage in keeping with the individual species/type characteristics for the full duration of their natural expected life span. Beds and planted areas should be maintained predominantly weed free at all times by applying an appropriate mulch as approved by the Authority to a depth of not less than 25mm, that shall be maintained to this level throughout the year and without the use of herbicides, except by agreement of the Authority; the Partner should allow for irrigation if required to maintain the standard; • At all times ensure that all shrubs, hedges, flowers herbaceous are not an obstruction, physical or visual nuisance or danger to any/all members of the public regardless of the public's chosen method or mode of travelling; and • At all times ensure that no shrubs, hedges, flowers herbaceous impede footpaths, road traffic signs, fire hydrants, drain covers, inspection covers, doorways, windows, heating flues, telephone wires/cables, air bricks, eaves, gutters, down pipes, vents. <table border="1" data-bbox="448 987 1445 1395"> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Requirement</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="3">High Street</td> <td>Rent of lamppost baskets (23inch)</td> <td>144</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supply fully planted and flower 23inch baskets</td> <td>144</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maintenance of baskets including watering, feeding, weeding, dead heading and replacement planting where necessary</td> <td>144</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Various to be agreed</td> <td>Rent of six tier green flower towers</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supply of fully planted and flower six tier green flow towers</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maintenance of flower towers including watering, feeding, weeding, dead heading and replacement planting where necessary</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The number of FTE operatives varies depending on the seasons and when tasks are undertaken.</p>	Location	Requirement	Number	High Street	Rent of lamppost baskets (23inch)	144	Supply fully planted and flower 23inch baskets	144	Maintenance of baskets including watering, feeding, weeding, dead heading and replacement planting where necessary	144	Various to be agreed	Rent of six tier green flower towers	6	Supply of fully planted and flower six tier green flow towers	6	Maintenance of flower towers including watering, feeding, weeding, dead heading and replacement planting where necessary	6
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Specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As detailed in the Street Cleansing Contract with Veolia 2020 - 2028 • As detailed in the Parks and Open Spaces Contract with Veloia 2020 - 2028 																	
Existing value of contract/ service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The costs for maintaining the town centre are incorporated into the overall Veolia Environmental Services Contract which covers Parks and Open Spaces, Street Cleansing and Waste & Recycling. Any reductions or increases would be proportionately across the town potentially including the town centre. 																	
Performance Measure	<p>Service measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular inspections by the Client Services Contract Monitoring Officer • Response to customer enquiries • Contractors key performance indicators including NI195 surveys carried out quarterly. • Fortnightly meetings with Veolia • Quarterly reports to Strategic Partnership Board • Reports to Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel annually 																	

Non compliance procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defaults in place for non performance depending on level of default – up to £500 per default.
Future level of service provision	There are no plans to reduce or increase the current level of service.
Other relevant information	There are no plans to reduce or increase the current level of service.
Proposed BID additional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of floral displays, flower towers and hanging baskets. ○ Increased regularity of gum removal ○ Enhanced street cleansing ○ Further public art
Cost of additional BID activity	tbc

Draft

BASELINE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Baseline activity: Town Centre Compliance (environmental health & licensing) and Community Safety

Responsible authority: Watford Borough Council

Head of Service: Justine Hoy, Head of Community Protection

Aim of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the health, quality, safety and economic prosperity of our town through a high performing efficient team delivering excellent outcome and customer focussed services
Current level of service provided including number of staff, equipment and frequency of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support, advice, training and enforcement across all relevant aspects of Environmental Health and Licensing including pest control and Enviro Crime (includes fly tipping, littering enforcement and abandoned vehicles) The town centre is incorporated with the rest of the borough in terms of service provision which is delivered based on risk, complaints, intelligence, service requests and customer/stakeholder feedback The service is delivered in accordance with statutory service plans and legal requirements. There is effective partnership working with the Police on matters relating to Community Safety in the town centre There is effective partnership working with town centre pubs and clubs in relation to Purple Flag and Pub Watch
Specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with Food Safety Service Plan, Enforcement Policy, Licensing Policy, relevant local and national policies / legislation
Existing value of contract/ service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service budget is allocated across the whole Borough of Watford on a functions basis rather than on a geographical basis. The proportion of the overall allocated budget utilised in the town centre may vary year on year
Performance Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local and nationally reported KPI's relevant to the services delivered
Future level of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As highlighted above this is determined year on year based on risk, complaints, intelligence, service requests and customer/stakeholder feedback
Other relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided can change and may also be subject to national legislative changes from central Government Future budget allocation may vary
Proposed BID additional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the Purple Flag arrangements (including annual submission)
Cost of additional BID activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be confirmed will vary annually depending type of inspection.

BASELINE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Baseline activity: Town Centre Events
Responsible authority: Watford Borough Council
Head of Service: Paul Rabbitts, Head of Parks, Heritage & Culture

Aim of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Watford a destination of choice through a cultural offer that contributes to Watford's prosperity, well being and reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit.
Current level of service provided including number of staff, equipment and frequency of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is currently committed to 3 Big Events each year which are Imagine Watford, The Big Screen on the Parade and the Big Beach • All resourcing (budget and staff) for the above is agreed on an annual basis within the WBC annual budget setting process and is liable to change
Existing value of contract/ service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services are provided within the annual budget set by WBC
Performance Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at events • Satisfaction with events
Non compliance procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contained within each contract for each event / activity
Future level of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events to be reviewed on an annual basis in line with other WBC budget allocations
Other relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services provided can change
Proposed BID additional activity	The BID will support the marketing of the Big Events and will host additional events
Cost of additional BID activity	tbc

BASELINE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Baseline activity: Christmas Lights and Christmas Trees
Responsible authority: Watford Borough Council
Head of Service: Paul Rabbitts, Head of Parks, Heritage & Culture

Aim of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Watford a destination of choice through a cultural offer that contributes to Watford's prosperity, well being and reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit.
Current level of service provided including number of staff, equipment and frequency of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christmas lights fixed to lamp columns in the town centre and 2 Christmas trees – one by the pond/ice rink and one by St Mary's Church All resourcing (budget and staff) for the above is agreed on an annual basis within the WBC annual budget setting process and is liable to change
Existing value of contract/ service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christmas Lights and Trees - £20,000 All services are provided within the annual budget set by WBC which is set on annual basis and is liable to change
Performance Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christmas lights and tree up, on and positive feedback received (including via social media) from residents, visitors and businesses
Non compliance procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contained within each contract for each activity
Future level of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lights and Trees to be reviewed on an annual basis in line with other WBC budget allocations
Other relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided can change
Proposed BID additional activity	To support a whole town approach to Christmas activities and festivities, and to support marketing activities and events.
Cost of additional BID activity	tbc

BASELINE SERVICE AGREEMENT

Baseline activity: Footfall Counting
Responsible authority: Watford Borough Council
Head of Service: Kathryn Robson
Responsible Officer: Kathryn Robson

Aim of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide 24/7/365 recording of pedestrian footfall flows at key locations across the town centre • Data and reports to be presented via online portal
Current level of service provided including number of staff, equipment and frequency of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot project to test new system currently operating to test proof of concept • 2 locations currently covered but with option of extending if proof of concept approved and within available budgets • Continuous count 24/7/365 • 3 user logins for WBC and Watford BID • Data and reports available to all town centre stakeholders • Council officer aligned to coordinate and manage the service, and maintain relationship with current provider • Current service provider covers all aspects of the operation, management and support of service
Existing value of contract/ service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No contract is currently in place as the council is undertaking the pilot / proof of concept. If pilot is successful, a contract will be developed • Current funding allocated by Watford Borough Council: £8k per year
Performance Measure	<p>Service measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous availability of accurate and timely data and reports • Response to customer enquiries
Non-compliance procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These will be developed as part of the contract. Issues that will be covered include: downtime of technology, inaccurate reporting, reporting tool failure
Future level of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still to be confirmed
Proposed BID additional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be confirmed. The council will provide a level of town centre coverage that will be deliverable within its budget. Should the BID require more extensive coverage (additional cameras in particular), it would need to contribute financially and a revised contract agreed
Cost of additional BID activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable

BASELINE SERVICE AGREEMENT

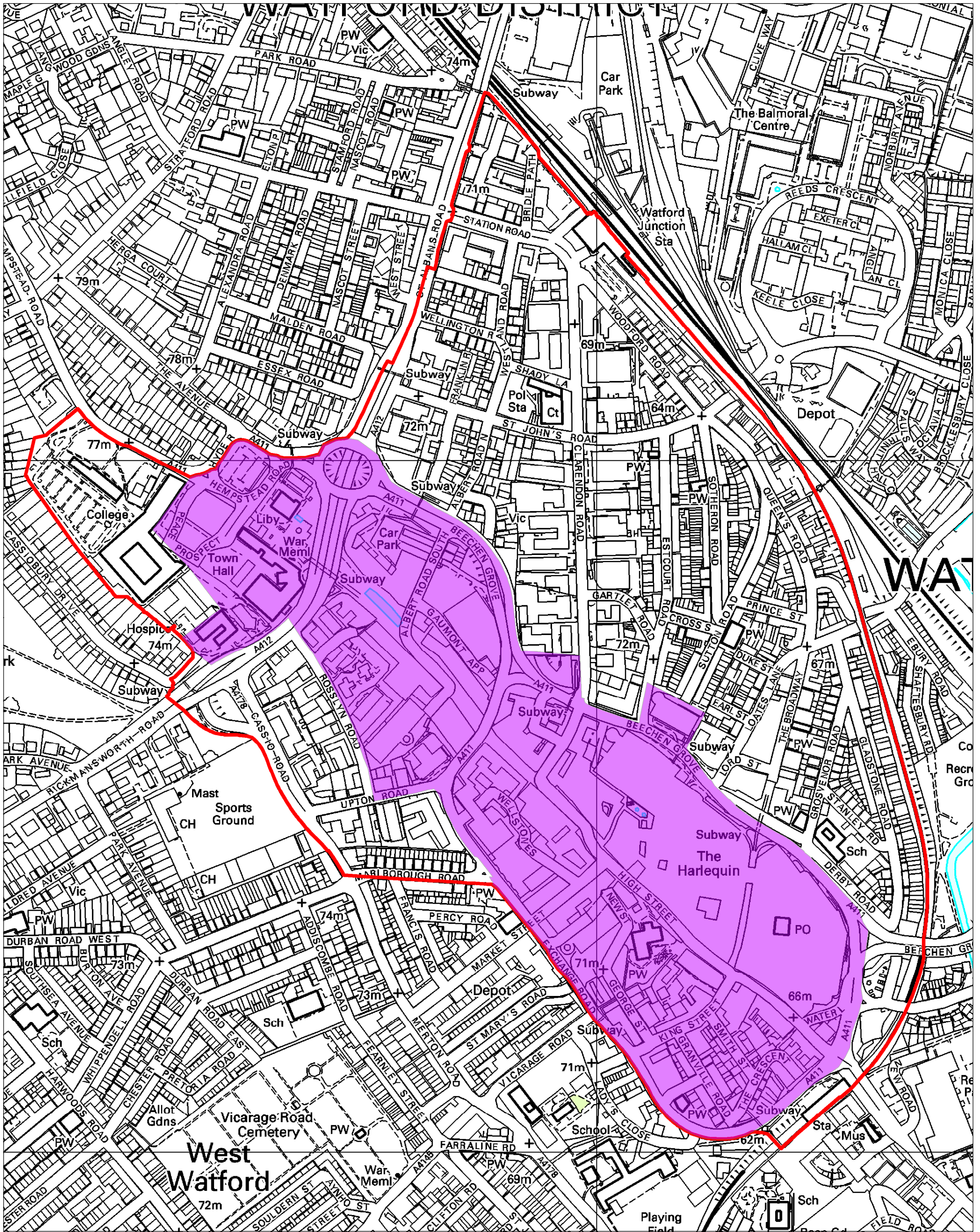
Baseline activity: Town Centre CCTV operation and management

Responsible authority: Watford Borough Council


Head of Service: Tom Dobrashian

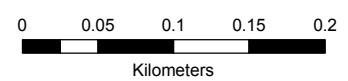
Responsible Officer: Tim Woolridge

Aim of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a 24/7/365 public area CCTV monitoring, recording and evidence management service. The objective is to assist in the detection of crime and to reduce the fear of crime.
Current level of service provided including number of staff, equipment and frequency of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the town centre public area cctv system to a standard whereby it remains fit for purpose Continuous (min 1x) operator presence 24/7/365 78 full colour day/night ptz cameras 56 full colour day/night static cameras Control Room Supervisor (20hrs/week Mon & Thurs) Employing suitably qualified and experienced cctv operators under contract with OCS Legion Group Ltd Undertaking planned preventative maintenance visits using Videcom Security Ltd Timely response to camera, communications and systems faults visits using Videcom Security Ltd Co-ordination of activities with town centre traders in tracking suspects Manage ShopLink and PubWatch town centre radio systems. Maintain links with INTU, and other town centre traders and venues Provide prompt evidence issuing service to Police and other agencies Liaison with Council departments re Taxi Licensing, Enforcement and street trading Responding to Freedom of Information and Data Subject Access requests Attending Watford Business Against Crime/traders meetings to discuss and share intelligence, crime trends and emerging issues Evaluation of emerging issues and design of new camera installations
Specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing services measured against contract specification and performance indicators Maintenance contract measured against contract specification for fault response and rectification Performance indicators for FOI and DPA responses
Existing value of contract/ service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue budget 2020/21 £240k Capital funded projects in 20/21 to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> upgrade control systems and cameras install private fibre-optic network
Performance Measure	<p>Service measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular performance monitoring and supervision of fault rectification Response to customer enquiries Contractors' key performance indicators.
Non compliance procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor will be issued with a default notice and financial penalty Corrective actions with contractors/staff
Future level of service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will continue on base line. No plans to reduce
Other relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no plans to reduce or increase current level of service Staffing contract expires Aug 2022 Maintenance contract expires Mar 2028
Proposed BID additional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the provision of coordination and continuity services with town centre traders and ShopLink radio users
Cost of additional BID activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £15k
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to process sheet App H2 to access camera mapping information



- Town Centre Partnership Boundary June 2015
- Town Centre Area

N

 Scale: 1:5,000
 at A3



ORDNANCE SURVEY LICENCE AGREEMENT
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Front page

BID Business Plan

2021-2026

“Watford town centre is the heart of our town, providing an outstanding destination for retail, leisure, business and a place where our community can come together to enjoy all that it has to offer. Town centres do not thrive without vision, drive and commitment. Watford BID has played a vital role in providing our town centre businesses with a strong voice to make sure their interests are heard and now, more than ever, this is critical to the town’s long-term success. We are determined that Watford remains the region’s premier town centre and look forward to working with the BID and all our businesses to make this happen.”

Peter Taylor, Elected Mayor of Watford

(picture of Peter)

“Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is certainly not a job we can do alone and I am grateful for the continued support of our partners across Watford. We have enjoyed a strong working relationship with the Watford BID for some time, and they have been instrumental in backing our youth crime project which aims to divert vulnerable teenagers away from gang and knife crime.”

Watford Chief Inspector Ian Grout

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The BID board

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What has Watford BID achieved?

What will change if businesses vote NO?

Moving Forward: planning the next five years of Watford BID

Theme 1: Safeguarding the future of Watford

Theme 2: Enhancing the look and feel of the BID area

Theme 3: Marketing, events and promotions

How will the BID measure success?

The BID budget

BID rules

The BID area

(if some of the tint box quotes won't fit in on other pages – they can be dropped onto this page)

Our vision for Watford town centre

It will be a town where everyone feels safe, confident and comfortable, and where businesses thrive and prosper. Watford town centre should continue to be competitive and dynamic, a place that is attractive to businesses and investors.

Tint box:

The most successful places will be those with a commercial culture that supports entrepreneurship, investment and innovation to flourish. PWC – Good Growth for Cities 2019

The Watford BID team

Pic of team

Watford BID employs a small team of staff to deliver the business plan. We are based in an office on the High Street and are committed to improving Watford town centre.

Maria Manion – Chief Executive

Maria is responsible for ensuring the BID company delivers against its five-year business plan and the town's interests are well represented.

Jill Farnsworth – Head of Operations and Development

Jill is responsible for the delivery of our large BID projects, communicating with levy payers and handling the contracts with outside organisations.

Glen Hemenstall – Marketing & Communications Manager

Glen is responsible for the BID's marketing and communications including the websites, social media networks, PR and promotional campaigns and projects.

John Hattingh – Watford Business Against Crime Co-ordinator

John is responsible for managing the business crime reduction scheme. He works part time and spends his time working with retailers and the police.

Sue Tappenden, a professional Company Secretary supports the company.
The company accountant is HW Fisher.

Chair's introduction

It is vital we continue to invest in the future of Watford.

It is incredible to think five years have passed since Watford BID was established. The time has flown, and so much has happened. As we look back on what has been achieved in Watford, we need to ensure that we do not let the pandemic overshadow our success. We need to take a balanced view of what we are facing now and go forward with optimism.

Since early March 2020, the country has had to deal with the impact of COVID-19; a national lockdown, recovery, local spikes and lockdowns and a high degree of economic uncertainty. This has impacted on all aspects of business across the country, but especially on town centres. We have seen that the towns which are dealing with the challenges most effectively are those where community leaders and businesses work together. We are stronger together, and in Watford we can proudly say, this is a town where people work together.

Town centres are historically the social and economic hearts of our communities. How they are used and how they operate has changed over the years – and will continue to change. We need to ensure that Watford continues to offer its residents, businesses and employees the services and opportunities they need and want.

Over the past five years we have seen over £200m invested in our town centre via intu, Watford Borough Council and the BID, plus other public and private sector partners. Watford's townscape is the envy of many other towns: it has no graffiti, the streets are well maintained, the crime rate is very low and rough sleeping, while present in the town, is very well managed by all our statutory agencies.

The BID has worked hard to improve our town centre. There are the very visual enhancements such as the banners, floral displays and the stunning Christmas lights, but what many of you may not appreciate is the amount of time that is spent behind the scenes getting the town to where it is today, and some of the battles that have been fought along the way.

We know and understand that for many of you COVID-19 has devastated business and recovery will be a long and hard process; we have therefore shaped and developed this Business Plan with this in mind. The first two years will focus on recovery, while years three, four and five will focus on the growth and development of Watford. As such, we have not increased the BID levy for the first two years of a new BID term. We are also better supporting our local charities through a greatly reduced levy rate.

The pandemic has changed how our town will operate and we need to be smart enough to recognise this and flexible enough to adapt to the challenges and opportunities as they arise. I believe the BID is part of the new emerging Watford and will play a fundamental role in shaping its future development. However, we can only achieve this with your continued support, so I would urge all businesses to vote 'YES' in the forthcoming ballot. Without the BID the town would be a very different place.

Vicki Costello

Chair, Watford BID

Director, Watford Shopping Centre

The BID Board

Pics (similar to Nottingham layout)

Vicki Costello (chair)

Vicki is the Centre Director of Watford Shopping Centre.

Daniel Berko (vice chair)

Daniel is a Director and Shareholder at Aspect Property Group, a local privately run family property company.

Kwame Tefe

Kwame is the Manager of the Moon Under Water, a JD Wetherspoon Pub on the High Street.

"I have been the manager here for the last 11 years; but I have worked for the company for 29 years. I can confidently say that the reason for staying in Watford so long is because of my involvement in what goes on in the town centre; firstly, through the Town Centre Partnership and then the BID.

"The BID has contributed to raising the status of Watford as a vibrant town centre where people can shop, work, relax and visit as a destination, while feeling safe and secure. This has been achieved through us all working together. And I am very proud to be part of that.

"In the last 4 years, I have seen the pub grow from strength to strength; and I believe that a lot of it is down to increased footfall triggered by a lot of projects and activities organised by the BID. Last year we had our best Christmas sales ever in the 25 year history of the pub, which I put down to the BID's spectacular lights, among other things.

"It is my hope that all other businesses too have seen the benefits of the BID and will vote yes in the forthcoming ballot."

Gary Foley

Gary is the General Manager of the Everyone Active Watford Central leisure centre.

"I moved to Watford as General Manager in 2015, at the same time as the BID was very looking to secure its first term and saw then the benefits it would bring to the town. Now, I feel the BID is integral to the town. We have benefited enormously from being part of the BID through networking, business to business deals and the support from the team and Board."

John Gautrey

John is the Chief Operating Officer of Citipark Ltd, who manage Church, Gade and Sutton town centre car parks.

Martin Witherden

Martin is the business manager of Metro Bank on Watford High Street.

"Metro Bank prides itself on being active in the local community so when we knew we were opening a Watford store we contacted the BID to find out what they were doing and how we could get involved. I wasn't prepared for how active the BID was and the variety of activities that were

underway to make Watford a fantastic town centre. I think it would be a huge loss to the town to not have the BID in place for a second term and really hope that other businesses here see the value too and will join me in voting yes.”

Saeed Gillani

Saeed is the founder of Gee Kay Farrar, Accountants and Business Advisors

Tony King

Tony is the director of Warren Anthony, an independent estate agency on Market Street.

“We’ve been based in Watford town centre for 17 years and have seen some huge improvements over that time. I’ve been really impressed with the work the BID has been doing and our estate agency has got involved in a number of the projects they’ve been running.

I decided to join the BID Board in 2019 so I could play a more hands-on role and help represent the independent business sector. I think the continuation of the BID will be fundamental in ensuring Watford keeps on improving and remains an attractive and viable place from which to run a business.”

Donna Nolan

Donna became the Managing Director of Watford Borough Council in February 2020.

“I’m a strong believer in the power of collaboration and I work closely with partners to ensure an excellent quality of service for the communities and residents of Watford, so that everyone can reach their full potential. I also work with key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of our ambitious and sustainable regeneration plans for the borough. By profession, I am a solicitor and have worked both within the public and private sectors.

“Less than one month into the role, I led the council’s response to COVID-19. This involved developing a new way of operating in a collective and ‘cell’ approach, building a shared understanding of what was needed and buy-in for how the council would effectively respond to the pressing needs of its communities and stakeholders.

“Watford BID played a pivotal role during this time, partnering with us to bring about the safe reopening of Watford town centre and Intu. In what has been – and what will continue to be – an incredibly unsettling time, the BID has been a constant, working tirelessly to reassure and encourage our town centre business community. We are united in our vision of a thriving town centre, driven by a creative and strategic plan for the future.”

Kathryn Robson

Kathryn is the Executive Head of Strategy and Communications at Watford Borough Council.

“Working closely with Watford BID over the last five years has really shown the value they have brought to Watford town centre, working with so many organisations including the council; continuing the BID will achieve even more. By listening and working with businesses, the BID has been able to successfully promote what is important to them and give them the opportunity to help shape the town centre’s future success. The council is backing the BID’s second plan for Watford town centre as it will benefit businesses and residents and visitors too, which is more important now than ever.”

Phil Holby

Phil is the manager of Walkabout Bar & Comedy Loft, on The Parade.

What is a BID and how does it work?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and business funded company, supported by government legislation and formed to improve the commercial wellbeing of a specified geographic area, the 'BID area'.

A BID has a maximum term of five years. Organisations within the BID area pay an annual levy to the BID company, based on a percentage of the rateable value of their premises, this money is then spent on delivering the five-year business plan.

There are over 300 BIDs successfully operating across the country. Locally, the number of BIDs in Hertfordshire has risen from two to eight BIDs in the last five years; with Hitchin and Letchworth having already successfully secured a third and second term respectively for their BIDs.

BIDs succeed because they are focused, cost-efficient and entrepreneurial. They do not replace local authority and police services, but they do provide additional, supplementary resources and activities.

BIDs are established through a ballot of businesses within a defined BID area. For the BID to go ahead, two conditions must be met:

- *Over 50% of businesses that vote must vote in favour*
- *Those voting 'YES' must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all the votes cast.*

If both these conditions are fulfilled, payment of the levy becomes mandatory for ALL eligible businesses, regardless of how they voted.

What is Watford BID?

Watford BID Ltd is a business-led, not for profit company, voted for by town centre businesses and supported by the public sector. We were established and began trading on 3 April 2016 following a successful ballot in October 2015. Of those of you who voted, 77% of the total number and 73% of the total rateable value said 'YES'.

Over the last five years, we have been delivering against our 'BID Business Plan 2016-2021' and represent approximately 350 businesses and organisations in Watford town centre.

This business plan sets out what we will deliver in a second five year term, from 2021-2026.

The ballot for Watford BID will take place from 8 January 2021 to 4 February 2021. Ballot papers will be issued by Watford Borough Council and must be returned to Watford Town Hall before 5pm on 4 February 2021.

If the ballot is successful, our second five-year term will begin on 1 April 2021 and will generate close to £3 million of investment over five years. After that time is up, you will have the opportunity to review and decide if Watford BID will continue for a third term.

Remember, a 'YES' vote gives you the chance to make a real difference to the future of Watford town centre – your voice, your choice, your future – make your vote count.

Tint box:

Watford is the happiest place in the East of England region (2019, Office of National Statistics, ONS). The average happiness score for respondents in Watford was 8.02, positioning Watford as the 14th happiest place in UK.

Watford – a snapshot – put these in boxes/bubbles

- Watford Borough is 8.3sq miles
- Watford's population is 96,600, with a total of 38,200 households (2018), with around 4,515 persons per km², it is one of the most densely populated districts in England
- There are over 500,000 people living within a 20 minute travel time of Watford and five million within 45 mins
- Watford is the only Hertfordshire town within the M25
- Watford is home to 5,900 businesses, and it has a higher than average number of large businesses and Headquarters
- Over nine million people pass through Watford Junction on an annual basis

Tint box:

Global data Consulting

Top 50 UK Shopping Centres – December 2019

Research identifies the top 50 shopping centres in the UK, metrics include annual turnover, size, footfall and shopper ratings.

The biggest movers – Watford

Following a £180m investment programme into Watford has rocketed up the ranks driven by its provision up 13 places from 28th in 2018.

Watford is now overall ranked 26 as a retail centre compared to 36 in 2018.

COVID-19: the impact on Watford

Watford town centre has not been immune to the impact of COVID-19. Several months of lockdown meant consumers adjusted to working from home, became more comfortable with online shopping and increasingly nervous about going to town centres. Some retailers, cultural venues and food and drink establishments remained closed beyond lockdown. Some have closed their branches in Watford permanently, including the major retailers John Lewis and Debenhams.

The impact of these closures on the town, its residents, and the way people perceive the town cannot be underestimated and will undoubtedly provide challenges in the short to medium term. However, there are also businesses that have taken the opportunity to refurbish, and new businesses are opening.

Throughout this pandemic we have witnessed the spirit of Watford. It is an intangible which cannot be measured or seen, but it is certainly there. Over 1,500 people volunteered to help out vulnerable community members; the town's businesses provided NHS workers with lunches, meals and refreshments as they worked flat out; and a raft of other goods and services to the third sector. What the pandemic has shown - and something Watford people have known for a long time - is the town feels better and thrives when everyone pulls together, and that is the very essence of a BID.

Working together we are stronger

How the BID helped reopen the High Street safely

Throughout the pandemic the BID has continued to support local businesses and levy payers. During lockdown, we maintained a core staff and furloughed a small part of the team.

The core staff managed all communications with businesses, set up a designated COVID-19 webpage, and provided weekly e-updates. An online and brand presence was maintained during lockdown with regular social media posts; sharing positive community stories, fun online quizzes, encouraging locals to support their high street where they can, and informative updates on COVID-19 guidelines.

We also worked with Watford Borough Council to ensure those businesses eligible for support received it.

We received a grant of £18,085 from the government, which we invested straight back into supporting the town, its businesses and on making sure consumers felt safe and comfortable coming back into Watford. This money paid for:

- Five hand sanitising units installed in the town, and the maintenance and upkeep of these units
- One-way directional floor stickers throughout the town centre, supported by marshals in the first few weeks of re-opening.
- A COVID-19 small grants programme, which directly supported 24 BID businesses
- Additional hand sanitiser and distancing floor stickers to other businesses.

In May, Watford became the first town in Hertfordshire to have road closures put in place in the town centre. We funded 30 large flower displays to replace the fencing and cones being used to enforce parking restrictions. The road closures were extensive, so flowers ensured the town was bright and colourful, and did not look like a closed building site.

We also worked with Herts County Council, bus companies and taxi firms to ensure access in and out of the town centre was still possible.

2016-2021: What has Watford BID achieved?

Over the past 5 years, we have delivered a range of projects under the three themes of the BID Business Plan 2016–2021.

Theme 1 – Enhancing the look and feel of the town

Helped catch shoplifters

In 2017 we took over the management of the ‘Watford Business Against Crime’ crime reduction scheme, through which retailers share information with each other and the police via radios to help reduce shoplifting. Since 2017 the number of participating retailers has increased from 41 to 63 and it is a well-used scheme.

Funded CCTV cameras & improved access points

We contributed to the running, maintenance and development of the town centre CCTV system and improvements to lighting, paving and welcome signage at car park entry points.

Acted on rough sleepers and street drinkers

In 2017/18 rough sleepers and street drinkers became a noticeable problem in the town. We worked with the Police and the Safer Watford Crime Partnership and produced a leaflet advising businesses on what you should do. This multi-agency approach has reduced some of the issues and we continue to work together on, what is an ongoing national issue.

Filled the town centre with flowers

Every summer, we installed beautiful, colourful floral displays throughout the town centre, rising from 116 displays in year one to 215 by year five, drawing praise from all that saw them. From 2018 we added winter flower displays. We also offered excellent value, spectacular hanging baskets to levy payers – both summer and winter variations, with our 2-4-1 offer.

On behalf of WFRA Committee I would like to thank Watford BID for the stunning floral displays throughout the town centre. They look stunning and make such a difference to the town centre. We very much appreciate the efforts that have been made to create such beautiful displays.

Glenys Isaacs, Vice Chair, Waterfields Resident Association (2017)

Pease pass on huge thanks for whoever is responsible for the Town Centre floral stacks. They are superb and such a lift for the High Street customers and traders when shops are having a tough trading time.

Janet (Watford resident)

Lit up the town centre at Christmas time

We took over festive lights from Watford Borough Council, combining their investment with the BID income meant there was a Christmas light on every (suitable) lamp column in the whole town centre for the first time ever.

For 2019 and 2020, we decided to move away from standard Christmas lighting and invested significantly in spectacular light installations to attract visitors into the town from across the region. These included massive, illuminated baubles, the word ‘WATFORD’ spelled out in giant glowing letters, laser displays, teardrop lights in 32 trees and a giant LED Christmas tree.

Celebrated excellent customer service

We ran our annual Service Excellence Awards, which became one of the most prominent events in the town's calendar, recognising the commitment of businesses to excellent customer service. Over the years the judging became more comprehensive, including customer votes, secret shoppers and exit surveys, culminating in a black-tie awards ceremony attended by over 350 guests from local businesses and sponsors.

"The annual BID Awards are not only a great way for various industries to come together and network in a relaxed and fun environment, but also gives all of our hard working staff a night off to enjoy themselves and feel part of the larger community we have in the town centre. I've personally attended each one since they started and every single time the BID have raised the bar to new heights which is a credit to all of those who work for the BID initiative. It's disappointing that COVID-19 might impact next year's ceremony, but when the next date is in the diary you can bet you'll see me and my team there!"

Tom Ward, Fitness4Less Watford

Added colour to the townscape

We brightened up the town centre with 72 colourful lamppost banners that featured local landmarks and icons, including Vicarage Road, Anthony Joshua and Cassiobury Park. 13 designs were produced in total by two young Herts designers. From 2019, we also installed Christmas themed banners to complement and promote our Winter in Watford campaign.

Retained the Purple Flag

We worked with stakeholders to retain the town centre's Purple Flag Award which recognises good management of the night time economy, the wide offer, and the way partners work together to ensure the safety of people visiting.

Offered free training courses

In 2016, we teamed up with Watford Borough Council and local skills providers to help you access over 250 training courses that were free for your employees to attend, via European funding.

Helped wayfinding by installing and distributing town centre maps

As the town went through some major developments, we helped visitors find their way around by dressing development hoardings & empty shop windows with large town centre maps and information wraps. Foldaway maps were also distributed via regional tourist information points.

Theme 2 – Promotion, marketing and events

Switched on our Christmas lights

In 2016, we celebrated our first Christmas by inviting a stilt-walking, illuminated Snow King and Queen, to turn on our lights. In 2017/18 there was no switch-on in the town due to limitations caused by the intu development, so we ran alternative Christmas activities. Then in 2019 we celebrated our new lights with a switch on event attended by over 10,000 people.

Ran 'Watford Weekender' promotions

We invited businesses to run special offers, events or activities during our Watford Weekenders, which we promoted across all media channels. The number of businesses participating climbed by 25% from 2016 to 2017. In 2018 we added 36 new businesses to the activities, weekend footfall was up significantly and 80% of participants received enquiries or customers due the Weekender.

Tint box:

Watford Weekender October 2018...did you know...

- *Thomas Sabo was the best performing store in the UK for the Saturday of the Weekender*
- *Runners World had its busiest Saturday of the year*
- *Cath Kidston sales were up 36% on the previous year*
- *Everyone Active signed up 9 new members*

Launched Watford Food & Drink Week

Our first Food & Drink Week ran in 2017, with 52 businesses offering bespoke offers. By 2019, it had evolved to being £5, £10 and £15 set menus, which narrowed participation to 21 restaurants but proved very successful with consumers. It culminated with a tasting festival in the new development of intu. Visitor figures to the website doubled in 2019 to 2,900 visitors. 73% of participating restaurants said they gained new customers.

“The set menus are a great idea – if you are on a budget it helps to know how much you will roughly spend and encourage more people to take part.”

Website feedback

Created & distributed Watford Food & Drink map

We featured all the pubs, bars, cafes, restaurants and take-aways in the BID area in a fold out leaflet and map, which was then distributed to hotels, shopping centres and other visitor information points around the region.

Promoted everything Christmas related

We joined forces with Watford Borough Council, the Palace Theatre, Watford Colosseum and intu shopping centre and created Winter in Watford. All events and activities happening in Watford over the festive period were promoted on a dedicated website, backed by a strong advertising campaign. The campaign even went on the road, with bus backs promoting Watford. By 2019, the website received three times more visitors than the previous year.

Tint box:

Did you know...

- *There were 4,645 visitors to the Winter in Watford website in 2019*
- *The Christmas Lights were seen by 317,000 users across Watford BID’s social media channels*
- *There was 96% visitor satisfaction rate with Winter in Watford activities*

Rewarded responsible drinking during World Cup

We teamed up with CitiPark car parks and several pubs and bars in the town, and created the Designated Driver campaign, offering free non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers during World Cup games.

Encouraged businesses to back Watford FC in the FA Cup Final

When Watford reached the FA Cup final for the first time since 1984, we encouraged businesses to decorate their frontages and ran a best dressed window competition. It really contributed to a fantastic atmosphere in the town and created a lot of positivity over social media.

Supported outdoor theatre: Imagine Festival

Each year the Imagine Festival brings thousands of people into the town to see the spectacular Friday evening show and a weekend of live street theatre. We promoted, supported and sponsored this event.

Showcased the night-time economy

We have promoted Watford town centre's wide and varied night-time economy with a range of promotional activities including bus back adverts, social media campaigns, as well as contributing to the purchase of a bus for the Street Angels.

Launched the Watford Gift Card

In February 2020, the BID launched the Watford Gift Card, which is free to all BID businesses. The programme is designed to lock in additional money for participating businesses and raise awareness of those businesses. Promotion of the card continues into 2020/21. In 2020, 35 businesses were participating in the scheme.

Launched Visit Watford

In 2019, following extensive research, Visit Watford was formed. Visit Watford is funded via a range of partners, including the BID – and is used to support and deliver the BID's consumer marketing. The Visit Watford team are based in the BID office and managed on a day to day basis by the BID, reporting to their own partnership Board.

Tint box

Visit Watford – We will surprise you (logo)

Visit Watford undertakes a variety of destination marketing activities for the town including the online promotion of local businesses driving footfall to increase sales. With strong levels of engagement from over 5,000 followers on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, its dedicated website at www.visitwatford.com includes full listings of firms offering a comprehensive range of products and services across the area including town-centre hotels, tourist attractions, cafes, bars and independent retail outlets, along with the latest guide to scheduled cultural, leisure and business events.

Launched a Visitor Guide

In September 2016, Watford hosted the Master Golf Tournament at The Grove Hotel, the BID saw an opportunity to promote Watford to a new audience and produced a Watford visitor guide which was distributed on the buses to and from the tournament. It was then distributed via visitor information points across the region.

Theme 3 – Working together to secure the future of the town

Supported the development of the town

The continuing development of the town is vital for its economic and social viability, and much of the Chief Executive's time has been spent working with partners, in particular Watford Borough Council and intu to ensure Watford is a joined up town, which can be enjoyed and accessed by all.

In 2017, the BID commissioned a transport study. It was this piece of work that brought together Herts County Council, Watford Borough Council, intu and the developers to resolve how the High Street looked and worked around the new intu extension.

The BID pushed for all High Street works to be completed in tandem with intu works, so there was no further disruption to businesses.

Clarendon Road improvements

During 2018 and 2019 the BID's Chief Executive worked with Watford Borough Council and the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership on a range of proposals for Clarendon Road, and was instrumental in securing £4.8m of grant funding for improvements between Watford Junction and the town centre, The first phase included filling in an underpass. Improvements to the crossing were completed in 2019.

Future High Street Fund

The partnership continued with an application to the Future High Street Fund, which outlined improvements to the lower part of the High Street. While this application was unsuccessful, the process has provided a focus on what needs to happen in the future, and sustainable transport supports the town's development. This piece of work will also ensure that Watford is ready and well placed to access other pots of funding in the future.

Monitored footfall and dwell time

We entered into an agreement with Watford Borough Council, where they managed the footfall camera contract, via Springboard, and we managed footfall monitoring. In March 2020 the Council's contract with Springboard ended and a new company is being sourced to take on the footfall count.

In early 2020 footfall was high, and the dramatic impact of the lockdown on the town was recorded:

	2018	2019	2020
January	755,177	885,586	1,091,502
February	732,402	1,040,007	921,913
March	878,520	1,365,644	202,021

Prior to COVID 19 the average dwell time was 89 minutes in 2019 up from 82 minutes on the previous year. This was higher than the national average, and higher than competitor towns.

Awarded over £18k for individual business improvements

In March 2018, we launched a small grant scheme aimed at helping levy payers develop their business and improve the quality of their customer experience. The maximum grant available was £2,000 or 50% of the total costs. In total, over £18,000 was awarded to businesses in the town. Grants ranged from £316 to £2,000, and covered improving equipment at a live music venue, to shop front and signage improvements, to businesses re-configuring their internal layout, and improving/or developing their online presence.

Supported police in reducing knife crime

We supported an innovative pilot project with Hertfordshire police and intu, which has funded two police officers who have been working with vulnerable children across Watford, showing them the dangers of gang and knife crime.

Raised money for St Mary's Church restoration

In 2017, Watford hero and legend Graham Taylor died. His funeral took place at St Mary's Church in Watford town centre and the eyes of the world descended on Watford, as thousands attended to commemorate his life and pay their respects. Watford Borough Council installed commemorative Graham Taylor boards to dress up a recently vacated building next to the church. The boards were given to the BID to auction off to fans, raising over £700 for the major refurbishment of the Church.

If people come along and better you, that is great, but leave your mark behind by what you achieve and how you achieve it.

Graham Taylor

Supported Shopmobility scheme

We recognise that for Watford town centre to be welcoming it is important that there is access for all, so have provided a £5k grant to Shopmobility every year for five years. Shopmobility is run by a team of volunteers from Church car park and its free mobility scooters are well used in Watford.

Launched discount app for those working in BID businesses

We piloted our 'Employee App' which gave staff at levy paying businesses access to exclusive discounts or promotions at other BID businesses. Unfortunately, the company who developed the app decided this was not their core businesses and stopped work on its development. Moving forward we would like to work with another app developer on a new, more comprehensive employee app.

Watched Watford Grow

The intu extension works started in March 2016 and completed in September 2018. During this time, we tracked the developments with weekly photographs and updates – including the High Street improvements – and posted them on Facebook and Instagram under the hashtag #WatchWatfordGrow. This meant people could see how quickly progress was being made and also provided a fascinating insight into the transformation of the town.

Received British BIDs Accreditation

In 2018, we achieved British BIDs national accreditation. Only a small number of BIDs across the country have received this award, which recognises best practice in communications with levy payers, governance and marketing. As part of the assessment process and our financial management was also scrutinised.

Won a national BID Place Management Award

We won the national British BIDs Place Management Award 2018 for our contribution to the High Street improvement works. The awards acknowledge outstanding projects delivered by BIDs around the country.

Achieved industry recognised qualification

Two of our members of staff studied for and passed the British BIDs Certificate in BID Management course with Jill gaining a distinction and coming top in the class.

Hosted professional development day for other BIDs

We were asked to showcase the work we do in Watford to other BIDs around the country by hosting a British BIDs Professional development day. This took place in April 2019.

It is terrific news for Watford BID, gaining Accreditation, winning the National BID Award and having a key member of staff graduate with the certificate in BID Management. All three were celebrated at the British BIDs conference, and all three are a sign that the levy payers of Watford are receiving a truly excellent service. We congratulate Watford BID on these successes.

Professor Chris Turner, Chief Executive, British BIDs

Representing Watford BID and business interests

Our Chief Executive is the Chair of the Hertfordshire Vibrant Towns Group; is on the Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM) national Advisory Board, the British BIDs Board and Visit Herts Partnership Board, plus locally she represents the BID and its levy payers on local stakeholder groups: Big Business Connect, Cultural Leaders and One Watford. During the pandemic she was a member of the Watford Together group and the Watford Business Re-opening Strategy Wider

Taskgroup. Over the past five years, we have supported and offered guidance to developing and new
BIDs across the country.

What our town will lose if you vote 'NO'

- NO... floral displays
- NO... Christmas lights
- NO... dedicated marketing of Watford town centre
- NO... business crime reduction scheme
- NO... BID website & social media to promote town's offer and individual businesses
- NO... small business grants
- NO... promotional activities that encourage footfall around the town such as Food & Drink Week, Watford Weekenders, town centre trails
- NO – one to liaise with the police & other partners regarding street drinkers, rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour
- NO – one championing the town and its businesses, locally or nationally
- NO...industry insights into best practice occurring in 300+ BIDs/towns across the UK
- NO... Service Excellence Awards
- NO... one to work with stakeholders to shape local developments and improvements
- NO... benefitting from new initiatives and technology, such as the Watford Gift Card, and Employee app
- NO...Visit Watford and targeted consumer marketing
- NO... lamppost banners
- NO – one to manage the Purple Flag Award application
- NO... support for Pubwatch
- NO... funding for the development of the CCTV system
- NO...support for Shopmobility, which promotes access for all in our town centre
- NO...funding for initiatives to tackle crime
- NO... business networking and social events, specifically for town centre businesses
- NO...relevant information sharing with businesses regarding local news and COVID-19 updates
- NO... passionate, caring BID team dedicated to the prosperity of our town centre
- NO...innovative, dynamic initiatives which aid economic recovery and future growth

NO... £3m of investment for the town centre

YES...Watford BID really is that essential to our local businesses, employers, residents, economy, and future.

How the BID has kept in touch & shaped its future plans

Our communications with businesses

We recognise that there is no one size fits all approach when communicating with our levy payers.

For the past five years the BID has sent [monthly e-updates](#) to all businesses on its database. During the COVID 19 pandemic, this increased to weekly updates, to ensure businesses received the latest government and local information.

In addition to the e-update, the BID also produced quarterly [printed newsletter](#) which we hand delivered to all businesses in the town centre and to other stakeholders.

Once a year the BID holds an [AGM meeting](#), which all company members and levy payers are invited to, and produces an [Annual Report](#), which is available online, posted to stakeholders, and hand delivered to every business in the BID area.

All the above is in addition to the regular [face to face](#) visits carried out by the BID team when developing projects or looking into the viability of new projects.

We also share all information over our social media channels: Twitter, Facebook, Linked-In and Instagram.

Our business networking events

The best ambassadors for the town are its businesses, their employees, and Watford residents. Our networking events are for businesses getting to know each other, the BID team and the Board.

Over the years, we have held different styles of events at different times of days, at different locations within the BID area. We started with the more traditional B2B style events with presentations and workshops – these were particularly helpful, while the town was going through redevelopment and were also attended by a lot of businesses on the periphery of the BID area, interested in what was going on in the town.

More recent events have focused on levy payers getting to know each other in a more social environment, understanding what is in the town, and how they can work together. These have been particularly well attended, with the last event in 2019 attended by 60 people.

How your feedback shapes the BID's future

Since we began operating we have listened to our businesses, we have consulted with businesses after each project to establish whether it was a success, if it delivered value for money, whether it should be repeated and if so how it could be improved. As a result of this constant business feedback we have modified and improved projects over the years.

We wanted to make sure that you, our businesses, shaped the future of the BID. As part of our commitment to you, we undertook a mid-term review of the BID to make sure we were on the right

track and delivering what we said we would, plus we also asked what could be improved and what you would like to see moving forward. We undertook an online survey, plus Storecheckers visited businesses in town to talk in person with BID levy payers.

In the lead up to producing the business plan, we sent out 356 surveys, each week for 4 weeks, and offered a series of Zoom meetings to all businesses. We also hand delivered our annual report and used the opportunity to build our email database, recognising that face to face consultation is not desirable or permitted on a large scale due to the pandemic.

Moving Forward: planning the next five years of Watford BID

Tint box:

It is wrong to say we live in especially uncertain times, the future is always uncertain.

We are operating in a very different environment to that of 12 months ago, and we are facing a very unusual, uncertain future. The planning that we originally put in place has had to be reconsidered and for our next five years we have to think differently and plan differently.

We do know there is good support for what the BID does among levy payers and a desire for services and activities to continue, however, we have to be realistic in our expectations, the budgets in the first two years of a new BID will be tight, this combined with the continuing COVID restrictions, means we will have to be adaptable and creative in the way we approach things. We will have two exciting projects which we can carry through to the summer of 2021, which we hope will generate footfall and interest in the town.

Our 2021-2026 business plan is focused on continuing to deliver what levy payers want from us, but this is a very different world we are all operating in, so we know we will have to be flexible and maintain a constant dialogue with our levy payers, to ensure we are on track to deliver against the business plan and business aspirations.

Maria Manion, Chief Executive, Watford BID

Tint box:

PWC – Good Growth for Cities 2019: Five factors for good growth

- 1. Start and end with citizen outcomes*
- 2. Take a broad view*
- 3. Balance today's challenges with tomorrows opportunities*
- 4. Build collaborative partnerships*
- 5. Back up your ambitions with deliverable plans*

Theme 1: Safeguarding the future of Watford

Influencing and place shaping will be at the very heart of everything the BID does. It reinforces the BID's position with other partners and stakeholders, and the role of the BID in shaping and influencing how Watford will look in the next five to 15 years.

"It is clear that multifunctional town centres are on the rise and we now have the opportunity to accelerate this to meet the challenge of bringing back into productive use, redundant retail space."

Mark Robinson, chair of High Streets Task Force

Influencing growth and development across the town and encourage entrepreneurship

We will work with Watford Borough Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and other relevant stakeholders to encourage investment and business growth and development in Watford.

We will:

- Monitor and maintain a vacancy list for the BID area and identify market gaps.
- Meet with agents and the Council every six months, to monitor trends, and identify hard to shift units and work on the concept of pop-up units and flexible workspace, with 'in/out' rental options.
- Represent the interest of our businesses, the need to adapt, and maintain good and clear communication with the people who use the town.
- Circulate information on key planning applications and consult with the Board to ensure a full and balanced commentary is presented.

Supporting sustainable transport, and improving the town's infrastructure

We will work with partners to deliver imaginative, sustainable, and safe transport projects.

We will:

- Continue to push for a sustainable transport interchange in the town centre, improvements to the High Street, with improvements to Watford High Street Station and improved access to nearby Waterfields Retail Park.
- Continue discussions with partners, about a range of sustainable transport proposals for the town
- Work with the district and county councils to ensure commercial, consumer and business interests are represented in any discussions regarding the town's future and future developments.

Understanding the needs of our communities

We recognise Watford's local communities are at the heart of the town's future success – it is their confidence and support for Watford which will help the town bounce back fully.

We will:

- Consult with local resident groups, keeping them fully informed of developments and plans for Watford.
- Support local community groups efforts in utilising redundant space in the town in a creative and innovative way.
- Work with the Elected Mayor, the councils and utilise local consultations to inform communication and planning.
- Work with the local cultural leaders, community leaders and religious leaders to reach our broader communities, to ensure as many people as possible are aware of Watford's offer, both socially and economically.

Tint Box:

In a new review of the high street titled Build, Back, Better, Bill Grimsey has recommended high streets take on a “massive shift in power” away from central government, instead empowering local communities to develop their high streets. He argues that for town centres and high streets to thrive after COVID-19, they will need to rediscover their community purpose.

“Faced with the huge challenge of rebuilding our high streets, we are presented with a golden opportunity to repair their neglected social fabric, lead a values-led period of social renewal and deliver lasting change.”

Encouraging Business development and networking

We will:

- Design a series of business development and networking events which will cover themes such as: finance/legal; marketing; social media; procurement; international trade; managing growth and wellness/mindset.
- In Year 2 the Chamber will deliver ‘hub’ events and an extension of the Watford Business Festival. Levy payers and their employees will be given priority access to these events and the opportunity to host events and pitch their own business.

Championing the third sector and charities

We will:

- Link businesses with support agencies and charities as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities; the priority will be to support local services and charities first.
- Encourage individual businesses to become a local charity advocate or champion.

“Watford BID has been incredibly supportive of our charity Home-Start both with providing funding and an introduction to other businesses in Watford. Their support enabled us to create a confidential space for us to meet with volunteers and families we provide services for. More recently their support meant we could invest in the resources we needed to begin to return to our charitable activities, safely, minimising the risks of transmitting COVID-19.

“Watford BID do an excellent job of creating unity in Watford and a shared purpose - creating a vibrant and welcoming town for residents, visitors, charities and businesses alike.”

Emma Power, CEO. Home-Start Watford & Three Rivers

Open to new ideas & staying ahead of the game

We will:

- Continue to ensure that all business views are represented at a national level.
- Continue to participate in national discussions on your behalf and inform submissions to central government across a range of topics, including the Business Rate Review and the state of the High Street.
- Embrace new ideas and undertake imaginative and innovative projects that will make Watford an attractive destination. The BID will however always manage the risk to ensure the interests of levy payers remain the top priority.
- Continue to be recognised as one of the Country's highest performing BIDs, with Watford being recognised as a centre for excellence.
- Learn as much as possible about the BID industry and lessons from other BIDs to ensure we deliver the best service we can.

Theme 2: Enhancing the look and feel of Watford

People use Watford town centre in many ways. We want you, your staff, customers, or clients to have a positive experience, and feel safe and comfortable when in town.

Maintaining a commitment to safety and access

We will:

- Continue to run and develop the Watford Business Against Crime scheme to help reduce retail crime, with its own dedicated member of staff.
- Continue to contribute to the CCTV system, and its development, and to schemes such as Shopmobility and the Street Angels.
- Continue to monitor street drinking, beggars and rough sleepers, immediately notifying the police and other key partners of issues of antisocial behaviour; working with them, businesses and landlords to both offer solutions and minimise the impact on the town centre and its users.
- Encourage levy payers to help us identify areas or access points in need of improvement and work with Watford Brough Council to source additional funding to secure works to provide additional peace of mind for businesses in these areas.
- Support the night-time economy and the development of PubWatch.

Tint box: Watford Crime Stats August 2019 – July 2020

Public order offences decreased 9.2% on the previous year.

Shoplifting dropped 25.3% (this could be attributed to lockdown & COVID 19)

Theft from the person showed an annual drop of 35%

Enhancing our townscape

We will:

- Continue to brighten up the town centre with eye-catching floral displays.
- Think creatively about Christmas lighting, learning from both major UK and European towns and cities, to ensure Watford continues to have stunning displays.
- Find other cost-effective ways of enhancing and brightening up the townscape, such as banners.
- Work with our partners to ensure we maintain a high-quality townscape free from graffiti, which is clean and well cared for.

Emphasising the importance of service excellence

We will:

- Encourage and reward excellent customer service, recognising that post COVID, a positive face to face experience will encourage repeat visits and draw some sales back from online.
- Celebrate those businesses and their employees that do it well at our annual black-tie Service Excellence Awards.

Theme 3: Marketing, Communications and Events

Communication is key. There is no point of the BID committing your levy to a range of projects if you or the consumer do not know about it. With the current restrictions in place and uncertainty for the future, it may be necessary to approach events and marketing in a slightly different way, but this will be done in consultation with levy payers, and imaginatively, to maximise success.

Promoting Watford during and immediately after the pandemic

We will:

- Create marketing and communication plans that will encourage people to come safely back into our town, venues and businesses in years one and two, then deliver high visibility consumer marketing and promotional campaigns once the new normal is established.
- Continue to inform you about the latest government guidance on COVID-19 and legislation; and how to access grants and cost-savings initiatives.

Communicating with levy payers

We will:

- Continue to provide regular newsletters, e-updates and visit your business to keep you informed about the latest news from the BID, and our partners.
- Develop a portal on the BID website where levy payers get exclusive access to; important town centre information, footfall statistics, insights into consumer data, and a message board to get in touch with other levy paying businesses.
- Host meetings, social and networking events to ensure we stay in touch with you and your employees, and feel part of a business community where businesses support and understand each other. We want our businesses and their employees to be Watford's ambassadors.
- Listen to your concerns, and use your feedback to inform BID activities, local decisions, and regional and national discussions.
- Utilise other available channels to share important information with you, such as the shopping centre business newsletter and PubWatch meetings.
- Invite you to our AGM, and publish and hand deliver annual reports.

Reaching out to residents and beyond

We will:

- Continue our financial support of Visit Watford, and work with the Visit Watford team to promote Watford, BID events, projects and activities to consumers.
- Identify the most effective media for advertising and sharing news to best reach our target audiences and achieve a return on investment.
- Grow our existing social media channels of a combined 16,000+ followers by sharing engaging content which encourages visitors and enhances people's perception of Watford.
- Use technology to build a better picture of who the user of Watford town centre is and how to best reach out to them.
- Be open to new ideas and embrace change to ensure the town retains its competitive edge and use technology to both promote the town and extend our reach and engagement.
- Support existing activities and events being run by other organisations.
- Showcase examples of best practice, and shout about Watford's success – being proud about what we have and can achieve as a town and as a BID.

Events and activities to attract people to the town centre

We will:

- Look at how we effectively develop events and promotions which safely allow people to move around Watford. Previous successful promotions including the Food & Drink Week and the Watford Weekender will be reviewed for inclusion, and we will look at good examples from other large towns and cities and see how they could work in Watford.
- Continue to promote Watford town centre as a wonderful Christmas destination via our Winter in Watford platform.
- Continue to support the events held by other organisations, either via marketing or by sponsorship, such as the outdoor cinema, beach, Diwali and Imagine Festivals.

How will the BID measure success?

Success means different things to each of us, and for each project, our measurement of success will be different. However, we need to ensure this Business Plan delivers for you and the town, and this will always be at the heart of our work.

- Business feedback provides a lot of information, we will continue to survey participating businesses after each activity, to see if they offer value for money both for the business and consumer.
- We will conduct consumer surveys to support business and event surveys.
- We will hold an Annual General Meeting, providing business to feedback on the years' work and produce annual reports which will be hand delivered to local businesses and posted to Head Office voters.
- We will independently review the performance of the BID mid-term.
- We will ensure we maintain the British BIDs accreditation for high quality management and governance.
- We will monitor vacancy rates, new business start-up rates and business survival rates.

Tint box:

Knight Frank's High Street Ranking – where's hot, where's not?

Where next when investing in high street retail? Bury St Edmunds, Basingstoke and Watford. Three towns that wouldn't necessarily be top-of-mind hotspots of retailing excellence. But all three rank in the Top 30 in Knight Franks High Street Investment Ranking of 200 locations across the UK. With strong fundamentals, the investment case for each is a decent one.

Budgets

Watford BID	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Totals	%
Income							
BID Levy	364,512	364,512	488,436	488,436	488,436	2,194,332	
Additional Income*	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000	23%
Total Income							
Expenditure							
Operating Costs	72,000	72,000	78,000	80,000	85,000	387,000	16%
Theme 1	70,400	70,400	80,000	80,400	82,000	383,200	15%
Theme 2	181,100	181,000	220,000	220,000	220,000	1,022,100	41%
Theme 3	110,500	110,500	150,000	150,000	150,000	671,000	27%
Renewal process					20,000		

Total Expenditure	434,000	433,900	528,000	530,400	557,000	2,483,300	
Annual Surplus	£30,512	£30,612	£60,436	£58,036	£31,436		
Cumulative Reserves	£30,512	£133,064	£167,902	£204,985	£244,381	£244,381	4.83%

*Includes voluntary BID levies, sponsorship income, ticket sales and WBAC scheme.

BID rules

The Ballot

1. Watford Borough Council will send those responsible for properties or hereditaments to be subject to the BID a ballot paper prior to 8 January 2020.
2. Each property or hereditament subject to the BID will be entitled to one vote in respect of this BID Proposal in a 28 day postal ballot which will commence on 8 January 2020, and close at 5pm on Thursday, 4 February 2020. Ballot papers received after 5pm on 4 February 2020 will not be counted. The result of the ballot is due to be announced on the following day.
3. In order for the proposal to be successful at ballot the result will need to meet, as a minimum, two independent criteria which are: (a) of those ballots returned by the close, those voting in favour of the renewal proposal must exceed those voting against it, and (b) of those ballot papers returned by the close, the total rateable value of those properties or hereditaments which vote in favour, must exceed the total of those voting against.
4. If successful at ballot, the BID will commence delivery of services on 1 April 2021 and will continue for a period of 5 years to 31 March 2026.

The Levy

1. The levy rate to be paid by each property or hereditament is to be calculated as 1.25% of its rateable value as at the 'chargeable day' (31 March each year), for years 1 & 2, rising to 1.5% in years 3, 4 and 5. This returns the BID to its originating levy rate in years 1 & 2.
2. Only properties or hereditaments with a rateable value of £10,000 or more will be eligible for payment of the levy.
3. The number of properties or hereditaments liable for the levy is approximately 456.
4. The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period to be April to March each year, starting in 2021. No refunds will be made.
5. The owners of untenanted properties or hereditaments will be liable for payment of the levy. This includes listed buildings.
6. Occupiers within the shopping centre that are subject to a service charge will pay 1% of the rateable value in years 1 and 2, and 1.25% of their rateable value in years 3,4,5.
7. Registered Charitable organisations not based within a retail unit will pay 0.5% of the levy that would otherwise apply.
8. Watford Borough Council will be responsible for collection of the levy. There will be no charge for this.

Accountability and Transparency

1. The BID Body will be Watford BID Ltd a not for profit organisation, limited by guarantee.
2. The Directors of the BID (the 'Board'), will be elected annually and shall meet every two months. The Board will have responsibility for governance matters such as financial arrangements, contractual obligations, human resources, standards and compliance.

3. The Board shall appoint a Chair.
4. Project sub groups operate on an as needed basis, and will comprise of Directors, and interested levy payers.
5. Provided that the BID is meeting its overall objectives, subject to consultation it shall have the ability to vary service delivery and expenditure allocation according to the changing demands of levy payers. However, any change to the BID boundary or to the levy rate proposals would require an Alteration Ballot.
6. The Company shall meet with the Council, as the Billing Authority, quarterly to monitor service delivery, levy collection and financial management issues.
7. Levy paying businesses will be eligible to become Members of the BID Company.
8. The BID will file annual accounts compiled by independent accountants with Companies House. The accounts will be available to all levy payers. An annual report on activities, including finances, will be published. An Annual Meeting for Members and levy payers will be held.
9. An Operating Agreement, which includes the Council's Baseline service commitments, has been agreed with Watford Borough Council. A copy can be found at www.watfordbid.co.uk
10. Notification of the intention to hold a ballot was sent to the Secretary of State on 18 May 2020

Finances

1. A cautious approach has been adopted to budgeting for the BID term due to ongoing and unknown impact of COVID 19. In our first term, collection rates in the early years were very good, and on average an additional 24% additional income was generated per annum. However, given COVID 19, a full and cautious revision of budgets and forecasts have taken place.
2. A levy collection rate of 85% in years 1 & 2 rising to 95% in years 3,4,5 has been assumed. This reflects the unknown medium and long term impact of COVID 19. If collection rates exceed this we will deliver a full range of BID activities.
3. The average annual levy available to be spent by the BID in year 1 and 2 is 364,512 and £488,436 in years 3, 4 and 5.
4. A contingency provision on expenditure, together with the availability of reserves, provides for an anticipated surplus of £244,381 by the end of the term. This equates to 5% of expenditure.
5. During the first term, the BID had some success in generating additional revenue. The additional income provision within the budget for the renewed BID takes account of committed amounts only and totals 23% of total income.
6. Operating costs of the BID are estimated as 16% of total expenditure.

Definition

The term 'Renewal' means replacement of the existing BID at the end of its current term (March 2021) with new BID Arrangements covering the extended area and subject to the rules and arrangements described herein.

The BID Area (insert map)

List of streets in the BID area:

Albert Road South
Bentine Lane
Cambridge Road
Charter Place Bus Lane
Clarendon Road
Crown Passage
Exchange Road (East side of road, including BT Exchange Building, Church Car Park and Wren House)
Gaumont Approach
George Street
Granville Road
Halsey Road
Hempstead Road (up to and including the Leisure Centre and Avenue Car park)
High Street (down to numbers: 165 & 174)
King Street
Market Street (from High Street to numbers 24 & 25)
New Street
Peace Drive
Peace Prospect
Queen Road (1-19A)
Rickmansworth Road (numbers 1-5 and up to Peace Drive)
Rosslyn Road (only Gade Car Park)
Smith Street
St Mary's View
St Mary's Close
St Mary's Churchyard
Sutton Road (only Sutton Car Park)
The Crescent
The Parade
Water Lane (west of Beechen Grove)
Watford House Lane
Wellstones
Wilmington Close

Ballot timetable (style as previous business plan)

Ballot opens 8 January 2021

- Ballot papers issued to businesses

Ballot closes: 4 February 2021

- Ballot papers must be received no later than 5pm

Ballot result announced: 5 February 2021
YES

Contact us:

Watford BID
Suite 5, Kings Court
153 High Street
Watford
WD17 2ER

Tel: 01923 919989
enquiries@watfordbid.co.uk
www.watfordbid.co.uk

@watfordbid

Watford BID Ltd.
Suite 5, Kings Court
153 High Street, Watford
WD17 2ER

01923 919981

maria@watfordbid.co.uk

watfordbid.co.uk



Donna Nolan
Managing Director
Watford Borough Council
Town Hall
Watford WD17 2EX

21 October 2020

Dear Donna,

I would like to advise you that Watford BID Ltd is proposing to hold a ballot for the renewal of Watford town centre Business Improvement District on February 4, 2021, with the ballot period being 8 January to February 4, 2021.

As per the BID Regulations (2004) please accept this letter as notification of the intention of requesting Watford Borough Council to put the following BID proposal to a ballot.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Manion

Maria Manion
Chief Executive
Watford BID Ltd

Watford Business Improvement District Business Proposal (BID) 2021 to 2026

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1. What is a Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID is a defined geographical area of a town, city, or commercial district where National Non Domestic rates (NNDR) business ratepayers are invited to vote to invest collectively in local improvements that are additional to those currently provided by the Council and other statutory bodies.

Business ratepayers are asked to vote on agreeing and paying an additional levy to their rates bill that, if supported, will be collected by the Council, and retained in a ring-fenced account and then used to finance the delivery of projects, services and activities detailed in the Business Plan.

2. The benefits of a BID for Watford Town centre

The proposal is for a second term of Watford BID. A BID provides businesses with the opportunity to decide what happens in the BID area and to influence key stakeholders such as the Council as to what they want to see happen in the BID area. By acting together business in the town will have a stronger voice. There will be

a small levy to pay, it is the businesses who will decide where the money is invested and how it is invested over five year term of the BID. It will also mean that by buying in certain activities collectively businesses may get more for their money.

A BID will not replace existing statutory services (those services the Council and other agencies such as the Police are legally obliged to provide), although these agencies will be under increasing pressure to reduce spend on activities they are not legally obliged to provide. The town and its businesses need to be well placed to face the challenges presented by COVID 19, Brexit and other economic circumstances as they emerge. A BID will provide the town and businesses with stability and a chance to shape the future development of Watford town centre.

3. The BID Proposer

The 'BID Proposer' for the Watford town Business Improvement District is Watford BID Ltd. Watford BID Ltd is a not for profit, company limited by guarantee. It is funded via an annual BID levy placed on each hereditament within the BID area, collected by the Council on behalf of the BID. The BID delivers projects and activities as identified in the 5 year business plan, which was voted for by businesses in November 2015.

The BID seeks to facilitate and encourage investment in the town while also building on the opportunities provided by the ongoing developments within the town.

The BID vision and objectives are set out in the 5 year business plan. The company's Articles of Association set out governance arrangements. The Board meets every two months.

4. BID management

Subject to a successful vote, the Watford BID will be managed by the existing Watford BID Company, which has its own legal identity, corporate structure and accounts.

If a BID ballot is successful the second term of the Watford BID will commence operation from 1 April 2021, and be in operation for a 5 year period. There will be a smooth transition from the current BID to the new 5 year term.

Watford BID has a Board. If the ballot successful we will retain the existing Board, but will include new members if deemed appropriate by the Board i.e. if a sector representative is required.

- During COVID 19 the BID lost its large retailers representation following the closure of Debenhams and John Lewis, and restructuring at M&S. Steps are being taken to rectify this.

The BID Board has a nomination and election process to ensure transparency and accountability. These are set out in the Company's Articles of Association. The role of the Board will be:

- The strategic management and direction of the Company
- Ensure officers deliver against the 5 year business plan
- Ensure good management and financial management of the company.

The Articles of Association and BID Business Plan, outline the decisions reserved for the Board, and the reporting and governance of the company. The BID utilises the services of a professional company secretary to ensure compliance with company law.

5. Statement of works proposed

Vision

A town where everyone feels safe, confident and comfortable, and where businesses thrive and prosper. Watford town centre should continue to be competitive and dynamic, a place that is attractive to businesses and investors.

The Watford town centre BID do this by delivering projects and activities against three key theme areas:

- **Working together to secure the future of the town** – building on opportunities and developments ensuring the town is future proofed; working in partnership with the public sector and other organisations and agencies to develop the aspirations of the town; developing and assisting social and community enterprise and entrepreneurship; supporting business and skills development in the town; managing vacant units and information; supporting the town with the development of new technologies; benchmarking and maintaining the quality of the town centre.
- **Enhancing the look and feel of the town centre** – managing the Retail Business Against Crime Scheme, improving the environment of the town centre, through items such as floral displays, and Christmas lights; enhancing pedestrian routes and access to and from car parks; improving facilities in the town to meet the aspirations of the town its businesses and customers. Supporting the early evening and night time economy and maintaining reputation of town as a welcoming and safe place to spend time and do business.
- **Promotion, marketing & events** - improving perceptions & raising awareness of the town; developing a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy supported by relevant branding, campaigns and activities, including the creation of an employee app. Supporting and enhancing existing events and projects (such as the Gift Card and Visit Watford), and developing new, relevant events and promotional activities..

Further details are outlined in the draft Business Plan (Attachment 3)

6. A statement of baseline services

Much is already being achieved through the activities and resources of Watford Borough Council, Herts County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary. For the purpose of this BID, the services provided by Herts County Council are excluded from the resourcing baseline. These will be monitored and managed through the on-going relationship with Watford Borough Council. It should be noted that not all resources are listed, there are some activities that may be delivered as part of on-going partnership agreements with other agencies, these will be monitored as part of the on-going partnership arrangements.

To ensure BID resources are directed towards delivering real added value Services Agreements have been prepared to secure the ongoing commitment of Watford Borough Council and define a baseline service specification and performance monitoring arrangements. Watford BID will not only be committed to monitoring these baseline standards, but also to pursuing higher standards where possible.

The agreements will, in practice, provide an essential input into the annual BID business planning process. The baseline services cover the following categories:

- CCTV
- Footfall counters
- Street cleansing & maintenance of street furniture
- Christmas lights
- Hanging baskets
- Town Centre Events

Watford Borough Council provides other services, which, while not possible to baseline for their specific impact on the BID area, will have significant implications for existing and future investment in the area. The agreement seeks to promote effective engagement and dialogue between Watford BID and Watford Borough Council on matters of mutual interest.

Copies of the Service Level agreements can be found at Attachment 1

7. The proposed BID area

The streets included are:

List of Streets in BID Area:

- Albert Road South
- Cambridge Road
- Carey Place
- Charter Place
- Church Street
- Crown Passage
- Clarendon Road (Numbers: 1-35 & 2-24)
- Escort Road (only Sutton Car park)
- Exchange Road (East side of road, including: the British Telecom Exchange buildings, Church Car Park, and Wren House (numbers 15-23)
- Gaumont Approach
- George Street
- Granville Road
- Halsey Road
- Hempstead Road (up to and including the Leisure Centre & Avenue Car Park)
- High Street (down to numbers:165 & 174)
- King Street
- Market Street (from the High Street to numbers: 24 and 25)
- New Street
- Peace Prospect
- Peace Drive (The Peace Hospice and Prospect House)
- Queens Road (Numbers: 1-19A)
- Rickmansworth Road (Numbers 1-5 and up to Peace Drive)
- Rosslyn Road (Numbers: 13-27, plus Gade Car Park and Halsey House)
- Smith Street
- St Mary's View
- St Mary's Close
- St Mary's Churchyard
- The Cloisters
- The Crescent
- The Parade including Rigby House

- Upton Road (Numbers: 14-20)
- Watford House Lane
- Water Lane (the section west of Beechen Grove)
- Wellstones
- Wilmington Close
- Meeting Alley

Map of the BID area: Attachment 2

8. Statement of who is within the BID area and how the BID levy is calculated

Any NNDR business rate payer for a hereditament will be liable to pay the levy in respect of that hereditament if at time on the Chargeable Day the hereditament is in the BID area and is on the Rating List. If a hereditament becomes empty, the liability for the BID Levy will fall on the organisation or person entitled to possession on the relevant day, or the administrator for any business that has ceased trading. For this purpose 'entitled to possession' shall have the same meaning as under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It is compulsory to pay the BID levy if a yes vote is secured, regardless of whether or not you voted in the ballot, or how you cast your vote.

The levy rate is set against the rateable value of a property or hereditament.

- The BID levy rate is set locally at 1.25% of the rateable value for each property as at 31 March 2021. The levy will be a fixed charge per annum for 2 years of the BID term, increasing in yr 3,4,5 to 1.5%, based on the rateable value (RV) as at the 31 March for each subsequent year, for all businesses within the BID area excluding those businesses within the intu shopping centre who already pay a service charge. Those businesses in the intu shopping centre who are paying an annual service charge will receive a discount of 0.25% on the headline levy rate, meaning the levy payable by those businesses is 1% in yrs 1 & 2 rising to 1.25% in years 3,4,5.
- Local charities (Peace Hospice, YMCA, Homestart and Shopmobility), where the business is not in a retail premise will be charged at a reduced levy of 0.5% over the course of the BID term. Retail premises associated with the charities will be charged at the standard levy rate of 1.25% increasing to 1.5%.
- The Watford BID area includes 456 hereditaments with a rateable value of £10,000 and over.

Their combined rateable value (RV) is a calculation based on the existing RV survey information. The combined rateable value is £38,920,900 This should raise £428,841 per annum in years 1 and 2 and £514,143 in years 3, 4 and 5 or £2,400,111 over the 5 years of the Watford BID.

Re-ballot BID development work or ballot costs will be met through the BID core costs, and Watford Borough Council will make charges for setting up the collection of the BID levy on behalf of the Watford BID, this involves setting up the template and other works related to the pre-collection works. It is estimated these works will cost £30,000 with an annual charge for updates of £5,000

The Watford BID will not be limited to income derived from the BID levy and can expect to raise further funds from:

- Voluntary contributions
- Grants
- Sponsorship and advertising revenue
- Other extra income

The BID levy is calculated for each hereditament for each Chargeable Day as follows:

Amount payable by the hereditament = $0.0125 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March each year (excluding those businesses listed within the intu centre), for yrs 1 & 2, rising to $0.0150 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March for years 3,4,5.

For those businesses listed within the intu centre the Amount payable by the hereditament = $0.01 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March yrs 1 & 2, increasing to $0.0125 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 31 March in years 3,4,5.

Costs associated with going to ballot: All costs will be met from existing BID core budgets.

There are costs associated with purchasing software, licence costs, setting up templates and bills and accounts within the BID areas on the system – these are estimated to be in the region of £30,000 but will be confirmed if the ballot is successful.

These costs will be met by Watford BID.

9. A statement of any relief (threshold, discounts etc)

The BID levy will be applied annually from 1 April 2021 to all NNDR business ratepayers within the defined area of the Watford BID before any discounts or exemptions have been applied to the individual account and above with no exceptions.

In other words charitable organisations who receive 80% mandatory discounts and in some cases an additional 20% discretionary rate relief, meaning they no NNDR liability, will still be required to pay a levy on the original RV as outlined above.

In the case of an empty, partly refurbished or demolished hereditament the property owner will be liable for the BID levy, and they will be entitled to vote. There will be no void period and every property will pay for all 365 days of the year.

The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period to be April to March each year starting in 2021. The levy will then be calculated on the RV as at 31 March each subsequent year. No refunds will be made.

Those hereditaments that are within the intu shopping centre and are subject to a service charge for services such as security and cleaning will receive a reduction of 0.25% of the levy rate payable.

The following hereditaments will be eligible for a discounted levy rate of 0.5%

- Peace Hospice (non retail)
- YMCA
- Home Start
- Shopmobility

The Ratings List (including the 2021 list) will be examined for new entries each year prior to the issue of levy invoices.

There will be no other reduction to the BID levy other than specified above.

Other associated costs with collecting the BID levy

The Council will issue an annual bill to each business, which is separate from the normal NNDR bill. The Council will endeavour to collect all outstanding amounts of the levy, using the same processes and mechanisms for collecting the usual NNDR liability. This includes charging businesses where a summons is issued and passing debts to bailiffs, for which the bailiffs will make a charge.

The recovery processes for the NNDR liability and the BID levy are separate processes. Businesses will be liable to pay two sets of costs where they are summoned for each debt. The costs that are collected by the Council are retained by the Council to meet its additional administrative costs and are not passed to the BID levy company.

10. A statement of any alteration/variation provision

The BID Board will develop projects that meet the 3 project areas, these must be appropriate to the prevailing state of the economy.

All budget headings and project costs can be altered within the constraints of the revenue received through the levy, and the BID Board will be empowered to move the funds between budgets providing the BID's aims are adhered to.

Any proposed variance to budgets and significant projects must be agreed by the Board and reported in the annual financial report and action plan.

11. A statement of the duration of the BID

If the BID is approved then it will commence operation on 1 April 2021 for a period of 5 years. At this date all occupiers of eligible properties will be required to pay the BID levy on receipt of an invoice from Watford Borough Council.

A postal ballot of business ratepayers in the BID area based on the list of non-domestic ratepayers will take place between 8 January and 4 February 2021. The result of the ballot will be published on the Watford Borough Council website and Watford BID website on 5 February 2021.

If successful in 2021, the Watford BID will seek a renewal ballot in 2026. From August 2025 the BID Board will allocate funds to manage the required consultation for the re-ballot in 2026.

12. Start date of the BID

If successful at ballot, the new BID company will continue delivery of services on 1 April 2021 and will continue for a period of 5 calendar years to 31 March 2026.

13. Details of research and consultation

Background

Watford BID was established in 2016, and since then has maintained a constant dialogue with businesses and levy payers across the BID area during its term.

In the Watford BID Business Plan: 2016 – 2021 Business Plan, we committed to carrying out an independent survey mid term survey to help us understand how we were doing, what we could do better, and what levy payers would like us to do more.

Methodology

In April 2018, we commissioned Storecheckers to carry out this research for us.

An online survey, which took no more than 10 minutes to complete, was emailed to every business for which we had an email address. Jeff Bowden from Storecheckers was also in town on 25 April, 26 April, 1 May, 2 May and 3 May, to talk in person with BID levy payers.

117 completed surveys were received in total.

Findings

1. Awareness of being in a BID

Reassuringly, a large majority of businesses surveyed - 87% - were aware that they were a part of Watford BID. Storecheckers confirmed this was high compared with other BID areas they have surveyed and suggested that Watford BID was successfully communicating and engaging with businesses.

2. Our newsletter & email updates

The BID sends out a monthly e-update to every contact on our e-database (currently 356), which summarises the work that has been undertaken that month. The format is kept simple, with short paragraphs under clear headings, in order to be quick and easy for busy levy payers to read. The BID also produces the 12-page newsletter that is professionally printed and hand delivered by the team to every BID business. A digital version is also emailed to those on our e-database and put on the BID website. An average of 3 per year are produced.

Nearly two thirds of respondents (63%) indicated that they receive either the Watford BID email e-news updates or newsletters. Reassuring of those that receive them, 87% said that they believed them to be either "Very informative" or "Reasonably informative". Only 5% - or 7 responses - felt that the updates were uninformative.

Considerations

While it is very reassuring that most businesses find our communications informative, we need to plug the gap and reach more levy payers than at present. Despite us hand delivering the BID newsletters to every business, 29% said they do not receive, indicating it cannot be reaching the right person.

37% of businesses surveyed said they did not receive our BID emails. This presents more of a challenge, firstly because there are businesses that either don't have work email addresses or who do not wish to give them out – for example when asked as part of this survey if they would be happy to be contacted, 50% said 'no' and 48% said 'no' to being added to our mailing lists. The second challenge to overcome is how we ensure our emails are seen – often we are told by businesses that they don't receive our emails, however when we go to add their email address onto our database we find they are already on there and so should in theory be receiving our emails.

The appointment of the ambassadors was, in part, intended to help us bridge these kinds of communication gaps, by ensuring all businesses were also regularly visited and updated in person about BID activities.

3. BID Key projects & services

a) Delivery & success projects & services

In the BID business plan: 2016-2021, Watford BID committed to delivering these 4 key projects:

- i. Marketing Watford
- ii. Watford Weekenders / Food & Drink Week
- iii. Service Excellence Awards
- iv. Improving the Look & Feel of the Town (Wow Watford)

Over three quarters of businesses surveyed (77%) agreed that we had delivered these projects and importantly, seven out of ten (70%) considered them to have been delivered successfully – with 'improving the look and feel' considered to be successful by the greatest number of businesses (82% of businesses). Only 7% said these projects were unsuccessful.

b) Usefulness of key projects & services

The survey also looked at how useful various BID projects were to levy payers – the list was expanded to include the individual campaigns and activities within the key project areas. As expected, the one rated as most useful – by 90% of businesses – is the one that is most accessible to all; our outdoor displays: Floral displays, hanging baskets, Christmas lights and banners. This was followed by 'Winter in Watford' (75.2%), Marketing (68.4%), Service Excellence Awards (67.5%), Food & Drink Week (65.8%) and Watford Weekender (65%).

At the end of the scale were those activities that will have had limited opportunities for participation. For example, our 'business support grant' – which we know is extremely valued by those businesses that have received it, but it is not going to be considered as 'useful' to businesses that have no reason to apply for it. Similarly, the NTE activities such as Designated Driver, Purple Flag, which are arguably important for the town centre, may only be perceived as actually 'useful' to a section of our levy payers.

Considerations

While it is clearly important to run projects and offer services that benefit as many levy payers as possible, there will also be ones that only certain sectors may directly benefit from. The challenge for the BID is to ensure that spend on projects and services that benefit one sector only, proportionally reflects the income generated

from BID levies from that same sector; or that the benefit to the BID area as a whole is equitable and that this benefit is well communicated.

As an example, Food & Drink Week may only be perceived as useful to those businesses that directly participate in it and have their business advertised. However, it could also be perceived as useful to those businesses whose staff take-up the offers. Furthermore, if it attracts more people into Watford town centre, then arguably the whole BID area benefits. In order to measure these levels of 'usefulness', we carry out post-event surveys, however it is difficult to get enough responses to glean any useful information: only 10 participants completed the short survey following our recent Food & Drink Week (provided online and in hard copy), and only 14 BID businesses completed a version created to find out what they and their staff thought of the activity.

4. Other BID activities

a) Green business

In the BID business plan: 2016-2021, Watford BID also committed to delivering a fifth key project: 'Green business', which included the energy tariff monitoring scheme via our provider Utilitrack and plans to find cost savings for businesses through bulk purchasing of outsourced services, eg rubbish collection, recycling, pest control etc.

53% of businesses surveyed felt the BID had not delivered in this area. Only 46% felt this had been a successful project, with 12% classing it as unsuccessful.

Considerations

The Utilitrack service is something that was heavily promoted in year one, with Jenny from Utilitrack visiting businesses in the town, however only 3 businesses signed up for services. The service has continued to be promoted through newsletters and e-updates, plus Utilitrack has attended our networking events. Jenny's replacement Hester is keen to come back to town and revisit businesses.

Also in year one of the BID, a survey was undertaken to see what interest there was in the BID procuring contracts for waste, recycling etc to help save money through bulk purchase. Only 2 businesses responded to the survey – which was hand delivered and sent by email – and neither was interested in taking up this service. No further work on this has been undertaken by the BID

The BID has however recently met with Meercat, an organisation that offers these kinds of schemes at BIDs around the county. They are a paid-for service and the BID board will need to determine whether more businesses will be interested if approached directly by Meercat professionals.

b) Crime & Policing

Watford BID committed to supporting crime reduction initiatives in the town centre.

The survey found that most businesses (87.2%) were happy with the BID's approach to policing. 15 businesses were not happy, and when asked why the answers given indicated that perceived low levels of policing visible on the streets was the main cause for concern, followed by a perceived lack of support from the BID with regard to policing and crime issues.

18% of businesses did however flag up crime and policing as an area they would like the BID to focus on in the future.

5. New projects / services needed

BID businesses were asked what additional services they would like the BID to offer, and what they would like the BID to focus on in future.

The largest response was 'none - no further services were required' from 47.0% of all respondents. This suggests that they are happy with that range of services already provided by the BID and want more of the same. The next three most mentioned were for more events, wider marketing/promotional activities and further visual/infrastructural improvement to the BID area.

6. Benefits of having a BID

When asked what the greatest benefits respondents and their businesses derive from having a BID in their town "Improving the look and feel of the town" was the most frequently-cited benefit, mentioned by 73% of respondents, followed by "Creating a safer town" with 58% and "Improving marketing and promotion" with 55%.

7. Support for retaining a BID for 2021-2026

Watford BID's term will end on 31 March 2021. Prior to that, in November 2020, a ballot of all businesses in the BID area will be held to find out whether businesses want to reinstall Watford BID for a further five-year term. The ballot would be held by the local authority and the BID would create a new five-year business plan detailing projects and budgets for the new BID term. The BID would continue only if a majority of businesses voted 'yes' and if the yes vote represented a collective rateable value higher than the 'no' vote.

Just under half of businesses surveyed (46%) said they are likely to support the BID for a new term, while just over a quarter (27%) said they are unlikely to support it.

When asked why, respondents said that they were most likely to support the BID because of the overall benefit it is perceived to have given to both the town centre - 20.4% of all reasons - and the respondent's own business - 19.0%. Of the reasons given to not support the BID, 6.8% of reasons suggested that respondents did not feel that there had been a great enough impact to warrant it.

March 2020 – COVID 19

Prior to March 2019 we were in discussion and conversation with a high percentage of business in the BID area, 6 March over 350 business representatives attended the annual Service Excellence Awards, which also received the highest number of best employee nominations.

Two weeks later the country went into a national lockdown, and a pandemic swept the world. The majority of businesses in the town closed, with the exception of essential services, and a significant amount of staff were furloughed, and at the point of writing this report, large numbers of staff remain on furlough, uncertain about their future or if they have a job left to go to. Of significant concern for Watford BID, and for the social, cultural and economic development of the town, is the closure of the cultural sector (theatres and music venues) and of the night time economy, including

the nightclubs and bars – these remain shut, and it looks like they will be unable to open until 2021.

The BID continued to run throughout the lockdown period (we furloughed some staff but retained a small core), we provided:

- weekly updates and support to businesses, this is something we are currently maintaining;
- worked with the Council to maintain the quality of the environment; information and support to businesses and the local community.
- a social media presence, which was updated on a daily basis
- We worked with the Chamber of Commerce, Chaplaincy, and other support businesses and agencies (including accountants and HR specialists) promoting and encouraging businesses to take up the range of webinars and courses available.
- We set up a dedicated COVID 19 website page.
- We worked with the Public Health team to support businesses during the re-opening (this continues), we have provided 5 hand sanitiser units throughout the town centre, which we maintain and fill, we provided directional signage in the town, and supported the implementation of road closures. Watford was the first and priority town to have road closures put in place in Hertfordshire – these happened in mid May. The BID installed 30 large floral displays to support these road closures – they are in addition to the other floral displays installed in the town centre. We also brought the Business Crime co-ordinator off furlough to support the public health team, and police with re-opening.
- The BID has maintained its commitment to the quality of environment, as we consider this to be important to presenting a place where people want to spend time, and feel comfortable and safe.
- The BID has supported 30 businesses with small grants to assist with safe re-opening of businesses.

Since June we have sent out 356 emails and surveys per week, over a 4 week period consulting on the direction and structure of the BID.

In addition to the surveys we offered out 6 Zoom sessions to BID business, 19 business attended these.

Attachments to report

Appendix 1: Service Level Agreements

Appendix 2: Map of the proposed Watford Town Centre Area

Appendix 3: Draft Business Plan & budget

Agenda Item 7

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 9 November 2020

Report author: Managing Director
Executive Head of Strategy and Communications and
Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office

Title: **Focusing on delivery:**
Tracking progress on the Council Plan – 2020-2024 / Delivery Plan –
2020-22, Organisational Development Strategy 2020 – 24 and Our
Covid-19 Road to Renewal Plan

1.0 Summary

1.1 Watford Borough Council has set an ambitious agenda for the town and the council and has refined its strategic framework to ensure that it continues to build its reputation as a council that gets things done. A critical part of this new approach is regular monitoring and reporting of the key elements of the council's strategic framework comprising:

- the Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22;
- the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and Delivery Plan; and
- Covid-19 Road to Renewal Plan.

1.2 The updates on the progress on the plans reflect the positive outcomes that have been achieved through strengthening the council's strategic framework and establishing a clear direction for the organisation. This has enabled services to concentrate on what is important to the town and council and the progress achieved since the plans were approved in summer 2020 is shown in the updates appended to this report (Appendix A, B and C).

1.3 All three plans were underpinned by our corporate understanding of both the external and internal environment at the time of their development. The council has continued to face tremendous challenges since the summer, particularly around the impact of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the emergence of the second wave and the uncertainty generated by the prospect of the Government's White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery. Whilst these have not deflected the council's focus on delivery, it has impacted on some specific areas of work within the plans, which are being re-profiled to ensure delivery within the life of the plans.

1.4 In July 2020, Council approved the Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22. The Council Plan 2020-2024 and Delivery Plan 2020-22 are key part of the council's strategic framework, developed to ensure the organisation remains ambitious for

the town, and community, and integrating our approach to addressing the challenges of the post Covid-19 era.

- 1.5 The successful delivery of the commitments in the Council Plan 2020-24 is critical to ensuring we remain focused on what is important to the town and our residents and are seen as an organisation that delivers on its promises. The July report to Council outlined how the organisation will make sure it rises to the opportunities and challenges of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, including reporting regularly to Cabinet on progress, milestones and achievements. These reports will then form the basis of an annual report to our community.
- 1.6 The Organisational Development Strategy 2020 – 24 and its associated Delivery Plan (both approved by Cabinet in July 2020) set out how the organisation will support staff to deliver the Council Plan, helping them develop and grow their skills, knowledge and experiences so they can make an effective contribution to the organisation’s achievements and serve the residents and community of Watford. A commitment was also made to provide Cabinet with regular updates on the delivery of this strategy and delivery plan.
- 1.7 The council’s Covid-19 Road to Renewal Plan details the work streams established to deliver a comprehensive and joined-up renewal of the town and council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Within the framework of the Council Plan it also outlines the specific objectives for each area, which cover the community, economy and business and the council’s organisational renewal, including its financial resilience.

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)
Slippage on delivery of the Council Plan	<p>Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for our town and residents.</p> <p>Potential impact on the reputation of the Council.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Robust project and programme management</p>	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

Failure to recognise milestones / completion of commitments	Lost opportunity to celebrate success internally and externally	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management Clear communication of milestones / achievements	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Failure to promote and recognise the Council's strategic approach and culture that is focused on delivery and outcomes	Lost opportunity to embed a renewed strategic approach and culture that ensures Watford BC remains a high performing, innovative and agile organisation	Regular, robust and accurate reports for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny that is owned across service areas Linking delivery to staff and team objectives	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Slippage on delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy	Failure to deliver our commitments to staff potentially resulting in failure to deliver our Council Plan. Potential impact on staff's health and wellbeing.	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management. Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Loss of skilled staff / difficulties in recruiting if Organisational Development Strategy is not delivered and the council is not perceived as a place where staff can develop and grow	Impact on delivery, potential cost implication if needed to recruit on short-term basis to fill posts	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management. Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group Build into recruitment literature	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Our Road to Renewal Plan is adopted but	Town and council do not deliver the renewal as effectively as	A significant appraisal of resourcing requirements has been undertaken in relation to the activities	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

cannot be delivered	they could. Perceived lack of leadership and support	identified within the Road to Renewal Plan. This will be aligned to the corporate budget position prior to approval. A robust governance and reporting structure has also been established to ensure ongoing momentum and appropriate levels of scrutiny.		
Our Road to Renewal Plan does not allow for an agile response to the changing external environment	Council's support for renewal is not as effective as it could be	There may be need to accelerate, amend or stop the plans in the Renewal Plan in light of the fast changing external environment. The governance structure in place allows for a formal change control process so that decisions to deviate from the Road to Renewal Plan are not made in isolation and with full overview of the Renewal Co-ordination Board.	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

3.0 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to note:

- 3.1 The progress updates within this report relating to:
- the Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020 -22 (Appendix A);
 - the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 (Appendix B); and
 - the Road to Renewal Plan (Appendix C).
- 3.2 The significant corporate effort over the last four months that has resulted in the level of progress made against all three plans.
- 3.3 The impact of external factors on some areas of delivery. These will be re-profiled to reflect the current environment during Quarter 3. Whilst delivery over the life of the plans remains a corporate commitment, the impact of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic will be the focus of the council's corporate effort.
- 3.4 The proposal to bring regular updates to Cabinet on the three plans on a quarterly basis. From Quarter 3 the ambition is to include reporting on the Council Plan and

Delivery Plan and the Road to Renewal Plan on the council's new business intelligence platform. Once this is established a similar approach will be taken to the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and Delivery Plan.

- 3.5 A communications plan will be linked to the update reporting on the Council Plan and Road to Renewal Plan to ensure the Council communicates its progress and achievements to our community. An annual report will be developed on the Council Plan progress, which will be distributed to residents and stakeholders
- 3.6 Staff will be engaged throughout the delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy and regular opportunities to feedback will be an integral part of delivery.

Further information

Kathryn Robson, Executive Head of Strategy and Communications
kathryn.robson@watford.gov.uk Tel: 01923 278077

Liam Hornsby, Head of Programme Management Office
liam.hornsby@watford.gov.uk Tel: 01923 278094

Report approved by: Donna Nolan, Managing Director

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 A refreshed strategic framework

- 4.2 The council has an ambitious agenda for Watford and recognises that a focused, and aligned, strategic framework is fundamental to the successful delivery of its plans for the town.
- 4.3 Over the summer, the council reviewed and refreshed its strategic framework to better reflect these ambitions as well as the Mayor's Manifesto, local intelligence, community feedback and best practice. The renewed framework, comprising the council's key strategies and plans, confirms our focus on what is important to the town and its residents and that resources are allocated to its priority commitments.
- 4.4 A critical part of the successful deliver of the renewed framework is robust, and regular, monitoring and reporting of the associated plans including:
- the Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22;
 - the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and Delivery Plan; and
 - Covid-19 Road to Renewal Plan.

This report presents a progress update of the plans outlined above and in associated Appendices (A, B and C).

- 4.5 Whilst only four months into the life of the plans, a significant amount of progress has been achieved across all delivery areas. The direction set by the strategic framework has ensured services have clarity on where they need to concentrate their energies and supports the council's reputation as a council that gets things done and that delivers on what is important to the town.
- 4.6 Running throughout the council's progress is the strengthening of our organisational approach, governance and structure, which has also been undertaken since July. This means the council has the essential building blocks in place to support all of our activities and commitments not just across these plans but also across all of our corporate work and effort. This has particularly focused on:
- making sure we have the right capacity to deliver;
 - a renewed emphasis on integrating how we work strategically;
 - making sure the way we make our decisions is transparent, timely and support by the relevant information; and
 - our organisational culture is directed to our 'one team' approach, shared ownership of our corporate priorities and commitment to deliver
- 4.7 All three plans were underpinned by our corporate understanding of both the external and internal environment at the time of their development. Since their development, the council has continued to face a range of challenging external factors, which have required capacity and resources. These include: the impact of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the emergence of the second wave and the uncertainty generated by the prospect of the Government's White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery. The review of progress has identified where these external influences have impacted original milestones for some areas of work and where these will be re-profiled during Quarter 3.
- 4.8 At the time of writing, the full impact of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic is more evident and we are expecting that, during Quarter 3, the corporate effort will need to be directed to supporting our community and staff. This may well affect progress during Quarter 3.
- 4.9 **Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22**
- 4.9.1 The new Council Plan 2020-24 was approved by Council in July 2020 as was the associated Delivery Plan 2020-22.
- 4.9.2 The 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.
- 4.9.3 The Plan, has three themes (see below) and is underpinned by the principles of excellence; promotion; impact; enterprise; leadership and caring.

Council themes:

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

Each theme has five areas of commitment under which specific projects and areas of work have been identified and articulated through the Delivery Plan 2020-22.

- 4.9.4 Whilst the Council Plan has a four year perspective, the Delivery Plan has been developed to concentrate on key priorities to 2022. The 18 month perspective means that the Council can be flexible and agile to respond to emerging and future challenges and opportunities and the initial Delivery Plan has a steadfast focus on the work to support our community, businesses and staff as they recover from Covid-19.
- 4.9.5 By reporting regularly to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by the organisation against the Council Plan and, particularly the Delivery Plan, we can ensure we are continuing to direct our resources on what is important to our town and community. It also provided transparency and clear accountability to our community.
- 4.10 **Tracking progress on the Council Plan – 2020-2024 / Delivery Plan – 2020-22**
- 4.10.1 In July 2020, the recommendation to report on progress on the Council Plan and Delivery Plan to Cabinet on a quarterly basis was approved by Council.
- 4.10.2 The first update is at Appendix A. This identifies all the Delivery Plan commitments, the project delivering the activity and progress made during the first four months of the Council Plan. The Executive Head of Strategy and Communications and the Head of the EP MO are coordinating the organisational response to the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, working closely with services to promote a shared corporate understanding and ownership of our commitments, reflecting our new culture and ways of working. Since July, Heads of Service have been developing their service plans to reflect the Delivery Plan, identifying milestones, organisational dependencies and progress made to date. To reflect our ‘one team’ approach and corporate ownership of the Council Plan, this has been done collaboratively to ensure shared ownership and understanding of each service plan. This has informed the update in Appendix A.
- 4.11 **Overview / highlights**
- 4.11.1 Overall, there are 510 areas of work / projects identified within the Delivery Plan 2020-22.

4.11.2 The council completed or has made significant progress against a number of important projects during Quarter 1. Highlights include:

A council that serves its residents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New waste and recycling service launched Over 12,000 residents have signed up for the new green waste service using the digital MyWatford platform. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Organisational Development Strategy developed and approved, designed to support staff to deliver the best service for residents and businesses (see section 4.12-4.14 and Appendix B). 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road to Renewal plan, designed to support the renewal of the council and town following lockdown, approved by Cabinet on 6 July with a whole range of activities now underway or completed (see section 4.15 – 4.17 of this report and Appendix C). 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New internal governance structure for the council established to allow for agile but robust decision making and a renewed focus on strategy and commercialisation. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of key leases agreed at Croxley Business Park, attracting and retaining businesses within the local area and supporting the council's financial recovery. 	Completed
A thriving, diverse and creative town	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A demand responsive transport scheme implemented. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A covid-safe High Street reopened, with ongoing advice and guidance for all businesses to ensure that they operate safely and residents and visitors are kept safe. 	Initial work completed. Ongoing oversight and review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business forums and partnerships reviewed and implementation of recommendations underway to ensure that the council has the best support in place for businesses of all sizes across the town. 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support partnership with Wenta agreed and launched. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Strategy to underpin the council's long term support for businesses and the local economy commenced following a competitive process to procure a partner to engage with businesses and develop the strategy. 	Completed phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 key accounts programme developed, key business identified and approach agreed, with launch on 16 October. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Shaping Panel recruited, formed to support high quality design for development across the borough 	Completed
A happy and healthy town	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxhey Activity Park opened to the public, including a BMX track, children's playground, skate park, café and wildflower meadow. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford Rough Sleeper Task Force launched with attendees from a large number of agencies who all committed to work collectively and operationally to provide packages of accommodation and support for individual rough sleepers that enables them to leave the streets permanently and sustainably. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary sector review underway alongside the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group, with significant engagement amongst the sector completed, and a final report to Cabinet on 9 November. 	Completed phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design team appointed for Woodside Sports Village, a refreshed outdoor space to provide new sports and leisure facilities in the town. 	Completed

4.12 **Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and associated Delivery Plan**

4.12.1 The Council Plan identifies the Organisational Development Strategy as a priority area of work under the theme 'A Council that serves our residents' with the related commitment to 'Empower leaders at all levels in our council to inspire our organisation and our community'.

4.12.2 The council recognises our staff are critical to our success and to building our reputation as a council that delivers. At the same time, we know that the commitment of our staff and their passion for public service ensures we keep our

residents, our businesses and community at the heart of everything we do. The importance of effectively matching our resources (both financial and staff) to the ambitions of our Council Plan and Delivery Plan was recognised when the plans were presented to Cabinet in July with an aligned budget update and a new Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24.

4.12.3 The Organisational Development Strategy is also supported by a Delivery Plan, which translates the high level, strategic approach to how we develop our staff into practical and timely actions.

4.13 Tracking progress on the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24

4.13.1 In July 2020, the recommendation to report on progress on the Organisational Development Strategy on a quarterly basis was approved by Cabinet. Aligning progress reporting to Cabinet on the delivery plans for the Council Plan and the Organisational Development Strategy will retain the synergy between the plans and support the effective governance for the council’s strategic framework.

4.13.2 The first update on the Organisational Development Strategy is at Appendix B.

4.14 Overview / highlights

4.14.1 Whilst progress has been made against a number of the areas of work identified in the Organisational Development Strategy delivery plan, the priority of the council’s Human Resources team, including the Executive Head of Service and the HR Business Partner (Organisational Development), has been on continuing to support staff through Covid-19, particularly as the likelihood of a second wave became more apparent. The potential impact of Local Government Reform also diverted focus for a period during the summer, as the HR service responded to the potential implications for the workforce.

However, even with this, a number of important milestones have been achieved. Highlights include:

• Staff Ambassadors’ Group established	Completed
• Organisational capacity strengthened through enhanced development opportunities - Assistant Heads posts recruited	Completed
• Improve the number of managers who feel confident to spot the early warning signs of mental health and have the skills to manage those conversations – mental health training for all managers	Completed Phase 1
• Roll out mental health first aid training for colleagues, enabling them to spot the signs and offer support including online e- learning courses for all staff	Completed Phase 1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot health check programme with Environmental Health team 	Completed Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define, through engagement with staff, what agile working is, and could be, for the organisation 	Phase 1 progressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update people policies (particularly health and safety and flexible working) to optimise agile working. 	Completed Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of new i-Perform system to support the review and refresh our development offering for all staff to facilitate good quality performance management, set clear objectives linked with our Council Plan and reflect how our organisational values are being demonstrated. 	Completed Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the recruitment and retention of apprentices to the council - recruit 6 apprentices across the council (possible need to re-profile if Covid-19 impacts during Quarter 30) 	Completed Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and integrate our new performance review system, i-Perform for regular 1:1 check-ins and annual reviews (appraisal). 	Completed Phase 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch 'Watford Leads' development programme to build management skills and confidence amongst all team managers and leaders. 	Phase 1 progressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a 'first steps to leadership' programme. 	Completed Phase 1

4.15 Road to Renewal Plan

4.15.1 The Renewal Plan is intrinsically linked to the Council Plan and Delivery Plan and provides the strategic link to the council's ambitions for the renewal of the town, and the organisation, following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.16 Tracking progress on the Road to Renewal Plan

4.16.1 The Road to Renewal Plan was presented to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July and the first formal update on progress of the Road to Renewal Plan is at Appendix C. It should be noted that ongoing progress relating to the Road to Renewal will be subject to the impact of a second wave of Covid-19.

4.17 Overview/highlights

4.17.1 The council completed a number of areas of work relating to the Road to Renewal Plan. Highlights include:

Work Stream 1: Community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful bid for Next Steps Accommodation funding for rough sleepers support allowing the council to continue working towards its commitment of zero rough sleepers on the streets of Watford. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHCLG funding of £101,000 for winter shelter and accommodation for rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds obtained for the period October 2020-March 2021, to ensure support for rough sleepers in the coldest months. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford Rough Sleeper Task Force launched with attendees from a large number of agencies who all committed to work collectively and operationally to provide packages of accommodation and support for individual rough sleepers that enables them to leave the streets permanently and sustainably. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1,500 Watford residents supported by the Watford Helps scheme and all residents previously receiving support through lockdown successfully transitioned to self-sufficiency or longer-term support if needed. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than £155,000 raised for voluntary and community groups across the town supporting Watford residents with plans underway to ensure that the fund helps support groups long term and in a sustainable way. Additional £10k distributed to local groups providing food support to our community to coincide with October half-term. 	Completed + Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans in place to reinstate resident support in the event of a second lockdown so that the council can again support some of the most vulnerable in the community. 	Completed
Work Stream 2: Business and Economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual SME Business Forum created and chaired by the Elected Mayor, in line with the commitment to engage closely with smaller and medium sized businesses who have 	Completed

been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Information Hub launched to provide improved and relevant information to businesses across the town. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business e-newsletter launched and circulated to businesses on a monthly basis, providing an ongoing opportunity for the council to actively engage with businesses, particularly SMEs. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business survey launched with 232 responses received and the results used to shape the business support proposals and 50 key accounts programme. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SME & Retail Hospitality & Leisure Fund fully allocated to local businesses, supporting the local economy during lockdown. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £856k of Discretionary Fund allocated to 150 businesses to provide support during and after lockdown. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp for Business launched – the first UK High Street to do so, helping businesses on Market Street get back up and running after lockdown, providing them with an easy way to engage directly with their customers. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Customer Relationship Management system specified, procured and purchased. Implementation now underway to allow the council to better manage its ongoing relationships and support for businesses. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face visits and follow up calls offering practical help to local businesses and households undertaken by the Environmental Health / Community Protection team, to keep our community safe and healthy, including piloting a local ‘test and trace’ scheme and a Covid-19 Action Week. 	Completed (and ongoing)
Work Stream 3: Organisational Renewal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall covid-safe measures implemented and customer face-to-face drop-in and appointment service resumed for the town’s most vulnerable residents. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments undertaken for all staff to facilitate their return to the Town Hall for essential business needs. 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council policies impacted by covid reviewed, updated and relaunched to ensure that they protect, support and inform council staff, particularly during the ongoing pandemic so they remain productive, resilient and they feel supported in terms of their health and wellbeing 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of health and wellbeing tools launched for staff, to support physical and mental health. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All business continuity plans reviewed, updated and kept under review, alongside additional preparations for a second wave of covid or potential move up the national system of tiers to ensure that the council can respond as effectively, and quickly, as possible to support Watford residents and businesses. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Service Plans covering the period 2020-22 completed and endorsed by Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders, linking the Council Plan to specific projects and service delivery to ensure that our strategic vision is translated into ‘action on the ground’, benefitting Watford residents across the borough. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web content for Revenues & Benefits, Elections & Parking Services reviewed, simplified and refreshed so that we are providing customers with digitally enabled services so they can interact as easily as possible with the council 	Completed

4.18 **Progress monitoring going forward**

4.18.1 The council has invested in a business intelligence platform that will improve how it will collate, monitor and report across its strategic framework. This will speed up analysis of progress, provide earlier warning where there might be a risk of slippage and link across the council’s key strategies and performance measures. Work is currently underway to integrate the Council Plan and Delivery Plan commitments and the Road to Renewal Plan areas for action into the platform. An update on the integration will be reported to Cabinet as part of Quarter 3 reporting on the strategic framework.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Council Plan is aligned with the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure that the commitments within the Plan are resourced. 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'.

- 5.1.2 A Renewal Fund of £1.2m was agreed by Council to support the delivery of the Road to Renewal Plan in recognition that this work is essential to supporting the town's response to Covid-19. The Fund is being monitored by the Head of the EPMO and Finance and regularly reported to the council's Renewal Coordination Board so that it is overseen by the Managing Director and other senior officers.

As of 21 October, there is £770k remaining within the Fund.

Areas of work funded include: £85k support to Watford small businesses to provide free of charge services including one-to-one business advice, skills training webinars and workshops, access to co-working, incubation space for small businesses and specialist support, £30k to explore co-working spaces and pop-up spaces, £22k for a business CRM to manage our business relationships and £15k for town centre winter planters to make it a safer environment.

5.2 **Legal issues**

- 5.2.1 The Council Plan is one of the policy framework documents listed in the constitution that has to be approved by Council. The plan was approved by Council on 14 July 2020.

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

- 5.3.1 An Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) was developed for the Council Plan 2020-2024. This is consistently reviewed based on up to date information and data the council receives to ensure the council meets its public sector equalities under the s149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010.

EIAs were also developed for the Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 and for the Road to Renewal Plan. These will also this will be monitored through the life of the respective strategies.

5.4 **Staffing**

- 5.4.1 The Council Plan sets the Council's strategic direction, and is, therefore, a key document for 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.

The Organisational Development Strategy supports the Council Plan and Delivery Plan to equip all staff 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 A – Council Plan 2020-24 / Delivery Plan 2020-22 progress update Oct 2020
- Appendix B – Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 progress update Oct 2020
- Appendix C – Road to Renewal progress update Oct 2020

Watford Borough Council Delivery Plan

Progress Update

THEME 1: A council that serves our residents

Key achievements over this period

- New waste and recycling offer launched, with over 12,000 residents signing up the new green waste service using the digital MyWatford platform.
- Road to Renewal plan, designed to support the renewal of the council and town following lockdown, approved by Cabinet on 6 July with a whole range of activities now underway or completed. Full details can be found within Appendix C.
- New internal governance approach is in place allowing for agile but robust decision making and a renewed focus on strategy and commercialisation.
- New Organisational Development Strategy developed and approved, designed to support staff to deliver the best service for residents and businesses.
- A number of key leases agreed at Croxley Business Park, attracting and retaining businesses within the local area and supporting the council's financial recovery.
- Business continuity plans across the council have been updated to reflect the lessons learnt from the first wave of Covid-19. Plans for second wave preparedness have also been finalised as part of the council's ongoing response to Covid-19, this also includes maintaining a daily active monitoring of the Covid-19 situation in Watford and working with Hertfordshire County Council, other districts/boroughs, NHS and Public Health England on suppressing the virus across the town
- Support, guidance and advice provided for the community through Covid-19, including face to face visits from Environmental Health/Community Protection, outreach and communications across the town to keep people informed and engaged

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Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	2
	On track	15
	Planning underway	1
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	0
Total		18

COMMITMENT Make sure our council is a caring and collaborative organisation that puts what matters to people at the heart of everything we do		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
1. Provide an excellent customer experience	We will deliver a new Customer Experience Strategy covering the next 5 years to ensure that we provide an excellent end-to-end customer experience across all our services.	Customer Experience Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September '20- Research and analyse data sources • October '20 - Engage Leadership Board & Portfolio Holders • November '20 – Engage services • November '20 – Strategy development • December '20 – Strategy approved by Leadership Board • January '21 – Strategy approved by Cabinet • February '21 - Strategy launched 	On track	Initial draft nearing completion and will be subject to internal review during the next quarter in order to ensure that the council places our residents, businesses and customers at the heart of everything we do. The delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy will require significant engagement with members, residents, businesses and council officers from across the organisation.
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	Customer Experience Strategy	Milestones subject to Customer Experience Strategy (above)	Planning underway	This activity forms an integral part of most Service Plans and remains an ongoing action across the council. However, the development of the Customer Experience Strategy will outline some focused activity to deliver this commitment.
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	Watford Helps (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April '21 - Project Manager in place • June '21 - Options appraisal • July '21 – Develop proposal 	On track	Scoping complete but key actions not due to start until April 2021 to align with available resource. This project

	they have the same opportunities as others in our town.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August '21 – Proposal approved • September '21 – Deploy approved approach 		will seek to support residents across the town to avoid digital isolation, the importance of access and skills to technology having been highlighted during lockdown.
COMMITMENT Deliver high quality sustainable services		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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.	Waste and Recycling Service Review	✓ 1 September – New service launched	Complete	The new waste and recycling service launched on 1 September. This included a new chargeable green waste service which over 12,000 residents have already signed up to.
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 that 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.	Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September '20 – Begin to gather insight • September '20 - Develop and deploy ongoing improvements • February '21 - Develop methodology • April '21 - Develop Business Intelligence dashboard • April '21 - Develop prioritised improvement timeline • Develop and deploy ongoing improvements - Sep 2020 - Feb 2022 • January '22 - Review of methodology 	On track	The need for continuous improvement and providing the very best service to our customers is an integral part of the work that all the councils' services undertake. However, customer insight works are now underway to inform a consistent and focused continuous improvement methodology. Ongoing improvements are being implemented as they are identified and will continue to be through to February 2022.

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.	Remobilisation (Road to Renewal Plan)	✓ 6 July – Road to Renewal Plan approved by Cabinet	On track	All additional milestones and progress updates captured within section 3 of Appendix C – Organisational Renewal of the Road to Renewal Quarterly Update
COMMITMENT Empower leaders at all levels in our council to inspire our organisation and our communities.		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
1. Introduce a new Organisational Development approach	We want to make sure that we develop, motivate and inspire our staff whilst ensuring that 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.	Organisational Development Strategy	✓ 6 July – Organisational Development Strategy approved by Cabinet	On track	All additional milestones and progress updates captured within Appendix B – Organisational Development Quarterly Update.
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.	Organisational Renewal (Road to Renewal Plan)	✓ 30 July – Internal engagement relating to governance processes complete ✓ 1 September - New internal governance structure in place and corporate communications circulated	Complete	New internal governance approach in place from September 2020 to ensure robust but agile decision making and a clear and renewed focus.

3. Improve succession planning and talent management and recruitment	We will ensure that we open up opportunities for staff to build their skills, experience and knowledge so that working for our town can be a fulfilling and professional career. Where we do need to recruit, we will ensure we recruit the very best candidates from those that apply and represents the diverse backgrounds of our residents.	Organisational Development Strategy	✓ 6 July – Organisational Development Strategy approved by Cabinet	On track	All additional milestones and progress updates captured within Appendix B – Organisational Development Quarterly Update.
COMMITMENT Focus our budget so we can deliver on our commitments and secure investment to work for Watford		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
1. Ensure our investment portfolio delivers maximum value to the council	We will ensure that 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.	Investment Portfolio (Road to Renewal Plan)	✓ 23 July - Compare latest quarter rent/investment collections with pre-Covid quarters ✓ 10 August – outstanding market rent letters sent ✓ 15 August - Intu 7% rent receipt not received ✓ 7 September – Regus rent extension agreed at PIB • 20 October - quarterly update reports presented to Commercial Income and Investment Board • 1 November – Additional occupation of Croxley Business Park premises • 30 November – Ongoing monitoring of intu rent income	On track	A number of leases agreed at Croxley Business Park during lockdown and others are progressing. Detailed monitoring of the impact of the intu administration is ongoing. Further ongoing monitoring of quarterly rent receipts and comparison with previous quarters. As part of the internal governance review an officer Commercial Income and Investment Board has been created to provide a further corporate focus on the investment portfolio and wider commercialisation.

<p>2. Assess the feasibility of Growth Fund</p>	<p>We will assess the feasibility of using our financial strength to support economic growth and an investment return through investing in start-up and growth opportunities.</p>	<p>Revive (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 November – Business case in outline form End December - agree way forward and secure resources to develop business case <p>All future milestones will be developed based on the findings of the Business Case that is currently being scoped and due for completion in Quarter 3.</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Scoping work has started, but substantive activities not due to commence until Quarter 3 when feasibility of fund will be determined. Business case development for co-working space and assessing options around growth funds scoped with a conclusion scheduled by the end of the year.</p>
<p>3. Deliver the council's financial recovery</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Financial Resilience (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 July – Budgets reset as a result of Covid-19 ✓ 25 July - SLM Leisure Centres reopened ✓ 31 July - Receipt of Gov't LA support package funds ✓ 11 September - Market income impact paper ✓ 30 September - Completed & Submitted Gov't's Income Guarantee scheme forms to reclaim quarter 2 income • 19 October - Develop high street initiatives project plan 	<p>On track</p>	<p>The council's budget was reset following the pressure caused by Covid-19. Since then, the financial picture has become clearer as government support and the impact of lockdown gains more clarity. The resetting of budgets has been aligned to the annual service planning process to ensure that budgets can be prioritised to focus on the delivery of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan. Despite some government funding to offset the pressures on the Council's finances as a result of COVID 19 there remains a pressure of approximately £2.2million as a result of lost income, additional Covid 19 and related spending. As part of internal</p>

					improvements a new approach to budget monitoring will be introduced in Quarter 3.
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.	Financial Resilience (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 July - Budget reset discussions at Council ✓ 10 September - Budget strategy review at Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service ✓ 23 September - Review base budget adjustments ✓ 12 October – Growth bids and savings proposals for 2021/22 due from services <p>Assessment of growth bids and savings proposal underway in preparation for the budget setting cycle.</p>	On track	Management of the council finances remains an ongoing activity. However, particular focus has been given to in-year savings and the accuracy of any growth bids through the budget setting process for the 2021 finance year.
COMMITMENT Welcome innovation, technology and new ways of working to continuously improve		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
1. Ensure that our use of digital technology matches our ambition to deliver the best possible	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.	ICT Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2020 – Development of strategy underway <p>All future milestones will be dependent on the Strategy but</p>	On track	The council's updated ICT Strategy is due to be drafted by the end of Quarter 3 with delivery anticipated from 2021 onwards. This will build upon the huge progress made over

<p>service to our residents</p>			<p>implementation is anticipated from April 2021 onwards</p>		<p>the period of the last strategy which saw the completion of the core infrastructure programme, the roll out of laptops for all staff and the introduction of the highly successful unified communications platform which has allowed all staff to continue working throughout Covid-19 with minimal impact on services.</p>
<p>2. Deliver our Business Intelligence Strategy</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Business Intelligence</p>	<p>✓ October 2020 - Draft strategy ready for organisational review and socialisation October 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Cabinet January 2021 <p>All future milestones will be dependent on the Strategy but implementation is anticipated from February 2021 onwards following approval by Cabinet</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The council's Business Intelligence platform has already been implemented and the first services, including HR and the EPMO, are using the system. The first draft of our longer term Business Intelligence Strategy is now being progressed and the process of internal review is ongoing, with the aim of presenting to Cabinet in January 2021.</p>
<p>3. Ensure that the council's future office accommodation is fit for purpose</p>	<p>Learning the lessons from Covid-19 and listening to our staff, we will develop plans to ensure the council has a modern, fit for purpose, sustainable and good value for money offices to work from.</p>	<p>Organisational Development Strategy</p>	<p>✓ 6 July – Organisational Development Strategy approved by Cabinet</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>All additional milestones and progress updates captured within Appendix B – Organisational Development Quarterly Update.</p>

			This area of work forms part of the Town Centre Cultural Quarter project and, therefore, future milestones will reflect the overall programme for this project		
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.	Agile Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ March - Trial new performance process ✓ September - Train employees in use of i-Perform via virtual training of videos and drop in sessions ✓ 1 October - Launch and comms and transfer from PDR to i-Perform • January '21 – Review embedding of system and availability of data of reports for managers. Explore the facility to add values and behaviours when agreed by the Council. 	On track	All staff already have laptops to allow working from home and all council processes, including HR processes are now digital to allow remote transactions with the council. The milestones listed here reflect the recent launch of the council's digital performance system. Further work is underway to develop an approach for officers working, such as those in Planning or Building Control, remotely off-site and "in the field". This work will link to the Council's new IT Strategy and approach to digital inclusion
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.	Resilience (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July - Report to SLT on lessons learnt from first wave response ✓ 31 July – Updated business continuity plans template agreed and instructions for review and second lockdown 	On track	Business continuity plans across the council have been updated to reflect the lessons learnt from the first wave of Covid-19. Plans for a second wave or potential move up the national system of tiers have been prepared, and are

			<p>scenario planning circulated to all Heads of Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 August – All Business Continuity Plans updated ✓ 14 September - Report to LB on second wave preparations ✓ 21 September - Report to PHs on second wave preparations • December '20 – Review of corporate resilience approach complete • April '21 – Implementation of recommendations 		<p>regularly reviewed, to ensure that the council can respond as effectively, and quickly, as possible to support Watford residents and businesses.</p>
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THEME 2: A thriving, diverse and creative town

Key achievements over this period

- A covid-safe High Street reopened, with ongoing advice and guidance for all businesses to ensure that they operate safely and residents and visitors are kept safe.
- Business forums and partnerships reviewed and implementation of recommendations underway to ensure that the council has the best support in place for businesses of all sizes across the town.
- Business support partnership with Wenta agreed and launched.
- Economic Development Strategy to underpin the council's long term support for businesses and the local economy commenced following a competitive process to procure a partner to engage with businesses and develop the strategy.
- 50 key accounts programme developed, key business identified and approach agreed, with launch due 16 October.
- Place Shaping Panel recruited, formed to support high quality design for development across the borough.

Theme BRAG Analysis

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BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	1
	On track	20
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	1
Total		22

COMMITMENT Promote Watford as an enterprising town where businesses can invest, grow and succeed		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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.	Revive (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 July – Develop tender brief ✓ 27 July – Tender documents finalised ✓ 21 August – Tender closes ✓ 10 September – Supplier interviews ✓ 15 September – Supplier confirmed ✓ 2 October – Strategy development initiation ✓ 8 October - initial stakeholder engagement event • w/c 12 October – Design survey and questions • w/c 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period • w/c 02 November – Review survey results • w/c 06 November – commence 1:1 stakeholder meetings • 23 November – definition of strategic priorities • 07 December – first draft of strategy 	On track	Strategy consultants have been selected following a competitive tender and development of the strategy is now underway which will provide the council with a clear medium to long term focus on supporting businesses and the local economy across the town.
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.	Reopening the Town Centre (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 10 July – Approach to high street stewards agreed ✓ 15 July – Shop local campaign introduced ✓ 22 July – Changes to pavement licensing ✓ 15 August – ‘Travel with confidence’ campaign underway ✓ 15 September – Enhanced track and trace roll out ✓ 02 October – messaging aligned to “Hands, Face, Space” ✓ 12 October – Officer meeting re long-term strategy for High Street traffic control 	On track	Support for businesses to remain ‘Covid-safe’ is ongoing and remains subject to government guidance and legislation. Shop Local, Stay Safe’ and ‘Travel with Confidence’ initiatives really successful – ‘Travel with Confidence’ adopted countywide. Successful summer town centre entertainment programme was rolled out to bring vitality to the High Street, whilst promoting

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 October – Traffic Marshals agreed to be in place until January 2021 • 19 October – Safe reopening messaging ongoing, including more locally focussed Covid comms week • 23 October – Long-term strategy for High Street traffic control considered at RCB • October – Halloween and Christmas planning ongoing e.g. entertainers • October – replace summer planters with winter ones to aid social distancing 		<p>Covid-19 safety messages. Covid-19 action week taken place during October 2020 to reinforce messages and guidance to businesses and households.</p> <p>Communications to residents and visitors continues to be subject to government guidance and will be updated and tailored accordingly but with knowledge / understanding of the Watford community and local context.</p>
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, 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.	Survive (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 29 June - Business Information Hub launched and communications circulated ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet, including merging virtual Covid-19 group with SME business Connect ✓ 25 September – Wenta support programme proposal approved by Renewal Coordination Board ✓ 8 October – Final virtual Covid-19 Forum • 19 October – Wenta business support programme to launch • End November – Launch of OneWatford for Business • End November – Relaunch of SME Business Connect 	On track	Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented by the end of the year to ensure that the council is best placed to support the many successful smaller businesses and business owners across the town.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End November – Relaunch Developers’ Forum • February/March 2021 - annual symposium for Business 		
4. Attract and retain big business in Watford	Recognising the importance of big businesses to local 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.	Thrive (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July – 50 key businesses identified ✓ 10 August – Business CRM tender underway ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet ✓ 24 August – Key Accounts Programme approach approved ✓ 4 September - Leadership Team account managers assigned to businesses ✓ 14 September – CRM supplier appointed ✓ 07 October – existing contacts added to CRM ✓ 09 October – CRM contract • 16 October – Introduction emails to initial 20 businesses • 02 November – CRM live • Late November – Next Big Business Connect forum to review the Council Plan, Local Plan and 50 key accounts programme for business 	On track	50 key accounts process approach agreed and onboarding now underway. All businesses will have regular interactions with senior council officers, with contract recorded on the business CRM system. Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented by the end of the year to ensure that the town attracts and retains major employers for Watford residents.
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	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 and Q2 - Spatial Options development • Q3 and Q4 - Prepare Issues and Options document and gain Political agreement to consult 	On track	Continuing to contribute to the development of a strategic approach to growth in SW Hertfordshire including Watford, Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and St Albans through ongoing work with the Hertfordshire Growth Board.

	<p>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.</p>				
<p>COMMITMENT Create thriving and affordable neighbourhoods and the right environment for business to flourish</p>		<p>Project</p>	<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>1. Progress our plans for the High Street North and Cultural Hub</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>High Street North</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q2 2020 - North High Street Regeneration Study • Q3 – Q4 2020 – Identified programme of developments and strategy with the aim of identifying delivery partner/s to take scheme forward and quick wins • Q3 2020 – Approval and sign off by Cabinet • Q3 – Q4 2020 - Commencement of procurement of development partner(s) to help deliver initial development opportunities together with entering into MoUs with partners for future phases of development • Q3 –Q4 2020 – Detailed feasibility and discussions with stakeholders with the aim of agreeing a MOU 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Business Cases are due to be reviewed by Cabinet on 30 November following the initial regeneration study work. Significant work has been made to align the regeneration programme with the review of the council's existing Cultural Strategy, which is due to be review by Cabinet, also on 30 November.</p>

<p>2. Develop Watford Business Park</p>	<p>We will develop Watford Business Park to create new, high quality business space and employment opportunities for local people.</p>	<p>Watford Business Park (Zone A)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2020 - Secure vacant possession and submit detailed planning application/commence intrusive surveys/demolition. • Q4 2020 – Tender for design and build contractor and secure Cabinet approval to appoint • Q1-4 2021 – Construction and preletting campaign on Gateway Zone • Q4 2020 – Q4 2021 – Identify further regen/commercial activities and present outline business cases to the council’s Commercial Income and Investment Board 	<p>Delivery re-profiled as a result of Covid- 19</p>	<p>In order to support businesses as much as possible, the council moved the vacant possession date, which was originally anticipated to conclude on 30 June 2020. With lockdown preventing businesses from making arrangements to relocate, this was re-programmed to 30 September 2020, allowing businesses a further three months to find suitable relocation premises. Given the impact to date of Covid 19 there is a delivery risk, which is being monitored.</p>
<p>3. Create new neighbourhoods at Riverwell</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Riverwell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2020 – Planning obtained for the Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and Family Housing and tenders issued. Development of legal agreements • Q3-4 2020 – Agree marketing strategy & potential turnkey development proposals for industrial zone north and progress to preparing detailed planning application • Q3-4 2020 – To complete enabling works including utility diversions on site • Q1 2021 – Let contract and start on site for Phase 1 of Family Housing • Q1/4 2020 – To continue to develop plans for remaining development zones and their integration into the hospital refurbishment/redevelopment plans 	<p>On track</p>	<p>A turn-key development opportunity currently being prepared to market for Industrial Zone North. Northern Zone Enabling works currently on site. The LABV are currently negotiating terms with West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust (WHHT) to fund, operate and maintain the MSCP whilst the LABV will provide Development and Project Management services</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3 2020 – To have achieved the sale of all remaining residential units at Woodlands and initiate sale of ground lease. Advise Elections team accordingly. Q4 2020 – To have commenced works on site on MSCP Q3/4 2020 – Ongoing monitoring of site development through liaison with Bellway Homes and Mayfield Q3-4 2020 – Liaise with HCC on legal agreements and delivery of school and ensure timetable accords with longstop 		<p>Master-planning coordination workshops scheduled between WHHT and the LABV</p> <p>Contract tendering for Phase 1 of Family Housing currently underway with returns due at the end of November.</p> <p>Last remaining units at Woodlands currently being marketed with final completions targeted for December 2020.</p>
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.	Surplus Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3 2020 to Q4 2020– Review options for identified small sites across the town and engage on their potential future 	On track	Whole range of council sites being reviewed to ensure that they work for our communities. The Commercial Income and Investment Board has been created to oversee ongoing progress in relation to the council’s surplus sites programme.
COMMITMENT Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments to create successful, well-designed new communities		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
1. Achieve the right long-term balance of development,	We will produce and deliver a comprehensive new Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over	Local Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 November – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet January – Consultation underway June ‘21 – Submission to Planning Inspectorate February ‘22 – Local Plan adopted 	On track	New timetable agreed in October due to staff transition and need for additional evidence. On track to new

<p>services and transport links for our town</p>	<p>the next 30 years and make sure that key development sites are underpinned with creative and well-considered masterplans. We will work with other Hertfordshire Councils on long term spatial plans for Hertfordshire.</p>				<p>timetable which will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years.</p>
<p>2. Champion high quality design in Watford</p>	<p>Through the creation of a Design Panel, use of our 3D model and developing planning guidance, we will expand how the council's planning function ensures that proposed development proposal designs are of a high quality.</p>	<p>Place Shaping Panel / Watford 3D Urban Model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q1 2020 - Finalise 3D model ✓ Q1 2020 – Set up and induct the Place Shaping Design Panel • Q2 2020 - Finalise platform for 3D model • Q3 2020 - Go Live Watford Urban Design 3D model • Q2-Q4 2020– Hold regular panel meeting on a monthly basis 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Place Shaping Panel recruited and 3D model finalised, both of which will ensure that high quality design is exemplified across the borough.</p>
<p>3. Develop the Watford Junction Quarter</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Watford Junction Quarter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 August - Supplementary planning document for site adopted ✓ Q2 2020 – Submit funding bid to Herts Growth Board for infrastructure interventions • Q3 2020 – Complete investigations on what access connections and interlinkages are required to open up the rail lands and what the costs are • Q3 2020 – Inform Strategic Development Area within Local Plan • Q3 and 4 2020 – Working with partners to promote development of mutually beneficial schemes • Q1 to Q4 2020 – Working with Network Rail to delivery improvements to Watford Junction station and design a publicly accessible pedestrian link across the rail lines 	<p>On track</p>	<p>The council continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders to support the development of the Watford Junction area with significant milestones planned over the next period.</p>

COMMITMENT Make sure we have quality homes to meet the needs of residents, including housing that is affordable through ownership, private rental and social housing		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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.	Deliver Our Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q2 2021 – Complete draft document by end September 2021 Q3 2021 - consultation stakeholders, members by end December 2021 Q4 2021 – Approval of final draft by Cabinet and Council by end June 2022 	On track	Creation of Housing Strategy on track for development throughout 2021 which will provide a clear direction and focus to ensure that the town has affordable and good quality homes for Watford residents.
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.	External Wall Insulation Warmer Homes Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards BEIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2020 – June 2021 - Delivery of project on site August 2021 - Project evaluation and close November: Promotion materials and processes completed and scheme advertised. Scheme commences on site. Scheme runs through winter and demand tails off May 2021 1 July 2021 – to 31 March 2022 	On track	A number of initiatives identified to support private sector housing renewal over the period of the Delivery Plan. This will be an ongoing programme led by the council's Community Protection team and will ensure that the quality and standard of homes for local residents across the borough are improved.

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.	Strategic Housing Partnerships	Continuous assessment of effective partnership arrangements and practices	On track	The council already works closely with a number of organisations to ensure that it provides quality homes for Watford residents and assessment of the effective partnership arrangements is already underway.
COMMITMENT Build on our new, greener ways to travel in and around Watford and promote the transition to a low carbon economy.		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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.	Sustainable Travel Town	✓ September – Board, PID and task developed • November - Develop detailed project plan milestones • 30 November - Public engagement on vision • 2 March '21 - draft strategy presented to Portfolio Holders • June '21 – Final Strategy approved	On track	Initial Project Board formed and held to provide ongoing focus to the council's commitment for sustainable transport. Initial discussions with HCC to be held to agree approvals process across 2 LA tiers and plans in place for public engagement to inform the final strategy.
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,	Demand Responsive Transport	✓ 1 July – ArrivaClick demand responsive transport system launched	Complete	Reduced service launched on 1 July to ensure conformity with social distancing requirements

	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.	LCWIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3 2020 - Prepare draft document for consultation Q3 2020 – Undertake public consultation Q4 2020 - review of comments received and adopt plan Q4 2020 - Begin implementation 	On track	In line with the significant work already undertaken to the council’s draft Local Plan, further plans have been developed to engage closely with Watford residents on additional plans for improving the cycling and walking network across the town.
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.	Mass-Rapid Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021/22 – HGB bid to Govt for funding 2021/22 – Feasibility Studies contribution to engaging consultation 	On track	High Level early stage discussions held with HCC and their consultants. Further milestones will be developed as the project progresses.
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	Low Carbon Transport Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3/Q4 2020 – Land acquisition discussions and proposals Q3 2020 – Consider funding options to progress 	On track	In line with the newly formed Sustainable Transport Board and the council’s ongoing commitment to invest in sustainable transport for Watford residents, high level

	congestion and improving air quality for everyone.				plans are continuing to investigate opportunities to create a low-carbon transport hub in Watford Town Centre. Key milestones in place over the next period which will help to establish future works.
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.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 September – New waste and recycling service launched • Q2-3 2020 – Warmer homes scheme underway • Q3-4 2020 – Review of EPC’s in our community buildings and undertake appropriate works where appropriate to improve energy efficiency and sustainable development • Q3 2020 – Funding bid to the Energy Trust for the wider roll out of electric vehicle charging • Q3-4 2020 – Implement e-car club at Harebreaks Car Park • Q1 2021 – Local Nature Reserve biodiversity action plans to be reviewed and funding opportunities identified • Q2 2021 – External wall insulation project for private sector housing complete 	On track	There a number of initiatives and projects underway to ensure that the council can meet the target of net zero carbon by 2030. This includes many of the innovative sustainable transport initiatives listed above, although the individual milestones have not been listed against this commitment. It should also be noted that a whole range of activities were agreed by Cabinet in March 2020 as part of the approval of the council’s Sustainability Strategy, which provides a detailed view of all the activities being undertaken to meet their commitment.
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 council plans, we will reduce our use of single use	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2020 - Tender for new waste and recycling vehicles with the aim of awarding contracts by March 2021. • Q3-4 2020 – Review EPC’s in our community buildings and undertake appropriate works 	On track	Sustainable activities integrated into Service Plans across the Council. Work ongoing to establish a single plan of activity but initial milestones captured against this commitment, all of which continue to run on track and aligns with the council’s

	plastics, lead by example on low carbon travel and carry out energy audits of our council buildings.		where appropriate to improve energy efficiency and sustainable development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q4 2020 prepare report for Leadership Board on the expansion of the electric vehicle charging scheme at the Town Hall		approved Sustainability Strategy.,
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THEME 3: A healthy and happy town

Key achievements over this period

- Oxhey Activity Park opened to the public, including a BMX track, children’s playground, skate park, café and wildflower meadow
- Watford Rough Sleeper Task Force launched with attendees from a large number of agencies who all committed to work collectively and operationally to provide packages of accommodation and support for individual rough sleepers that enables them to leave the streets permanently and sustainably
- Voluntary sector review underway alongside the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group, with significant engagement amongst the sector completed, and a final report to Cabinet on 9 November
- Design team appointed for Woodside Sports Village, a refreshed outdoor space to provide new sports and leisure facilities in the town

Theme BRAG Analysis

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BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
Completed	Completed	1
On track	On track	18
Planning underway	Planning underway	0
Delayed / Unknown	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	2
Total		21

COMMITMENT	Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
Embrace our diversity, heritage and culture to make Watford a place for people to succeed from childhood to old age				
1. Ensure that everyone living in our town has the opportunity to achieve their	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.	Achieving Potential	On track	Whilst this commitment is embedded within all council Service Plans, specific activity is being undertaken by the council’s Democratic
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2021 - Task group to review issues that are important to Watford’s BAME community and develop recommendations for Cabinet • April 2021 – Further milestones will be subject to the above task group work which 		

potential			will then enable these issues to be taken forward by relevant groups, authorities or services, including the council's equalities statement and policy and the street naming policy and process.		Services team who work with a designated task group to develop a range of proposals for consideration by Cabinet.
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.	Heritage Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February '21 – tender and commission consultant March - July '21 – Strategy developed 	On track	Subject to Museum and Heritage Strategy (see below). Anticipate that work will commence in September 2021.
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 and diverse history.	Museum and Heritage Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February '21 – tender and commission consultant March - July '21 – Strategy developed 	On track	Plans for the development of proposals will be subject to the AEA report on the Cultural Strategy, which will allow commencement of proposal development from February 2021 onwards.
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.	Healthy Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December - Dependent on covid restrictions implement a secondary satellite Hub working in conjunction with the main Hub March '21 - Evaluate effectiveness of Hub and develop proposal for sustainable service provision March 2021 	Delivery to be re-profiled	Impact of Covid-19 means that this activity requires re-profiling. However, continuing to explore opportunities for establishment of strong links with additional relevant organisations and partners with some of their services delivered through the Healthy Hub.

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.	Dementia Friendly Town	Milestones to be confirmed with delivery of agreed action plan to be reviewed in the light of Covid-19 and the focus of the council's Community Protection team on working with residents and businesses on preventing the spread of the virus.	Delivery to be re-profiled	Watford already has a reputation as a dementia-friendly town and accreditation has been achieved for a further two years.
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 front line workers and provides opportunities for reflection for all parts of our community.	Watford Together (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 October – Art installation brief for Artists complete 28 October – Design for Cassiobury Peace Garden complete 1 March – Cassiobury Peace garden memorial in place 15 January '21 – Artist commissioned 23 April '21 – Art installation complete 	On track	Agreement that 2020 too early to install memorial and peace garden. However, work is underway to have these in place for Spring 2021. Timelines agreed to align with available resource.
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.	CAMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3 2020 - Prepare tender and appoint consultants Q3/Q4 2020 – Draft document including Public Consultation Q4 (March) – Seek cabinet approval 	On track	Conservation Area Management Plan on track to be developed by the end of the financial year.
COMMITMENT Enable our cultural and creative sectors to flourish		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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.	Watford Together (Road to Renewal Plan)	✓ 6 August – AEA commissioned to provide support in delivery of the council's existing cultural strategy, including our work with the cultural sector	On track	Cultural Strategy delivery support underway with Cultural Leaders engaged and ongoing alignment of the council's cultural ambitions across the town.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review • 5 November – Cultural Leaders group to review AEA report • 30 November – AEA final report to Cabinet 		Cultural Leaders will continue to be engaged in advance of the final report.
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 enhancing the buildings so that they are modern and sustainable.	Watford Colosseum Refurbishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 30 September - RIBA Stage 2 report completed <p>Further milestones subject to the outcome of the final AEA report on the Cultural Strategy, due on 30 November</p>	On track	Cultural Strategy delivery support underway with Cultural Leaders engaged and ongoing alignment of the council’s cultural ambitions across the town. Further work for this commitment will follow the successful completion of the Cultural Strategy work.
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.	Watford Together (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 August – AEA commissioned to provide support in delivery of the council’s existing cultural strategy, including our work with the cultural sector ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review • 5 November – Cultural Leaders group to review AEA report • 30 November – AEA final report to Cabinet 	On track	Cultural Strategy delivery support underway with Cultural Leaders engaged and ongoing alignment of the council’s cultural ambitions across the town. Cultural Leaders will continue to be engaged in advance of the final report.

COMMITMENT 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.		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
1. Complete Oxhey Activity Park	We will deliver Oxhey Activity Park, an exciting new venue for skateboarding, BMX and cycling, combined with a café and community facilities.	Oxhey Activity Park	✓ 7 September – Practical completion	Complete	Oxhey Activity Park opened in September. Project will remain open for 3 months to resolve any snagging issues.
2. Create Woodside Sports Village	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.	Woodside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ April 2020 – Design Brief to procure consultants ✓ Sept 2020 - Appoint design team • October 2021 - onwards detailed design, planning and procurement to begin on site in late 2021 	On track	Design team recently appointed following procurement process. Detailed design now underway to create a new and existing space for residents across the town.
3. Revitalise the River Colne	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.	Reclaiming the River Colne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April '20 - March '21 – River improvement plans developed, funding streams assessed • April '21 – river works / site improvements 	On track	Work on detailed plans underway. Subsequent milestones will be subject to this initial tranche of work.
4. Improve our local parks	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	Park Enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April '21 – commission Landscape architect • July '21 – site works 	On track	Works continually ongoing and 12 green flags issued to Watford Parks in 2020. Further milestones on future parks improvements to be

	exercise and spend time together and enhance the biodiversity of the town.				identified through the planning process.
5. Enhance our public spaces	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.	Clarendon Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q1 2020 – Construction works ongoing from St Johns Road to Station Road ✓ Q1 2020 - One way traffic flow Beechen Grove and St Johns Road for 9 months ✓ Q3 2020 – 2nd Phase starts • 2022/23 – Completion of all works • 2023/2024 Defects Correction period • 2024/25 Handback the completed project to Highway Authority, Herts County Council 	On track	A number of public realm schemes are already underway. Significant improvement works have already been undertaken in Clarendon Road with the second phase of these works commencing recently. Improvements to the Watford Junction are also almost complete and significant works are ongoing in St Albans Road to improve the street scene and access for residents and visitors to the many businesses.
		Watford Junction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q2 2020 – Implementation of scheme • Q3 2020 – Completion of scheme • 2021-22 Defects Correction Period • 2023 Hand back the completed project to Network Rail 		
		St Albans Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q2 2020 – HCC permits & Technical agreement • Construction • Q3 2020 – Completion • Q3 2020 – Q3 2022 Defects Correction period (HCC required a 2 year period) • Q4 2022 – Sign off and handover of highway back to County 		
		Streets Improvement Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July '21 - Develop selection criteria, community and stakeholder engagement • August '21 - Commence role out of project and engagement/ partnership working 		

COMMITMENT Work even more closely with the voluntary and community sector, to build a resilient community where people support each other		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September '21 - Project delivery phase May '22 - Evaluation and close of project 		
1. Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need	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.	Watford Helps (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 21 August – Voluntary Sector Specialist recruited ✓ 21 September – Review approach approved by Informal Cabinet and engagement underway ✓ 8 October – Internal review of draft strategy • 9 November – Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	Review on track with further actions subject to the outcome of the work currently underway. The significant Covid-19 volunteer response led by the council has underpinned the review with much positive feedback already received about the strong community spirit across the town.
2. Ensure our community buildings benefit local residents	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.	Community Asset Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October '20 - Completion of review of all buildings – Includes Condition Surveys and schedules of work • October '20 - Agree standardised form of lease • November '20 - Policy approval and begin implementation 	On track	Corporate Asset Management team undertaking condition surveys and reviews of all community buildings, due to be completed this month.
3. Ensure a safer Watford	We will work with partners and use our statutory powers to ensure that Watford is a safe place for all our residents.	One Watford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 28 July – Review approach, working with the LGA to undertake remote peer support, agreed ✓ 12 October – All One Watford members notified in relation to review 	On track	Review programme now confirmed and initial engagement with all members of the One Watford Board. Review

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 October – Review programme finalised • 17 November – Peers attend One Watford • 1-3 December – Review undertaken • 1 April '21 – Review recommendations implemented 		planned between 1 – 3 December, with the outputs ensuring that One Watford continues to serve residents as effectively as possible.
COMMITMENT Work with partners to end rough sleeping and help people enjoy better lives		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
1. Achieve and maintain zero rough sleepers on the streets on 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.	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy approved • Q3 2020 MHCLG Rough Sleepers Initiative funding application – submission Nov/Dec 2020 • Q4 2020/21: NSAP revenue funding spent by end March 2021 • Q4 2020/21: NSAP capital funding spent by end March 2021 • Q4 2020/21: Work with HCC re best use of housing related support funding by end March 2021 • Q4 2020/21 – Open complex needs scheme • Q3 2021/22: Have zero rough sleepers on streets of Watford 	On track	It should be noted the Homelessness Strategy contains a significant number of initiatives, milestones and objectives – the list contained within this report is not exhaustive with more detailed reporting on delivery of Strategy provided to HPAG. However, this does provide an overview of the significant progress already made in this field over the last few months, where there has been a significant focus on supporting those who find themselves homeless and sleeping on the streets.

<p>2. Support our residents with more complex needs and housing requirements</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Complex Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q1 2020 – Source Support Service Provider • Q3 2020 – Sign Support Contract with provider • Q3 2020 – Implementation of works • Q4 2021 - Completion 	<p>On track</p>	<p>The Complex Needs project has been initiated and Project Manager assigned. Work is underway with the support service provider to develop the scheme in line with the implementation plan</p>
<p>3. Continue partnership working</p>	<p>We will work with partners to ensure there are no rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.</p>	<p>Rough sleeping and homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July – Homelessness Strategy approved by Cabinet ✓ 14 July - Information shared on training, secondment and shared learning opportunities provided at Watford Strategic Homeless Forum ✓ 14 July - Watford Rough Sleeping Taskforce was launched 	<p>On track</p>	<p>The Watford Rough Sleeping Taskforce is continuing to meet on a monthly basis focusing on hard-to-engage individuals and agreeing a multi-agency approach to focused and bespoke support, working with the council’s designated Rough Sleepers Coordinator</p>

Watford Borough Council Organisational Development Strategy

Progress Update

Theme 1 – Workforce Health and Wellbeing

Key Achievements over this period

- Pilot on-line wellbeing questionnaire (Wellbeing with Cari) trialled with Environmental health department and followed up with 1:1 personal coaching sessions.
- Wellbeing with Cari rolled out to all employees as a method of reviewing wellbeing.
- Regular communication with staff on Wellbeing initiatives.
- Agreement that all people managers will attend a training event to give them information about spotting signs of Mental Health issues amongst employees.
- Access given to all staff to a video library containing short films of how to improve your health in the workplace.
- Meetings to discuss common issues have taken place with Mental Health First Aiders.
- Additional Mental Health first Aiders are being recruited and trained.

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Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	0
	On track	11
	Planning underway	1
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	1
Total		13

COMMITMENT Focus on tackling stigma associated with mental health		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Take steps to improve the number of managers who feel confident to spot the early warning signs of mental health and have the skills to manage those conversations	All managers to be trained in how to spot signs of mental health issues with Remploy providing relevant training course which will consist of 2 x 2hr on-line face to face group training.	By 21 March 2021	On track	7 dates now arranged in Nov and Dec 2020. Notification has been sent to managers for them to book an appropriate date.
Mental health first aid training for colleagues, enabling them to spot the signs and offer support.	Mental Health First Aiders to be accessible.	By 1 March 2021	On track	On-line e-learning courses available to all staff together with an online consulting tool - CARI Wellbeing is an on-line wellbeing assessment that personalises feedback and points to the correct intervention.
Tackle stigma around mental health issues or declaring a disability by encouraging open conversations	Increase awareness of policies and use of on-line material to ensure staff have knowledge to recognise when help is required.	By 1 December 2020	Planning underway	We will liaise with Mental Health Champions and First Aiders to recognise the individual needs of employees who may be reluctant to share concerns. Draft communications for staff as part of an awareness programme.

COMMITMENT Support personal and professional growth in health subjects		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Continue to grow and develop "Watford Health and You" resources.	Intranet pages to be updated with information on a regular basis.	By 1 September 2022	On track	The intranet information is reviewed on a monthly basis and updates added for staff.
Create and publicise a range of opportunities to learn and build good habits on health and wellbeing topics so our people can access e-learning and interactive, habit changing sessions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Factors affecting wellbeing at work (control and autonomy) - Food, sleep and exercise - Financial health 	Identify e-learning opportunities and ensure they are advertised and accessible via the i-Learn platform.	By 1 September 2021	On track	New resources are constantly being identified and added to our library accessible through the intranet. Communications sent out to staff regarding the new material available.
Use focus groups to develop a health and wellbeing programme – with access to a number of health and improvement areas.	Design and Launch a programme with feedback from group. Ensure there is resilience and a feeling of wellbeing amongst staff, as measured by Wellbeing Survey. Increased staff satisfaction and motivation as measured by staff survey.	By 1 Sept 2021	On track	Mental Health First Aiders and Champions group established and meeting on a monthly basis to discuss wellbeing issues and help identify trends which are then reviewed by the Leadership Board.

COMMITMENT Ensure our occupational health and employee assistance offering is high quality and accessible to all		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Continued promotion of the benefits of the Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health services.	Regular ongoing communication to take place to ensure all staff are aware of external support that is available.	By 1 April 2023	On track	Intranet resources are regularly updated and communication for staff pointing to these resources.
COMMITMENT Craft great roles where our people feel in control over the best way to deliver their work and feel well supported to do so		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure that all of our people have access to "job crafting" training, so that they can develop skills to enhance flow, productivity, engagement and wellbeing.	Develop a process whereby employees have an opportunity to review the effectiveness of their role so that they can learn how to identify improvements and any new skills required.	By 1 April 2021	Delivery re-profiled	Work to be fully scoped so that it also links in with Values and Behaviours project.
Ensure our leadership programmes emphasise the importance of engaging and co-designing work so all of our people feel able to contribute new ideas and instigate new and better ways of doing things.	Key competencies to be identified and incorporated into updated Leadership Programme.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Input required from Values and Behaviours project to ensure a joined up approach.
Support teams to regularly pause and reflect on their work. Discussions should be around how to optimise team effectiveness and create a psychologically safe workspace.	Develop a pro-forma to be used in team discussion to identify team successes and process improvement opportunities.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Focus groups using managers and staff ambassadors to be created to input into the pro forma and contribute other ideas and suggestions for the delivery of this objective.

COMMITMENT Champion physical health		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Adopt Public Health England workplace health standards and refresh our HR policies.	Review policies and procedures to ensure they are compliant with standards Ensure managers are confident in the support they can give their teams Benchmark or standards against other organisations.	By 1 April 2022	On track	Policies regularly reviewed and interim policies, to reflect the covid-19 situation are introduced, for example interim Smarter Working policy. Policies will also be compared to PHE standards to identify gaps and improvements required.
Evaluation of pilot health check programme (environmental health).	Gain feedback from provider on common issues that need to be addressed.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Pilot took place in June 2020 with approx. 50% take up by staff. Benefits to be re-evaluated after 6 months (Dec 2020).
Rollout of health check programme across the wider council	Collate and analyse anonymised data from system to identify any trends.	By 1 April 2021	On track	'Wellbeing with CARI' rolled out to all staff in July 2020. Quarterly review due. Links to assessment have been added to all Mental Health and Wellbeing newsletters.

Theme 2 – An Organisation Driven by Values and Behaviours

This part of the plan was deferred during summer 2020 whilst there was ongoing debate regarding the potentially imminent implementation of Local Government Reform in Hertfordshire. Deferral was necessary so to ensure resources could be deployed to support any future change programme associated with structural reform.

At the point of deferral the position of the MHCLG was that in September 2020 the government would be publishing the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper, which would redefine the way in which local government serves by establishing the unitisations of councils as the first step for negotiating devolution deals. The White Paper has not been published, and the local government secretary Robert Jenrick has now stated an intention to invite unitary proposals from a small number of areas, which do not include Hertfordshire. In parallel the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council has indicated his intention to focus on the existing Growth Board model to secure devolution for Hertfordshire. As it is now unlikely that we will see any changes within the short/medium term to local government structures in Hertfordshire, this part of the Delivery plan is being re-profiled in Quarter 3 and new delivery dates will be agreed.

Theme BRAG Analysis – re -profiled during Quarter 3

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BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
Completed	Completed	
On track	On track	
Planning underway	Planning underway	
Delayed / Unknown	Delayed / Unknown	
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	
Total		

Theme 3 – Become an Agile Organisation

Key Achievements over this period

- A scoping document has been produced and additional resources have recently been allocated to this project

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	0
	On track	11
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	6
Total		17

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COMMITMENT		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Optimise choice over when and where our people work				
Team based review of processes, learning and ways of working pre-, during and post-crisis.	Each team agrees how they will work going forward, with a formal date for reflection and review.	This area of work forms part of the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and, therefore, future milestones will reflect the overall programme for this project.	Delivery re-profiled	The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the majority of staff working remotely for an indefinite period. Further work on this commitment will form part of the change programme, which is part of the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project.

<p>Deliberate decisions and actions are taken to retain and embed ways of working that support agility</p>	<p>Each team participates in a simple team reflection session. A focus on what to stop, drop, continue, and re-energise, post COVID-19.</p>	<p>This area of work forms part of the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and, therefore, future milestones will reflect the overall programme for this project.</p>	<p>Delivery re-profiled</p>	<p>Flexible working is in place with staff working at home to suit their own personal situations. Managers are checking in with staff and ensuring key activities continue. Longer term plans will align with the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project.</p>
<p>Teams and the wider organisation agree what agile working is, and could be, so there is clarity (for example, in future, will 100% homeworking be acceptable for some roles?)</p>	<p>Clarity as to what agile working is, and recognition that “one size does not fit all” in each service – tested through the staff survey. “Challenge sessions” in LB where leaders can challenge each other, with a view to optimising an agile mind-set (at least every quarter).</p>	<p>This area of work forms part of the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and, therefore, future milestones will reflect the overall programme for this project</p>	<p>Delivery re-profiled</p>	<p>Project underway to identify how we will define an Agile environment and the activities required to get there. This is part of the wider Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and will, therefore, engage with this project as it is taken forward, reflecting key milestones.</p>
<p>Creation of agile champions. Teams, leaders and staff who can share their experiences (this becomes a recognised badge of honour).</p>	<p>Publication of case studies (at least every quarter). Reward and recognition of best practice.</p>	<p>This area of work forms part of the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and, therefore, future milestones will reflect the overall programme for this project</p>	<p>Delivery re-profiled</p>	<p>Delivery dates to be reviewed as project start-up has been delayed due to covid. This is part of the wider Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and will, therefore, engage with this project as it is taken forward, reflecting key milestones.</p>
<p>Development of organisational case studies in agility to demonstrate the art of the possible in different types of teams.</p>	<p>Agile can be developed in different ways across different teams, the measurement is in team members feeling that they have some control and autonomy of when, where and how they work, in the context of their department, as measured the staff survey</p>	<p>This area of work forms part of the Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and, therefore, future milestones will reflect the overall programme for this project</p>	<p>Delivery re-profiled</p>	<p>Delivery dates to be reviewed as project start-up has been delayed due to covid. This is part of the wider Town Hall Cultural Quarter project and will, therefore, engage with this project</p>

				as it is taken forward, reflecting key milestones.
COMMITMENT Design ways of working that challenge and further develop an agile mind-set		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
People policies (particularly health and safety and flexible working) are reviewed to optimise agile working	Policies reviewed, signed off and publicised. Flexibility and responsiveness that was demonstrated during crisis is replicated and embedded post-crisis and reflected in our policies.	By 31 March 2021	On track	Interim Smarter Working (Agile) policy introduced. Other policies have already been reviewed updated and published. Remaining policies that need to be reviewed have been identified and an action plan for review in place.
Align our annual review (appraisal) process with our succession planning and staff development approach	Incorporate our staff's interests in deepening their understanding of other parts of the council and from this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a register of interests of individuals who wish to gain exposure or experience in another area • Be considered for a secondment or temporary promotion opportunity 	By 31 March 2021	On track	Line managers to discuss and record as part of their regular catch up sessions. HR to build a database of individuals' interest and to contact relevant managers with opportunities required and available
Re-design and delivery of project teams, where staff are chosen because of their functional role or experience. Instead, there will be a deliberate move to encourage people to work on projects because of their interest and potential.	Establish a direct link to a new Leadership Development programme. This will result in a record take-up of project roles in different areas of the business.	By 31 March 2021	On track	i-perform launched 1 October as new check-in (1:1 meetings) and annual review platform. This will incorporate development discussions and a section for recording skills to kick start the central database of staff skills and abilities.

Creation of opportunities to pilot new approaches to agile working service models and solutions, with clear evaluation criteria	There will be a swift response to new demand. We will initially test on small scale, engaging users, gathering insight and learning what will work on a larger scale e.g. possible focus on digital solutions	By 31 March 2021	On track	Bi-monthly Team reflection exercises to identify and test opportunities to change processes that increase productivity
COMMITMENT Supporting the development of digital		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Support colleagues to improve their digital skills using a blend of face to face and online channels	Assessment of our workforce digital learning requirements as we roll out digital solutions for our communities.	By 1 August 2021 Scoping has commenced and key milestones are being finalised for Quarter 3	On track	Develop a programme of courses that will increase awareness and use of digital technologies
Creation of a digital mentor programme which buddies up “technophobes with techno geeks” promoting digital and potentially intergenerational learning	Number of successful buddying relationships established.	By 31 March 2021 Scoping has commenced and key milestones are being finalised for Quarter 3	On track	Through i-Perform process identify experts in their field and encourage them to become mentors for those developing in their roles.
Creation of “digital champions” clustered around our most popular digital hard and software (such as 8x8). Champions will be available to share their knowledge and learning, informally with colleagues across the Council.	Digital champions established and regularly publicised and supported to help and coach others.	By 31 March 2021 Scoping has commenced and key milestones are being finalised for Quarter 3	On track	Identify champions in their specialist areas and publicise their availability to help those in need of increasing their knowledge and confidence.

COMMITMENT Break down silos across teams		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Creation of an annual service roadshow – an opportunity for our staff to show case to each other the work they are doing, and learn more about different parts of the Council	Roadshow takes place, is vibrant, well attended and evaluates well	By 30 June 2021	Delivery re-profiled	The Roadshow concept (which is usually face to face) needs to be reviewed to take into account the current restrictions placed upon us by the Covid-19 pandemic.
Review and re-design of corporate and local induction to reduce silo working and set expectations from the outset, to include:	Time spent in the CSC, as the face of the Council will be mandatory for all new starters. Each new starter will spend a minimum of two days working directly with at least two teams that their new role will require them to interface with, in the first 12 weeks of their employment.	By 31 March 2021	On track	Agreement in principle from CSC to host new starters but Covid-19 rules resulting in home working may restrict some activities.
A commitment that all staff, irrespective of their role or level in the organisation, can spend up to five days per year, working in, or shadowing in another department, to improve their understanding and make important links.	Take up of developmental opportunity to work in another department or team. An opportunity to blog and share their learning and experience, to encourage take up.	1 April 2021	On track	Pro-forma being designed and distributed to all department managers to identify work shadowing opportunities in their direct area. Details of all opportunities to be shared on intranet so that managers can arrange.
Creation of “partnership timeouts” where different parts of the Council who are internal customers to each other, can come together, review ways of working and reflect on how the customer transfers seamlessly between teams.	Creation of tool which can be used by teams who often interface to identify process improvements. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the work of different teams and departments and have greater insight and awareness of the impact of their work on other teams.	By 1 September 2021 Scoping has commenced and key milestones are being finalised for Quarter 3	On track	Tool to be developed at start of new year to reflect the working arrangements in force at the time.

<p>In recognition that silos take place in hierarchy, as well as across teams, take steps to empower front line teams and individuals to take action and make changes to practices, for the benefit of their customers.</p>	<p>Creation and delivery of OD tools to support leaders to encourage the whole team, irrespective of role or grade to lead innovation and service change (measured by the staff survey?). Staff should contribute ideas and suggestions for change and take decisions for the benefit of their customers.</p>	<p>By 1 September 2021 Scoping has commenced and key milestones are being finalised for Quarter 3</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Tool to be developed at start of new year to reflect the working arrangements in force at the time.</p>
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Theme 4 – Performance and Staff Development

Key Achievements over this period

- Roll out of i-Perform to all staff which will help with the staff performance review

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	0
	On track	12
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	2
Total		14

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COMMITMENT		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
We will create a strong development process				
Design and implementation of development programmes linked to succession planning and building organisational resilience	Proactive management of individuals to ensure stretch, personal development and improve likelihood of retention Identification of business critical roles, vacancy risk and pipeline prospects for short, medium and long-term Staff Ambassador group and management forums to discuss, benchmark and review current data	By 31 December 2020	Delivery re-profiled	The new Leadership programme will also have links to the values and behaviours expected. As this is still in progress (see Theme 2) the will be a slight knock on effect with some sections of the programme.

Revise and refresh our development offering for all staff to facilitate good quality performance management, set clear objectives linked with our Council Plan and reflect how our organisational values are being demonstrated. Need to focus on the WHAT and HOW part of the role	Roll out of refreshed development approach 100% of staff and managers have completed their annual reviews with clear objectives set and a personal development plan in place	By 1 April 2021	On track	Launch of new i-Perform system will support the identification of development areas for staff and support the introduction of clear objectives, regularly reviewed within the i-perform platform. The HOW part will also link with the development of new values and behaviours – how we expect staff to behave.
Support the recruitment and retention of apprentices to the council.	Increase the number of council apprentices.	By 1 April 2021	On track	There is agreement to recruit 6 apprentices across the council and this is on-going; however the current restrictions on office working due to covid will need to be considered when reviewing the management and supervision of new apprentices. Given Covid-19 this may need to be re-profiled.
Make full use of the apprenticeship levy to support learning and development and career progression.	All funds used. Demonstrable impact of learning for the individual and the organisation.	Review by 1 April 2021	On track	Subject to the above we are on-target to make full use of the Levy
Develop a comprehensive approach to succession planning which incorporates planning for roles which are: Hard to Fill Business Critical (i.e. a potential single point of failure) Have an ageing workforce profile	Identification of all “single points of failure” roles will be a starting point to prioritise development needs. HR to create a central list so that risks can be identified.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Pro-forma developed that will enable HR Business Partners to collect information from relevant line managers.

<p>HRBP's to hold information of who can step into each role at short notice.</p>	<p>Ensure there are no "Single Points of Failure" within the workforce.</p>	<p>By 30 March 2021</p>	<p>Delivery re-profiled</p>	<p>In response to the ongoing Covid-19 situation a bank of staff who could be redeployed to support the pandemic management strategy have been identified. This work has been underpinned by a new policy. Further work will be undertaken during Quarters 3 and 4 regarding the risk associated with single points of failure.</p>
<p>We will work with partners to explore opportunities to create a comprehensive graduate and / or degree placement programmes, designed to attract and retain high calibre graduates</p>	<p>Successful programme in place with strong feedback from graduates.</p>	<p>By 1 September 2021</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Partner with LGA to join their 2021 NGDP (national graduate development programme). Initial expression of interest to be submitted and final decision on inclusion required before 31st March 2021.</p>
<p>COMMITMENT Prioritise the development of all of our people</p>		<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>Build in the concept of "everyone is a leader at Watford" into our recruitment and on-boarding programmes, as well as our work with colleagues at all levels of the organisation</p>	<p>Currently, 32% of staff survey respondents feel that they cannot contribute to ideas for improvement / ways to do things differently (and another 3% didn't know). Success to be measured by a statistically significant improvement in staff survey results.</p> <p>Support in first line leadership, middle leadership and senior leadership programmes, emphasising the benefits and risks of leadership styles that lead to constant improvement.</p>	<p>By 1 August 2022</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Scoping commenced for consideration in Quarters 3 and 4. When launched the new Leadership programme will contain a module on Continuous Process Improvement to highlight that everyone can contribute to improvements. (See commitment above to develop a strong development process). Induction programme being updated to include session on looking into process and service improvements.</p>

<p>Review training and promotion data by workforce profile, so that we can assure ourselves that under-represented groups are both accessing the development required and successfully achieving promotions, in our organisation.</p>	<p>Assurance that under-represented groups access the same level of development and achieve promotion at the same rate as all staff.</p>	<p>By 1 August 2022</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Scoping commenced for consideration in Quarters 3. New HR system (that will become live by April 2021) will contain updated information on the characteristics of the workforce. This will enable detailed analysis of where to highlight development opportunities to individuals.</p>
<p>Launch and integrate our new performance review system, i-Perform for regular 1:1 check –ins and annual reviews (appraisal) so that all staff feel it’s a worthwhile exercise: - Incorporation of interests and passion, as well as career development discussions. - Use the annual review as an opportunity to nurture all talent, irrespective of grade or role - Carefully link the role back to the objectives of the organisation so that everyone understands how they make a difference</p>	<p>Currently, 18% of our staff feel that the annual review is not of value to them (and a further 8% did not know!). We want our people to look forward and see the value of an annual review. The success will be an improved rating of the quality of the conversation (measured by the staff survey).</p>	<p>By 1 October 2021</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>New i-Perform system launched 1 October 2020 and is available to all staff. Regular reviews will take place to determine its effectiveness. Information on interests will be collected to link in with the development of agile mind-sets (see 2nd commitment in theme 3). The new i-Perform process specifically links personal objectives to that of the organisation. We will be reviewing outputs every quarter to ensure the collected information is relevant.</p>

COMMITMENT We will encourage and actively develop our aspiring leaders		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Our new 'Watford Leads' development programme will build management skills and confidence amongst all team managers and leaders (3rd tier managers).	All 3rd tier managers will complete the course over time. Participants will deliver a specific business improvement project in the workplace. All events to have a cross section of departments represented. Positive feedback from participants. Colleagues feel supported by their manager – measured by the staff survey (baseline to be set following next survey)	By 1 December 2021	On track	While the planning of programme is underway and ideas for holding remotely are considered, the impact of covid must be taken into account. Will be reviewed in early/mid 2021 to determine if face to face courses will be possible.
Introduce a 'first steps to leadership' programme to cover the main principles of leadership and Watford's Council policies and processes.	Course designed. Selection and evaluation approach agreed. Aspiring leaders feel supported to develop their career – measured by course evaluation (baseline to be set). Positive feedback from participants. Improved compliance with corporate policies.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Leadership development has taken place, mainly remotely, with follow up sessions planned. To be reviewed for Heads of Service in early 2021 together with output from Theme 2 - Values and Behaviours project.
COMMITMENT We will create an enviable programme of leadership development		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Pilot and roll -out a new leadership competency framework, that is linked to the annual review process	Managers use feedback to create their personal development plan – measured through performance review scores. Managers visibly demonstrate the qualities set out in the Framework, measured via regular 1; 1 check-in meetings and annual review process.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Pilot complete and roll-out commenced.

	Increased opportunities for secondments and career progression for aspiring leaders – measured by staff survey (baseline to be set)			
Support leaders to link workforce and succession planning – forecasting the type and number of roles and skills needed for the future and create learning and development plans to support their team development.	All leaders received appropriate training tools and support to complete their workforce plans. All services have a workforce plan in place, aligned to the annual business planning cycle.	By 1 April 2021	On track	Review workforce plan with leaders to ensure appropriate individual development plans are in place to satisfy future needs.

Watford Borough Council Road to Renewal Plan

Progress Update

1. Work Stream 1: Community

1.1 Key achievements over this period

- Successful bid for Next Steps Accommodation funding for rough sleepers support allowing the council to continue working towards its commitment of zero rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.
- MHCLG funding of £101,000 for winter shelter and accommodation for rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds obtained for the period October 2020-March 2021 to ensure support for rough sleepers in the coldest months.
- Watford Rough Sleeper Task Force launched with attendees from a large number of agencies who all committed to work collectively and operationally to provide packages of accommodation and support for individual rough sleepers that enables them to leave the streets permanently and sustainably.
- Voluntary sector review underway alongside the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group, with significant engagement amongst the sector completed, and a final report to Cabinet on 9 November to ensure that the council can harness the great community spirit demonstrated throughout the first wave of Covid-19.
- Whole range of additional online resources in place to support residents suffering financial hardship, bereavement or mental health issues as a result of Covid-19.
- Over 1,500 Watford residents supported by the Watford Helps scheme and all residents previously receiving support through lockdown successfully transitioned to self-sufficiency or longer-term support if needed.
- More than £155,000 raised for voluntary and community groups across the town supporting Watford residents with plans underway to ensure that the fund helps support groups long term and in a sustainable way. Additional £10k distributed to local groups providing food support to our community to coincide with October half-term.
- Plans in place to reinstate resident support in the event of a second lockdown so that the council can again support some of the most vulnerable in the community.

1.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
Completed	Completed	7
On track	On track	18
Planning underway	Planning underway	1
Delayed / Unknown	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	2
Total		28

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OBJECTIVE	Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Recognise Watford's fantastic community				
Bring the community together following the lengthy period of isolation caused by Covid-19	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 August – AEA commissioned to provide support in delivery of the council's existing cultural strategy, including our work with the cultural sector ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review • 5 November – Cultural Leaders group to review AEA report • 30 November – AEA final report to Cabinet 	On track	Cultural Strategy delivery support underway with Cultural Leaders engaged and ongoing alignment of the council's cultural ambitions across the town. Cultural Leaders will continue to be engaged in advance of the final report.

			All further milestones to be subject to the outcome of the report and recommendations.		
Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19	Establish memorial and thank you events to recognise the community spirit across the town during the pandemic and to acknowledge the sacrifice made by key workers on behalf of the town, its residents and businesses	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 March '21 – Cassiobury Peace Garden memorial in place 23 April '21 – Arts installation complete 31 March '21 - St Mary's Churchyard Fountain restored 	On track	Planned thank you events on hold subject to government guidance on social distancing. However, progress is underway with other memorial events not impacted by social distancing.
Review our relationship with the voluntary and charitable sector	We will produce and deliver a clear strategy on the ongoing relationship with the voluntary sector	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 21 August – Voluntary Sector Specialist recruited ✓ 21 September – Review approach approved by Informal Cabinet and engagement underway ✓ 8 October – Internal review of draft strategy • 9 November – Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	Review on track with further milestones subject to the outcome of the work currently underway. Significant engagement with the voluntary and community sector has already taken place and will form the basis of the council's ongoing strategy.
Identify the best way to work with volunteers in the future	Through a high level options appraisal, we will build upon the positive volunteer response to Covid-19 by identifying the options available for the long-term management of volunteers across the town, particularly encouraging young people whose education has been impacted	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 21 August – Voluntary Sector Specialist recruited ✓ 21 September – Review approach approved by Informal Cabinet and engagement underway ✓ 8 October – Internal review of draft strategy • 9 November – Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	Review on track with further actions subject to the outcome of the work currently underway. The significant Covid-19 volunteer response led by the council has underpinned the review with much positive feedback already

	by Covid-19 to volunteer within the community				received about the strong community spirit across the town.
Ensure we are best placed to utilise volunteers to support community responses in the future	Using the experience of leading a collective community response to Covid-19, we will ensure that the use of volunteers, subject to the options appraisal recommendations, is included within business continuity plans	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 21 August – Voluntary Sector Specialist recruited ✓ 21 September – Review approach approved by Informal Cabinet and engagement underway ✓ 8 October – Internal review of draft strategy • 9 November – Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	Review on track with further actions subject to the outcome of the work currently underway. All business continuity plans have been updated, learning the lessons from the first wave of Covid-19 and the use of volunteers will be included once the voluntary review has been concluded.
Support our residents living with, or caring for someone living with, dementia	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	Watford Helps	Milestones to be confirmed with delivery of agreed action plan to be reviewed in the light of Covid-19 and the focus of the council's Community Protection team on working with residents and businesses on preventing the spread of the virus.	Delivery to be re-profiled	Watford already has a reputation as a dementia-friendly town and accreditation has been achieved for a further two years.
OBJECTIVE Engage our community in the renewal process		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Work with our community to reflect and commemorate Covid-19	We will engage with community, faith leaders and councillors to identify an appropriate memorial to mark the pandemic and act as a place of reflection for our residents	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 December - Engagement with Watford General Hospital commenced • 1 March '21 – Cassiobury Peace Garden memorial in place • 23 April '21 – Arts installation complete 	On track	Planned thank you events on hold subject to government guidance on social distancing. However, progress is underway with other memorial events not

					impacted by social distancing.
Ensure our residents remain supported after Covid-19	We will work with our partners to clearly understand the process to transition beneficiaries from the support they have received through Covid-19 to longer term support if necessary, to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community are not forgotten when lockdown ends	Watford Helps	✓ 1 August – following closure of Operation Shield all beneficiaries transitioned to longer term support or self-sufficiency, where appropriate.	Complete	This activity has been successfully completed through the transition of beneficiaries as the Watford Help incident cell closed. More than 1,500 Watford residents were helped by the scheme and the Incident Cell remains on stand-by in the event of the tier level escalating to the point where cell needs to remobilise.
Ensure our residents receiving support from partners continue to be supported after Covid-19	We will work with our partners to support mutual aid groups and online communities who have provided support throughout the crisis to ensure that those receiving support from these groups are able to access help over the medium to long term if they require it	Watford Helps	✓ 1 August – following closure of Operation Shield all beneficiaries transitioned to longer term support or self-sufficiency, where appropriate.	Complete	This activity has been successfully completed through the transition of beneficiaries as the Watford Help incident cell closed. Cell remains on stand-by in the event of the tier level escalating to the point where cell needs to remobilise.
Continue to work closely with our community, voluntary and faith groups who contributed to the	We will ensure a seamless transition of the Volunteering Planning Group, chaired by the Elected Mayor so that they can contribute to the renewal of the town, including ensuring that our	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 21 August – Voluntary Sector Specialist recruited ✓ 21 September – Review approach approved by Informal Cabinet and engagement underway 	On track	Review on track with outputs including a recommendation relating to the Volunteering Planning Group so that the positive joint working across

community response to Covid-19	most vulnerable residents continue to receive the support they need		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 8 October – Internal review of draft strategy • 9 November – Strategy approved by Cabinet 		the sector and with council throughout Covid-19 can be harnessed and taken forward long-term.
OBJECTIVE Support and facilitate the ongoing welfare of residents who have suffered hardship, loss and trauma as a result of the pandemic		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure that support is in place for residents with mental health issues	We will work with our partners to ensure that support is in place for residents whose mental health has been impacted by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 November – Gap analysis and funding proposal developed by Watford Community Housing to be presented to the One Watford Strategic Partnership <p>Further milestones will be subject to the outcome of the gap analysis and subsequent indication of where focus is required, in order to best serve Watford residents.</p>	On track	Investigations underway to build upon the capacity provided by the council's Healthy Hub by engaging with the 'New Leaf' project.
Make the best use of online resources to maintain support for our residents	We will utilise the large amount of information collated during the pandemic to ensure that it remains accessible to those who may need support after lockdown and is available in the event of a second wave of the virus or increase in the infection rate	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15 July – Number of online resources available for residents, covering financial hardship, bereavement and mental health issues. ✓ 15 September – Confirmation of approach to managing volunteers and supporting residents in the event of a second wave and online resources updated accordingly. 	Complete	Significant amount of information remains online and accessible for residents. Continual updates ongoing subject to government guidance.
Provide a shared space of remembrance for our residents	We will build upon the now well-recognised Watford Together brand to	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 March '21 – Cassiobury Peace Garden memorial in place 	On track	Plans underway to create a memorial within the Cassiobury Peace Garden as

	establish a shared place of reflection for residents following Covid-19		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 March '21 - St Mary's Churchyard Fountain restored 		a collective place of reflection for residents of all faiths across the town.
Ensure that resources are in place to support those specifically impacted by Covid-19	We will produce online resources to support residents who have suffered financial hardship, bereavement or mental health issues as a result of the pandemic	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15 July – Number of online resources available for residents, covering financial hardship, bereavement and mental health issues. 	Complete	Significant amount of information remains online and accessible for residents to provide ongoing support.
OBJECTIVE Put in place mechanisms to identify those with ongoing vulnerabilities and a strategy for addressing these needs		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure our most vulnerable residents remain supported after Covid-19	Following contact with all those receiving support through Watford and Three Rivers Trust throughout the Pandemic following a referral from the council, we will ensure that all those who have been supported during Covid-19 and lockdown either no longer require support or are referred to an appropriate partner organisation	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 August – following closure of Operation Shield all beneficiaries transitioned to longer term support or self-sufficiency, where appropriate. 	Complete	This activity has been successfully completed through the transition of beneficiaries as the Watford Help incident cell closed. Over 1,500 Watford residents were supported by the Cell. The Cell remains on stand-by in the event of the tier level escalating to the point where cell needs to remobilise.
Address the issue of digital isolation that impacted many in our community as result of Covid-19	We will work with partners to tackle the issue of digital isolation in the community, using new partnerships to drive social value in this area	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April '21 - Project Manager in place June '21 - Options appraisal July '21 – Develop proposal August '21 – Proposal approved September '21 – Deploy approved approach 	On track	Action plan in place following engagement with the voluntary sector through the Elected Mayor's Volunteering Planning Group. Not due to start until

					April 2021 to align with available resource.
Reduce the number of residents impacted by scams	We will ensure that the council provides support and information in relation to financial abuse and online scams which often increase during periods of economic hardship and so may be more prevalent post-Covid	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15 July – Additional information and signposting added to council website, specifically relating to financial abuse and online scams 	Complete	Working with the Elected Mayor’s Volunteering Planning Group, lots of advice, signposting and guidance available on the council website to support and protect residents from financial abuse and online scams.
Achieve and maintain zero rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.	Following approval of our new Homelessness Strategy for Watford, we will enact the specific actions outlined in the document, ensuring that the strategy is 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	Rough Sleeping and Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 30 June - Medium Complex Intensive Support Service (MCISS) opens ✓ 6 July – Homelessness Strategy approved by Cabinet ✓ 14 July - Information shared on training, secondment and shared learning opportunities provided at Watford Strategic Homeless Forum ✓ 14 July - Watford Rough Sleeping Taskforce was launched ✓ 23 September – Next Steps Accommodation funding bid successful ✓ 25 September - MHCLG funding of £101,000 for winter shelter and accommodation for rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds obtained for the period October 2020-March 2021 ✓ 30 September - Application for 20 units of self-contained move-on accommodation submitted 	On track	It should be noted the Homelessness Strategy contains a significant number of initiatives, milestones and objectives – the list contained within this report is not exhaustive with more detailed reporting on delivery of Strategy provided to HPAG. However, this does provide an overview of the significant progress already made in this field over the last few months, where there has been a significant focus on supporting those who find themselves homeless and sleeping on the streets.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 December - Quality, timely and accessible information available to all homeless households to help prevent homelessness • 24 December - Online homelessness training and education course developed and made available on the council's website. Hospital and prison discharges are planned and homelessness prevented through work with key public authorities with Duty to Refer responsibilities • 15 March '21 - Pathways are formalised for responding to cuckooing, gang-related incidents, domestic violence and modern slavery • 31 March '21 - First Home Truths programme with West Herts College and local schools to prevent future homelessness amongst young people 		
Maintain the ability to remobilise resources in the event of a second wave of Covid-19	We will ensure that Watford Helps is able to remobilise as quickly as possible in the event of a second wave of the virus in order to support the most vulnerable residents in our community	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July - Report to SLT on lessons learnt from first wave response ✓ 14 September - Report to LB on second wave preparations ✓ 21 September - Report to PHs on second wave preparations 	Complete	Arrangements now confirmed between borough councils, county council and CVS, incorporating lessons learnt and previous planning works so that the council can work as effectively as possible for all residents and businesses in the event of the tier level escalating.

OBJECTIVE Identify funding opportunities to assist in the renewal process		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Support charities and the voluntary sector impacted by Covid-19	We will maintain the council's Community Fund, established during the pandemic, to support charities and the voluntary sector across the town	Watford Helps	Subject to voluntary sector review, the final report of which is due to be reviewed by Cabinet on 9 November. The review remains on track to meet this deadline.	On track	Voluntary sector review is specifically looking at the best way to manage the Community Fund over the medium to long term after a fantastic response to the appeal during the first wave of the virus with more than £155,000 raised and allocated to local charities and voluntary groups serving residents across the town.
Promote the council's Community Fund	We will maintain links between the council's Community Fund and Watford Together activities or the council's Big Events programme to provide ongoing promotion of the fund and therefore, the town's charities and voluntary organisations who support so many across our town	Watford Helps	Subject to voluntary sector review, the final report of which is due to be reviewed by Cabinet on 9 November. The review remains on track to meet this deadline.	On track	Voluntary sector review is specifically looking at the best way to manage the Community Fund in a long term and sustainable way so the important voluntary groups across the town can continue to be supported.
OBJECTIVE Deliver and support appropriate memorial and thank you events and initiatives		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Provide a shared space of remembrance for our residents	We will establish a Cassiobury Peace Garden where residents can collectively reflect on the pandemic and their own personal losses as well	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 October – Design for Cassiobury Peace Garden complete 1 March – Cassiobury Peace garden memorial in place 	On track	Scoping is under way to install memorial and peace garden for Spring 2021, at the earliest.

	as those of key workers who supported the town throughout Covid-19				
Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19	We will work with the community to design and install a Public Arts Feature marking the pandemic and commemorating front line workers who continue to support residents and businesses through the pandemic	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 October – Art installation brief for Artists complete 15 January '21 – Artist commissioned 23 April '21 – Art installation complete 	On track	Scoping is under way to install memorial and peace garden for Spring 2021, at the earliest.
Bring together and thank our community for the town's collective response to Covid-19	Subject to social distancing guidance and government requirements, we will sponsor a Watford Thanks You Parade, bringing our community together following a period of physical isolation as a result of the pandemic and an opportunity to recognise the work of our key workers across the town	Watford Together	Entirely subject to government guidance and legislation so unable to confirm timeline for this at the current time.	Delivery to be re-profiled	Whilst the milestones remain under certain there is a clear commitment to celebrate the resilience of the town and great community spirit across the local area shown by Watford residents through the Covid-19 pandemic
Provide a shared space for reflection for our residents	We will restore the fountain in St Mary's Churchyard so it can once again be a space enjoyed collectively by our community, as a place of reflection and remembrance	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 March '21 - St Mary's Churchyard Fountain restored 	On track	Scoping is under way to install memorial and peace garden for Spring 2021, at the earliest.
Utilise volunteers to support our community	Subject to the council's ongoing volunteering strategy, we will work with our volunteers to support Watford Together events and initiatives	Watford Helps / Watford Together	Subject to voluntary sector review, the final report of which is due to be reviewed by Cabinet on 9 November. The review remains on track to meet this deadline.	On track	Voluntary sector review is specifically looking at the best way to manage the Community Fund in a long term and sustainable way so the important voluntary

					groups across the town can continue to be supported whilst integrating with other key community events.
OBJECTIVE Provide community reassurance through effective community leadership		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure we work with our partner organisations as effectively as possible to maintain a safe town for our residents	We will reimagine One Watford and our Community Safety Partnerships to ensure that there is a clear ongoing collective purpose which will allow us to maintain the momentum established through the response to the pandemic	One Watford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 28 July – Review approach, working with the LGA to undertake remote peer support, agreed ✓ 12 October – All One Watford members notified in relation to review • 31 October – Review programme finalised • 17 November – Peers attend One Watford • 1-3 December – Review undertaken • 1 April '21 – Review recommendations implemented 	On track	Review programme now confirmed with the Local Government Association and engagement with all members of the One Watford Board. Review planned between 1 – 3 December, with the outputs ensuring that One Watford continues to serve residents as effectively as possible.
Monitor the impact of economic turbulence on social cohesion	We will remain aware of the impact of economic turbulence on community cohesion and be ready to mobilise community based initiatives in response if necessary	One Watford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community Cohesion cell remains in place 	On track	Ongoing awareness through the Community Cohesion cell and regular meetings of the One Watford Community Safety Partnership, and also with the Hertfordshire Recovery Co-ordinating Group which the Managing Director Chairs.

2. Work Stream 2: Business and Economy

2.1 Key achievements over this period

- A covid-safe High Street reopened, with ongoing advice and guidance for all businesses to ensure that they operate in line with legislation so that residents and visitors are kept safe
- Virtual SME Business Forum created and chaired by the Elected Mayor, in line with the commitment to engage closely with smaller and medium sized businesses who have been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown.
- Business forums and partnerships reviewed and implementation of recommendations underway to ensure that the council has the best support in place for businesses of all sizes across the town.
- Business Information Hub launched to provide improved and relevant information to businesses across the town.
- Business e-newsletter launched and circulated to businesses on a monthly basis, providing an ongoing opportunity for the council to actively engage with businesses, particularly SMEs.
- Business survey launched with 232 responses received and the results used to shape the business support proposals and 50 key accounts programme.
- Business support partnership with social enterprise Wenta agreed and launched, providing tailored offerings for all Watford businesses and the self-employed.
- SME & Retail Hospitality & Leisure Fund fully allocated to local businesses, supporting the local economy during lockdown
- £856k of Discretionary Fund allocated to 150 businesses to provide support during and after lockdown
- WhatsApp for Business launched – the first UK High Street to do so, helping businesses on Market Street get back up and running after lockdown, providing them with an easy way to engage directly with their customers.
- Economic Development Strategy to underpin the council's long term support for businesses and the local economy commenced following a competitive process to procure a partner to engage with businesses and develop the strategy.
- 50 key accounts programme developed, key business identified and approach agreed, with launch due 16 October, ensuring that our commitment to provide the town's largest employers with a strong voice within the town.
- Business Customer Relationship Management system specified, procured and purchased. Implementation now underway to allow the council to better manage its ongoing relationships and support for businesses.
- Face to face visits and follow up calls offering practical help to local businesses and households undertaken by the Environmental Health / Community Protection team, to keep our community safe and healthy, including piloting a local 'test and trace' scheme and a Covid-19 Action Week.

2.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
Completed	Completed	9
On track	On track	26
Planning underway	Planning underway	0
Delayed / Unknown	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	1
Total		39

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OBJECTIVE	Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Create an economic and business revive and thrive strategy that is intelligence-led and informed by local businesses and partner organisations (BID, Chambers etc) to ensure an ongoing focus on business need				
Create our Economic Revive and Thrive Strategy	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 July – Develop tender brief ✓ 27 July – Tender documents finalised ✓ 21 August – Tender closes ✓ 10 September – Supplier interviews ✓ 15 September – Supplier confirmed 	On track	Strategy consultants have been selected following a competitive tender and development of the strategy is now underway which will provide the council with a clear medium to long term focus on supporting businesses and the local economy across the town.
Develop our Economic Plan 2020-2024	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2 October – Strategy development initiation ✓ 8 October - initial stakeholder engagement event • w/c 12 October – Design survey and questions • w/c 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period 		

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> w/c 02 November – Review survey results w/c 06 November – commence 1:1 stake-holder meetings 23 November – definition of strategic priorities 07 December – first draft of strategy 		
OBJECTIVE Establish new, stronger and more focused partnerships with businesses of all sizes across the town		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure big business has a strong voice in the town	We will review our forums for big businesses to ensure that they have a clear purpose, allowing business to have a strong voice in the town and are promoted effectively. This will include representatives of the major business groups in the town on our Business Stakeholder Group	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet • Late November – Next Big Business Connect forum to review the Council Plan, Local Plan and 50 key accounts programme for business 	On track	Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented by the end of the year to ensure that the town attracts and retains major employers for Watford residents.
Understand the needs and concerns of our small businesses	We will review our forums for small and medium businesses to ensure that they have a clear purpose, allow business to have a strong voice in the town and are promoted effectively. This will allow us to understand the needs and concerns of our businesses and to support them accordingly and will include representatives of SME groups on our Business Stakeholder Group	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet, including merging virtual Covid-19 group with SME business Connect ✓ 8 October – Final virtual Covid-19 Forum • End November – Launch of One Watford for Business • End November – Relaunch of SME Business Connect • End November – Relaunch Developers' Forum 	On track	Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented by the end of the year to ensure that the council is best placed to support the many successful smaller businesses and business owners across the town.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February/March 2021 - annual symposium for Business 		
Work with cultural bodies in the town to support their sustainability and business model(s) in the medium and longer term	We will work closely with the cultural sector to recast the council's relationship with them so we can collectively develop a sustainable future for the sector	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 August – AEA commissioned to provide support in delivery of the council's existing cultural strategy, including our work with the cultural sector ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review • 5 November – Cultural Leaders group to review AEA report • 30 November – AEA final report to Cabinet 	On track	Cultural Strategy delivery support underway with Cultural Leaders engaged and ongoing alignment of the council's cultural ambitions across the town. Cultural Leaders will continue to be engaged in advance of the final report.
Ensure that the council communicates effectively with our businesses	We will ensure that our corporate communications plan has a clear focus on communicating effectively with businesses of all sizes across the town, promoting genuine and meaningful two-way engagement	Renewal Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 18 September - Draft Renewals Comms Plan produced ✓ 12 October – Renewals Comms Plan approved by Renewal Coordination Board 	Complete	Renewal Communications Plan has a specific focus on communications for businesses of all sizes across the town to ensure genuine and meaningful two-way engagement.
OBJECTIVE Actively support initiatives intended to assist SMEs to survive and grow		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Support businesses to re-open safely	We will support businesses to re-open safely after Covid-19 and in line with government guidance relating to social distancing. We will provide public health advice, make any physical changes necessary to keep	Business Reopening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 10 July – Approach to high street stewards agreed ✓ 15 July – Shop local campaign introduced ✓ 22 July – Changes to pavement licensing ✓ 15 September – Enhanced track and trace roll out 	On track	Support for businesses to remain 'Covid-safe' is ongoing and remains subject to government guidance and legislation.

	<p>visitors to our town safe and support the Town Centre reopening with a Marshall and street angels scheme</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 October – Officer meeting re long-term strategy for High Street traffic control ✓ 12 October – Traffic Marshals agreed to be in place until January 2021 • 23 October – Long-term strategy for High Street traffic control considered at RCB • October – Halloween and Christmas ‘Covid-safe’ planning ongoing e.g. entertainers • October – replace summer planters with winter ones to aid social distancing 		<p>Environmental Health / Community Protection have undertaken hundreds of face to face and follow up calls during the Covid-19 pandemic, offering practical help to local businesses and households to keep our community safe and healthy, including piloting a local ‘test and trace’ scheme and a Covid-19 Action Week</p>
<p>Encourage residents and visitors to use our Town Centre</p>	<p>We will introduce a programme of communications for residents, encouraging them to support our local businesses and to 'shop local, stay safe'</p>	<p>Business Reopening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25 July – Shop local, stay safe campaign introduced ✓ 15 August – ‘Travel with confidence’ campaign underway ✓ 02 October – messaging aligned to “Hands, Face, Space” • 19 October – Safe reopening messaging ongoing, including more locally focussed Covid comms week 	<p>On track</p>	<p>‘Shop Local, Stay Safe’ and ‘Travel with Confidence’ initiatives really successful – ‘Travel with Confidence’ adopted countywide. Successful summer town centre entertainment programme rolled out to bring vitality to the High Street, whilst promoting Covid-19 safety messages.</p> <p>Covid-19 action week taken place during October 2020 to reinforce messages and guidance to businesses and households.</p>

					Communications to residents and visitors continues to be subject to government guidance and will be updated and tailored accordingly to reflect the needs of the Watford community and our local context.
Keep businesses informed	We will introduce a monthly business newsletter for our businesses, providing us with an opportunity to provide support, advice and guidance	Revive	✓ 24 July – First business newsletter sent	Complete	Business newsletters have been published on a monthly basis since July providing a direct link between local businesses and the council.
Understand business need	We will launch a Watford Business Survey so that we can understand business needs and the impact of Covid-19 on our local businesses and wider economy. This will inform our Economic Revie and Thrive Strategy so that it best meets the needs of our businesses	Survive	✓ 5 June - Business survey launched ✓ 15 July – Business survey closed	Complete	Business survey was launched and received 232 responses, allowing the council powerful insight into the challenges faced by local businesses. The insight has informed ongoing activities and will inform our Economic Revie and Thrive Strategy.
React to business need	Based on the Watford Business Survey results, we will develop a bespoke support scheme designed to match the needs of our local businesses	Revive	✓ Business results shared and used to inform content on the website, the Wenta programme and the 50 key accounts programme	Complete	Intelligence and feedback provided by the business survey used to inform a tailored approach to council-

					led support for local business, with the Wenta social enterprise programme recently launched and the 50 key accounts programme due to be launched in November.
Ensure that our businesses are able to access information	We will improve the information for businesses on our website and establish a Business Information Hub so that businesses are able to find all relevant information and services in a single location	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 29 June - Business Information Hub launched and communications circulated ✓ 25 September – Wenta support programme proposal approved by Renewal Coordination Board ✓ 07 October – Wenta contract agreed ✓ 16 October - Wenta press release and launched 	Complete	Business Information Hub launched and Wenta support programme will provide further, tailored information for business and self-employed residents.
Promote our businesses	Partnering with Whatsapp, we will use their business platform to promote our local businesses, promote entrepreneurs and boost growth across our local economy	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ August – intro letter to pilot businesses ✓ 9 September – training for pilot businesses ✓ 23 September – set-up of business profiles ✓ 2 October – WhatsApp for business app launched. 	Complete	The new WhatsApp for Business launched on 2 October alongside a positive comms campaign and will provide a new, innovative way for businesses to engage directly with their customers.
Support businesses to work safely	We will support our local economy by producing and delivering a Safe Working initiative for taxis & other sectors	Business Reopening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ August/September – taxi driver training and protective screens provided under Travel with Confidence (TwC) scheme ✓ 30 September – TwC licensed for other LAs to use ✓ 7 October – TwC marketing commenced 	Complete	Successful Travel with Confidence initiative introduced to keep Watford residents safe.

OBJECTIVE Attract and retain big businesses to the town		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Develop our 50 Key Accounts approach	We will identify 50 key businesses operating within the town and introduce a key accounts approach whereby we work closely on a one-to-one basis with businesses to understand their needs and concerns, ensuring that we both attract and retain them within the town, further supporting our local economy and residents	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July – 50 key businesses identified ✓ 10 August – Business CRM tender underway ✓ 24 August – Approach approved by Cabinet ✓ 4 September – Leadership Team account managers assigned to businesses ✓ 14 September – CRM supplier appointed ✓ 07 October – Existing contacts added to CRM ✓ 09 October – CRM contract • 16 October – Introduction emails to initial 20 businesses • 02 November – CRM live 	On track	50 key accounts process approach agreed and onboarding now underway. All businesses will have regular interactions with senior council officers, with contract recorded on the business CRM system.
Promote Watford effectively	We will develop a Brand Positioning strategy to establish a strong brand for Watford as the place to do business	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2021 – Develop brief • January/February 2021 – Commission appropriate support • March – May 2021 – Undertake work • May 2021 – Agree brand positioning 	On track	Economic Growth Strategy development underway which will feed into the council's Brand Positioning strategy to attract and retain business within the town, employing local residents and supporting the local economy.

OBJECTIVE Ensure Watford Town centre remains a regional leisure and shopping destination which supports the local economy and local people		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Allow our Town Centre to reopen safely	We will initiate social distancing arrangements in the High Street, including introducing physical changes to the space to attract residents back to the Town Centre in a safe and managed way	Business Reopening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25 May – Temporary TRO and traffic marshals in place ✓ 1 June – Relaxing of lockdown commenced and hand sanitizers in place ✓ 5 June – Directional floor stickers in place ✓ 8 June – High St stewards in place ✓ 8 June – Summer planters used as natural social distancing ✓ 07 October – Traffic marshals funded until January 2021 	Complete	Social distancing measures introduced in the High Street in line with reopening dates announced by the government. This has included planter arrangements, floor stickers, stewards and hand sanitiser stations, as well as additional advice and guidance for businesses.
Develop a Town Centre Strategy post Covid-19	We will use intelligence and best practice to evolve our Town Centre so that it has a good mix of recognised high street brands and independent retailers, including within the Market	Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 28 August – Interim Town Centre Development Manager starts ✓ 28 September - BID Business Plan reviewed ✓ October – Visit Watford consultant review complete ✓ 9 October – Registered interest with the High Street Taskforce for expert advice and support • October – Reviewing Market strategy • 15 October – Comms meeting to agree approach to attracting and growing businesses in Watford • 20 October – meeting with College • November onwards – Develop plan 	On track	Town Centre Development Manager now in place to provide a specific focus on the Town Centre, working with the Business Improvement District to ensure that the Town Centre is well positioned for the challenges of the future. As part of the council's review of Strategic Partnerships, specific focus will be given to the Town Centre and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders.

Create co-working spaces in the town	We will support the creation of co-working / incubator spaces based on local requirements to support our small and medium businesses	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September – suitability of ‘Makers’ Space’ explored at library ✓ 25 September – Wenta support programme proposal approved by Renewal Coordination Board ✓ 07 October – Wenta contract agreed ✓ 16 October - Wenta press release and launched • October – work underway to assess co-working space availability in the town 	On track	Incubation space to support the creation and flow of new businesses to be addressed through the Wenta programme. Work underway to identify additional opportunities for co-working space.
OBJECTIVE Through links with partners, act as a conduit to central government and other bodies where there are unmet support needs for businesses		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
Advocate for our local businesses	We will use the results of our Watford Business survey to influence the business support package delivered by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Hertfordshire Growth Hub	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September – Business Survey results used to determine Wenta programme content 	Complete	Business support package provided through the Wenta programme which will provide further, tailored support for businesses and self-employed residents.
Work with partners to meet business needs	We will launch our Watford Thrives Stakeholder Group so members and council officers can work closely with local business groups such as the Business Improvement District, Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and Wenta so that we collectively meet business needs and	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet • Late November – ‘One Watford for Business’ stakeholder group to launch, following final Covid-19 virtual forum on 8 October 	On track	Proposed ‘Watford Thrives Stakeholder Group’ rebranded as ‘One Watford for Business’, which is due to launch towards the end of November. Terms of reference are drafted with proposed attendees identified.

	establish genuine and meaningful two way engagement				
OBJECTIVE Support growth and development aspirations so that Watford remains an economic leader in the sub-region		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure our town develops sustainably to boost and support both the local and wider economy	We will produce and deliver a comprehensive new Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 30 years, boosting growth within the local economy	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 November – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet • January – Consultation underway • June '21 – Submission to Planning Inspectorate • February '22 – Local Plan adopted 	On track	New timetable agreed in October due to staff transition and need for additional evidence. On track to new timetable which will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years.
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	Watford Junction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 August - Supplementary planning document for site adopted • Q2 2020 – Submit funding bid to Herts Growth Board for infrastructure interventions • Q3 2020 – Complete investigations on what access connections and interlinkages are required to open up the rail lands and what the costs are • Q3 2020 – Inform Strategic Development Area within Local Plan • Q3 and 4 2020 – Working with partners to promote development of mutually beneficial schemes • Q1 to Q4 2020 – Working with Network Rail to delivery improvements to Watford Junction station and design a 	On track	The council continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders to support the development of the Watford Junction area with significant milestones planned over the next period.

			publicly accessible pedestrian link across the rail lines		
Ensure that the town's infrastructure supports and attracts local business and the wider economy	We will develop and continually update an infrastructure plan for Watford which matches the ambitions of the town and local economy	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 November – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet January – Consultation underway June '21 – Submission to Planning Inspectorate February '22 – Local Plan adopted 	On track	New timetable agreed in October due to staff transition and need for additional evidence. On track to new timetable which will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years.
OBJECTIVE Collectively pursue relevant opportunities for funding		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Maximise opportunities for the town and its businesses	We will ensure that we work with other local authorities to monitor opportunities for government and other public sector funding and pursue these as and when they emerge	Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing monitoring at present. As and when opportunities merge, the council will be in a position to pursue these. 	On track	Ongoing monitoring at present and close liaison with the LEP and the Growth Board.
OBJECTIVE Deploy our investment to achieve appropriate commercial returns in conjunction with driving the economic growth potential of Watford		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Develop Watford Business Park	We will develop Watford Business Park to create new, high quality business space and employment opportunities	Watford Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3 2020 - Secure vacant possession and submit detailed planning application/commence intrusive surveys/demolition. Q4 2020 – Tender for D&B contractor and secure Cabinet approval to appoint 	Delivery re-profiled	In order to support businesses as much as possible, the council moved the vacant possession date, which was originally anticipated to conclude on 30 June 2020. With

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1-4 2021 – Construction and preletting campaign on Gateway Zone • Q4 2020 – Q4 2021 – Identify further regen/commercial activities and present outline business cases to CIIB 		lockdown preventing businesses from making arrangements to relocate, this was re-programmed to 30 September 2020, allowing businesses a further three months to find suitable relocation premises. Given the impact to date of Covid 19 there is a delivery risk, which is being monitored.
Continue to invest in Croxley Business Park	We will ensure that Croxley Business Park maintains its eminent position as a centre of employment in South West Herts	Croxley Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2020 – To have agreed a business plan and strategy for the £92million lump sum that the council hold • Q1/Q4 2020 – Ongoing strategy for refurbishment will need to be agreed within a settled strategy linking into the business plan • Q1/Q4 2020 – To oversee the delivery of a new office building of 85,000sq ft. and endeavour to identify a pre let of this space • Q1/Q4 2020 – Ensure regular marketing meetings are progressed to minimise voids • Q1/4 2021 – Delivery of 7,000sq m in Gateway Zone 	On track	3 new businesses have signed leases at Croxley Park over the last period and work is continuing to Building 1 which remains on track for completion in the Spring of 2021 providing further high quality space for local businesses.

Use our financial strength to support economic growth	Assess the feasibility of using our financial strength to support economic growth and an investment return through investing in opportunities	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 November – Business case in outline form End December - agree way forward and secure resources to develop business case 	On track	Business case development for co-working space and assessing options around growth funds underway with a conclusion scheduled by the end of the year.
OBJECTIVE Work with ‘anchor’ institutions in Hertfordshire to maximise the benefits of economic growth for local residents		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
Focus on employment and skills for our local residents	We will ensure that there is a specific focus within our Economic Revive and Thrive Strategy on employment and skills, aligning this where possible to low carbon industries and new technologies, so that we can support our residents to play a full role in the UK’s economic revival	Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 July – Develop Strategy tender brief ✓ 27 July – Strategy Tender documents finalised ✓ 21 August – Strategy Tender closes ✓ 10 September – Strategy Supplier interviews ✓ 15 September – Strategy Supplier confirmed ✓ 25 September – Wenta support programme proposal approved by Renewal Coordination Board ✓ 2 October – Strategy development initiation ✓ 07 October – Wenta contract agreed ✓ 8 October - initial stakeholder engagement event • 12 October – Design survey and questions ✓ 16 October - Wenta press release and programme launched 	On track	Development of the Economic Strategy is underway. Completion of this activity will be subject to the final Economic Growth Strategy and delivery plan which will provide the council with a clear medium to long term focus on supporting employment and skills for local residents. The Wenta programme will also support businesses and owners that require new skills, knowledge, information and advice to ensure that their business can recover in more resilient ways or grow.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period • 02 November – Review survey results • 06 November – Commence 1:1 stakeholder meetings • 23 November – Definition of strategic priorities • 07 December – First draft of strategy 		
Ensure that the local economy works as a component of the wider local community	We will ensure that community value is positioned as a clear driver within the Economic Plan so that economic growth benefits local residents	Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 July – Develop tender brief ✓ 27 July – Tender documents finalised ✓ 21 August – Tender closes ✓ 10 September – Supplier interviews ✓ 15 September – Supplier confirmed ✓ 2 October – Strategy development initiation ✓ 8 October - initial stakeholder engagement event • w/c 12 October – Design survey and questions • w/c 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period • w/c 02 November – Review survey results • w/c 06 November – Commence 1:1 stakeholder meetings • 23 November – Definition of strategic priorities • 07 December – First draft of strategy 	On track	Development of the Economic Strategy is underway and engagement with the business stakeholder groups now scheduled. Completion of this activity will be subject to the final Economic Growth Strategy and delivery plan and will ensure that the council's medium to long term plan focuses on the benefits of economic growth for local residents.

OBJECTIVE Ensure there is the appropriate office space, industrial facilities and infrastructure to attract and retain businesses in the borough		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure that the Local Plan aligns with the council's ambition to attract and retain businesses in Watford	We will use our Local Plan and town-specific planning frameworks to ensure that we achieve the right mix of development across the town, matched with appropriate facilities and infrastructure	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 November – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet • January – Consultation underway • June '21 – Submission to Planning Inspectorate • February '22 – Local Plan adopted 	On track	New timetable agreed in October due to staff transition and need for additional evidence. On track to new timetable which will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years.
Work with developers and utilise our strong brand for Watford to attract business to the town	We will create a strong brand position for Watford as a place to do business and will work with developers to champion and support planning applications to attract and retain businesses within the town	Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End November – Relaunch Developers' Forum • January 2021 – Develop brief • January/February 2021 – Commission appropriate support • March – May 2021 – Undertake work • May 2021 – Agree brand positioning 	On track	Relaunch of Developers' Forum scheduled following successful review of the council's business partnerships and forums. Economic Growth Strategy development also underway which will feed into the council's Brand Positioning strategy to attract and retain business within the town, employing local residents and supporting the local economy.
Ensure that our local transport infrastructure is sustainable	We will develop a sustainable Transport Strategy which ensures that Watford has the right infrastructure to support the local economy and to	Sustainable Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September – Board, PID and task developed • November - Develop detailed project plan milestones 	On track	Initial Project Board formed and held to provide ongoing focus to the council's commitment for sustainable transport. Initial discussions

	attract and retain businesses within the town		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 November - Public engagement on vision 2 March 2021 - Draft strategy presented to Cabinet June 2021 - Agree strategy 		with HCC to be held to agree approvals process across 2 LA tiers and plans in place for public engagement to inform the final strategy.
OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Deliver transport improvements to support the retention of businesses and a flourishing town centre					
Champion proposals for a mass-rapid Transport Scheme for Watford	Working closely with Hertfordshire Growth Board, we will seek to secure the best mass rapid transport system for our town, providing a further option for our residents, visitors and commuters to travel sustainably whilst encouraging investment in Watford	Mass Rapid Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021/22 – HGB bid to Government for funding 2021/22 – Feasibility Studies contribution to engaging consultation 	On track	High Level early stage discussions held with HCC and their consultants. Further milestones will be developed as the project progresses.
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	Low Carbon Transport Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3/Q4 2020 – Land acquisition discussions and proposals Q3 2020 – Consider funding options to progress 	On track	In line with the newly formed Sustainable Transport Board and the council's ongoing commitment to invest in sustainable transport for Watford residents, high level plans are continuing to investigate opportunities to create a low-carbon transport hub in Watford Town Centre. Key milestones in place over the next period which will help to establish future works.

<p>Improve the cycling and walking network in Watford</p>	<p>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 the town. 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.</p>	<p>LCWIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2020 - Prepare draft document for consultation • Q3 2020 – Undertake public consultation • Q4 2020 - review of comments received and adopt plan • Q4 2020 - Begin implementation 	<p>On track</p>	<p>In line with the significant work already undertaken to the council’s draft Local Plan, further plans have been developed to engage closely with Watford residents on additional plans for improving the cycling and walking network across the town.</p>
<p>Implement a demand responsive transport scheme</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Demand Responsive Transport</p>	<p>✓ 1 July – ArrivaClick demand responsive transport system launched</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Reduced service launched on 1 July to ensure conformity with social distancing requirements.</p>
<p>Position Watford as a Sustainable Travel Town</p>	<p>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.</p>		<p>✓ September – Board, PID and task developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November - Develop detailed project plan milestones • 30 November - Public engagement on vision • 2 March 2021 - Draft strategy presented to Cabinet • June 2021 - Agree strategy 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Initial Project Board formed and held to provide ongoing focus to the council’s commitment for sustainable transport. Initial discussions with HCC to be held to agree approvals process across 2 LA tiers and plans in place for public engagement to inform the final strategy.</p>

3. Work Stream 3: Organisational Renewal

3.1 Key achievements over this period

- Town Hall covid-safe measures implemented and customer face-to-face drop-in and appointment service resumed for the town’s most vulnerable residents.
- Risk assessments undertaken for all staff to facilitate their return to the Town Hall for essential business needs.
- Council policies impacted by covid reviewed, updated and relaunched to ensure that they protect, support and inform council staff, particularly during the ongoing pandemic so they remain productive, resilient and their health and feel supported in terms of their health and wellbeing
- A range of health and wellbeing tools launched for staff, to support physical and mental health.
- New internal governance structure implemented to ensure robust but agile decision making and a renewed focus on the areas that matter.
- New Organisational Development Strategy launched, recognising the contribution and value of staff and the corporate commitment to support and develop them.
- All business continuity plans reviewed and updated, alongside additional preparations for a second wave of covid or potential move up the national system of tiers to ensure that the council can respond as effectively, and quickly, as possible to support Watford residents and businesses. All Service Plans covering the period 2020-22 completed and endorsed by Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders, linking the Council Plan to specific projects and service delivery to ensure that our strategic vision is translated into ‘action on the ground’, benefitting Watford residents across the borough.
- Web content for Revenues & Benefits, Elections & Parking Services reviewed, simplified and refreshed so that we are providing customers with digitally enabled services so they can interact as easily as possible with the council

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3.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
	Completed	17
	On track	10
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influence	4
Total		31

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Restore service delivery to agreed business as usual in a planned way					
Open the Town Hall safely for our staff	We will ensure that the Town Hall and associated council buildings are able to open for staff whilst adhering to social distancing requirements by implementing a one-way system around the building, introducing a desk booking policy, increasing our cleaning regime and opening the buildings up in a gradual way, whilst ensuring that staff who wish and can continue to work from home are supported to do so	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 29 June – Town Hall reopened to staff. ✓ 30 June - Risk Assessments for all staff complete and actions put in place; risk assessments also available for members ✓ 1 September - Additional space (desk and meeting rooms) available for use as and when it is required including for councillors 	Complete	The Town Hall was reopened to staff in July with social distancing and other covid-safe measures having been put in place. In October, the policy was reviewed in line with latest government guidance and Town Hall working policy communicated to staff via Heads of Service.
Open the Town Hall safely for our customers	We will ensure that the Town Hall and associated council buildings are able to open for customers whilst adhering to social distancing requirements by implementing a customer booking system, changing the physical layout of our Customer Service Centre and ensuring that all customers understand our new guidelines for a face-to-face service. We will also ensure that as many services as possible are available online.	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15 August - Approach for opening Face-to-face drop-in service developed and agreed ✓ 2 September - Drop-in service at Town Hall resumes in line with new approach 	Complete	The Town Hall opened for face-to-face appointments on 2 September. The transition to customers accessing services online has been extremely successful. As a result only a limited number of number of customers require face to face support and the drop-in service is therefore operating on Tuesdays and Thursdays for our more vulnerable residents in particular.
Review our policies	We will review and amend our council policies to reflect the new 'business as usual' in terms of social distancing and smarter working	HR Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July - HRBPs to review impact of social distancing on other policies and identify work required 	Complete	All relevant policies reviewed and updated to ensure staff are kept safe and informed. To be kept under review in line with changes to government guidelines

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 August - All interim policies / guidelines finalised and agreed ✓ 17 July Interim Smarter Working Policy agreed by OLT and SLT 		
Identify the projects underway at the time Covid-19 disruption commenced	We will collate a comprehensive singular view of corporate projects across the council so that we can ensure that we understand the overall impact of Covid-19 and reprioritise against the Council Plan	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 20 July - Centralised and consolidated list of corporate projects in-agreement with Heads of Service created ✓ 13 October – Service Planning process complete and Delivery Plan in place for delivery of Council Plan 	Complete	Corporate projects list created and impact of Covid-19 on delivery identified. This has fed into the Service Planning progress for 2020-22, covering the period of the approved Delivery Plan ensuring that the council's strategic direction is translated into 'action on the ground' to benefit Watford residents.
Understand the impact of the pandemic on our projects	We will understand the impact of the pandemic on our projects by reviewing the timelines, budgets and alignment to the Council Plan or Renewal Plan	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 20 July - Centralised and consolidated list of corporate projects in-agreement with Heads of Service created ✓ 24 July - Mapping exercise of all corporate projects against the Council Delivery Plan 	Complete	Corporate projects list created and impact of Covid-19 on delivery identified. This has fed into the Service Planning progress for 2020-22, covering the period of the approved Delivery Plan ensuring that the council's strategic direction is translated into 'action on the ground' to benefit Watford residents.
Prepare for a second wave of the virus	We will review and amend our Business Continuity Plans, including in relation to our approach for a second wave of the virus and subsequent lockdown so that we can	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July – Updated business continuity plans template agreed and instructions for review and second lockdown 	Complete	All Business Continuity Plans updated with specific reference to Covid-19, incorporating the lessons learnt from the first wave to ensure that the council is able

	respond as effectively as possible to support our residents and businesses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scenario planning circulated to all Heads of Service ✓ 31 August – All Business Continuity Plans updated 		to respond as effectively as possible for residents.
Improve our internal decision making so that it is agile and effective	We will review our existing governance structure and the way in which we internally make decisions to ensure that we are able to make decisions in an agile but considered way, in light of the changing situation introduced by Covid-19	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 30 July – Internal engagement relating to governance processes complete ✓ 1 September - New internal governance structure in place and corporate communications circulated 	Complete	New internal governance approach in place from September 2020 to ensure robust but agile decision making and a clear and renewed focus.
Ensure that we have sufficient resourcing to deliver on our Renewal Plan commitments	We will review our existing resource to ensure that we are able to deliver on the commitments of our Council Plan and Renewal Plan, alongside continuing to deliver the usual services provided to our resident and businesses	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 13 August – Approach to Service Planning agreed ✓ 2 September – First draft of Service Plan submitted ✓ 25 September – Cross service dependencies identified ✓ 1 October – All Service Plans peer reviewed ✓ 13 October – Service Plans reviewed and signed off by Leadership Board 	Complete	All corporate Service Plans completed, endorsed by Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders. This will ensure delivery of the Council Plan over the next 18 month period with clear ownership of commitments and plans in place for all of the activities which will benefit residents and businesses across the town.
Understand what was good about our response to Covid-19 and what we would do differently in the future	We will ensure that all our incident response cells are closed or transitioned to business as usual in a way which allows us to review what worked well in each cell and where we could apply learning in the future, particularly to help us prepare for a second wave of the virus	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July - Report to SLT on lessons learnt from first wave response ✓ 14 September - Report to LB on second wave preparations ✓ 21 September - Report to PHs on second wave preparations 	Complete	Lessons learnt from across the incident management cells reviewed and consolidated, feeding in second wave preparedness plans enabling the council to respond as effectively as possible in the event of the tier level escalating.

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure the consistent application of appropriate policies during the renewal phase					
Modernise our working practices	We will modernise our working practices through the revision of policies, including updating our smart working policy and the production of social distancing policy to ensure ongoing alignment with government restrictions and guidelines	Re mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July - HRBPs to review impact of social distancing on other policies and identify work required ✓ 31 August - All interim policies / guidelines finalised and agreed ✓ 17 July - Interim Smarter Working Policy agreed by OLT and SLT 	Complete	All relevant policies reviewed and updated to ensure staff are kept safe and informed. To be kept under review in line with changes to government guidelines.
Ensure alignment in staff contracts with the new ways of working	We will review contracts for our new members of staff to ensure alignment with our new ways of working and policies, ensuring that these help us to deliver our democratic obligations and to respond as effectively as possible in a second wave of the virus	HR Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July - Contracts of employment for new starters reviewed and amended 	Complete	All council contracts now reflect working from home requirements, ensuring that the current working arrangements are clearly conveyed to potential future employees in line with the organisation's obligations.
OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure the management of backlogs, identifying any extra resources required to restore normal services					
Understand the impact of Covid-19 on our projects	We will review the timelines for all of our projects and understand the impact of Covid-19, including ensuring that all projects continue to support the delivery of our Council Plan and priorities for our residents	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 August - Create a corporate understanding of the overall impact of the pandemic on our corporate projects and communicate to relevant stakeholders 	Complete	Corporate projects list created and impact of Covid-19 on delivery identified. This has fed into the Service Planning progress for 2020-22, covering the period of the approved Delivery Plan, ensuring that the council's strategic direction is translated into 'action on the ground' to benefit Watford residents.

Update our Service Plans	We will ensure that our individual Service Plans are updated to reflect the impact of Covid-19 response and our new Council Plan so that we are focused on delivering our priorities for our residents and businesses	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 13 August – Approach to Service Planning agreed ✓ 2 September – First draft of Service Plan submitted ✓ 25 September – Cross service dependencies identified ✓ 1 October – All Service Plans peer reviewed ✓ 13 October – Service Plans reviewed and signed off by Leadership Board 	Complete	All corporate Service Plans completed, with a clear link from the Council Plan and the Delivery Plan, ensuring that the council’s strategic direction is translated into ‘action on the ground’ to benefit Watford residents.
OBJECTIVE Identify employee support needs and vulnerabilities and respond to these	Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update	
Support our front line colleagues	We will review and understand the needs of our colleagues working on the front line, including providing therapy and other support where necessary	Staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 23 April - Bereavement training by Cruise Bereavement was provided to front line staff ✓ 13 July - Cari, an on-line AI health and wellbeing service launched across the Council ✓ 13 October - Mental Health Training Awareness for Managers agreed. Training to be undertaken on-line with Remploy and dates are currently being sourced. • Awaiting confirmation of dates for mental health training from supplier 	On track	In addition to continuous updates to our Health and Wellbeing information pages, a staff Survey on Wellbeing continues to be sent out on first Monday of every two months to ensure that the council continues to react to staff need. Specialist support has provided to front line staff and a whole range of tools are now available to staff, including Cari, an online AI health and wellbeing service. Furthermore, in addition to the newly expended Mental Health First Aiders team, all council Managers will shortly undergo mental health training

					awareness.
Protect all colleagues	Whilst most staff will continue to work from home in the short term, in preparation for a return to office working, we will carry out risk assessments for all colleagues in advance of their return to the Town Hall (including specific risk assessments which recognise the increased risk of the virus for our BAME colleagues). We will review any requirements identified and ensure that these are actioned to provide a safe and supportive working environment	Staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 March – Initial risk assessments undertaken for all staff ✓ 15 July – Additional risk assessments, including for BAME colleagues, relating to the return to the Town Hall ✓ 25 September – Further risk assessments undertaken following changes to government guidance 	On track	<p>Risk assessments carried out for all staff, including specific assessment for those staff recognises as at higher risk of the virus. These have recently been reassessed in light of changing government guidance. Risk assessments were also rolled out to Members to ensure that they were able to return to the Town Hall safely and that the council meet its legal obligations.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor this objective as this is an ongoing requirement as we continue to manage the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
Understand the impact of caring responsibilities on our colleagues	We will understand and remain mindful of the impact of caring responsibilities on colleagues and ensure that clear and supportive policies are in place for this	Staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 March – Risk assessment carried out for all staff, specifically identifying those with caring responsibilities so this could form part of the consideration in relation to advice. ✓ 23 March – Clear guidance provided to all Managers on the agreed approach for staff working from home with 	On track	The impact of school age children remaining at home over an extended period, as well as those staff members with other caring responsibilities, was recognised immediately following the announcement of lockdown. This was specifically identified in the risk assessments undertaken by all staff and clear guidance was provided to all Managers in relation to the need for flexibility

			<p>school age children or caring responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25 March – Watford Health and You updated to provide specific information to assist those working from home with caring responsibilities 		<p>and to make local arrangements as appropriate. This was reinforced by a number of corporate communications, including ‘In Touch’ directly from the Managing Director.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor this area during the pandemic to actively support our staff with caring responsibilities.</p>
Understand the impact of covid-19 on the health and wellbeing of staff	We will remain in regular contact with staff, understand the difficulties they have faced and provide support through ‘Watford Health and You’ for them depending on their own circumstances. We will develop and train more Mental Health First Aiders and Mental Health Champions to further support staff.	Staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15 July - Meeting with current Mental Health Champions and First Aiders to review situation ✓ 31 July - Advertise and actively seek additional Mental Health Champions and First Aiders ✓ 30 September - Required training complete for all Mental Health Champions and First Aiders 	On track	<p>The council has 14 Mental Health First Aiders, including a councillor representative and eight Mental Health Champions. As part of the council commitment to focus on mental health, the number of Mental Health first aiders and champions has grown in the past months and all Managers have received specific guidance in relation to keeping in touch with staff.</p> <p>Ensuring our staff have the appropriate support for their health and wellbeing remains a priority and we would continue to engage with them on the help that they need.</p>

Ensure our policies are updated	We will review all our policies to reflect the new 'business as usual' in terms of social distancing, new starters and smart working	HR Policy	All required policies updated but situation to be kept under constant review	On track	All relevant policies reviewed and updated to ensure staff are kept safe and informed. To be kept under review in line with changes to government guidelines.
OBJECTIVE Ensure that employees are supported, that efforts are acknowledged and that effective communications with employees is maintained		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Communicate effectively with colleagues	We will produce an employee Communications Plan with includes details of effective tools to ensure that key messages are cascaded whilst allowing our colleagues to feedback in a meaningful way	Staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 22 July - Additional online support for staff to be launched ✓ 18 September - Draft Renewals Comms Plan produced ✓ 12 October – Renewals Comms Plan approved by Renewal Coordination Board 	Complete	Road to Renewal Communications Plan developed. Fortnightly review of Communications Plan to ensure ongoing delivery and progress. This includes details of key tools to ensure the accurate cascade of corporate messages and has also formed part of the internal governance review.
Engage with colleagues on the future of the council	We will continue to engage regularly with the Staff Ambassador Group, including in relation to our Renewal Plan and wider Council Plan	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 9 June - Staff Ambassador Group review of Council Plan and Renewal Plan ✓ 24 June – Final version takes into account feedback provided directly from staff. 	On track	Staff Ambassador Group continue to meet on a regular basis, with representatives from services across the council. Updates on delivery continue to be provided via regular In Touch updates from the Managing Director. A further update for the Staff Ambassador Group on the progress of the Delivery Plan and Renewal Plan is scheduled for Quarter 3.

					The Staff Ambassador Group continues to meet to respond to provide staff with an opportunity to share their views and input into corporate initiatives and transformation.
Recognise the contribution of our colleagues to our response to Covid-19	We will evolve our Team Recognition Strategy to recognise the impact of Covid-19, including recognition for staff beyond June 2020	HR Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 3 August - Paper to SLT on Team Recognition Strategy, payments for 19/20 and decision for future delivery ✓ Team Recognition Strategy discussed and agreed at LB on 28 Sept ✓ 30 September – Final decision for budget for scheme to be retained for 20/21 to recognise staff efforts throughout Covid 	Complete	Team Recognition Strategy pilot review has been completed. It has been agreed that the budget for this year will be retained to reflect the additional effort of staff from across the organisation in supporting the council's Covid-19 response but that a new scheme would not to be pursued and the budget would not to be transferred to the next financial year but used as Covid savings to mitigate the pressure on budgets.
OBJECTIVE Capture learning through a process of debriefing, both single and multi-agency		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Understand what was good about our response to Covid-19 and what we would do differently in the future	We will ensure that all our incident response cells are closed or transitioned to business as usual in a way which allows us to review what worked well in each cell and where we could apply learning in the future, particularly to help us prepare for a second wave of the virus	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July - Report to SLT on lessons learnt from first wave response ✓ 14 September - Report to LB on second wave preparations 	On track	Lessons learnt from across the incident management cells reviewed and consolidated, feeding in second wave preparedness plans, ensuring that the council can respond as effectively as possible to in the

			✓ 21 September - Report to PHs on second wave preparations		<p>event of the tier level escalating.</p> <p>Second wave preparations complete but constantly under review to embed continual improvement and support response to national tier escalations.</p>
Learn from other organisations to inform our future plans	We will work with our Local Resilience Forum partners to compare our approach to Covid-19 with what others have done in relation to incident to enable us to respond to a future incident and support our residents and businesses as effectively as possible	Resilience	✓ Ongoing link between the council's Resilience Officer and the Local Resilience Forum maintained. Council representatives remains on operational and strategic response groups to ensure ongoing alignment and opportunity for shared learning.	On track	<p>Ongoing engagement between the council and Local Resilience Forum via the HCC Resilience Officer. The Managing Director also sits on the Executive Board of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), engaging at a strategic level.</p> <p>We will continue to actively engage with the LRF to make sure our plans remain up to date, focused and enable us to respond quickly as the pandemic progresses.</p>
React to feedback from colleagues	We will report back on our recent Covid-19 staff survey with a clear action plan for delivery, based on the feedback received from our colleagues	Re-mobilisation	<p>✓ 13 October - LB reviewed and agreed the Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 October – Action plan to be implemented 	On track	Covid-19 staff survey undertaken to understand the impact on staff. A responsive Action Plan is now in development, with implementation scheduled for the end of October.

Prepare for a second wave of the virus	Based on the above, we will review and amend our Business Continuity Plans, including in relation to our approach for a second wave or spikes in the infection rate of the virus and subsequent lockdown so that we can respond as effectively as possible to support our residents and businesses	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 31 July – Updated business continuity plans template agreed and instructions for review and second lockdown scenario planning circulated to all Heads of Service ✓ 31 August – All Business Continuity Plans updated 	Complete	All Business Continuity Plans updated with specific reference to Covid-19, incorporating the lessons learnt from the first wave to ensure that the council is able to respond as effectively as possible for residents.
OBJECTIVE Ensure that learning is used to identify opportunities and inform future changes, such as modernisation and transformation, linking to the existing programme		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure our values and behaviours reflect what we have learnt about the council during the Covid-19 response	We will refresh and co-design the council's expected behaviours and values over the next period to ensure that we have a supported workforce who work collectively for our residents and businesses	Re-mobilisation	No dates/milestones have been agreed yet.	Delivery re-profiled	As detailed in appendix 2 work is now recommencing,, on the Action Plan which will be in place by the beginning of November
Introduce a new Organisational Development approach	We will establish a people-focused and valuable Organisational Development Strategy so that we develop our staff and support them to feel satisfied and motivated to provide the best service for Watford's residents and businesses	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July – Organisational Development Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	Full list of commitments and milestones for the Organisational Development Strategy accompanies the report to Cabinet as Appendix B
Digitise our processes	We will ensure that all council processes utilise existing council technology, such as the council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system so that customers, whether residents or businesses, can transact with the council at a time that suits them, not just during the traditional opening hours	Digitisation	Digitisation relating to Community Protection and Revenues and Benefits remains outstanding. However, focus of the teams remain on Covid-19 response and milestones therefore remain uncertain at the current time meaning that the	Delivery re-profiled	Community Protection and Revenues and Benefits digitisation activity delayed due to Covid response activity. Immediate priorities have been agreed and will be actioned this year with further planning activity

			timeline for this commitment will require re-profiling.		to take place when resource allows.
Understand the impact of Covid-19 on our requirements for office space	Learning from the experience of Covid-19 and the extended period of colleagues working from home, we will understand what the needs of the council and colleagues are in the future, using learning from our Covid-19 staff survey to enhance feasibility work already underway in relation to the High Street North and Cultural Hub	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 July – Engagement with senior leaders from across the organisation to understand the impact of Covid-19 and future requirements for the organisation ✓ 16 September – Potential Town Hall requirements fed directly into the High Street North and Cultural Hub business cases. 	Complete	Learning from Covid-19 captured and engagement with all service heads to understand future requirements which have now fed into wider project on High Street North and Cultural Hub and the relevant business cases.
Implement a new digital print and post solution	We will complete the implementation of the council's digital print and post solution to ensure a reduced need for on-site activities and to ensure that our internal processes are as efficient as possible, allowing us to focus on providing services for our residents and businesses	Digitisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 October – Test Benefits printmail • 16 October – Agree go-live subject to successful testing. Anticipate go-live w/c 19 October • 21 October – Agree timeline for Revenues activities 	Delivery re-profiled	Some delays to implementation as a result of an ongoing focus on Covid-19 response and the issuing of grants meaning the re-profiling of the timeline. However, clear delivery expectations now in place.
OBJECTIVE Ensure that there are appropriate commemorative events for colleagues/Members		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Recognise the contribution made by our staff during the pandemic	Engaging with our Staff Ambassador Group we will identify appropriate and valuable events for colleagues which recognise their contribution to our Covid-19 response in supporting our town, residents and businesses, whilst respecting those who	Staff wellbeing	Work is ongoing incrementally with the Staff Ambassador's Group, but plans for face to face events have had to be deferred.	Delivery re-profiled	There have been a number of initiatives for staff to ensure that their effort and dedication throughout the Covid-19 response has been recognised. This includes financial recognition

	have been personally impacted by the virus and the subsequent lockdown			where appropriate. However, with a second wave of the virus underway it is not appropriate to consider face-to-face events at the current time and so this will remain on hold until government guidance is changed.
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4. Work stream 4: Financial Resilience

4.1 Key achievements over period

- Budgets reset and agreed in light of Covid-19 impact.
- £150k general support from Government received and first quarterly Income Guarantee claim submitted to Government (forecast c.£1m for the year).
- Agreement reached on Colosseum contract.
- SLM (Leisure centres) recommenced trading.
- September quarterly rental income receipts trending upwards compared to June 2020.
- 4 lettings agreed since end March.
- Former Debenhams site filled at intu and Next Home & Beauty now open.

4.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
Blue	Completed	1
Green	On track	8
Yellow	Planning underway	0
Red	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influence	0
Total		9

OBJECTIVE Quantify the budgetary impact of the pandemic on the council and identify and pursue external opportunities for funding		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Understand the impact of Covid-19 on our finances	We will ensure that the financial impact of Covid-19 is fully identified and recorded, including what we have spent responding to the crisis and the impact on our income	Financial Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25 July - SLM Leisure Centres reopened ✓ 31 July - Receipt of Gov't LA support package funds ✓ 11 September - Market income impact paper ✓ 30 September - Completed & Submitted Gov't's Income Guarantee scheme forms to reclaim quarter 2 income ✓ 2 October - Colosseum contract end notification letter ✓ 12 October - Review first month's accounts since leisure centre reopening • 19 October - Develop high street initiatives project plan 	On track	Financial impact of Covid-19 identified and ongoing monitoring underway through the Financial Resilience work stream.
Understand the wider impact of Covid-19 on the public sector	We will contribute fully locally and nationally to the work being carried out to identify the impact on district councils and lobby for additional resources to support our Road to Renewal Plan whilst continuing to deliver services for our residents and businesses	Financial Impact		On track	Ongoing contribution to cross authority groups and to learn from others/share best practice. Where grants and additional financial support is available, bids have been made in order to support the council's financial resilience. This includes for the

					High Street reopening scheme and for support for rough sleepers.
Manage the impact of Covid-19 on our finances over the coming years	We will identify the longer term impact on the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and develop a strategy to close the gap so that we can continue to focus on our priorities	Investment Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 July - Budget reset discussions at Council ✓ 10 September - Budget strategy review at Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service ✓ 23 September - Review base budget adjustments ✓ 12 October – Growth bids and savings proposals for 2021/22 due from services <p>Assessment of growth bids and savings proposal underway in preparation for the budget setting cycle.</p>	On track	Council budget reset following re-profiling of projects as a result of Covid-19, allowing the council to focus on priorities outlined within the Council Plan. Ongoing managing of budgets and planning for impact of Covid on future financial years
OBJECTIVE Model the effects of disrupted revenue streams		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Understand the impact of the Covid-19 on our income	We will continue to identify and model the impact of the pandemic in relation to the council's property investment revenue streams and work with the council's investment managers to identify any action that can be taken to minimise risks and reduce the impact	Investment Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 23 July - Compare latest quarter rent/investment collections with pre-Covid quarters ✓ 10 August – outstanding market rent letters sent ✓ 15 August - Intu 7% rent receipt not received ✓ 7 September – Regus rent extension agreed at PIB • 20 October - quarterly update reports going to Commercial Income and Investment Board 	On track	A number of leases agreed at Croxley Business Park during lockdown with detailed monitoring of intu administration impact underway but positive developments include the announcement of Next Home & Beauty moving into the ex-Debenhams site. Ongoing monitoring of quarterly rent receipts and comparison with previous quarters. Ongoing

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 November – Additional occupation of Croxley Business Park premises 		successful management of the council’s investment portfolio will allow budget to be focused on the delivery of the priorities outlined in the Council Plan.
OBJECTIVE Ensure the prompt administration of national and local financial schemes during the renewal phase		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
Manage financial hardship schemes	We will continue to ensure that national and local financial hardship schemes support those residents and businesses most affected by the crisis		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 17 July - SME & Retail Hospitality & Leisure grant allocated and closed ✓ 2 September - Discretionary Fund allocated and closed 	Complete	SME & Retail Hospitality & Leisure Fund fully allocated to eligible businesses. 150 businesses supported through the administration of the Discretionary Fund, totalling £856k. Policies drafted for Local Lockdown Fund for use if and when required.
OBJECTIVE Develop draft local approaches to mitigating budget challenges		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
Mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the council by continuing to actively manage our budgets	We will develop options for reduced spend and increased borrowing to ensure that our budget can continue to support services provided to our residents. This budget management will include ensuring that grants are spent on time and that any projected spend impacted by the virus is re-profiled so that it supports our priorities	Manage the gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 July - Budget reset discussions at Council ✓ 10 September - Budget strategy review at Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service ✓ 23 September - Review base budget adjustments ✓ 12 October – Growth bids and savings proposals for 2021/22 due from services • November - Assessment of growth bids and savings proposal 	On track	Council budget reset following re-profiling of projects as a result of Covid-19, allowing the council to focus on priorities outlined within the Council Plan.

			underway in preparation for the budget setting cycle.		
OBJECTIVE Assess the impacts of supply chain disruption (including key contractors)		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Understand the impact of supply chain disruption on our projects and contracts (whether as a result of a second wave of the virus or EU Exit)	We will review all existing projects and contracts to assess the potential impact of supply chain disruption and other Covid-19 impacts so that we can continue to deliver the best possible service to our residents and businesses	Contractor Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 30 September – EU Exit and supply chain strategy shared with key Finance stakeholders ✓ 07 October – Work stream risk register updated with EU Exit risk to supply chains • 30 October – Final review undertaken by all services in relation to the impact on services as a result of EU Exit. 	On track	<p>EU Exit and Supply Chain Strategy successfully completed. All Business Continuity Plans updated with specific reference to Covid-19, incorporating the lessons learnt from the first wave to ensure that the council is able to respond as effectively as possible for residents. Further review is now underway in light of the specific impact of the EU Exit in relation to supply chains. Ongoing review in line with Covid wave 2 and EU Exit negotiations.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be a resourcing impact in Q3 and 4, which may have an impact on the Covid 19 response. To mitigate risk discussions ongoing at the Hertfordshire Recovery Coordinating Group.</p>

<p>Support our local businesses to work with the council</p>	<p>We will review how the council works with local SMEs with a view to improving the opportunities for local SMEs to supply goods and services to the council so that we play an active role in supporting our local economy</p>	<p>Contractor resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 28 August - Town Centre Development Manager appointed ✓ September – engaged BID & reviewing its future ahead of ballot in 2021 ✓ 28 September - BID Business Plan reviewed ✓ October – Visit Watford consultant review complete ✓ 9 October – registered interest with the High Street Taskforce for expert advice and support • 15 October – Comms meeting to agree approach to attracting and growing businesses in Watford • 20 October – meeting with College • November onwards – Develop Town Centre plan, including developing opportunities for local SMEs 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Town Centre Development Manager appointed to provide ongoing focus on the town centre and, following a success review of the council’s business networks and forums, is continuing to work closely with SMEs in line with the council’s new approach to business engagement.</p>
<p>Ensure that our business continuity plans are realistic about the impact of supply chain disruption (whether as a result of a second wave of the virus or EU Exit)</p>	<p>We will review our business continuity plans to ensure that there is clarity on how services will be delivered in the event of contractor or supply chain failure and to ensure that we can continue to deliver the best possible service to our residents and businesses</p>	<p>Contractor resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 9 September – Business Continuity Plans updated • 30 October – Final review undertaken by all services in relation to the impact on services as a result of EU Exit. 	<p>On track</p>	<p>All Business Continuity Plans updated with specific reference to Covid-19, incorporating the lessons learnt from the first wave to ensure that the council is able to respond as effectively as possible for residents. Further review is now underway in light of the specific impact of the EU Exit in relation to supply chains.</p>

Agenda Item 8

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 9 November 2020

Report author: Senior Democratic Services Officer

Title: Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group final report

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with the final report and recommendations of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group. The full report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The report was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 22 October. An extract of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's minutes is attached as Appendix 2
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to consider the task group's recommendations for approval.

2.0 Risks

- 2.1 No direct risks to the council have been identified as a result of the task group's recommendations.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 that Cabinet approves the task group's recommendations:

- 1) W3RT should take steps to improve understanding of its activities in the local community.
- 2) There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community.
- 3) W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust.
- 4) The Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector.

- 5) W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities
- 6) W3RT should ensure that connections with local partners and statutory bodies are maintained in order to maximise the number of volunteers locally.
- 7) W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links.
- 8) W3RT and WBC should maintain a strong and collaborative working relationship.

Further information:

Ishbel Morren

ishbel.morren@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Managing Director

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 At its meeting on 23 July 2020, Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed a scrutiny proposal to form a task group to review Watford Borough Council's relationship with Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT), with a particular focus on the partnership working during the pandemic.
- 4.2 At that meeting, the membership of the task group was agreed. The following councillors were appointed:

Councillor Glen Saffery Chair, Councillor for Woodside Ward
Councillor Dawn Allen-Williamson, Councillor for Callowland Ward
Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa, Councillor for Vicarage Ward
Councillor Amanda Grimston Councillor for Meriden Ward
Councillor Jennifer Pattinson Councillor for Meriden Ward
- 4.3 The task group had an initial meeting to review and agree the terms of reference, work programme and key witnesses.
- 4.4 A number of witness sessions were held with representatives of W3RT, officers and other key local stakeholders. The views of the local voluntary sector were captured in a survey.
- 4.5 The task group has been working in tandem with the council's Voluntary Sector Specialist, who has also been undertaking a review of the council's voluntary sector relationships.

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 there are no legal implications in this report.

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

5.3.1 There are no specific implications in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group report

Appendix 2 – Extract of minutes from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 22 October 2020

Background papers

There are no specific background papers for this report. All background information used during the task group's work is referenced in the final report.



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

**Watford and Three Rivers Trust
Task Group**

October 2020

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1. Task group proposal	

Task group members

Councillor Glen Saffery
Councillor Dawn Allen-Williamson
Councillor Amanda Grimston
Councillor Jennifer Pattinson
Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa

Chair, Councillor for Woodside Ward
Councillor for Callowland Ward
Councillor for Meriden Ward
Councillor for Meriden Ward
Councillor for Vicarage Ward

Officer support

Jodie Kloss
Ishbel Morren
Nicola Marven

Democratic Services Officer
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Voluntary Sector Specialist

Witnesses

Watford and Three Rivers Trust

Bob Jones
Nicky Fawcett
Guy Foxell

Chief Executive Officer
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Chair of Trustees

Three Rivers District Council

Rebecca Young

Acting Head of Community Partnerships

Watford Borough Council

Liam Hornsby

Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office, (seconded to coordinate the volunteer response to the pandemic)

Chris Fennell
Natalie Frost

Head of Leisure and Environmental Services Contract and Relationship Manager – Sustainable Transport, (seconded to support the volunteer response to the pandemic)

Julietta Federico

Contract and Partnership Manager – Leisure & Community

Watford Chamber of Commerce

Chris Luff, MBE

Chief Executive Officer

Hertfordshire County Council

Kristy Thakur

Operation Sustain Programme Lead (VPAC)
Deputy Head (Community Wellbeing)
Integrated Community Support Commissioning Team

Representatives of the local voluntary sector who responded to the survey.

Proposed recommendations to present to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. W3RT should take steps to improve understanding of its activities in the local community.
2. There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community.
3. W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust.
4. The Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector.
5. W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities
6. W3RT should ensure that connections with local partners and statutory bodies are maintained in order to maximise the number of volunteers locally.
7. W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links.
8. W3RT and WBC should maintain a strong and collaborative working relationship.

Background to the task group

Under a service level agreement, Watford Borough Council (WBC) commissions Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT, also referred to as ‘the Trust’ elsewhere in this report) to provide infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector. The council funds W3RT £79,173 per year to support the community and voluntary sector, and has worked closely with the Trust to respond to COVID-19.

W3RT has a focus on service delivery to strengthen the voluntary sector in Watford and enable it to thrive, ensuring that it has the best possible opportunity of delivering high-quality, effective and value for money services to residents and service users.

Whilst WBC’s response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 has been impressive, it was thought helpful to review how well the community and voluntary sector were supported during the council’s response to the pandemic and to establish whether there were areas for improvement.

Seven key themes were identified to guide the task group’s work:

1. What is the long-term plan for volunteers and volunteering – sustaining what we have, recruiting and retaining new volunteers?
2. What is the impact of volunteers currently and how could this be improved?
3. How do we sustain the current effort and support community organisations?
4. How successfully did the trust collaborate with businesses, statutory and public sector organisations in responding to COVID-19?
5. Based on data and evidence, what was the delivered response to COVID-19?
6. What is the overall strategy, vision and business plan for W3RT, including harnessing the positive outcomes from the crisis, and how does this support the CVS (council for voluntary services) role commissioned by WBC?
7. How do we turn the Community Fund into a legacy of COVID-19, including:
 - Governance and the role of WBC
 - Links to existing Watford based charities e.g., New Hope, Peace Hospice etc, and how we involve them in promoting and supporting the Community Fund
 - The need for a dedicated fundraiser at W3RT
 - How to link the Community Fund to the Mayor and his business links.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish the task group at its meeting on 23 July 2020 and confirmed the membership and chair, as set out above.

Response to the pandemic

On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced measures to slow down the spread of the virus. The public was told only to leave their homes for very limited purposes and certain businesses, including all shops providing non-essential goods, were closed. Those who were considered most vulnerable to severe disease as a result of COVID-19 were asked to shield,

initially for a 12 week period. This had wide-ranging impacts on the whole community and in particular on those who were shielding.

In response, the council set up a number of work-streams including one on coordinating the community resource which:

- Set up a local hub to co-ordinate all voluntary activity in Watford
- Ensured that the most vulnerable in all areas of Watford had the required support from volunteers
- Supported volunteers in responding to emerging needs in a safe and meaningful way.

W3RT was a key partner in a number of these areas. The Trust coordinated the volunteer response assigning support tasks to volunteers and allocating volunteers to membership organisations who needed additional support as well as ensuring safeguarding needs were met. W3RT provided a valuable service in triaging the needs of many residents who were shielding and signposting them to the most appropriate services.

The results of this partnership working had significant outputs including:

- Recruitment of nearly 1,700 volunteers working with over 1,300 people
- 7,700 'keeping in touch' calls made by volunteers
- 400 prescriptions collected and delivered
- 330 personal shops or other actions completed
- Over 600 emergency food packs delivered
- Over 7 tonnes of food and PPE collected and distributed
- The Community Fund raised more than £155,000, approximately £125,000 of which has been allocated
- 7,700 triage calls to assess needs undertaken by W3RT staff
- Through Hertfordshire Community Navigators Service, resolved around 10,000 support needs.¹

Community Fund

The Community Fund has been in existence for a number of years but had been dormant with no active appeals. It was decided that it could be used as a vehicle to raise money for local voluntary and community groups who were responding to additional and changing needs during the pandemic. A significant donation of £100,000 was received from Camelot, whose headquarters are located in the area. This donation was split equally with Three Rivers. Other fundraising activities for the Community Fund included:

- A weekly online quiz with Watford's Elected Mayor and Luther Blissett
- A unique 'ride to donate' initiative with Beryl Bikes, which saw money generated for the fund for every ride taken on a Beryl Bike during a two week period. This was

¹ Data provided by W3RT's Chair of Trustees, correct as of mid-September 2020.

supported by Watford FC goalkeeper Ben Foster and generously sponsored by PLM Limited, a local business

- A 'walk for Watford' challenge in partnership with Everyone Active, which encouraged residents to walk one mile and donate £5 to the fund during lockdown, challenging five friends to do the same on social media
- A raffle with prizes donated by local businesses. Tickets sold raised over £3,500
- An auction of prizes donated by a number of former Watford FC players among others, raising over £4,000
- The creation of a dedicated website with appeal videos from famous faces linked to Watford, including Kelly Smith, Limahl, Maro Itoje and Tommy Smith
- Creation of text to donate numbers and an online portal.

To date, the fund has raised more than £155,000 and supported approximately 50 groups who are active in Watford. W3RT oversaw the allocation of the fund; receiving and reviewing applications in line with the guidelines and making the payments to the recipients.

Commissioning Framework

WBC has an ongoing relationship with W3RT under its commissioning framework. As part of this framework, W3RT delivers the CVS function for Watford. The focus of this service delivery is to strengthen the voluntary sector in Watford and enable it to thrive, ensuring that it has the best possible opportunity of delivering high quality, effective and value for money services to residents and service users.

The outcomes as set out in the service specification are:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations are better equipped to run their organisations and build resilience and sustainability.
- The voluntary and community sector interests and concerns are represented to achieve a better outcome.

WBC officers undertake regular monitoring of this work through key performance indicators (KPIs) and end of year reports as well as meetings which often include WBC portfolio holders. The end of year reports are regularly reviewed by WBC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The current framework commenced on 1 April 2019 and will end on 31 March 2023.

Overview of the task group's programme of work

The task group held an initial meeting in August 2020 to review the terms of reference and to identify the key issues for consideration. It was agreed that a series of witness sessions would be held in September. The task group agreed to seek the views of:

- Key representatives from W3RT

- Officers from WBC and TRDC involved in the councils' regular engagement with W3RT, as well as those seconded to help with the work of coordinating the local response to COVID-19
- Voluntary sector organisations, including recipients of the Community Fund
- Watford Chamber of Commerce
- Hertfordshire County Council.

In parallel to these witness sessions, a survey of all those who had applied to the Community Fund, and other local voluntary groups, was undertaken to understand the experience of the application process and to ascertain if and where improvements might be made. The task group focussed both on the immediate term – in anticipation of a second wave of COVID-19 impacting the local community, and on the future – to harness the positive lessons learnt during lockdown in order to optimise the community and voluntary service for local residents.

The task group worked alongside Nicola Marven, Voluntary Sector Specialist, who was undertaking a review of how the council interfaces with W3RT and the voluntary sector more widely. Some areas included in the initial terms of reference, such as the investigation of how the outcomes delivered by W3RT compare to other similar umbrella organisations, will be captured in her review.

Additional research work was carried out by Democratic Services to inform the task group's work and to produce this report

A list of the witnesses who provided evidence to the task group is listed on page 3 and a bibliography is provided at the end of this report.

Recommendations and comments

W3RT reach and profile in the community

1. W3RT should take steps to improve understanding of its activities in the local community.

W3RT's role, responsibilities and long-term objectives should be better understood in the local community. W3RT offers wide-ranging support and it is important that all of the voluntary and community sector can make the most of its resources, services and guidance. The task group heard evidence on a number of occasions that the trust's expertise in governance issues was widely regarded as excellent.

It would be useful for the Trust to capture information about successful activities and innovations, possibly in the form of real-life case studies. This would enable good and best practices to become embedded within and shared between community and voluntary sector organisations and could be used as part of the marketing activities related to the Community Fund.

2. There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community.

The task group identified the fact that isolated groups, which included those representing Watford's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), religious and other non-English speaking minority groups, may not have come forward to volunteer or to apply for Community Fund grants. It is recommended that outreach work is undertaken to address this and to ensure the needs of all groups are embedded into the organisation's culture.

In this regard, W3RT's current work with the Hertfordshire Equalities Council to identify isolated and under-represented groups in Watford is welcomed by the task group.

As community leaders, councillors have a key role to play engaging with the different communities within their wards to ensure that all groups benefit fully from W3RT's support and expertise. The elected members should also encourage groups to pursue an active ongoing relationship with the Trust. These relationships will particularly benefit the smaller groups who are less likely to benefit currently from local support and networks.

Fundraising

3. W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust.

This post would provide support for local groups applying for local and national funding. Additionally, the role could be responsible for drawing in funding for Watford's Community Fund.

Fundraising is crucial. The ability to identify funding sources and raise money is empowering for charity and voluntary groups – it is feared that some of the fledgling organisations will not survive unless they are equipped with these skills and supported to develop their fundraising work. At the same time many established charities face a major loss of income and will need to fundraise successfully to keep their vital services running in the tough times that are anticipated ahead. This was clearly reflected in the survey where 83% of respondents stated that one of the main challenges facing their organisations in the next 12 months was sustainability of income and funding.

The Community Fund has been a valuable resource for the voluntary sector during the pandemic. At the time of writing, the Three Rivers portion of the funds has been exhausted and there is approximately £20,000 remaining for Watford-based activities. The task group feels that it is important that this lifeline for the voluntary sector is extended through further fundraising.

W3RT should take a lead in equipping CVS members with the skills they need to raise funds and use its position to lead in developing and marketing the Community Fund resource. The task group noted 62% of respondents to the survey had not applied for funding from the Community Fund.

4. The Task Group considers that the Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector

Fundraising needs to be at the heart of the sector's recovery strategy and cannot be considered as a secondary function. Across the country, COVID 19 has significantly impacted the charity and voluntary sector's ability to fundraise and charities have real concerns about their financial security. These concerns were confirmed by respondents to the survey. When asked about the main challenges facing organisations in the next 12 months, 83% stated sustainability of income / funding. 40% of respondents also highlighted an anticipated increase in the number of local residents needing support.

The Community Fund will be crucial to supporting local charities with meeting this challenge. There is immense goodwill towards the fund and an opportunity exists to capitalise on the sense of place and loyalty to the Watford community that has seen the fundraising operate so successfully in recent months.

The fund is considered to have been administered efficiently – 68% of those who responded to the survey question around the speed with which they received funding stated that they had received it very quickly. However, it is important to ensure high standards of transparency in grant awards, and to ensure that constructive feedback is available to applicants who are either unsuccessful or received less than the amount they applied for.

It is suggested that a strategic discussion with WBC, the Watford Chamber of Commerce and other key local partners and stakeholders should take place to set

the long-term aims of the Community Fund as well as the means of developing, growing and marketing the fund.

Watford's CVS provider has a crucial role to play not only as custodian of this fund but as a champion of it – ensuring money is raised by local people for local people.

Volunteering

5. W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities

W3RT's vision is to create a pro-volunteering culture in the town as a whole. W3RT's role is to inspire and galvanise volunteers. The challenge for the future is to provide a tiered volunteering structure to allow people to commit to an appropriate level. W3RT would provide a system to check and validate volunteers and facilitate online training. This structure is welcomed, but needs to be embedded in the CVS.

The task group accepts that volunteer numbers are likely to fall as people return to work. However, with unemployment expected to increase the benefits of volunteering should not be underestimated for those seeking useful employment, nor in its capacity to maintain social fabric in the town.

As part of this, WBC should consider reviewing the service level agreement with W3RT to ensure that the council's aspirations for the town's volunteering culture is fully reflected in this document and gives the Trust the foundation on which they can develop this work further.

Working relationships

6. W3RT should work to ensure that connections with local partners and statutory bodies are maintained in order to maximise the number of volunteers locally.

Excellent working relationships have been formed with many local partners and statutory bodies including the NHS and the community navigation service. Maintaining regular contact and liaison with these partners will ensure the joint working undertaken during the pandemic has a long-lasting impact.

The Mayor's Office can be a facilitator of partnership working, fundraising, community support and cohesion. Engagement with businesses from across the town can also boost outreach into BAME communities, by helping to reach the customers they serve. The task group would encourage this facilitating role to continue in this regard.

7. W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links.

The voluntary sector and the business community would benefit from closer collaboration with each other. Business provides a commercial perspective on the challenges facing the voluntary sector and W3RT has valuable insight into the local community and voluntary sector. This insight can be used by business looking to

develop their corporate social responsibility agendas, invest in the local community and understand their customers better.

Collaboration with the business community could be strengthened at W3RT. It is suggested that W3RT invite a representative of the Watford Chamber of Commerce to sit as a trustee on the board to provide an ongoing link with the local business sector.

Interface with Watford Borough Council

8. W3RT and WBC should maintain a strong and collaborative working relationship.

Maintaining and strengthening the good collaborative working relationship between the council and W3RT is essential in order to maximise the benefit to Watford's community and voluntary sector.

During the Covid crisis, the task group noted that central leadership from the Mayor's office proved beneficial to W3RT, business partners and other groups, by bringing stakeholders together and providing a crucial channel of communication. These links should be solidified to enable issues to be identified and addressed through a more collaborative and symbiotic working relationship, rather than simply a commissioning approach. This approach to working should operate at all levels of engagement between the council and W3RT.

It is suggested that WBC officers working on economic development should promote W3RT and the Community Fund as part of businesses' local corporate social responsibility programmes. Collaborative work should be undertaken between the Trust, Chamber of Commerce and council to encourage businesses locating to Watford to direct their corporate social responsibility efforts towards local causes via W3RT.

The task group learnt that there were different arrangements between other authorities and their CVS organisations. It is suggested that WBC officers develop networks to share and learn best practice in other districts in order to strengthen the community and voluntary sectors across Hertfordshire.

The task group would like to thank all their witnesses who generously gave time to assist with this review as well as respondents to the survey.

Bibliography/background papers

Report to Cabinet – [Watford Borough Council response to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - 4 May 2020

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee – [New Scrutiny task group: WBC's relationship with W3RT during the COVID 19 pandemic](#) – 23 July 2020

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee – [Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework year 1 report](#) – 24 September 2020

[Impact on the Charity Sector during Coronavirus](#) – research report June 2020, Institute of Fundraising, NCVO, and Charity Finance Group supported by PwC

Watford Community Survey – October 2020

**Watford Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny proposal form**

Scrutiny review title	Watford Borough Council's relationship with the Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT)
Scrutiny proposer	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Details of specific area for review	<p>The council provides funding to W3RT to support the voluntary and community sector, and has worked closely with the trust to respond to COVID 19.</p> <p>Under a service level agreement, the council commissions W3RT to provide infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector. W3RT has a focus on service delivery to strengthen the voluntary sector in Watford and enable it to thrive, ensuring that it has the best possible opportunity to deliver high quality, effective and value for money services to residents and service users.</p> <p>Scrutiny is asked to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well the community and voluntary sector were supported during the council's response to COVID 19 and whether there are areas for improvement • the council's relationship with W3RT and the lessons learnt from the COVID 19 response.
Which council priorities it supports	The scrutiny suggestion supports the council's priority to celebrate and support our local communities.
Desired outcomes / indicators of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed overview of W3RT's COVID 19 activities and expenditure in Watford. • Lessons learnt during the community sector response to COVID 19 which can be taken forward in policies and other relevant documentation. • Clear recommendations that contribute to a strengthened service for the community sector in Watford.
Timescale and key dates	<p>23 July: Task Group outline, membership and chair to O&S</p> <p>July-Aug: Preparation with Chair to agree witnesses, draw up and arrange a schedule of meetings and meeting formats</p> <p>Aug-Sept: Meetings with witnesses</p> <p>22 Oct: Final report and recommendations to O&S</p> <p>9 Nov: Final report and recommendations to Cabinet</p>

Extract from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 October 2020

- Present: Councillor Parker (Chair)
Councillor Dhindsa (Vice Chair)
Councillors Allen-Williamson, Crout, Jeffree, Martins, Mauthoor, Saffery, and Turmaine
- Officers: Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Group Head of Transformation
Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office
Senior Democratic Services Officer

42. **Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group final report**

The Chair of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group, Councillor Glen Saffery, was invited to introduce the task group's final report and recommendations.

Councillor Saffery explained that the task group had been set up to review how well the community and voluntary sector had been supported during the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to establish whether there were areas for improvement. Work had focussed on two areas: volunteering and the future of the Community Fund. Councillor Saffery thanked the task group members, witnesses and officers for their constructive engagement.

Councillor Dhindsa commented that, although he had been a member of the task group, he did not agree with the report. He remained concerned about the lack of funds allocated to Watford's BAME communities from the Community Fund and the monitoring undertaken by W3RT. Councillor Dhindsa considered that W3RT needed to undertake more outreach work with BAME groups to raise awareness about the support and assistance available to them. He also suggested that the proposed dedicated fundraiser should be a council, rather than W3RT, employee.

Councillor Saffery regretted Councillor Dhindsa's comments. He disputed the suggestion that members of Watford's BAME communities had not received proportionate funding from the Community Fund. There had been a considerable response to the task group's survey of those who had applied to the Community Fund, and other local voluntary groups, but Councillor Dhindsa's concerns had not been echoed.

Other committee members welcomed the task group's work, which demonstrated the value of scrutiny in its capacity to take an even-handed arm's

length view in order to evaluate and make recommendations for improvement. It was also commented that the Community Fund had been the subject of significant publicity during the pandemic, not least on social media.

In response to comments from scrutiny members, the Chair agreed in accordance with Standing Committee Procedure Rules, paragraph 4.2, that it be recorded in the minutes how members cast their votes.

Those members voting for the officer's recommendation

Councillors Parker, Allen-Williamson, Crout, Jeffree, Martins and Saffery

Those members voting against the officer's recommendation

Councillors Dhindsa, Mauthoor and Turmaine

RESOLVED –

that the final report and recommendations of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group be agreed and forwarded to Cabinet.