



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

CABINET

7 June 2021

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

Sandra Hancock Democratic Services Manager

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk .

01923 278377

Publication date: 27 May 2021

Updated: 28 May 2021

Cabinet Membership

Mayor	P Taylor	(Chair)
Councillor	A Dychton	(Deputy Mayor)
Councillors	S Johnson, J Pattinson, I Stotesbury, 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 1 March 2021 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. Contract Exemption Hertfordshire Growth Hub (Pages 4 - 8)

Report of the Economic Development Consultant

6. Strategic Framework 2020-21 Q4 Update (Pages 9 - 148)

Report of the Executive Head of Strategy and Communications and Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office

7. Update of the Council's Domestic Abuse and Joint Safeguarding Policies (Pages 149 - 231)

Report of the Environmental Health Manager

8. Balmoral Road Garage Site - proposed use for interim move-on homes for Watford's Single Homeless Pathway (Pages 232 - 244)

Report of the Head of Housing

9. Economic Growth Strategy (Pages 245 - 372)

Report of the Economic Development Officer and the Group Head of Place Shaping

10. Exclusion of press & public

The Chair to move: that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act for the reasons stated below in terms of Schedule 12A.

Note: if approved, the Chair will ask members of the press and public to leave the meeting at this point.

11. Riverwell Joint Venture - Deed of Variation to Members Agreement (Pages 373 - 376)

Report of the (Shared Services) Director of Finance

Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3 – the report contains commercially sensitive information

Agenda Item 5

PART A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7th June 2021

Report author: Emma Finn, Economic Development Consultant

Title: Procurement Exemption - Watford Business Growth Grant

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) has been provided to local councils by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. The purpose is to support businesses that have either closed or have been severely impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic including those businesses that do not pay rates and are therefore unable to access support through the Local Restrictions Grant Scheme (LRSG).
- 1.2 £500,000 of this funding will provide businesses and organisations in Watford impacted by Covid 19 with advice, support and grant funding to help them grow.
- 1.3 It is understood that ARG top-up of £976,795 will only be released if the initial ARG funding is spent by 30th June 2021, subject to meeting the spend criteria. Hence wishing to establish the grant process with Hertfordshire Growth Hub.
- 1.4 Watford Borough Council has developed a bespoke programme of business support for Watford businesses with between 5 and 10 employees, which have been impacted by Covid 19.
- 1.5 Hertfordshire Growth Hub will be providing advice and support for 300 Watford businesses as well as managing and administering a £350k grant for 100 Watford businesses, at a cost of £149,980.08.
- 1.6 The administrative organisation behind the Hertfordshire Growth Hub is the University of Hertfordshire organisation Exemplas, which is the contractual organisation.
- 1.7 The council's contract procedure rules allow exemptions from undertaking a procurement exercise in certain circumstances provided the value of the contract is under the value of contracts that have to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. This contract is under that threshold.
- 1.8 It is considered that the reason for needing the exemption is a limited market and the speed required to establish a programme, An exemption was required because the programme was scheduled to launch in late May, and we needed to proceed

quickly. It will now launch on 27th May. Hertfordshire Growth Hub are uniquely qualified and experienced in providing professional advice and support to Watford businesses of this size. For example, in 2020/2021 HGH supported 200 Watford micro businesses (between 1 and 9 employees). It was felt that other organisations would not be able to mobilise at the speed required.

1.9 A Procurement Exemption to the Council’s Procurement Procedures was agreed on 13th May 2021 for the council to procure this contract with Exemplas.

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)
Hertfordshire Growth Hub are unable to deliver the programme effectively.	Watford businesses with between 5 and 10 employees will not fully benefit from the bespoke advice, support and grant funding available	Weekly reporting from the Hertfordshire Growth Hub is required as a condition of the contract and the project will be closely monitored.	Treat	3x2=6

3.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet notes the Approved Exemption to the Council’s Procurement Procedures in relation to the document in Appendix 1.

Further information:

Emma Finn
emma.finn@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Tom Dobrashian, Group Head of Place Shaping

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Details of the exemption can be found in Appendix 1.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the proposed grant to the Growth Hub will be met from within the Council's ARG funding and contribute to achieving spending the Council's first tranche of ARG funding by 30th June 2021. This will enable the Council to be eligible for a second tranche of ARG funding (approximately £0.9M). A formal grant agreement will require the grant to be spent for the prescribed purpose.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the contract procedure rules require any exemptions involving contracts worth more than £100,000 should be reported to cabinet.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149 (1) of the Equality Act, it is considered that an assessment is not required.

5.3.2 No Human Rights issues are considered detrimental to the proposal.

5.3.3 Exemphas and Watford Borough Council will be sharing data on businesses engaged with the programme. The following privacy statement will feature on Watford Borough Council's website where businesses will fill in an Expression of Interest form.

Privacy statement and data protection

Information collected here will be used by Watford Borough Council (WBC) and our delivery partner Hertfordshire Growth Hub (HGH), who will provide information and advice to support your business or business plans.

WBC's lawful basis for processing your data is a task in the public interest and aligns with its statutory responsibility for planning and economic development, licensing and regulation.

Data will be retained by WBC for three years.

Your data will not be published or referred to in a way that identifies any individual or business.

WBC's [privacy notice](#) explains how you can exercise your rights in respect of this data. The Council will not use your personal data for marketing unless you provide explicit consent for this above.

HGH's privacy notice can be found [here](#).

- 5.3.4 Data protection has also been addressed in the following clause within the draft grant agreement between Watford Borough Council and Exemplas.

DATA PROTECTION

Exemplas shall (and shall procure that any of its staff involved in connection with the activities under the Agreement shall) comply with any registration requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (**DPA**) and both Parties will duly observe all their obligations under the GDPR and the DPA which arise in connection with the Agreement.

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

5.4 **Staffing**

- 5.4.1 No staffing issues relate to this report.

5.5 **Accommodation**

- 5.5.1 No accommodation issues relate to this report.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

- 5.6.1 No community safety/crime and disorders relate to this report.

5.7 **Sustainability**

- 5.7.1 No sustainability issues relate to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Approved Procurement Exemption

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Exemption from Contract Procedure Rules - request form - Request Approved

ECPR334174593

Your details

Email address emma.finn@watford.gov.uk

Exemption request details

Exemption category	Limited market
Details / Circumstances / Explanation of why an exemption was required	Watford Borough Council is developing a bespoke programme of business support for Watford Businesses with between 5 and 10 employees, which have been impacted by COVID19. Hertfordshire Growth Hub will manage and administer Â£350k grant funding for Watford businesses at a cost of Â£149,980.08, which will support 300 businesses. The administrative organisation behind the Hub is the University of Hertfordshire organisation Exemplas, which will be the organisation we will contract with for mobilisation. An exemption is required because the programme will launch this month, we need to proceed quickly and Hertfordshire Growth Hub are uniquely qualified and experienced in providing professional advice and support to Watford businesses of this size. For example, in 2020/2021 HGH supported 200 Watford micro businesses (between 1 and 9 employees).
Contract Title	Watford Business Growth Grant
Vendor / Contractor	Exemplas
Date Contract let	24 May 2021
Term / Duration of Contract	10 months
End date	31 March 2022
Total Value of Contract	Â£149,980.08
WBC Contract Manager name	Tom Dobrashian
WBC Contract Manager email	tom.dobrashian@watford.gov.uk
Date	13 May 2021

Group Head of Service approval

Group Head of Service approving / rejecting:	Tom Dobrashian
Decision	Approve and forward to the Managing Director
Comments (optional)	note i will work with Emma for cabinet exemption report which we will need to do. Exemplus/Growth hub are in reality only organisation that can deliver this grant scheme in Hertfordshire at short notice, and the limited market that would be available.
Date	13 May 2021

Managing Director decision

Decision	Approve the request
Comments (optional)	Approved on the basis of limited market and the exceptional circumstances relating to the need to support the businesses identified without delay so as to seek to ensure they recover from the impact of Covid 19.
Managing Director	Donna Nolan
Date	13 May 2021

Portfolio holder

Name of the Portfolio Holder informed	Mark Watkin
Date the Portfolio Holder was informed	13 May 2021

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7 June 2021

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

Title: **Focusing on delivery:**
Tracking progress on the Council Plan – 2020-24 / Delivery
Plan – 2020-22 (Quarter 4), Organisational Development Strategy
2020 – 24 (Quarter 4) and Our Covid-19 Road to Renewal Plan
(Quarter 4)

Nature of Report: For noting

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 delivers and gets things done. A critical part of this 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
- 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 focus for the organisation. This has enabled services to concentrate on what is important to the town and council. 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 last update at the beginning of the year, particularly around the emergence of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional lockdown in January 2021, which continued to a significant degree throughout Quarter 4 (January to March) . 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 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22 are key part of the council's strategic framework, developed to ensure the organisation builds on the organisation's ambitious agenda 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 we are seen by our community as an organisation that delivers on its promises. The July 2020 report to Council, as well as introducing the plans, 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, currently planned for September 2021.
- 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 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 of focus, which cover the community, economy and business and the council's organisational renewal, including its financial resilience. However, it should be noted that the recovery from Covid-19 is unlikely to follow the steps of a traditional recovery; the situation remains very uncertain and significant changes have occurred since the progress of the plan was last reported. As a result, the Road to Renewal plan will need to adapt and remain flexible so that it remains focused on achieving a positive and successful renewal for the town, supporting our residents, businesses and community. This will include working with our neighbouring authorities and the County Council to ensure a Hertfordshire-wide position and renewal plans that share aims and align delivery to ensure the very best recovery possible. A refreshed Road to Renewal plan has, therefore, been developed which best reflects the additional challenges presented as a result of successive lockdowns and the impact on our residents and businesses. The refreshed Road to Renewal plan will be presented to Cabinet for discussion and approval in July and will cover the period up to June 2022 at which point our existing Delivery Plan will be updated to deliver the remainder of the Council Plan up to 2024, incorporating the focus on Covid-19 recovery which will become intractable from the wider service delivery undertaken by the council.

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	Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for our town and residents. Potential impact on the reputation of the Council.	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management	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 cannot be delivered	Town and council do not deliver the renewal as effectively as they could. Perceived lack of leadership and support	A significant appraisal of resourcing requirements has been undertaken in relation to the activities 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	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
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. The plan will be refreshed at appropriate times.	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 As outlined in the original report to Cabinet in July 2020, that the progress to date will be communicated publically to our residents, with the proposal to do this in September 2021
- 3.3 The significant corporate effort over the last three months that has resulted in a substantial level of progress made against all three plans.
- 3.4 The impact of external factors on some of the areas of delivery. Where this is the case, the area have been reviewed to reflect the current environment during Quarter 4. The focus on delivery within the life of the plans remains a corporate commitment.
- 3.5 The Road to Renewal plan will adapt to best serve residents and businesses as the Covid-19 incident continues and develops. As confirmed as part of the last update to Cabinet, a review and refresh of the existing plan has been undertaken to ensure that it is responding to the impact of the pandemic and the arising needs of residents and businesses. This will be presented to Cabinet in July 2021.

Further information

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

Liam Hornsby, Head of Enterprise 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 In summer 2020, 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 delivery 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 in 4.4 and in associated Appendices (A, B and C).

4.5 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 and focus 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 supported 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 emergence and focus on the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and, previously, 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 have been reviewed during Quarter 4. This is particularly true of the Road to Renewal Plan where some activities had, following the first Covid-19 wave, been completed but now need remobilising to respond to the January lockdown and subsequent easing of restrictions. Furthermore, the changing nature of the Covid-19 pandemic means the Road to Renewal Plan itself has been refreshed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of residents and businesses as the impact of Covid-19 develops and becomes clearer.

4.8 **Council Plan 2020-24 and Delivery Plan 2020-22**

4.8.1 The new Council Plan 2020-24 was approved by Council in July 2020 as was the associated Delivery Plan 2020-22.

4.8.2 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.

4.8.3 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 project and areas of work have been identified and articulated through the Delivery Plan 2020-22.

4.8.4 Whilst the Council Plan has a four year perspective, the Delivery Plan has been developed to focus 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.

4.8.5 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 focus our resources on what is important to our town and community. It also provides transparency and clear accountability to our community.

4.9 **Tracking progress on the Council Plan – 2020-24 / Delivery Plan – 2020-22**

4.9.1 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.

4.9.2 The third update, covering Quarter four of the 2020/21 year, is at Appendix A. This identifies all the Delivery Plan commitments, the project delivering the activity and progress made during the first nine months of the Council Plan. The Executive Head of Strategy and Communications and the Head of the EPMO are continuing to coordinate 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.

4.10 **Overview / highlights**

4.10.1 Overall, there are 62 areas of work / projects identified within the Delivery Plan 2020-22.

4.10.2 The council completed or has made significant progress against a number of important projects during the first nine months. Highlights include:

A council that serves its residents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New waste and recycling service launched Just under 13,000 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 4.11-4.13 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 4.14 – 4.17 of this report and Appendix C) 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reset of finances to mitigate the initial known impact of Covid-19 and ensure ongoing alignment with the council's priorities as detailed within the Council Plan. It should be noted that work will continue in this area as the incident develops. 	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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of our Business Intelligence Strategy along with the implementation of the council's Business Intelligence platform with the first services now using the system to enable ongoing high quality delivery of services. 	Initial work completed. Further activity underway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned as the district lead on the 'Staying Connected' project, which is a cross organisational Herts wide initiative that aims to support people with accessing information technology devices/kit and assist with training to help get them digitally connected to reduce social isolation. 	Commenced
A thriving, diverse and creative town	
<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. Further activity required as the Government roadmap progresses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Hall Quarter programme developed into a comprehensive single programme to regenerate the area at the north end of the High Street, ensure a sustainable future for the Town Hall and Colosseum, develop a refreshed heritage and museum service and adopt new ways of working for the council. 	Commenced

<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 drafted 	Completed phase 1.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key accounts programme developed and launched. Tranche two and three of the programme now underway. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New CRM for Business system launched allowing ongoing engagement with businesses across the borough 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Shaping Panel recruited, formed to support high quality design for development across the borough 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford Business Park – Building A demolition. 	Commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverwell Multi-storey car park construction 	Commenced

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. Car Park extension open. 	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, alongside the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group, with significant engagement amongst the sector completed, and a final report to Cabinet on 9 November. Delivery of the Strategy is now underway. 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex Needs Supported Housing Scheme at Brindle Court open and operational 	Completed
<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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member led scrutiny task group report back to Cabinet with recommendations to ensure that the council is actively tackling issues of importance to Watford's BAME community 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Realm works in St Albans Road and across the Watford Junction forecourt finished 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual outreach via zoom music and entertainment shows to those living with dementia in care homes and the community 	Completed and ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia Admiral Nurses to provide referrals, signposting and promotion of services with a focus on raising awareness, reducing isolation post covid lockdown 	Commenced

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

4.11.1 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'.

4.11.2 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.

4.11.3 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.

4.12 **Tracking progress on the Organisational Development Strategy 20-2024**

4.12.1 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.

4.12.2 The second update on the Organisational Development Strategy, covering Q4 of 2020/21, is at Appendix B. It should be noted that a number of items have been reprofiled. These predominantly relate to work dependent on the internal work to values and behaviour which, since the creation of the Organisational Development Strategy, have been aligned to the Town Hall Quarter programme and will be delivered through the Reimagining Watford project. However, a Project Manager is in place and engagement across the organisation has now commenced which will help to ensure that our values and behaviours have buy-in from across the council and are embedded.

4.13 Overview / highlights

4.13.1 The council completed a number of areas of work relating to Organisational Development Strategy. Highlights include:

• Staff Ambassadors' Group established	Completed
• Steps taken 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 with additional training now provided to all line managers	Completed
• Mental health first aid training for colleagues, enabling them to spot the signs and offer support.	Completed
• Evaluation of pilot health check programme (Community Protection team).	Completed
• People policies (particularly health and safety and flexible working) are reviewed to optimise agile working. <i>Several policies have already been reviewed updated and published.</i>	Completed Phase 1
• 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.	Completed
• 'Time to Talk' initiative rolled out to all staff and undertaken on two occasions, pairing colleagues together to connect in a way that has not been possible since the pandemic started.	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement in principle to recruit up to 6 apprentices across the council. New restrictions on office working due to Covid-19 have been considered and it is expected that recruitment will commence in July for a September start. 	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 (3rd tier managers). <i>Planning of programme underway and ideas for holding remotely if required</i> 	Phase 1 progressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a 'first steps to leadership' programme. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of Executive/Group Head Assistant has completed with two people taking up their roles in Nov 2020 and the remaining two at the start of the 2021 financial year. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Mental Health first Aiders recruited and trained 	Commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Reimagining Watford workshop held with the Staff Ambassador Group 	Completed

4.14 Road to Renewal Plan

4.14.1 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.

4.14.2 The Road to Renewal Plan was launched in July 2020, alongside the Council Plan, Delivery Plan and Organisational Development Strategy. Since this time, the impact of Covid-19 has evolved and more is now known about how it will affect our community in the short and longer term. We have always known that, in order to be responsive and reflective of the impact on Watford, the Road to Renewal Plan must remain agile and flexible and able to adapt to the changing needs of residents and businesses, particularly given that the recovery from Covid-19 is unlikely to follow the steps of a traditional recovery with the situation still far from certain. As such, a review and refresh of the Road to Renewal plan has taken place to ensure that it continues to best meet the needs of the community, our residents and our businesses. As a result, further emphasis and focus will be provided in areas such as the health and wellbeing of residents, equipping our residents to access employment opportunities and addressing digital isolation.

The council will also work with neighbouring authorities and the County Council to ensure that our renewal work is aligned to a Hertfordshire-wide position, working

collectively to deliver the best recovery for our community, residents and businesses.

4.15 Tracking progress on the Road to Renewal Plan

4.15.1 The Road to Renewal Plan was presented to the council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2020 and the third formal update on progress of the Road to Renewal Plan, covering Quarter 4 of 2021/22, is at Appendix C.

4.16 Overview/highlights

4.16.1 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 ensuring initial 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"> • More than £170,000 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. 	Completed + Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second and third lockdown successfully managed and council supporting some of the most vulnerable in the community. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Strategy developed and approved 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop review of the One Watford partnership undertaken to help develop role going forwards and retain successful joint working demonstrated throughout the pandemic 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven units of self-contained 'move-on' accommodation for ex-rough sleepers at Charter House, also funded by the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, began construction in March and will be completed and let by the end of June. A further 23 units of similar accommodation will be delivered in Charter House by the end of 2021. 	Commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and testing of a new system devised by Hertfordshire County Council to track rough sleeper cases. The system having been trialled in Watford is now in use across all 10 districts in Hertfordshire. 	Completed
Work Stream 2: Business and Economy	
<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 key accounts programme. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Growth Strategy drafted to provide a vision and strategy for economic development for Watford that embraces economic growth, environmental sustainability, social equity and inclusive growth. 	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"> • Recommendations from Business forums review implemented to ensure that the council has the best support 	Completed

in place for businesses of all sizes across the town - OneWatford for Business introduced.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business support partnership with social enterprise Wenta launched, providing tailored offerings for all Watford businesses and the self-employed - 154 businesses have engaged with the programme, 91 businesses have had face-to-face discussions, 67 people booked onto webinars and 1 business has sought more in depth and specialist advice. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Restrictions Grants (LRGs) allocated to local businesses, supporting the local economy during 3rd lockdown - £6,098,915 paid out across 4,493 applications to end March 2021. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed Business Payments (CBPs) paid out totalling £3,407,000. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful BID ballot held and BID in place for a further 5 year period to continue to help establish new, stronger and more focused partnerships with businesses of all sizes across the town. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Restrictions Grants (ARGs) to provide further one-off payment support to those businesses not covered by other grants – £1.9m pot allocated to Watford - £1.06m used to date, of which £560,000 paid in direct grants to 137 businesses. . £191,500 of total ARG pot paid to 383 taxi drivers to support with licensing and cleaning and £69,000 to support market traders with rent. 	Completed
Work Stream 3: Organisational Renewal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Hall covid-safe measures implemented and limited customer appointment service resumed for those in exceptional need based on personal circumstances. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council policies impacted by Covid reviewed, updated and relaunched to ensure that they protect and inform council staff. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All risk assessments for staff, particularly those working in the community, updated to reflect the latest government guidance. 	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"> • Mental Health Awareness Training for all managers 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All business continuity plans reviewed and updated which have allowed the council to respond effectively to the second and third national lockdowns. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Service Plans covering the period 2020-22 completed and signed off by Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders 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 customers can interact as easily as possible with the council without having to visit the Town Hall. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printmail solution now live across all services 	Completed

4.17 **Business Intelligence**

4.17.1 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. The platform is now in place and the report included as appendices have been the first to be produced using the new system, which is intrinsically linked to the regular highlight reporting of the programmes and projects across the organisation, coordinated by the Enterprise Programme Management Office. This also means that reporting against all Deliver Plan and Road to Renewal Plan commitments will be held centrally in a single location, improving corporate transparency and the efficiency of the process.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1. **Financial**

5.1.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is aligned with the Council Plan to ensure that the commitments within the Plan are resourced. The Council's budget underpins the whole of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan. The importance of the budget is recognised under the theme 'A Council that serves our residents' with the related commitment being '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 at its meeting on 14 July 2020 to support the delivery of the Road to Renewal Plan. This recognises that this work is essential in supporting the town's response to Covid-19. The use of the Fund is being monitored by the Head of the EPMO and Finance and is reported regularly to the council's Renewal Coordination Board, which comprises the Managing Director and other senior officers.

As at 23 January 2021, there was £687k remaining in the Fund. It has been used to support the Business Recovery and Growth programme, the business CRM system, social distancing measures in the High Street, the creation of the Voluntary Sector and Economic Growth strategies and project management resource. However, since then it has been possible to reallocate the cost of some of these schemes to the ARG fund. As a result, there is now £958,107 remaining in the Fund as of 6 May 2021. This will be used to fund the implementation of the refreshed Road to Renewal Plan

- 5.1.3 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no further financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

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 May 2021
- Appendix B – Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 progress update May 2021
- Appendix C – Road to Renewal progress update May 2021

Watford Borough Council Delivery Plan Progress Update

THEME 1: A council that serves our residents

Key achievements over this period

- Watford Borough Council have been assigned as the district lead on the 'Staying Connected' project, which is a cross organisational Herts wide initiative that aims to support people with accessing information technology devices/kit and assist with training to help get them digitally connected to reduce social isolation.
- 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.
- Following a successful business continuity planning process, the council has been able to retain delivery of the vast majority of services permitted by government guidance during the second and third national Covid-19 lockdowns.
- Ongoing management of budgets and planning for impact of Covid on future financial years. Budget for 2021/22 was agreed at the end of January.
- The council's Business Intelligence platform has been implemented and the first services, including HR and the EPMO, are using the system. A further app to monitor all WBC projects and programmes, and record progress against the Council Plan, has now been launched and work is underway to create information dashboards for services across the council.
- Successfully connected our Business Intelligence platform to a Customer Service Centre data source to enable real time reporting.

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	3
	On track	14
	Planning underway	1
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery reviewed 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 ✓ November '20 – Strategy development ✓ November '20- Present draft strategy to Strategic Board • June '21 - Engage Leadership Board & Portfolio Holders • August '21 – Strategy approved by Leadership Board • Sept '21 – Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	The, Customer Experience Strategy will be supported by engagement with members, residents, businesses and officers as it is a critical part of ensuring residents, businesses and customers remain firmly at the heart of what we do. The initial draft of the Strategy is complete and an initial discussion held at the council's Strategic Group. It was agreed by the Strategy Group that final development of the Strategy should be aligned with the council's overall strategic framework and values and behaviours work prior to engagement with Leadership Board, Management team and Portfolio Holders. Revised timetable of Jun '21 agreed for final draft of the strategy.
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. The development of the Customer Experience Strategy will drive forward this commitment and outline some

					<p>focused activity to deliver this commitment.</p>
<p>3. Address digital isolation</p>	<p>We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to support residents who do not have access to technology or do not currently have the skills to use IT so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town.</p>	<p>Watford Helps (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<p>✓ January '21 – Develop job descriptions for 'Digital Navigators'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May '21 – Develop eligibility criteria for devices • May'21 - Develop process for accessing, cleaning and distributing IT kit and Herts wide digital support map / database • June '21 – Recruit 'Digital Navigators' and develop corporate social responsibility and programme communications plans • August '21 – 'Digital Navigators' training • September '21 – Deploy approved approach 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Watford Borough Council is the district lead on the 'Staying Connected' project, which is a cross organisational Herts wide initiative that includes members from the CCG, HCC, CVS's, Age UK and HILS. The project aims to support people with accessing information technology devices/kit and assist with training to help get them digitally connected to reduce social isolation. The project will develop a training programme to train volunteers to go out into the community and support people with using a range of media devices including iPads, laptops, and smart phones, to help them get digitally connected and online using apps for grocery shopping and connecting with friends and family. It will also work to source digital devices for distribution to the community to support people to be digitally connected in the community.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 just under 14,000 households have signed up to (85% via our online form)
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 • Sep 2020 - Feb 2022 - Develop and deploy ongoing improvements 	On track	The need for continuous improvement and providing the very best service to our customers is already an integral part of the work that all services undertake. Customer insight works are now underway to inform a consistent and focused continuous improvement methodology. Ongoing improvements are being implemented as they are identified. Ongoing activity is also underway with services through Service Review regular meetings. Initial customer service information dashboards are now available through the corporate Business Intelligence platform, providing data on complaints and digital / frontline service delivery through the Firmstep CRM platform.

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. It should be noted that a refresh of the Road to Renewal plan is currently underway to align with the challenges which have arisen following a year of the pandemic.
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)	<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.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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)	<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 rent receipt not received ✓ 7 September – Regus rent extension agreed at PIB ✓ 20 October - LSH quarterly update report to Commercial Income and Investment Board 	On track	A number of new leases and positive 're-gears' agreed at Croxley Business Park. Refurbishments have also been agreed and on track for completion June/July, with Business Plan adopted, including a scheme of delegation. Terms have been agreed for the letting of the whole of Building 1 at

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 November – Additional occupation of CBP premises ✓ 30 November – Ongoing monitoring of intu rent income ✓ 02 December - Cabinet approval for the refurbishment of the Croxley Business park units ✓ 16 December – CIIB approved Croxley Business park refurb ✓ 8 February – Cabinet approval for the letting of Building 1 at Croxley Business Park ✓ 1 March 2021 – Cabinet approval to the Croxley BP Business Plan for 2021/22 ✓ March 2021 Completion of procurement for external legal support at Croxley Business Park 		<p>Croxley Business Park and legal work is now underway.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of quarterly rent receipts and comparison with previous quarters. Ongoing 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.</p> <p>Watford Centre Ltd has agreed and completed a surrender premium with John Lewis at Atria, with WBC to receive an element of variable rent in May 2021, as per the headlease agreement.</p>
2. Assess the feasibility of Growth Fund	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.	Revive (Road to Renewal Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ November – Annex identified as a co-working space ✓ 02 December – Co-working business case drafted • Q4 2020 – Q4 2021 - Working with investment advisors to undertake a programme of work 	On track	This work will form part of the commercial pipeline overseen by the Commercial Income and Investment Board. The council continues to investigate the feasibility of an Innovation and Incubation Hub in the town as part of the Town Hall Quarter programme, which will help to support start ups.
3. Deliver the council’s financial	We will reset our finances in the light of the pressures created by COVID-19 and based on insight about possible future	Financial Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 July - Budget reset discussions at Council 	Initial activity completed	Ongoing management of budgets and planning for impact of Covid on future financial years.

<p>recovery</p>	<p>pressures which will allow us to fund priorities to help Watford recover.</p>	<p>(Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 underway in preparation for the budget setting cycle. ✓ 14 December – PH’s discussed budgets ✓ January 2021 – Financial Scrutiny Cmte to review budgets (BAU) 	<p>but work ongoing</p>	<p>However, this will need to continue as the town emerges from future lockdowns or tiered restrictions.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>
<p>4. Manage the council finances</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Financial Resilience (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<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 proposals in preparation for the budget setting cycle. ✓ January 2021 – 2021/22 budget setting process completed 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Ongoing management of budgets and planning for impact of Covid on future financial years. This will continue as the incident develops and the final impact of Covid-19 remains uncertain at the current time.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>

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 service to our residents	We will deliver a new ICT strategy for the next five year period to ensure that we are making the most of new ICT and digital opportunities.	ICT Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1/Q2 2021 – Development of strategy underway <p>All future milestones will be dependent on the Strategy but implementation is anticipated from mid-2021 onwards. However, in effect delivery of the strategy has already commenced with the building of the Office 365 tenancy. This was expedited to support some Covid related work, including the deployment of Microsoft Teams to a small group of individuals and to further support a likely requirement for Community Protection staff to access a Covid related system within the HCC cloud based data centres.</p>	On track	The development of the council's ICT strategy (2020 to 2025) is underway with delivery of the document expected mid-2021. There will be two strategies produced. A digital strategy, underpinned by an ICT strategy. This will build upon the huge progress made over 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.
2. Deliver our Business Intelligence Strategy	We will improve how the council uses data and information to support well-informed decisions, improve performance and provide a better customer experience. We will use this information to monitor the delivery of	Business Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ October 2020 - Draft strategy ready for organisational review and socialisation October 2020 ✓ February 2021 – Strategy approved by Leadership Board. To be reviewed by Cabinet 	On track	The first draft of Business Intelligence Strategy prepared. The council's Business Intelligence platform has been implemented and the first services are using the system.

	our services for customers and to take action if something needs improving.		<p>alongside the Customer Experience Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future milestones are due to be agreed through discussions with services, although this is subject to change as a result of the ongoing council response to Covid-19. • December '22 – First phase of Business Intelligence Strategy delivered. 		The App to monitor all WBC projects and programmes, and record progress against the Council Plan, has now been completed and work is underway to develop a Customer Experience dashboard, covering a wide range of areas including complaints and customer contact. Service engagement started with Place Shaping and Leisure, Community and Environmental Services.
3. Ensure that the council's future office accommodation is fit for purpose	Learning the lessons from Covid-19 and listening to our staff, we will develop plans to ensure the council has a modern, fit for purpose, sustainable and good value for money offices to work from.	Organisational Development Strategy (Also linked to High Street North / Cultural Hub works)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July – Organisational Development Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	All additional milestones and progress updates captured within Appendix B – Organisational Development Quarterly Update. It should be noted that this activity is being delivered through the Town Hall Quarter programme which was initiated in January. Engagement is underway with all staff.
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 	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. Tablets have now been issued to officers working in Planning Enforcement so that

			of reports for managers. Explore the facility to add values and behaviours when agreed by the Council.		they can work digital “in the field”. Further work is underway as part of the Town Hall Quarter programme.
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 scenario planning circulated ✓ 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 ✓ May '21 – Review of function completed and reviewed at Leadership Board • From June '21 – Delivery of recommendation of review 	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 second wave preparedness were finalised and have now been put into action effectively. This includes the impact on services and a clear and auditable process for amending services based on resource requirements or government guidance. A review of the corporate resilience approach has been completed and was discussed at the council’s Leadership Board in May 2021.

THEME 2: A thriving, diverse and creative town

Key achievements over this period

- Town Hall Quarter programme developed into a comprehensive single programme to regenerate the area at the north end of the High Street, ensure a sustainable future for the Town Hall and Colosseum, develop a refreshed heritage and museum service and adopt new ways of working for the council.
- Awarded of circa £1.85 million for the borough to roll out external wall insulation (through two bids - one with TRDC/WCHT and one with Bucks Council totalling £3.7million).
- £3.5m awarded to the council to assist in the decarbonisation of the Town Hall and Colosseum, contributing to the council's target of achieving a greener organisation
- All remaining plots at Woodlands within the Riverwell development are now under offer, with 62 total completions and the remaining units expected to complete by June 2021. Construction of the Multi-Storey Car Park has commenced on site and good progress has been made to date.
- A covid-safe High Street remained open (subject to a 3rd national lockdown), with ongoing advice and guidance for all businesses to ensure that they operated in line with legislation so that residents and visitors were kept safe. Covid and traffic marshal presence extended to ensure the safe operation of the Town Centre.
- Economic Growth Strategy progressed by consultants to provide a vision and strategy for economic development for Watford that embraces economic growth, environmental sustainability, social equity and inclusive growth - this is being reviewed and updated by officers.
- Inaugural 'One Watford for Business' forum introduced 11 February following the recommendations from the Business forums review that were implemented to allow us to understand the needs and concerns of our businesses and to support them accordingly.
- Initial business support partnership with social enterprise Wenta completed by end March, providing tailored offerings for all Watford businesses and the self-employed - 326 businesses have engaged with the programme, 232 businesses have had face-to-face discussions, 206 people booked onto webinars and 22 businesses has sought more in-depth and specialist advice. Programme extended until end May 2021.
- Third tranche of Key Accounts Programme launched to leaders using the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and meetings now being held, ensuring that our commitment to provide the town's largest employers with a strong voice within the town, and also to allow the council to better manage its ongoing relationships and support for businesses.
- Visit Watford project commenced to find the 'vision, purpose, branding & narrative for Watford' and promote the town effectively.
- Successful 'Generation Watford' careers fair held 9 March 2021 to ensure that there is a specific focus on employment and skills, supporting our residents to play a full role in the town's, region's and UK's economic revival. CRM used to correspond with businesses and supporting 'Generation Watford' website utilised.

- National Apprenticeship Week held in February and local employer support for KickStart programme helping young people at risk of long term unemployment get into the job market by providing government funding for employers to create six-month job placements.
- Watford Business Park development planning agreed and demolition commenced.

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
Completed	Completed	4
On track	On track	16
Planning underway	Planning underway	2
Delayed / Unknown	Delayed / Unknown	0
Delivery reviewed as a result of external influences	Delivery reviewed as a result of external influences	0
Total		22

Page 40

COMMITMENT		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Promote Watford as an enterprising town where businesses can invest, grow and succeed					
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	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 ✓ 12 October – Design survey and questions ✓ 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period ✓ 02 November – Review survey results 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	Final strategy received from consultant. The detailed Action Plan and aligning with the council's strategic framework is progressing prior to due governance and formal publication of strategy in July. This will help the council to support businesses and the local economy not just immediately following the

	<p>future in a very uncertain landscape to ensure Watford remains a vibrant economic hub in south west Hertfordshire.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 06 November – Commence 1:1 stake-holder meetings ✓ 27 November – Definition of strategic priorities ✓ 23 December – First draft of strategy ✓ 21 January – Second draft of strategy ✓ 09 February – Review by Mayor/Cllrs ✓ 11 February – Review by One Watford for Business ✓ 18 February – Review by Strategy Group ✓ 15 March – Final strategy received ✓ 18 March – Final review by WBC Steering Committee ✓ 27 April – Leadership Board update ✓ 30 April – Publishable docs and detailed working Action Plan complete ● 07 June – Review and sign-off by Cabinet ● July – Strategy published 		<p>successive lockdowns but over the medium to long term.</p>
<p>2. Re-mobilise our Town Centre and local economy and support its recovery</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Reopening the Town Centre (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<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 ✓ 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 – Winter planters in place to aid social distancing 	<p>Complete during first and second lockdown</p> <p>Ongoing work to prepare for exit from 3rd lockdown</p>	<p>Local support to businesses, including in relation to public health, has continued.</p> <p>Revised governance structure introduced 13 January when Town Centre Operations Group took over responsibility to provide a real focus for the council to support the Town Centre through tactical interventions and projects. The Town Centre Strategic Forum has been established</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 11 November – Social distanced Remembrance Day ✓ 13 November – Christmas light switch-on ✓ 02 December – Town centre re-opened after November lockdown – transition to ‘tier’ system ✓ 02 December – Covid Marshals introduced ✓ 05 December – Spectators return to Watford FC ✓ December – Comprehensive comms programme to reinforce tier messaging ✓ 06 January – Review of festive period in Town Centre ✓ 13 January – New Town Centre Operations Group structure took over ✓ 22 February – Gov’t roadmap published ✓ 08 March – Gov’t roadmap – schools return ✓ March – Market revamp programme commenced ahead of 13 April reopening ✓ 29 March – Gov’t Roadmap – outdoor sport and leisure facilities open ✓ 12 April – Government Roadmap – outdoor hospitality, non-essential retail, gyms & swims, close contact services open ✓ From 17 April – Street entertainers every Saturday • 17 May – Government roadmap – indoor entertainment and indoor sport open, pilot public events • 21 June – Government roadmap final step – nightclubs and large events open, no legal limits on social contact 		<p>to provide the strategic direction for the town centre</p> <p>Programme of projects now tracked at Operations Group to support businesses and encourage the public back into the town in line with the published Government Roadmap.</p> <p>Public health advice and support for businesses across the Town, but particularly in the Town Centre, has been ongoing throughout.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	---

<p>3. Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Survive (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ June '20 - Business Information Hub launched and communications circulated ✓ August '20 – Review of existing forums ✓ August '20 – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet, including merging virtual Covid-19 group with SME business Connect ✓ September '20 – Wenta support programme proposal approved by Renewal Coordination Board ✓ October '20 – Final virtual Covid-19 Forum ✓ October '20 – Wenta business support programme to launch ✓ November '20 – Relaunch of SME Business Connect ✓ November '20 – Relaunch Developers' Forum ✓ January '21 – BID Ballot opens ✓ February '21 – Inaugural One Watford for Business ✓ April '21 – Next 'One Watford for Business' forum held 	<p>Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing</p>	<p>Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented to ensure that the council is best placed to support the many successful smaller businesses and business owners across the town. All first forums have been held with regular meetings scheduled.</p>
<p>4. Attract and retain big business in Watford</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Thrive (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ July '20 – Key businesses identified ✓ August '20 – Business CRM tender underway ✓ August '20 – Review of existing forums ✓ August '20 – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet ✓ August '20 – Key Accounts Programme approach approved 	<p>Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing</p>	<p>Key accounts scheme launched and meetings underway. All businesses involved will have regular interactions with senior council officers, with contact recorded on the business CRM system.</p>

	<p>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.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September '20 - Leadership Team account managers assigned to businesses ✓ September '20 – CRM supplier appointed ✓ October '20 – existing contacts added to CRM ✓ October '20 – CRM contract ✓ October '20 – Introduction emails to initial 20 businesses ✓ November '20 – CRM live ✓ December '20 – Key Accounts Programme launched ✓ December '20 – Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented ✓ April '21 – Next 'One Watford for Business' forum held • May '21 – All tranche 2 & 3 key account meetings held and relationships established • May '21 – All meeting feedback recorded on CRM • June – Next Developers' forum 		<p>Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations were implemented to ensure that the town attracts and retains major employers for Watford residents.</p>
<p>5. Maximise opportunities for Watford</p>	<p>We will work closely with local partners, including the Hertfordshire Growth Board to maximise opportunities for Watford within the County and wider sub-region. This will include joint working on schemes to benefit the whole town, such as improving the town's travel options, public spaces and schools. Our aim is to make Watford the obvious</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q1 and Q2 2020/21 - Spatial Options development • Q3 2021/22- Statement of Common Ground and Statement of Community Involvement across authorities to be agreed • Q3 2021/22 - Complete development of a Vision for the Joint Strategic Partnership. • Q4 2021/22 - Consultation on the Vision 	<p>On track</p>	<p>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 East/West Southern Growth Corridor Programme, the Hertfordshire Growth Board and the LEP.</p>

	<p>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 intention of bringing a programme business 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Plans developed into the Town Hall Quarter programme, which include the regeneration of the Town Hall area / High Street North as well as improvement works to the Town Hall, Colosseum and a review of the council's internal culture and ways of working. Approval for the first stage of the programme was provided by Cabinet on 18 January 2021. Work is now underway to reach the second programme gateway to provide additional</p>

			case to Cabinet in Autumn as part of the next key gateway		assurance in relation to feasibility and value. This progress of the programme is being monitored by a Member Steering Group.
2. Develop Watford Business Park	We will develop Watford Business Park to create new, high quality business space and employment opportunities for local people.	Watford Business Park (Zone A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q3 2020 - Submit detailed planning application/commence intrusive surveys/demolition. • Q1 2021/22 – Tender for design and build contractor and secure Cabinet approval to appoint • Q2 2021/22 – Main contractor appointed • Q1-4 2021/22 – Construction and preletting campaign on Gateway Zone • Q4 2020/21 – Q4 2021/22 – Identify further regen/commercial activities and present outline business cases to the council’s Commercial Income and Investment Board 	On track	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 January. However, the site has now been secured and demolition on site has commenced. Unilateral Undertaking has been executed and planning decision notice issued.
3. Create new neighbourhoods at Riverwell	We will continue to develop the new and vibrant neighbourhood at Riverwell with a high quality mix of new homes, jobs, open spaces and community facilities, including a new car park for Watford General Hospital. The work at Riverwell will support the opportunity for West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS	Riverwell	<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 	On track	All remaining plots at Woodlands are now under offer, with 62 total completions and the remaining units expected to complete by June 2021. Construction of the Multi-Storey Car Park has commenced on site and good progress has been made to date. Masterplan

	Trust to deliver its ambition for our local hospital.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 2021/22 – 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 ✓ 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 		discussion ongoing between the LABV and WHHT.
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"> ✓ January '21 - Approval of Programme Definition Document intended to relaunch programme and ensure programme approach to surplus sites. ✓ March '21 - Review of sites (internally) to create prioritisation list • May'21 – First set of Strategic Outline Cases to be approved <p>All further milestones will be subject to the approval of the above business cases</p>	On track (in line with new prioritisation)	A number of council sites being reviewed to ensure that they work for our community. The Commercial Income and Investment Board will oversee the ongoing progress in relation to the council's surplus sites programme. A prioritisation plan of projects has now been produced and the production of Strategic Outline Cases are underway

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, services and transport links for our town	We will produce and deliver a comprehensive new Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 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.	Local Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ November '20 – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet ✓ January '21 – 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. Consultation has now concluded and will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years.
2. Champion high quality design in Watford	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.	Place Shaping Panel / Watford 3D Urban Model	<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 	Planning underway	Place Shaping Panel operational. 3D model finalised, but Go Live is being reviewed in light of technical requirements that have been difficult to implement due to Covid restrictions. Planning working with IT to resolve.
3. Develop the Watford Junction Quarter	Recognising the importance of the Watford Junction area for so many of our residents and businesses, we will bring	Watford Junction Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ August '20 - Supplementary planning document for site adopted 	On track	The council continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders to support the development of the Watford

	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.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q2 2020 – Submit funding bid to Herts Growth Board for infrastructure interventions ✓ Q1 2021 – Complete strategic transport review work ✓ Q1 2021 – Procure consultants to help deliver collaborative funding and development strategy • Q2 2021 – Work with landowners to prepare collaborative funding and development strategy • Q2/3 2021 – Prepare and consult on Supplementary Planning Document 		Junction area. The procurement of a consultant for funding and development strategy work has been completed and work is underway with Herts Growth Board to seek funding for infrastructure. Work with Network Rail to promote progress on station improvement works and pedestrian link underway.
COMMITMENT		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
	Make sure we have quality homes to meet the needs of residents, including housing that is affordable through ownership, private rental and social housing				
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 writing 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		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.	On track	External wall insulation/home insulation - Prior to Government changes in schemes we were able to aid 35 applicants to apply and works are progressing. WBC has now

<p>3. Review our strategic partnerships</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Strategic Housing Partnerships</p>	<p>Continuous assessment of effective partnership arrangements and practices.</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The council works closely with a number of organisations to ensure that it provides quality homes for Watford residents and will continue to ensure that our partnership arrangements remain effective. Work is also shortly due to commence on a single pathway for residents working closely with partners to ensure a joined up, comprehensive approach for customers.</p>
<p>COMMITMENT Build on our new, greener ways to travel in and around Watford and promote the transition to a low carbon economy.</p>		<p>Project</p>	<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>1. 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>Sustainable Transport Town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September '20 – Board, PID and task developed ✓ November '20 - Develop detailed project plan milestones ✓ November '20 - Public engagement on vision • May '21 - draft strategy presented to Portfolio Holders • Sept '21 – Final Strategy approved 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Current initiatives of Sustainable Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are contributing to progression of WBC being named a Sustainable Travel Town by HCC. Successful engagement to inform the Strategy with a draft underway and final</p>

					sign off expected in September 2021.
2. Implement a demand responsive transport scheme	We will launch the ArrivaClick on demand bus service for Watford and make sure it links effectively with all of Watford's greener ways to travel so that we can reduce congestion, improve air quality and provide another sustainable but innovative way for our residents, visitors and commuters to get around.	Demand Responsive Transport	✓ July '20 – ArrivaClick demand responsive transport system launched	Complete	Revised service launched on 1 July 2020 to ensure conformity with social distancing requirements. Investigation of aspirations beyond the existing contract underway and initial draft of intervention strategy document prepared
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"> • 12 April – LCWIP stage 3 & 4 - Cycling Network and Walking Network review • 17 May – LCWIP Stage 5 - prioritisation complete • Q2/Q3 2021 – Undertake public consultation • 03 September – Stage 6 - final joint LCWIP document 	Planning underway	Decided that Watford continues with Stage 4 and 5 elements separately from Three Rivers and both to catch up for the final LCWIP document (Stage 6) and present as a joint piece. This has impacted delivery although not to a major extent.
4. Champion proposals for a mass-rapid	As part of our plans to encourage sustainable transport options, we will work	Mass-Rapid Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021/22 – Hertfordshire Growth Board bid to Government for funding* 	On track	High Level early stage discussions held with HCC and their consultants.

Transport Scheme for Watford	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.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021/22 – Feasibility Studies contribution to engaging consultation • November '21 – Strategic Business Case to include preferred route options and economic analysis <p><i>* dependent on opportunity</i></p>		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 congestion and improving air quality for everyone.	Low Carbon Transport Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engagement with HCC colleagues and BID initiated • Q1 2021/22 – Land acquisition discussions and proposals • Q1 2021/22 – 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.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September '20 – New waste and recycling service launched ✓ Q2-3 2020 – Warmer homes scheme underway ✓ Q3 2020 – Funding bid to the Energy Trust for the wider roll out of electric vehicle charging and subsequent installed of 7 dual 7KW fast chargers, including in Cassiobury Park, Croxley Business Park and residential 	On track	There are 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

	<p>community to improve energy efficiency, implement our Tree and Green Spaces Strategies to increase biodiversity, promote clear air campaigns and increase domestic recycling rates.</p>		<p>roads, supported by a Traffic Regulation Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 2021/22 – Local Nature Reserve biodiversity action plans to be reviewed and funding opportunities identified • Q3 2021 – External wall insulation project for private sector housing complete. Impacted by the recent change to the government scheme. 		<p>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.</p>
<p>7. Ensure that the council is a greener organisation</p>	<p>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 plastics, lead by example on low carbon travel and carry out energy audits of our council buildings.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q4 2020 - The Council has already number of electric vehicles in the waste and parks fleet. The authority has a rolling replacement programme for these waste and street vehicles and is actively seeking to replace the diesel engines with hybrid and electric options to ensure that the target date of 2030 is achieved. ✓ March '21 - Decarbonisation funding of £3.5m awarded • April '22 – Town Hall and Colosseum decarbonisation works complete • Expansion of the electric car provision in the Town Hall in the context of the Sustainable Transport Strategy. Timescales to be confirmed. 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Sustainable activities integrated into Service Plans across the Council, approved on 13 October. Further work required to establish a single plan of activity but initial milestones captured against this commitment, all of which continue to run on track. A whole range of activities were also 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.</p>

THEME 3: A healthy and happy town

Key achievements over this period

- Oxhey Activity Park car park extension has now opened, following feedback from the public and visitors.
- Watford Rough Sleeper Task Force continuing 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.
- The Complex Needs scheme at Brindle Court opened on 1 April 2021 as planned, managed by council partners, One YMCA. It will provide much needed support for some of the most vulnerable in the town.
- Member led scrutiny task group has reported back to Cabinet with a number of recommendations to ensure that the council is actively tackling issues of importance to Watford's BAME community. Some of these recommendations have already been completed whilst others will be progressed over the next quarter.
- Funding has also secured from Herts Health Protection Board for a new Full time Wellbeing Watford Co-ordinator to support mental health and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the Women's Centre has secured lottery funding for a fulltime outreach BAME worker.
- The "Think about living with Dementia", "Bereavement" and "Palliative Care" Creative Art programmes are continuing whilst Cathartic continue to support the community through daily welfare checks, the development of a lockdown activity pack and weekly sessions for a group of people living with Young Onset Dementia.
- Throughout the latest lockdown there has been a focus on virtual outreach via zoom music and entertainment shows to those living with dementia in care homes and the community. Working closely with Watford Football Club Community Trust, the Chamber of Commerce and other local key charities 300 cream teas and 1000 easter eggs and party packs have been delivered across the town to connect people virtually, entertain and also promote the work of Dementia Friendly Watford.
- Work is starting with the Dementia Admiral Nurses to provide referrals, signposting and promotion of services with a focus on raising awareness, reducing isolation post covid lockdown via events and community groups reopening and working together with the memory clinic and Admiral Nurses to ensure a clear pathway from diagnosis, attendance of the memory clinic to support within the community for carers and those living with dementia.
- Design team appointed for Woodside Sports Village, a refreshed outdoor space to provide new sports and leisure facilities in the town.

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	2
	On track	16
	Planning underway	3
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery reviewed as a result of external influences	0
Total		21

COMMITMENT	Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
<p>Embrace our diversity, heritage and culture to make Watford a place for people to succeed from childhood to old age</p> <p>1. Ensure that everyone living in our town has the opportunity to achieve their potential</p>	<p>Achieving Potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ February '21 – Member led scrutiny task group to review issues of importance to Watford's BAME community and develop recommendations for Cabinet (March 2021). The task group's work includes reviewing the council's street naming policy and process. ✓ March '21 - Encourage all communities to complete their Census 2021 returns and to underline the importance of this data in formulating future council policies. • June '21 – Corporate definition of BAME to be adopted • July '21 – Equalities Forum to be established 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Whilst this commitment is embedded within all council Service Plans, specific activity has been undertaken by the council's Democratic Services team working with a member-led scrutiny task group to develop a range of proposals which have now been considered and agreed by Cabinet. These will be delivered over the next period.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August '21 – Corporate equalities policy to be developed • September '21 – Equalities Impact Assessment template to be updated • By December '21 - Training on equalities and unconscious bias for staff and members. • TBC – Research has commenced with Watford Museum to develop an education programme based around a new exhibition which explores the background and history of the town's road names, subject to funding 		
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	Museum and Heritage Strategy underway. Initial report and recommendations have been received. On track at the current time as part of the Town Hall Quarter programme. Project Manager now in place with the development of the heritage trail commencing over the next period.
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	Haley Sharpe design Ltd have been appointed and will be working to incorporate suggestions from the AEA Cultural Strategy report with strategy development on track for completion by July 2021 as

<p>4. Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing, including those with mental health issues</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Healthy Hub</p>	<p>Covid has impacted on the implementation of the delivery of the Healthy Hub. In agreement with HCC a reviewed delivery plan has been put in place offering Covid secure Healthy Hub service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Domestic Abuse and Mental Health worker to commence. ✓ Remote offer, actively seeing clients and linking in with other services. ✓ Develop website • June '21 - Implement secondary satellite Hub's in Partnership with Cathartic (Creative Arts Company) :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Think About Living with Dementia ➤ Palliative care ➤ Bereavement Support 	<p>On track</p>	<p>part of the Town Hall Quarter programme.</p> <p>The Healthy Hub launched remotely in May 2020. Due to Covid there will be no physical use of the hub until further notice. Services continue to be offered remotely and, where possible, in person in the community. Funding has also been secured from Herts Health Protection Board for a new Full time Wellbeing Watford co-ordinator to support mental health and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the Women's Centre has secured lottery funding for a fulltime outreach BAME worker.</p> <p>The "Think about living with Dementia", "Bereavement" and "Palliative Care" Creative Art programmes are continuing whilst Cathartic continue to support the community through daily welfare checks, the development of a lockdown activity pack and weekly sessions for a group of people</p>
---	--	--------------------	---	-----------------	---

					living with Young Onset Dementia.
4. 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	<p>Lots achieved to date and 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.</p> <p>Action plan being refreshed in current steering group as we learn to live with covid. New priorities and milestones will be confirmed in June 2021.</p>	On track	Watford has built a strong reputation as a dementia-friendly town and accreditation has been achieved for a further two years. Focus over the last quarter has been on virtual outreach via zoom music and entertainment shows to those living with dementia in care homes and the community. Work is starting with the Dementia Admiral Nurses to provide referrals, signposting and promotion of both services. Focus on raising awareness, reducing isolation post covid lockdown via events and community groups reopening and working together with the memory clinic and Admiral Nurses to ensure a clear pathway from diagnosis, attendance of the memory clinic to support within the community for carers and those living with dementia. Dementia Awareness Week is scheduled for May 2021.

<p>6. Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Watford Together (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have been unable to confirm a timeline for these events which are entirely subject to Government guidance and legislation. However, 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. 	<p>On track</p>	<p>The staging of these events has been re-profiled in response to local COVID 19 restrictions and the national lockdown. However, some recent progress has been made, with vaccinations now underway nationally, the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, and the artist for the Covid-19 memorial having been selected. The aim is now for the events to be held from around June when the pandemic and government restrictions are due to end.</p>
<p>7. Enhance the town's character and its physical heritage</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>CAMP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 2021/22 - Prepare tender and appoint consultants • Q3 2021/22 – Seek cabinet approval 	<p>Planning underway</p>	<p>Delivery has been re-profiled to ensure alignment with the Local Plan work. Now expected to commence Q1 2021/22 with completion expected this year.</p>
<p>COMMITMENT Enable our cultural and creative sectors to flourish</p>		<p>Project</p>	<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>1. Maximise the cultural opportunities for the town</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Watford Together (Road to Renewal Plan)</p>	<p>✓ 6 August – AEA commissioned to provide support in delivery of the council's existing cultural strategy, including our work with the cultural sector</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The workshop on governance was held in late January. It was agreed at the workshop that the Newcastle/Gateshead Cultural Trust could be used as a model to be adopted in</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review ✓ 4 / 11 November – Cultural Leaders Group to review AEA report and action plan ✓ 18 January – AEA final report to Cabinet alongside THCQ Programme ✓ Late January – Governance workshop to establish preferred governance model • June '21 – Cultural Leaders Group to agree adoption of governance model 		<p>Watford. That meeting took place in mid February and provided some very useful feedback on the experiences of Newcastle/Gateshead. The next steps will be to convene a further meeting of the CLG to agree the governance model we should adopt. Working is also underway with the Palace Theatre and the Pump House on their infrastructure plans and collaborating such that the council can support them as they seek funding for the plans.</p>
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	Further milestones subject to the outcome of the final AEA report on the Cultural Strategy and further scoping of the Town Hall Quarter programme, which has a specific focus on culture and, in particular, use of the colosseum.	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 and additional scoping related to the Town Hall Quarter programme.
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	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 	On track	The workshop on governance was held in late January. It was agreed at the workshop that the Newcastle/Gateshead Cultural Trust could be used as

	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.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review ✓ 4 / 11 November – Cultural Leaders Group to review AEA report and action plan ✓ 18 January – AEA final report to Cabinet alongside THCQ Programme ✓ Late January – Governance workshop to establish preferred governance model • June '21 – Cultural Leaders Group to agree adoption of governance model 		a model to be adopted in Watford. That meeting took place in mid February and provided some very useful feedback on the experiences of Newcastle/Gateshead. The next steps will be to convene a further meeting of the CLG to agree the governance model we should adopt. Working is also underway with the Palace Theatre and the Pump House on their infrastructure plans and collaborating such that the council can support them as they seek funding for the plans.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 7 September – Practical completion 	Complete	Oxhey Activity Park opened in September. Project will remain open whilst snagging issues are resolved. Car Park extension was opened in April following feedback from residents and visitors.
2. Create Woodside Sports Village	In order to provide modern and attractive facilities for sports and leisure for all the community, and our	Woodside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ April '20 – Design Brief to procure consultants ✓ Sept '20 - Appoint design team 	On track	Design team recently appointed following procurement process.

	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.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ October '21 - onwards detailed design, planning and procurement to begin on site in late 2021 <p>Further milestones subject to the design work underway.</p>		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 - May '21 – River improvement plans developed, funding streams assessed • May '21 – River works / site improvements 	Planning underway	Work on detailed plans underway. Subsequent milestones will be subject to this initial tranche of work. Recruitment of a Project Manager to support delivery of this project is now underway, at which point timelines can be confirmed.
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 exercise and spend time together and enhance the biodiversity of the town.	Park Enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May '21 – Commission Landscape architect • July '21 – Site works 	Planning underway	Works continually ongoing and 12 green flags issued to Watford Parks in 2020. Applications for 17 green flag sites were submitted in mid-February. Further milestones on future parks improvements to be identified through the planning process which will commence once Project Manager recruitment has been completed.
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	<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 	On track	A number of public realm schemes are either complete or underway. Significant improvement works have already been undertaken in Clarendon Road with the

	<p>Clarendon Road and the Watford Junction Gateway, as well as other local street and open space improvement initiatives.</p>	<p>Watford Junction</p> <p>St Albans Road</p> <p>Streets Improvement Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/2024 Defects Correction period • 2024/25 Handback the completed project to Highway Authority, Herts County Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q2 2020 – Implementation of scheme ✓ Q3 2020 – Completion of scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021-22 Defects Correction Period • 2023 Hand back the completed project to Network Rail <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 <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 • September '21 - Project delivery phase • May '22 - Evaluation and close of project 		<p>second phase of these works commencing recently. Improvements to the Watford Junction and St Albans Road are now complete and have succeeded in improving the street scene and access for residents and visitors to the many businesses.</p>
--	---	--	--	--	---

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
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"> ✓ August '20 – Voluntary Sector Specialist recruited ✓ September '20 – Review approach approved by Informal Cabinet and engagement underway ✓ October '20 – Internal review of draft strategy ✓ November '20 – Strategy approved by Cabinet • May '21 - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget 	On track	Work on how best to ensure that the positive joint working across the sector and with the Council throughout Covid-19 is harnessed and taken forward in the long-term is currently being undertaken in joint cooperation with W3RT.
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 • July '21 – Property Strategy to Cabinet for approval • October '21 – Works to start on Phase 1 assets • January '22 – Works to start on Phase 2 assets • April '22 – Works to start on Phase 3 assets • July '22 – Works to start on Phase 4 assets 	On track	Project Manager in post to support the work required over the next two years. The project will be a key component of the delivery of the Property Strategy to ensure our community buildings are in a good state of repair, provide benefit to the local community and that the lease arrangements with tenants are appropriate and in accordance with the policies outlined within the new Property Strategy.

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 ✓ 1-3 December –Desktop exercise completed 	On track	With the benefit of feedback from the LGA, work on defining the future terms of reference of One Watford will be undertaken as part of the town’s brand positioning work.
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"> • 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 	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

			<p>no recourse to public funds obtained for the period October 2020-March 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 September - Application for 20 units of self-contained move-on accommodation submitted • Q3 2020 MHCLG Rough Sleepers Initiative funding application – submission May 2021 (MHCLG changed the timetable) ✓ Q4 2020/21: NSAP short-term 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 ✓ Q1 2021/22 - Open complex needs scheme • Q3 2021/22: Have zero rough sleepers on streets of Watford 		<p>homeless and sleeping on the streets.</p> <p>The next phase of works will focus on the development and adoption of a single pathway for rough sleepers, working with partners from across the town to help achieve this commitment to achieve and maintain zero rough sleeping.</p>
2. Support our residents with more complex needs and housing requirements	We will develop a focused scheme to help those with more complex needs, looking at areas such as housing and other targeted support and working with partner organisations to ensure that these services are provided.	Complex Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Q1 2020 – Source Support Service Provider ✓ Q4 2020 – Sign Support Contract with provider ✓ Q3 2020 – Implementation of works ✓ Q4 2021 - Completion 	Complete	The Complex Needs scheme at Brindle Court opened on 1 April 2021 as planned, managed by council partners, One YMCA. It will provide much needed support for some of the most vulnerable in the town.
3 Continue partnership working	We will work with partners to ensure there are no rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.	Rough sleeping and homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 July – Homelessness Strategy approved by Cabinet 	On track	The Watford Rough Sleeping Taskforce is continuing to meet on a monthly basis focusing on hard-to-engage

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 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		individuals and agreeing a multi-agency approach to focused and bespoke support, working with the council's designated Rough Sleepers Coordinator
--	--	--	---	--	---

Watford Borough Council Road to Renewal Plan

Q4 2020/21 (Jan – Mar) Progress Update

1. Work Stream 1: Community

1.1 Key achievements over this period

- Watford Council has been involved in the creation and testing of a new system devised by Hertfordshire County Council to track rough sleeper cases. The system having been trialled in Watford is now in use across all 10 districts in Hertfordshire.
- The Housing First project for rough sleepers which is funded through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme is continuing on target. Watford Community Housing has purchased ten self-contained one bedroom homes. Rough sleepers for all ten units have been identified and agreed through the Watford Rough Sleepers Taskforce. The first Housing First letting took place on 13 April 2021; the second took place on 15 April. The rest of the homes are due to be let by the end of May 2021. The Council is in discussion with MHCLG and Homes England regarding funding for a further 10 Housing First units.
- Eleven units of self-contained ‘move-on’ accommodation for ex-rough sleepers at Charter House, also funded by the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, began construction in March and will be completed and let by the end of June. A further 23 units of similar accommodation will be delivered in Charter House by the end of 2021.
- Work is underway to ensure that the Voluntary Sector Strategy and associated action plan approved by Cabinet on 9 November is delivered and the Council harnesses the great community spirit demonstrated throughout the first wave of Covid-19.
- Since the 9 February, ArrivaClick – the demand responsive minibus service subsidised by the council – has been supporting the local vaccination effort by offering free transport to and from vaccination appointments within the borough. The service is easy to book via a simple smartphone app which is freely available to download. Passengers are picked up by minibus at an agreed time from a ‘virtual stop’. The service operates to careful standards ensuring safety for passengers during Covid-19.
- Further Dementia Friendly Town activities have been taking place including a Zoom Coffee Morning designed to reach out to care home residents living with dementia; The Valentines Cream Tea Show and The Easter Variety Show which were both hosted by Radio Presenter Lee Partridge and broadcast via Zoom to a number of care homes in Watford. 27 Valentine’s day cards made by Cathartic were sent out to all Watford care homes and a number of partnership care homes in the local area from the Mayor.
- More than £170,000 raised for voluntary and community groups across the town supporting Watford residents, with plans underway to ensure that the fund helps to support groups long-term and in a sustainable way.

1.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
	Completed/Initial activity outlined complete	5
	On track/revisit at end of each lockdown	23
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	
Total		28

Page 70

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	Refresh Watford's Cultural Strategy to ensure that 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 6 August – AEA commissioned to provide support in delivery of the council's existing cultural strategy, inc. work with the cultural sector ✓ 6 October – Review of all strategic partnerships underway. Final outcome to be informed by AEA review ✓ 4/11 November – Cultural Leaders Group to review AEA report and action plan ✓ 18 January – AEA final report to Cabinet alongside THCQ Programme ✓ Late January – Governance workshop to establish preferred governance model 	On track	The final recommendations for delivering AEA's Cultural Strategy were fed into the newly established Town Hall Quarter programme approved by Cabinet in January. A workshop at the end of January considered the governance arrangements for taking the work forward. Further insight on governance has been sought from other local authorities which is to be fed into the Town Hall Quarter Project around the end of May.

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Recognise Watford's fantastic community					
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"> Have been unable to confirm a timeline for these events which are entirely subject to Government guidance and legislation. However, 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. 	On track	The staging of these events has been re-profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdown. However, some recent progress has been made, with vaccinations now underway nationally, the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, and the artist for the Covid-19 memorial having been selected. The aim is now for the events to be held from around June when the pandemic and government restrictions are due to end.
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 	Complete	Volunteer Strategy approved by Cabinet. New milestones created to implement the Voluntary Sector Specialist's recommendations. Significant engagement with the voluntary and community sector has already taken place and will form the basis of the Council's ongoing strategy.

OBJECTIVE Recognise Watford's fantastic community		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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 by Covid-19 to volunteer within the community	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 • May - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget 	On track	Significant engagement with the voluntary and community sector has already taken place and will form the basis of the Council's ongoing strategy. Work ongoing in partnership with W3RT, Watford's Community and Voluntary Service to implement the Voluntary Sector Specialist's recommendations.
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 ✓ 8 October – Internal review of draft strategy ✓ 9 November – Strategy approved by Cabinet • May - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget 	On track	Work on how best to plan for the future use of volunteers, including making sure there are appropriate roles for volunteers to step into and a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations to ensure both skills and motivations are considered is currently being undertaken in joint cooperation with W3RT.

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Recognise Watford's fantastic community					
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	Lots achieved to date with plenty of well received events, a raising of awareness and added support for those living with dementia, and a focus on the Council's Community Protection team working with residents and businesses on preventing the spread of the virus.	On track	Watford has built a strong reputation as a dementia-friendly town and accreditation has been achieved for a further two years. Dementia support and events over the last quarter include a Zoom Coffee Morning broadcast to care home residents living with dementia; the Valentines Cream Tea and the Easter Variety Shows broadcast via Zoom to care homes in Watford; Valentine's day cards from the Mayor sent out to all Watford care homes and a few partnership care homes in the local area. Dementia Champion Training with the Alzheimer's Society is being arranged, awaiting dates due to furloughed staff.
OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Engage our community in the renewal process					
Work with our community to reflect	We will engage with community, faith leaders and councillors to identify an appropriate memorial to mark the	Watford Together	✓ 28 October – Design for Cassiobury Peace Garden complete	On track	The completion of the design and construction work for the memorials has been re-

and commemorate Covid-19	pandemic and act as a place of reflection for our residents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 December - Engagement with Watford General Hospital on memorial commenced ✓ 15 February – Gov’t roadmap published ✓ 5 April – Artist selected to produce the Covid-19 memorial outside the hospital. <p>Further milestones subject to the end of Government restrictions</p>		<p>profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdown, but is now well underway. With the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, the aim is now for the memorials to be completed and the events to be held from around June when the pandemic and Government restrictions are due to end.</p>
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	<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. ✓ 15 February – Gov’t roadmap published 	Complete during first and second lockdowns. Required additionally at end of third lockdown	This activity has been successfully completed through the transition of beneficiaries, as the Watford Helps incident cell closed after the first national lockdown with more than 1,500 Watford residents helped by the scheme. Additional lockdowns have required the revisiting of previous milestones to ensure beneficiaries are transitioned again and supported in the long-term.
OBJECTIVE Engage our community in the renewal process		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
Ensure our residents receiving support from partners continue to be	We will work with our partners to support mutual aid groups and online communities who have provided	Watford Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1 August – following closure of Operation Shield all beneficiaries transitioned to longer term support 	Complete during first and second	This activity has been successfully completed through the transition of

supported after Covid-19	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		or self-sufficiency, where appropriate. ✓ 15 February – Gov’t roadmap published	lockdowns. Required additionally at end of third lockdown	beneficiaries, as the Watford Helps incident cell closed after the first national lockdown with more than 1,500 Watford residents helped by the scheme. Additional lockdowns have required revisiting of previous milestones to ensure beneficiaries are transitioned again and supported in the long-term.
Continue to work closely with our community, voluntary and faith groups who contributed to the community response to Covid-19	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 most vulnerable residents continue to receive the support they need	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 • May - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget 	On track	Work on how best to ensure that the positive joint working across the sector and with the Council throughout Covid-19 is harnessed and taken forward in the long-term is currently being undertaken in joint cooperation with W3RT.
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	Watford Helps	✓ 26 November – Gap analysis and funding proposal developed by Watford Community Housing to be	On track	Investigations underway to build upon the capacity provided by the Council’s Healthy Hub by engaging

	been impacted by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown		<p>presented to the One Watford Strategic Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 15 December - Gap analysis and funding proposal presented to the One Watford Strategic Partnership ✓ January 21 - Strategic Group to discuss a broader reaching Watford wide solution around mental health <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>		with the 'New Leaf' project. A broader Watford-wide mental health solution has been raised to bring together key partners and organisations across the town.
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 further waves 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 and ongoing	Significant amount of information remains online and accessible for residents. Continual updates ongoing subject to Government guidance
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
Provide a shared space of remembrance for our residents	We will build upon the now well-recognised Watford Together brand to establish a shared place of reflection for residents following Covid-19	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 28 October – Design for Cassiobury Peace Garden complete ✓ 1 December - Engagement with Watford General Hospital on memorial commenced ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published 	On track	The completion of the design and construction work for the memorials has been re-profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdown, but is now well underway.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5 April – Artist selected to produce the Covid-19 memorial outside the hospital. <p>Further milestones subject to the end of Government restrictions</p>		With the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, the aim is now for the memorials to be completed and the events to be held from around June when the pandemic and Government restrictions are due to end.
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 and ongoing	Significant amount of information remains online and accessible for residents to provide ongoing support. As further support requirements become clear as the incident develops, further online resources will be added.
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. ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published 	Complete during first and second lockdowns. Required additionally at end of third lockdown	This activity has been successfully completed through the transition of beneficiaries as the Watford Helps incident cell closed. Over 1,500 Watford residents were supported by the cell which will remain on stand-by in the event of a local lockdown. Additional lockdowns have required the revisiting of

					<p>previous milestones to ensure beneficiaries are transitioned again.</p>
<p>Address the issue of digital isolation that impacted many in our community as result of Covid-19</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Watford Helps</p>	<p>✓ January '21 – Develop job descriptions for 'Digital Navigators'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May '21 – Develop eligibility criteria for devices • May'21 - Develop process for accessing, cleaning and distributing IT kit and Herts wide digital support map / database • June '21 – Recruit 'Digital Navigators' and develop corporate social responsibility and programme communications plans • August '21 – 'Digital Navigators' training • September '21 – Deploy approved approach 	<p>On track</p>	<p>Watford Borough Council is the district lead on the 'Staying Connected' project, which is a cross organisational Herts wide initiative that includes members from the CCG, HCC, CVS's, Age UK and HILS. The project aims to support people with accessing information technology devices/kit and assist with training to help get them digitally connected to reduce social isolation. The project will develop a training programme to train volunteers to go out into the community and support people with using a range of media devices including iPads, laptops, and smart phones, to help them get digitally connected and online using apps for grocery shopping and connecting with friends and family. It will also work to source digital devices for distribution to the community to support people to be digitally</p>

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Put in place mechanisms to identify those with ongoing vulnerabilities and a strategy for addressing these needs					connected in the community.
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	✓ 15 July – Additional information and signposting added to council website, specifically relating to financial abuse and online scams	Complete and ongoing	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. This will be added to as and when necessary as the incident develops.
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 	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

			<p>obtained for the period October 2020-March 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 September - Application for 20 units of self-contained move-on accommodation submitted • Q3 2020 MHCLG Rough Sleepers Initiative funding application – submission May 2021 (MHCLG changed the timetable) ✓ Q4 2020/21: NSAP short-term 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 ✓ Q1 2021/22 - Open complex needs scheme • Q3 2021/22: Have zero rough sleepers on streets of Watford 		<p>homeless and sleeping on the streets.</p> <p>The next phase of works will focus on the development and adoption of a single pathway for rough sleepers, working with partners from across the town to help achieve this commitment to achieve and maintain zero rough sleeping.</p>
<p>Maintain the ability to remobilise resources in the event of a second wave of Covid-19</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Watford Helps</p>	<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 	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Arrangements were confirmed between borough councils, County Council and CVS, incorporating lessons learnt and previous planning works, and meant that the Council was able to work as effectively as possible for all residents and businesses, when the virus case numbers began to rise in Autumn. This was effectively completed</p>

					during the second wave of the virus and for the second and third lockdowns.
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	✓ 9 November – Volunteer Sector Strategy approved by Cabinet • May 2021 - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget	On track	More than £170,000 has been raised and allocated to local charities and voluntary groups serving residents across the town throughout the pandemic, thanks to a fantastic response to the Covid-19 appeal. Work on addressing the challenge of issuing continued support to charities and the voluntary sector impacted by Covid-19, including how best to manage the Community Fund over the medium to long term, is currently being undertaken in joint cooperation with W3RT.
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	✓ 9 November – Volunteer Sector Strategy approved by Cabinet • May 2021 - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget	On track	Throughout the pandemic, the Community Fund (now known as Watford Helps Covid-19 appeal), which has been supported and promoted closely by the Council, has grown to more than £170,000. Further activity and promotion of the

					fund is due to take place over the coming months. The council and W3RT are jointly investigating the best ways to manage the Fund over the medium/long term, including diversifying sources of funding.
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 as those of key workers who supported the town throughout Covid-19	Watford Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 28 October – Design for Cassiobury Peace Garden complete ✓ 6 December - Tree specification decided & memorial bench sourced for Peace Garden ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published 	On track	The completion of the construction work for the Peace Garden has been re-profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdowns. With the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, the aim is now for the garden to be completed and the events to be held from around June when the pandemic and Government restrictions are due to end.
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"> • Entirely subject to Government guidance and legislation so unable to confirm timeline for this at the current time. However, there is a clear commitment to celebrate the resilience of the town and great community spirit across the local area 	On track	The completion of the design and construction work for the Covid Memorial has been re-profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdowns.

			<p>shown by Watford residents through the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>✓ 5 April – Artist selected to produce the Covid-19 memorial outside the hospital.</p>		<p>With the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, and the artist for the Covid-19 memorial having been selected, the aim is now for the memorial to be completed and the commemoration event to be held from around June when the pandemic and Government restrictions are due to end.</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE Deliver and support appropriate memorial and thank you events and initiatives</p>		<p>Project</p>	<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>Bring together and thank our community for the town's collective response to Covid-19</p>	<p>Subject to social distancing guidance and Government requirements, we will sponsor a Watford 'Thank 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</p>	<p>Watford Together</p>	<p>Entirely subject to Government guidance and legislation so unable to confirm timeline for this at the current time. However, 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.</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The staging of these events has been re-profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdowns. However, some recent progress has been made, with vaccinations now underway nationally, the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, and the artist for the Covid-19 memorial having been selected. The aim is now for the events to be held from around June when the pandemic and</p>

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Deliver and support appropriate memorial and thank you events and initiatives					government restrictions are due to end.
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"> ✓ 26 November - Fountain ordered for St Mary's Church Yard ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published ✓ 28 February - Commission survey for St Mary's Church Yard Fountain 	On track	The restoration of the fountain has been re-profiled in response to local Covid-19 restrictions and the national lockdowns. With the Government setting out its roadmap for ending lockdown, the aim is now for the fountain to be restored and the commemoration event to be held from around June when the pandemic and government restrictions are due to end.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 9 November – Volunteer Sector Strategy approved by Cabinet • May 21 - W3RT to provide a menu of options covering which set of recommendations they can implement within their current budget 	On track	The response from the public to the appeal for volunteers during the first wave of the virus was overwhelmingly positive. The issue of how best to utilise volunteers in our community, including making sure there are appropriate roles for volunteers to step into is currently being undertaken

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 ✓ 1-3 December –Desktop exercise completed • 1 July '21 – One Watford position statement paper drafted • September - review recommendations implemented – re-baselined from 1 April 	On track	Work is underway to deliver a long term vision for Watford which will be an important driver in shaping the future direction of the partnership, with One Watford reflecting the shared vision for the town. After discussions with the LGA, it was agreed that the review paper would be undertaken in line with the Brand Positioning work to ensure ongoing alignment.
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. This will continue to be monitored as the incident develops.

in joint cooperation with W3RT.

2. Work Stream 2: Business and Economy

2.1 Key achievements over this period Q4 2020/21 (Jan – Mar)

- A covid-safe High Street remained open (subject to a 3rd national lockdown), with ongoing advice and guidance for all businesses to ensure that they operated in line with legislation so that residents and visitors were kept safe. Covid and traffic marshal presence extended to ensure the safe operation of the Town Centre.
- A considerable public health and communication programme undertaken to ensure businesses were able to reopen safely in line with the lockdown easing roadmap, 'welcoming the public back to Watford' and encouraging them to shop locally. New Town Centre Ops Group (WCTOG) launched 13 January to prepare.
- New Town Centre Strategy Group launched 3 March to ensure Watford Town centre remains a regional leisure and shopping destination which supports the local economy and local people.
- Longer term traffic solution agreed by members for the Lower High Street to keep visitors to our town safe and help sustain the long term health of the Town Centre.
- Economic Growth Strategy progressed by consultants to provide a vision and strategy for economic development for Watford that embraces economic growth, environmental sustainability, social equity and inclusive growth - this is being reviewed and updated by officers.
- Inaugural 'One Watford for Business' forum introduced 11 February following the recommendations from the Business forums review that were implemented to allow us to understand the needs and concerns of our businesses and to support them accordingly.
- Initial business support partnership with social enterprise Wenta completed by end March, providing tailored offerings for all Watford businesses and the self-employed - 326 businesses have engaged with the programme, 232 businesses have had face-to-face discussions, 206 people booked onto webinars and 22 businesses has sought more in-depth and specialist advice. Programme extended until end May 2021.
- Successful BID ballot held and BID in place for a further 5 year period to continue to help establish new, stronger and more focused partnerships with businesses of all sizes across the town.
- Local Restrictions Grants (LRGs) allocated to local businesses, supporting the local economy during 3rd lockdown - £ 6,098,915 paid out across 4,493 applications to end March 2021.
- Closed Business Payments (CBPs) paid out totalling £3,407,000.
- Additional Restrictions Grants (ARGs) to provide further one-off payment support to those businesses not covered by other grants – £1.9m pot allocated to Watford - £1.06m used to date, of which £560,000 paid in direct grants to 137 businesses. A further £977k will be available to support businesses in Watford if

we can account for spend against the original allocation by 30 June 2021. £191,500 of total ARG pot paid to 383 taxi drivers to support with licensing and cleaning and £69,000 to support market traders with rent.

- Town Centre Framework agreed with Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders to ‘promote understanding and communicate local priorities through engagement and consultation with local residents and businesses’ and will be progressed in May/June 2021.
- Third tranche of Key Accounts Programme launched to leaders using the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and meetings now being held, ensuring that our commitment to provide the town’s largest employers with a strong voice within the town, and also to allow the council to better manage its ongoing relationships and support for businesses.
- Visit Watford project commenced to find the 'vision, purpose, branding & narrative for Watford' and promote the town effectively.
- Successful ‘Generation Watford’ careers fair held 9 March 2021 to ensure that there is a specific focus on employment and skills, supporting our residents to play a full role in the town’s, region’s and UK’s economic revival. CRM used to correspond with businesses and supporting ‘Generation Watford’ website utilised.
- National Apprenticeship Week held in February and local employer support for KickStart programme helping young people at risk of long term unemployment get into the job market by providing government funding for employers to create six-month job placements.
- Watford Business Park development planning agreed and demolition commenced.

Page 87

2.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
	Completed/Initial activity outlined complete	15
	On track/revisit at end of each lockdown	21
	Planning underway	2
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	0
Total		38

OBJECTIVE 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	Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update	
Create our Economic Revive and Thrive Strategy	We will develop an Economic Revive and Thrive Strategy, which outlines the council's approach to revive our local economy so that it supports all our town post-Covid	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 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	Final strategy received from consultant. The detailed Action Plan and aligning with the council's strategic framework is progressing prior to due governance and formal publication of strategy in July.
Develop our Economic Plan 2020-2024	We will develop an Economic Plan for the next five years (2021-25) which will set out our plans to support our local economy and businesses to thrive in the years to come	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2 October – Strategy development initiation ✓ 8 October - Initial stakeholder engagement event ✓ 12 October – Design survey and questions ✓ 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period ✓ 02 November – Review survey results ✓ 06 November – Commence 1:1 stakeholder meetings ✓ 27 November – Definition of strategic priorities ✓ 23 December – First draft of strategy ✓ 21 January – Second draft of strategy ✓ 09 February – Review by Mayor/Cllrs ✓ 11 February – Review by One Watford for Business ✓ 18 February – Review by Strategy Group ✓ 15 March – Final strategy received ✓ 18 March – Final review by WBC Steering Committee ✓ 27 April – Leadership Board update 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	This will help the council to support businesses and the local economy not just immediately following the successive lockdowns but over the medium to long term.

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"> ✓ 30 April – Publishable docs and detailed working Action Plan complete • 07 June – Review and sign-off by Cabinet • July – Strategy published 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	<p>50 key accounts scheme launched and meetings underway. All businesses involved will have regular interactions with senior council officers, with contact recorded on the business CRM system.</p> <p>Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations were implemented to ensure that the town attracts and retains major employers for Watford residents.</p>
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.	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet ✓ 10 December – Developer’s forum resurrected ✓ 31 December – Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented ✓ 11 February – Inaugural ‘One Watford for Business’ forum ✓ March – Tranche 3 accounts allocated to leaders and briefs created using CRM ✓ 27 April – Next ‘One Watford for Business’ forum held • 31 May – All tranche 2 & 3 key account meetings held and relationships established • 31 May – All meeting feedback recorded on CRM • June – Next Developers’ forum 	Initial activities complete but work	Business partnerships and forums review complete and all recommendations implemented to ensure that the council is best placed to

	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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 8 October – Final virtual Covid-19 Forum ✓ 10 December – Relaunch Developers’ Forum ✓ 11 February – Inaugural ‘One Watford for Business’ ✓ 27 April – next ‘One Watford for Business’ forum held 	remains ongoing	support the many successful smaller businesses and business owners across the town. All first forums have been held with regular meeting schedule in the diary
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 ✓ 4 / 11 November – Cultural Leaders Group to review AEA report and action plan ✓ 18 January – AEA final report to Cabinet alongside THCQ Programme ✓ Late January – Governance workshop to establish preferred governance model ✓ June ’21 – Cultural Leaders Group to agree adoption of governance model 	On track	The workshop on governance was held in late January. It was agreed at the workshop that the Newcastle/Gateshead Cultural Trust could be used as a model to be adopted in Watford. That meeting took place in mid February and provided some very useful feedback on the experiences of Newcastle/Gateshead. The next steps will be to convene a further meeting of the CLG to agree the governance model we should adopt. Working is also underway with the Palace Theatre and the Pump House on their infrastructure plans and collaborating such that the council can support them as they seek funding for the plans.
Ensure that the council communicates	We will ensure that our corporate communications plan has a clear focus on communicating effectively with	Renewal Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 18 September - Draft Renewals Comms Plan produced 	Initial activities complete	Renewal Communications Plan has a specific focus on communications for

effectively with our businesses	businesses of all sizes across the town, promoting genuine and meaningful two-way engagement		✓ 12 October – Renewals Comms Plan approved by Renewal Coordination Board	but work remains ongoing	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 visitors to our town safe and support the Town Centre reopening with a Marshall and street angels scheme	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 ✓ 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 – Winter planters in place to aid social distancing ✓ 11 November – Social distanced Remembrance Day ✓ 13 November – Christmas light switch-on ✓ 02 December – Town centre re-opened after November lockdown – Transition to 'tier' system ✓ 02 December – Covid Marshals introduced 	<p>Complete during first and second lockdown</p> <p>Ongoing work to prepare for exit from 3rd lockdown</p>	<p>Local support to businesses, including in relation to public health, has continued.</p> <p>Revised governance structure introduced 13 January when Town Centre Operations Group took over responsibility to provide a real focus for the council to support the Town Centre through tactical interventions and projects. The Town Centre Strategic Forum has been established to provide the strategic direction for the town centre</p> <p>Programme of projects now tracked at Operations Group to support businesses and encourage the public back into the town in line with the published Government Roadmap.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 05 December – spectators return to Watford FC ✓ December – comprehensive comms programme to reinforce tier messaging ✓ 06 January – review of festive period in Town Centre ✓ 13 January – new Town Centre Operations Group structure took over ✓ 22 February – Gov’t roadmap published ✓ 08 March – Gov’t roadmap – schools return ✓ March – Market revamp programme commenced ahead of 13 April reopening ✓ 29 March – Gov’t Roadmap – outdoor sport and leisure facilities open ✓ 12 April – Gov’t Roadmap – outdoor hospitality, non-essential retail, gyms & swims, close contact services open ✓ From 17 April – street entertainers every Saturday • 17 May – Gov’t roadmap – indoor entertainment and indoor sport open, pilot public events • 21 June – Gov’t roadmap final step – nightclubs and large events open, no legal limits on social contact 		Public health advice and support for businesses across the Town, but particularly in the Town Centre, has been ongoing throughout.
Encourage residents and visitors to use our Town Centre	We will introduce a programme of communications for residents, encouraging them to support our local businesses and to 'shop local, stay safe'	Business Reopening	<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” ✓ December – Grant to support taxis agreed (licensing and cleaning) 	On track	<p>Revised governance structure introduced from 13 January.</p> <p>Council have employed a Town Centre Marketing & Communications Officer to support this activity.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 19 November – Locally focussed Covid comms week ✓ December – ‘Shop local’ campaign comms ✓ 13 January – New Town Centre Operations Group structure takes over ✓ 27 January – Marketing Comms Officer employed ✓ 22 February – Gov’t Roadmap published ✓ April – Shared comms plan between key partners (WBC/BID/Atria) ✓ From 17 April – Street entertainers every Saturday • End May – Maze attraction on The Parade during half-term • July – First of 3 night markets • August – Big Beach 		<p>Programme of multi-media communications ‘welcoming the public back to Watford’ and encouraging them to ‘shop / eat locally’, in line with Roadmap.</p> <p>Events programme planned from 17 April onwards.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 24 July – First business newsletter sent ✓ Programme of regular newsletters ongoing 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	Business newsletters have been published on a monthly basis since July 2020 providing a direct link between local businesses and the council. These continue to be published on a regular basis with the latest key information e.g. grants, Covid restrictions, EU transition, support programmes etc
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	Survive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5 June - Business survey launched ✓ 15 July – Business survey closed 	Initial activities complete but work	Business survey was launched and received 232 responses, allowing the council powerful insight into the challenges faced by local

	Economic Review and Thrive Strategy so that it best meets the needs of our businesses			remains ongoing	businesses. This has set up the structure for further surveys in future to ensure the Council continues to understand changing business needs
OBJECTIVE Actively support initiatives intended to assist SMEs to survive and grow		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Business results shared and used to inform content on the website, the Wenta programme and the key accounts programme 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	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 and the Key Accounts programme. The final Economic Growth Strategy will be used to evolve the Council's support for businesses.
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 launch 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	Business Information Hub launched and Wenta support programme extended to ensure we continue to provide further, tailored information for business and self-employed residents. Regular updates are made on the Hub e.g. grants, EU transition

OBJECTIVE Actively support initiatives intended to assist SMEs to survive and grow		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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. 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	<p>The new WhatsApp for Business launched on 2 October alongside a positive communications campaign and provides an innovative way for businesses to engage directly with their customers.</p> <p>The final Economic Growth Strategy will provide further information on how the council will continue to support businesses.</p>
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 ✓ December – HSBC rank reopened ✓ January – Grants agreed to support licence costs 	Initial activity outlined complete	<p>Successful Travel with Confidence initiative to keep Watford residents safe. The majority of Taxi drivers have completed training and obtained the TwC 'mark' throughout further lockdown periods. Grant has supported with licensing and cleaning costs.</p>

OBJECTIVE Attract and retain big businesses to the town		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Develop our 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 ✓ 16 October – Top 20 briefs produced ✓ 02 November – CRM launched ✓ 18 December – Initial meetings held ✓ January – Agreed next phase of businesses to contact ✓ March – Tranche 3 accounts allocated to leaders and briefs created using CRM • 31 May – All tranche 2 & 3 key account meetings held and relationships established • 31 May – All meeting feedback recorded on CRM 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	Key Accounts Programme and process launched and meetings with senior council officers being held with contact recorded on the business CRM system. The next tranche of meetings with key accounts is now underway.
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"> ✓ February – brief developed ✓ 8 February – BID ballot successful ✓ February – 'Visit Watford' project commenced with third party ✓ 24 February – Brand audit 	On track	Work continues to establish a strong brand identify which will set Watford apart and attract visitors to the Town supporting our local businesses as we emerge

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ March – cross-ref with draft Economic Growth Strategy ✓ April – Stakeholder workshops • May - Undertake work • June – Agree brand positioning/ vision 		from Covid-19 restrictions. A number of stakeholder workshops have been undertaken with our Brand Coordinating Group and work to develop the final brand is now underway.
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 ✓ January 2021 – Vaccination programme begins nationwide ✓ 22 February – Gov't published Roadmap ✓ 08 March – Gov't Roadmap – schools return ✓ 29 March – Gov't Roadmap – outdoor sport and leisure facilities open ✓ 12 April – Gov't Roadmap – outdoor hospitality, non-essential retail, gyms & swims, close contact services open 	Complete during first and second lockdown Ongoing work to prepare for exit from 3 rd lockdown	<p>Ongoing social distancing measures since May 2020. This has included planter arrangements, floor stickers, stewards and hand sanitiser stations, as well as additional advice and guidance for businesses.</p> <p>The easing of 3rd lockdown has required revisiting of previous milestones to ensure the town centre reopens safely again, this time in line with Roadmap.</p> <p>Public Health Cell has continued to engage local businesses and to perform local track and trace to ensure all measures being</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ From 17 April – Street entertainers every Saturday • 17 May – Gov’t roadmap – indoor entertainment and indoor sport open, pilot public events • 21 June – Gov’t roadmap final step – nightclubs and large events open, no legal limits on social contact 		undertaken to allow the town to reopen safely.
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 – Market strategy reviewed – speciality markets explored ✓ 02 November - commence developing Town Centre plan ✓ 02 December – new Town Centre Operations and Strategy Groups agreed ✓ February – inaugural Town Centre Strategy Group ✓ Town Centre framework agreed • Additional Place Shaping resource in place 	On track	<p>Ensuring that the Town Centre is well positioned for the challenges of the future.</p> <p>Draft diagnostic of Watford’s strengths and areas for development created.</p> <p>Town centre framework agreed.</p>

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
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 ✓ November – Annex identified as a co-working space ✓ 02 December – Co-working business case drafted ✓ March – Innovation and Incubator Hub project to be taken forward as part of Town Hall Quarter programme ✓ 22 February – 'Creator/meanwhile' space campaign restarted as Roadmap published ✓ April - Determine future plans for Town Hall Annex during 2021 • April – May – Find suitable creator/ maker space 	On track	<p>Incubation space to support the creation and flow of new businesses to be addressed within the Town Hall Quarter programme.</p> <p>18 expressions of interest from 'creator/makers' for space, ongoing challenge remains finding suitable cost-effective space.</p>
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	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September – Business Survey results used to determine Wenta programme content 	Initial activities complete	Business support package provided through the Wenta programme continues to

	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Hertfordshire Growth Hub		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ December – weekly Wenta dashboard to review success ✓ March – initial survey of Wenta programme users held ✓ March – Wenta programme extended • End May – review extended Wenta programme 	but work remains ongoing	<p>provide further tailored support for businesses and self-employed residents.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>
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 establish genuine and meaningful two way engagement	Revive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 August – Review of existing forums ✓ 24 August – Business forums recommendations approved by Informal Cabinet ✓ December – ‘One Watford for Business’ ToR, stakeholders, roles agreed ✓ 11 February – inaugural ‘One Watford for Business’ stakeholder group ✓ 27 April – next ‘One Watford for Business’ forum held 	Initial activities complete but work remains ongoing	‘One Watford for Business’ forum ongoing.
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"> ✓ November ‘20 – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet ✓ January ‘21 – 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. Consultation has now concluded and 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"> ✓ August '20 - Supplementary planning document for site adopted ✓ Q2 2020 – Submit funding bid to Herts Growth Board for infrastructure interventions ✓ Q1 2021 – Complete strategic transport review work ✓ Q1 2021 – Procure consultants to help deliver collaborative funding and development strategy • Q2 2021 – Work with landowners to prepare collaborative funding and development strategy • Q2/3 2021 – Prepare and consult on Supplementary Planning Document 	On track	The council continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders to support the development of the Watford Junction area. The procurement of a consultant for funding and development strategy work has been completed and work is underway with Herts Growth Board to seek funding for infrastructure. Work with Network Rail to promote progress on station improvement works and pedestrian link underway.
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/IDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) preparation with external consultant support and engagement with HCC undertaken with consultation launched 	On track	On track to have infrastructure plan in parallel with Local Plan 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 emerge, the council will be in a position to pursue these. 	On track	Ongoing monitoring at present

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 - Submit detailed planning application/commence intrusive surveys/demolition. • Q1 2021/22 – Tender for design and build contractor and secure Cabinet approval to appoint • Q2 2021/22 – Main contractor appointed • Q1-4 2021/22 – Construction and preletting campaign on Gateway Zone • Q4 2020/21 – Q4 2021/22 – Identify further regen/commercial activities and present outline business cases to the council's Commercial Income and Investment Board 	On track	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 January. However, the site has now been secured and demolition on site has commenced. Unilateral Undertaking has been executed and planning decision notice issued.
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 – business plan and strategy for the £92million refurbishment fund that the Council hold ✓ 02 December – strategy for refurbishment agreed at Cabinet ✓ Q1/Q4 2020 – Ensure regular marketing meetings are progressed to minimise voids ✓ March 2021 – Building 1 completed ✓ March – Cabinet approval received for delegated authority to secure deal with a tenant 	On track	Building 1 work completed and seeking to let. Exploring additional re-gears as necessary.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q2 2021 – Oversee the delivery of a new office building of 85,000sq ft. and endeavour to identify a pre let of this space Q1/4 2021 – delivery of 7,000sq m in Gateway Zone 		
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"> ✓ November – Annex identified as a co-working space ✓ 02 December – co-working business case drafted • Q4 2020 – Q4 2021 - working with our investment advisors to undertake programme of work 	On track	This work will form part of the commercial pipeline overseen by the Commercial Income and Investment Board. The council continues to investigate the feasibility of an Innovation and Incubation Hub in the town as part of the Town Hall Quarter programme, which will help to support start ups.
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 	On track	<p>Completion of this activity is partly subject to the final Economic Growth Strategy which will provide the council with a clear medium to long term focus on supporting employment and skills for local residents.</p> <p>The Wenta programme continues to support businesses and owners that</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2 October – Strategy development initiation ✓ 07 October – Wenta contract agreed ✓ 8 October – initial stakeholder engagement event ✓ 16 October – Wenta press release and launch ✓ 12 October – Design survey and questions ✓ 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period ✓ 02 November – Review survey results ✓ 06 November – commence 1:1 stakeholder meetings ✓ November – KickStart jobs scheme launched ✓ 27 November – definition of strategic priorities ✓ 17 December - Careers Fair Q&A session ✓ 23 December – first draft of strategy ✓ 21 January – second draft of strategy ✓ February – National Apprenticeship Week ✓ 09 February – review by Mayor/Cllrs ✓ 11 February – review by One Watford for Business ✓ 18 February – review by Strategy Group ✓ 09 March – Watford Careers Fair ✓ 15 March – final strategy received ✓ 18 March – final review by WBC Steering Committee ✓ 27 April – Leadership Board update ✓ 30 April – Publishable docs and detailed working Action Plan complete • 07 June – Review and sign-off by Cabinet 		<p>require new skills, knowledge, information and advice to ensure that their business can recover in more resilient ways, or grow.</p> <p>Local organisations and employers continue to be engaged and involved with the KickStart scheme.</p>
--	--	--	--	---

			July – strategy published		
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 ✓ 8 October - initial stakeholder engagement event ✓ 12 October – Design survey and questions ✓ 19 October – Deliver survey and survey live period ✓ 02 November – Review survey results ✓ 06 November – commence 1:1 stakeholder meetings ✓ November – KickStart jobs scheme launched ✓ 27 November – definition of strategic priorities ✓ 17 December - Careers Fair Q&A session ✓ 23 December – first draft of strategy ✓ 21 January – second draft of strategy ✓ 09 February – review by Mayor/Cllrs ✓ 11 February – review by One Watford for Business ✓ 18 February – review by Strategy Group ✓ 15 March – final strategy received ✓ 18 March – final review by WBC Steering Committee ✓ 27 April – Leadership Board update ✓ 30 April – Publishable docs and detailed working Action Plan complete • 7 June – Review and sign-off by Cabinet • July – strategy published 	On track	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"> ✓ January – Consultation underway ✓ January – Draft Local Plan to Cabinet • Q3 2021 – Submission to Planning Inspectorate • Q1 2022 – Local Plan adopted (anticipated) 	On track	On track with new timetable which will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years.
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
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"> ✓ February – brief developed ✓ 8 February – BID ballot successful ✓ February – 'Visit Watford' project commenced with third party ✓ 24 February – Brand audit ✓ March – cross-ref with draft Economic Growth Strategy ✓ April – Stakeholder workshops • May - Undertake work • June – Agree brand positioning/ vision 	On track	Work continues to establish a strong brand identify which will set Watford apart and attract visitors to the Town supporting our local businesses as we emerge from Covid-19 restrictions. A number of stakeholder workshops have been undertaking with our Brand Coordinating Group and work to develop the final brand is now underway.
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 attract and retain businesses within the town	Sustainable Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September '20 – Board, PID and task developed ✓ November '20 - Develop detailed project plan milestones ✓ November '20 - Public engagement on vision 	On track	Current initiatives of Sustainable Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are contributing to progression of WBC being named a

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May '21 - draft strategy presented to Portfolio Holders Sept '21 – Final Strategy approved 		<p>Sustainable Travel Town by HCC.</p> <p>Successful engagement to inform the Strategy with a draft underway and final sign off expected in September 2021.</p>
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 Govt for funding * 2021/22 – Feasibility Studies contribution to engaging consultation <p><i>* dependent on opportunity</i></p>	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"> ✓ Engagement with HCC colleagues and BID initiated Q1 2021/22 – Land acquisition discussions and proposals Q1 2021/22 – 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.

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Deliver transport improvements to support the retention of businesses and a flourishing town centre					
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 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.	LCWIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 April – LCWIP stage 3 & 4 - Cycling Network and Walking Network review 17 May – LCWIP Stage 5 - prioritisation complete Q2/Q3 2021 – Undertake public consultation 03 September – Stage 6 - final joint LCWIP document 	Planning underway	Decided that Watford continues with Stage 4 and 5 elements separately from Three Rivers and both to catch up for the final LCWIP document (Stage 6) and present as a joint piece. This has impacted delivery although not to a major extent.
Implement a demand responsive transport scheme	We will launch the ArrivaClick on-demand bus service for Watford and make sure it links effectively with all of Watford's greener ways to travel so that we can reduce congestion, improve air quality and provide another sustainable but innovative way for our residents, visitors and commuters to get around	Demand Responsive Transport	✓ 1 July – ArrivaClick demand responsive transport system launched	Complete	Service launched and has responded to the impact of the pandemic over the last year. As the lockdown eases the service will respond as demand grows.
OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Deliver transport improvements to support the retention of businesses and a flourishing town centre					
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	Sustainable Travel Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September – Board, PID and task developed ✓ November - Develop detailed project plan milestones 	Planning underway	Comprehensive nature of Sustainable Transport Strategy and need for a thorough analysis of the draft strategy has resulted in

	<p>ways to travel, reduces congestion, helps people to make healthy travel choices and stimulates economic growth.</p>		<p>✓ 30 November - Public engagement on vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2021 – draft strategy presented to Portfolio Holders • Consultation Summer 2021 • September/October – Final Strategy approved 		<p>review of key milestones with final sign-off now expected in September, rather than July. Current initiatives of Sustainable Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan are contributing to WBC being named a Sustainable Travel Town by HCC.</p>
--	--	--	---	--	---

3. Work Stream 3: Organisational Renewal

3.1 Key achievements over this period

- Town Hall Covid-safe measures implemented and regularly updated for staff, members and customers in accordance with government regulations and guidance.
- Mental Health Awareness Training for all managers arranged and completed. Health and Wellbeing guidance published via newsletters and website content has been regularly reviewed and updated in line with any changes to Government guidelines to ensure that staff continue to have access to the most beneficial info.
- HR Policies and HR Guidance documentation regularly reviewed, updated and published in line with any changes to Government guidelines to ensure that Council staff continue to be well informed and protected.
- Following the results of the Council's Covid-19 staff survey, an action plan designed to respond to the needs of Council staff affected by the virus has been successfully implemented, although this will remain ongoing as the incident continues to develop.
- Improved website content and customer journeys for key areas such as Coronavirus, parks and sports delivered. This has seen an improvement in customer satisfaction with our website and improved benchmarking of website satisfaction compared with other Councils using the GovMetric platform to measure satisfaction.
- New digitised processes delivered for services including: waste and recycling, community protection, Mayor's small grants, planning and Covid grants. Where digitised processes are available online through Firmstep, these are achieving 80% self-service take-up.
- Good progress made with the new Printmail solution which is now live across all services.

3.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
	Completed/ Initial activity outlined complete	15
	On track/revisit at end of each lockdown	14
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influence	2
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 ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published 	On track	The Town Hall was reopened to staff in July 2020 with social distancing and other Covid-safe measures having been put in place. Measures have subsequently been adapted and evolved to respond to further government guidance and lockdowns. Work is ongoing to safely re-open and enable a safe return to the Town Hall in accordance with the Government's roadmap and the council's future plans for agile / flexible working
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 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 ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published • 12 April - Town Hall safely reopened to customers 	On track	The face-to-face service at the Town Hall opened in September 2020 with reduced opening hours. This stopped in November 2020 in response to the lockdown measures. Face-to-face services re-opened on 12 April 2021 in line with the Government roadmap with reduced opening hours and a new operating model focussed on supporting customers to self-serve, or where required to

					attend a pre-booked face-to-face appointment. This approach will be reviewed and adapted if necessary over the coming months.
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 ✓ 31 August - All interim policies / guidelines finalised and agreed ✓ 17 July Interim Smarter Working Policy agreed by OLT and SLT ✓ 15 February – Gov't roadmap published 	Work ongoing as the situation evolves	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 Restore service delivery to agreed business as usual in a planned way		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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 	Complete	Corporate projects list created and impact of Covid-19 on delivery identified. This has fed into the Service Planning progress

			<p>agreement with Heads of Service created</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 24 July - Mapping exercise of all corporate projects against the Council Delivery Plan ✓ 15 February – Gov’t roadmap published 		<p>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. Robust change control mechanisms implemented through the EPMO to address any subsequent impact of Covid restrictions.</p>
OBJECTIVE Restore service delivery to agreed business as usual in a planned way		Project	Key Milestones	‘RAG’ Rating	Update
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 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 and ensured that the Council was able to respond as effectively as possible for residents during the second and third lockdowns.
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, particularly on the strategic direction of the organisation.
Ensure that we have sufficient resourcing to deliver on our	We will review our existing resource to ensure that we are able to deliver on the commitments of our Council Plan and	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 13 August – Approach to Service Planning agreed 	Complete	All corporate Service Plans completed. This will ensure delivery of the Council Plan over

Renewal Plan commitments	Renewal Plan, alongside continuing to deliver the usual services provided to our resident and businesses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 		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. This will be reviewed through the refresh of the plan
OBJECTIVE Restore service delivery to agreed business as usual in a planned way		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 ✓ 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 through the second and third national local lockdowns.
OBJECTIVE Ensure the consistent application of appropriate policies during the renewal phase		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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 	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. The long-term modernisation of council working practices will form part of the Transformation

			✓ 17 July - Interim Smarter Working Policy agreed by OLT and SLT		project within the Town Hall Quarter programme.
OBJECTIVE Ensure the consistent application of appropriate policies during the renewal phase		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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	✓ 31 July - Contracts of employment for new starters reviewed and amended	On track	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. The long-term modernisation of Council working practices will form part of the Transformation project within the Town Hall Quarter programme.
OBJECTIVE Ensure the management of backlogs, identifying any extra resources required to restore normal services		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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	✓ 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 May be required additionally at end of any further lockdowns	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. Robust change control mechanisms implemented through the EPMO to address any

					subsequent impact of Covid restrictions.
OBJECTIVE Ensure the management of backlogs, identifying any extra resources required to restore normal services		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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, subject to final approval from Portfolio Holders, 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. 	On track	In addition to continuous updates to our Health and Wellbeing information pages, a staff Survey on Wellbeing continues to be sent out regularly to ensure that the Council continues to react to staff need. Specialist support has been provided to front line staff and a whole range of tools are now available to staff, including online new employee assistance programme for staff to have access to health and wellbeing

			✓ 11 December - Mental Health Awareness Training for all managers arranged and completed.		advice. Furthermore, in addition to the newly expended Mental Health First Aiders team, all Council Managers have undergone mental health training awareness. The support provided will be monitored as the incident develops.
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	Risk assessments carried out for all staff, including specific assessments for those staff recognised as being at higher risk from 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 meets its legal obligations. Risk assessments will continue to be updated as the incident and restrictions change.
OBJECTIVE Identify employee support needs and vulnerabilities and respond to these		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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	✓ 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.	Complete	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

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 23 March – Clear guidance provided to all Managers on the agreed approach for staff working from home with school age children or caring responsibilities. ✓ 25 March – Watford Health and You updated to provide specific information to assist those working from home with caring responsibilities 		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 and to make local arrangements as appropriate. This was reinforced by a number of corporate communications, including 'In Touch' directly from the Managing Director.
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	WBC now 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. Staff sickness absences have reached a very low level during the last year.
OBJECTIVE Identify employee support needs and vulnerabilities and respond to these		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure that employees are supported, that efforts are acknowledged and that effective communications with employees is maintained					
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 	On track	Road to Renewal Communications Plan developed by the Communications and Engagement team. 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. This work will also form part of the Transformation project of the Town Hall Quarter programme as the council's long-term needs are considered.
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 	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-

			✓ 30 September – Final decision for budget for scheme to be retained for 20/21 to recognise staff efforts throughout Covid		19 response, but that a new scheme would not be pursued and the budget would not 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 ✓ 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, ensuring that the council was able to respond as effectively as possible during the second and third national lockdowns.
OBJECTIVE Capture learning through a process of debriefing, both single and multi-agency		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. 	Complete	Ongoing engagement between the Council and Local Resilience Forum via the HCC Resilience Officer. This allowed us to adapt and learn from our first response to the incident.
React to feedback from colleagues	We will report back on our recent Covid-19 staff survey with a clear action plan for	Re-mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 13 October - LB reviewed and agreed the Action Plan. 	Complete	Covid-19 staff survey undertaken to understand the impact on

	delivery, based on the feedback received from our colleagues		✓ 31 October – Action plan to be implemented		staff. A responsive Action Plan has now been implemented as BAU and action to be taken as needed.
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	✓ 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 which ensured that the council were able to react as effectively as possible during the second and third national lockdowns.
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 longer being undertaken as part of the Road to Renewal plan. Please see Appendix B for the full update on the delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy.	On track	Please see the Organisational Development update as per Appendix B.
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	✓ 6 July – Organisational Development Strategy approved by Cabinet	Complete	An Organisational Development Strategy has been developed and is being delivered separately from the Road to Renewal plan due to being out of its scope. Please see 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	Digitisation	Digitisation relating to Community Protection and Revenues and Benefits remains outstanding. However, the teams'	Delivery re-profiled	Progress has been made on digitising priority Waste and Recycling, Community Protection, Covid support and Mayor's

	customers, whether residents or businesses, can transact with the council at a time that suits them, not just during the traditional opening hours		focus remain on Covid-19 response. Milestones therefore remain uncertain at the current time, meaning that the timeline for this commitment will require re-profiling.		Grants processes. Where a process is supported by a Firmstep form we are seeing 80% of interactions delivered via online self-service.
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
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 Town Hall Quarter Business Case 	On track	Learning from Covid-19 captured, and engagement undertaken with all service heads to understand future requirements which have now fed into the wider Town Hall Quarter Programme.
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 ✓ 30 November - Go-live of Benefits Printmail solution completed for TRDC ✓ 7 January - Go-live of Benefits Printmail solution completed for WBC 	Complete	Revenues printmail went live on 19 April. The project is now complete. With reduced in-house print requirements work has been undertaken to reduce the corporate MFD fleet. Additional reductions to the production print hardware will be realised going forward.

			✓ Revenues Printmail now live		
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 have been personally impacted by the virus and the subsequent lockdown	Staff wellbeing	No milestones in place as yet	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 where appropriate. Events will be planned when the government roadmap and pandemic situation allows.

4. Work stream 4: Financial Resilience

4.1 Key achievements over period Q4 2020/21 (Jan – Mar)

- 2021/22 Budget agreed at Council 26 January.
- Multiple businesses supported via Local Restrictions Grant, Additional Restrictions Grant, Special Christmas Support Payments ('wet-led' pubs) and Home Business Support Grant – *see section 2.1*.
- Fixed ground rent of £2m pa/£500k pq remains forthcoming from Atria (former intu) extension.
- Confirmed we will receive c.£420k from Atria in May as part of the John Lewis site premium - also forecast to receive an (unspecified) amount from the variable rent clause in last 2 quarters of the 2021/22 financial year.
- Practical completion of Croxley Business Park 'Building 1' 29 March - now under offer and freeholder consent being sought.
- Croxley Business Park - Cabinet approval received for delegated authority to secure deal with a tenant.
- £0.2m received from Herts County Council to extend the self-isolation payments of £500 per person.
- WBC took back operation of the Colosseum.
- Leisure Recovery Fund award of £181k received from Sport England to support leisure centre management contract.
- Additional £235k payment received from Government (Tranche 4) and £471k announced as part of the Local Authority settlement for first quarter of 2021/22.
- Additional Restrictions Grant scheme used to cover Market Trader rent for January-April.
- Agreed deed of variation for SLM (leisure) contract and leisure centres set to reopen from 12 April.
- Temporary NHS 'lateral flow' testing facility opened above Wilko's – all operational costs to be met by HCC – 12 month operational licence awarded from 6 April.
- Negotiations opened with Legal & General on consenting to a proposed Lidl on part of the Woodside car park site and to receive an agreed capital sum (tbc) to vary the lease in return.

4.2 Work Stream BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in work stream
	Completed/Initial activity outlined complete	6
	On track/revisit during further lockdowns	3
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influence	0
Total		9

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Quantify the budgetary impact of the pandemic on the council and identify and pursue external opportunities for funding					
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 	Complete	2021/22 Budget agreed at Council 26 January

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 12 October – Review first month’s accounts since leisure centre reopening ✓ 02 December – Leisure centres able to reopen following 2nd lockdown ✓ 16 December – expression of interest for DCMS Leisure Fund submitted for 75% loss of SLM income ✓ 16 December – Tranche 4 of Gov’t funding received (£235k) ✓ 24 December – Colosseum contract ended ✓ January 2021 – budget setting process completed 		
<p>Understand the wider impact of Covid-19 on the public sector</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Financial Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 16 December – Impact of Covid recognised in Local Gov’t settlement 	<p>Initial activity outlined completed but work ongoing</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan. This will include work with neighbouring boroughs and the County Council.</p>

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
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 ✓ November - assessment of growth bids and savings proposals in preparation for the budget setting cycle. ✓ January 2021 – 2021/22 budget setting process completed 	On track	<p>Ongoing management of budgets and planning for impact of Covid on future financial years. This will continue as the incident develops and the final impact of Covid-19 remains uncertain at the current time.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>
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 rent receipt not received ✓ 7 September – Regus rent extension agreed at PIB 	On track	<p>A number of new leases and 're-gears' to the council's advantage agreed at Croxley Business Park. Refurbishments have also been agreed and on track.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of quarterly rent receipts and comparison with previous quarters. Ongoing successful management of the council's investment portfolio will</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 20 October - LSH quarterly update report to Commercial Income and Investment Board ✓ 1 November – Additional occupation of CBP premises ✓ 30 November – Ongoing monitoring of intu rent income ✓ 02 December - Cabinet approval for the refurbishment of the Croxley Business park units ✓ 16 December – CIIB approved Croxley Business park refurb ✓ Croxley Business Park 'Building 1' practical completed 29 Mar ✓ Croxley Business Park - Cabinet approval received for delegated authority to secure deal with a tenant. • Croxley Business Park - pursue freeholder consent. • April-May 2021 – ongoing management of portfolio 		allow budget to be focused on the delivery of the priorities outlined in the Council Plan.
OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Ensure the prompt administration of national and local financial schemes during the renewal phase					
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 ✓ December – Local Restrictions Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant opened 	Complete during first, second & third lockdowns. Required additionally throughout	Local Restrictions Grants (LRGs) allocated to local businesses, supporting the local economy during 3 rd lockdown - £ 6,098,915 paid out across 4,493 applications to end March 2021. Additional Restrictions Grant available to support more

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ December - Special Christmas Support Pymt provided to 'wet-led' pubs ✓ 05 January – new grant announced to support Retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with one-off payment ✓ January – agreed process/policy and allocated new grant to businesses ✓ February – Market trader rent covered to end April • April – review of ARG by Cabinet/ Portfolio Holders and agree approach for remaining monies • April – agree process/policy and allocate new Roadmap One-Off Restart Grant 	any future lockdowns	<p>businesses during additional restrictions - £1.9m pot allocated to Watford - £1.06m used to date, of which £560,000 paid in direct grants to 137 businesses. Taxi drivers and market traders also received financial support. A further £977k will be available to support businesses in Watford if we can account for spend against the original allocation by 30 June 2021.</p> <p>. New Roadmap One-Off Restart Grant announced to help get businesses back up and running as lockdown eases. Ongoing need to review and progress as announced by Gov't.</p>
OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
Develop draft local approaches to mitigating budget challenges					
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 	Initial activity completed but work ongoing	<p>Ongoing management of budgets and planning for impact of Covid on future financial years. However, this will need to continue as the town emerges from future lockdowns or tiered restrictions.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>

			<p>underway in preparation for the budget setting cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 14 December – PH’s discussed budgets ✓ January 2021 – Financial Scrutiny Cmte to review budgets (BAU) 		
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 ✓ 02 November – final review undertaken by all services in relation to the impact on services as a result of EU Exit. ✓ 31 December – transition period ended 	Initial activity outlined complete	<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 which allowed to council to respond as effectively as possible for residents in the second and third wave. Further review held to ascertain specific impact of the EU Exit in relation to supply chains. Post transition deal achieved with EU.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>
Support our local businesses to work with the council	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	Contractor resilience	<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 	Initial activity outlined complete	<p>Ensuring that the Town Centre is well positioned for the challenges of the future.</p> <p>Revised governance structure from January when Town Centre Strategy Group is introduced.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 9 October – Registered interest with the High Street Taskforce for expert advice and support ✓ October – Market strategy reviewed – speciality markets explored ✓ 02 November - commence developing Town Centre plan ✓ 02 December – new Town Centre Operations and Strategy Groups agreed ✓ January/February – inaugural Town Centre Strategy Group ✓ January/February – employ Marketing Officer 		<i>Track via Business & Economy work stream going forward</i>
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)	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	Contractor resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 9 September – Business Continuity Plans updated ✓ 02 November – final review undertaken by all services in relation to the impact on services as a result of EU Exit. ✓ 31 December – transition period ended and deal agreed 	Initial activity outlined complete	<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 which allowed the council to respond as effectively as possible for residents. Further review held to ascertain specific impact of the EU Exit in relation to supply chains.</p> <p>Further activities to be determined through review and next iteration of renewal plan.</p>

Watford Borough Council Organisational Development Strategy

Progress Update

Theme 1 – Workforce Health and Wellbeing

Key Achievements over this period

- Regular communication with staff on Wellbeing initiatives.
- Over 56% of managers have attended training events to give them information about spotting signs of Mental Health issues amongst employees.
- Meetings to discuss common issues have taken place with Mental Health First Aiders.
- Additional Mental Health first Aiders are being recruited and trained.
- Regular Health & Wellbeing newsletter's being sent out.
- Time to Talk initiative has been rolled out with over 150 participants on the first sessions. Health and Wellbeing team considering how to take forward for the future.
- Regular staff Check-in surveys have helped identify staff concerns and actions have been taken to resolve them.
- The Watford Health and You programme has been submitted for an award to the (RSPH) Royal Society for Public Health.

Page 132

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	8
	On track	3
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	2
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	Completed	Majority of managers have now attended specialist training and mop-up sessions took place 13 and 14 April 2021. Other sessions will be arranged subject to demand and sufficient numbers attending.
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	Completed but as new MHFAs appointed additional training will be given	On-line e-learning courses available to all staff together with the trial of an online consulting tool - CARI Wellbeing is an on-line wellbeing assessment that personalises feedback and points to the correct intervention. Additional volunteers for MHFA received training to be arranged. Other services available via Remploy. Intranet updated with details
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	Completed and Ongoing	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. Regular an ongoing communication relating to mental health issued and planned. Intranet contains a wealth of information. Breakout Room and other intranet resources constantly updated.
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	Completed and Ongoing	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. - 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	Completed and Ongoing	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	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

	Increased staff satisfaction and motivation as measured by staff survey			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	Completed and Ongoing	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 July 2021	Delivery re-profiled	Work to be fully scoped so that it also links in with Values and Behaviours project. Values and Behaviours project being reviewed, some time lines will be re-profiled.
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 October 2021	On track	Input required from Values and Behaviours project to ensure a joined up approach. It is likely that tender process will commence in October with delivery of first workshop scheduled for the beginning of 2022
Support teams to regularly pause and reflect on their work. Discussions should be	Develop a pro-forma to be used in team discussion to identify team successes and process improvement opportunities.	By 1 st July 2021	Delivery date to be re-profiled	Focus groups using managers and staff ambassadors to be created

around how to optimise team effectiveness and create a psychologically safe workspace	8/1/21 Ambassador Group to review in first instance			to input into the pro forma and contribute other ideas and suggestions for the delivery of this objective. Values and Behaviours project being reviewed, some time lines will be re-profiled.
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	Now by 1 st July 2021 (previous date By 1 April 2021)	Completed	Pilot took place in June 2020 with approx. 50% take up by staff. Benefits to be re-evaluated
Rollout of health check programme across the wider council	Collate and analyse anonymised data from system to identify any trends.	By 1 April 2021	Completed	'Wellbeing with CARI' rolled out to all staff in July 2020. Links to assessment have been added to all Mental Health and Wellbeing newsletters.

Theme 2 – An Organisation Driven by Values and Behaviours

Project manager has been appointed for the Re-imagining Watford project as part of the Town Hall Quarter programme. Part of this project will identify key values and behaviours which will then drive Theme 2 of the OD Strategy. This part of the plan will be finalised once the outputs have been agreed from the Re-imagining project. Pilot workshop planned held with the Staff Ambassador Group at the end of April. Roll out of workshop to all staff in May.

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
- Document presented to Leadership board in November.
- Project to be linked to Watford Re-imagined project
- Planning has started for staff returning to a new working environment in autumn

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	0
	On track	9
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	8
Total		17

Page 138

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.	By 31 July 2020	Delivery re-profiled	The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the majority of staff working remotely for an indefinite period.
Deliberate decisions and actions are taken to retain and embed ways of working that support agility	Each team participates in a simple team reflection session. A focus on what to stop, drop, continue, and re-invigorate, post COVID-19	By 1 October 2020	Delivery re-profiled	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 but little time is available to develop longer term plans
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?)	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).	By 1 December 2020	Delivery re-profiled	Project underway to identify how we will define an Agile environment and the activities required to get there. End date to be reviewed as project start date delayed due to covid. They will be in place for September 2021
Creation of agile champions. Teams, leaders and staff who can share their experiences (this becomes a recognised badge of honour).	Publication of case studies (at least every quarter). Reward and recognition of best practice.	By 31 January 2021	Delivery re-profiled	Delivery dates to be reviewed as project start-up has been delayed due to covid. This will be in place for September 2021
Development of organisational case studies in agility to demonstrate the art of the possible in different types of teams.	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	By 31 January 2021	Delivery re-profiled	Delivery dates to be reviewed as project start-up has been delayed due to covid. This will be in place for September 2021
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	Delivery date to be re-profiled	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	Incorporate our staff’s interests in deepening their understanding of other parts of the council and from this:	By 31 March 2021 Full reporting to be in place by 1st Oct 2021	On track	Line managers to discuss and record as part of their regular catch up sessions. HR to build a database of

<p>planning and staff development approach</p>	<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 			<p>individuals' interest and to contact relevant managers with opportunities required and available. i-Perform is now live and usage is increasing. Section 6 of this is devoted to Career Aspirations and reports taken from the system will give a snapshot of interest. It will take about 6 months for full data to be available.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>By 31 March 2021 Full implementation now likely by Q3 2021</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>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. As the Values and Behaviours project is linked to any new management development programme so full implementation will be later this year.</p>
<p>Creation of opportunities to pilot new approaches to agile working service models and solutions, with clear evaluation criteria</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>By 31 March 2021 Full implementation now likely by Q3 2021</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Bi-monthly Team reflection exercises to identify and test opportunities to change processes that increase productivity. Agile Working across organisation being reviewed as part of Reimagining Watford</p>
<p>COMMITMENT Supporting the development of digital</p>		<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>

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	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 30 September 2021	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	Completed	Each business area has allocated a digital champion.
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 31 December 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. As a return to the workplace will not take place until September 2021 at the earliest this item will be re-profiled to Q4 2021.
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	By 31 March 2022	On track	Agreement in principle from CSC to host new starters but COVID 19 rules resulting in home working may restrict some activities.

	interface with, in the first 12 weeks of their employment.			
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 Now 31st March 2022	Delivery Reprofiled	Pro-forma to be 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. However, as Covid restrictions have stopped office working so this will be put on hold until the new year
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	On track	Tool to be developed at start of new year to reflect the working arrangements in force at the time.
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.	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.	By 1 September 2021	On track	Tool to be developed at start of new year to reflect the working arrangements in force at the time.

Theme 4 – Performance and Staff Development

Key Achievements over this period

- Roll out of i-Perform completed and will be used for Annual appraisals in June 2021

Theme BRAG Analysis

BRAG rating	Key	Total number in theme
	Completed	0
	On track	8
	Planning underway	0
	Delayed / Unknown	0
	Delivery re-profiled as a result of external influences	6
Total		14

Page 173

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		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) there will be a slight knock on effect with some sections of the programme. Recruitment of Executive/Group Head Assistant (GHA) has completed with two people taking up their roles in Nov 2020 and the remaining two at the start of the 2021 financial year. Design linked to Theme 2. GHA now in place and all have been offered regular coaching sessions to help with their

				personal development. Review of business critical roles commencing at end of April 2021
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 changed to 1 October 2021	On track	Launch of new i-Perform system has supported 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. Additional briefing notes being developed to ensure objectives are clear and link with goals of organisation. It will take time for online reviews to be completed so completion date has been moved to reflect the embedding of the system.
Support the recruitment and retention of apprentices to the council.	Increase the number of council apprentices.	By 1 October 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. Agreement in principle to recruit up to 6 apprentices across the council. New restrictions on office working due to Covid-19 have been considered and it is expected that recruitment will commence in July for a September start. In addition to current recruitment for apprentices we are also looking to employ individuals under the Kickstart

				scheme. This will provide additional help to areas that are prepared to develop individuals in areas of their business whilst undertaking new tasks.
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 changed to 1 October 2021	Delivery Reprofiled	Pro-forma developed that will enable HR Business Partners to collect information from relevant line managers. Exercise put on hold due to competing priorities. Will be re-started by end April 2021 with a view to have a full picture by 1 October 2021.
HRBP's to hold information of who can step into each role at short notice.	Ensure there are no “Single Points of Failure” within the workforce.	31 March 2021 changed to 1st October 2021	Delivery Reprofiled	Work has commenced on this area and areas where staff will be required to be redeployed is underway. This has become more urgent with the possibility of an increase in tiers and is a priority item for HR Business Partners. Redeployment in place for key roles and areas that are affected by Covid-19 and ongoing restrictions. Additional information to be collected by 31st March 2021
We will work with partners to explore opportunities to create a comprehensive graduate and / or degree placement programmes,	Successful programme in place with strong feedback from graduates.	By 1 st September 2022	On track	We will not take part in the NGDP (National Graduate Development Programme) this year but will instead focus on developing Kickstart and

designed to attract and retain high calibre graduates				Apprenticeship schemes. However NGDP to be reviewed for 2022 intake.
COMMITMENT Prioritise the development of all of our people		Key Milestones	'RAG' Rating	Update
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	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. Support in first line leadership, middle leadership and senior leadership programmes, emphasising the benefits and risks of leadership styles that lead to constant improvement.	By 1 August 2022	On track	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.
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.	Assurance that under-represented groups access the same level of development and achieve promotion at the same rate as all staff.	By 1 August 2022	On track	New HR system which went live in April 2021 contains updated information on the characteristics of the workforce. This will enable detailed analysis of where to highlight development opportunities to individuals.
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.	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).	By 1 October 2021	On track	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).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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>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>
<p>COMMITMENT We will encourage and actively develop our aspiring leaders</p>		<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>Our new 'Watford Leads' development programme will build management skills and confidence amongst all team managers and leaders (3rd tier managers).</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>By 1 December 2021</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>While the planning of a 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.</p>
<p>Introduce a 'first steps to leadership' programme to cover the main principles of leadership and Watford's Council policies and processes.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>By 1 April 2021 change to 1 October 2021</p>	<p>Delivery Reprofiled</p>	<p>Leadership development has taken place, mainly remotely, with follow up sessions planned. This links to Theme 2 that has had delivery dates re-profiled. It is expected that development plans will be in place by 1 October 2021.</p>
<p>COMMITMENT We will create an enviable programme of leadership development</p>		<p>Key Milestones</p>	<p>'RAG' Rating</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>Pilot and roll-out a new leadership competency framework, that is</p>	<p>Managers use feedback to create their personal development plan – measured through performance review scores.</p>	<p>By 1 April 2021 change to 1st October 2021</p>	<p>Delivery Reprofiled</p>	<p>Pilot complete and roll-out commenced. Re-profiled to 1st October 2021 that will link to Theme 2 Outputs</p>

linked to the annual review process	Managers visibly demonstrate the qualities set out in the Framework, measured via regular 1; 1 check-in meetings and annual review process. 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 change to 1st October 2021	Delivery Reprofiled	Review workforce plan with leaders to ensure appropriate individual development plans are in place to satisfy future needs. Re-profiled to 1 st October 2021 that will link to Theme 2 Outputs

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7th June 2021

Report author: Environmental Health Manager (Community)

Title: Update of the Councils Domestic Abuse and Joint Safeguarding Policies

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Joint Safeguarding Policy sets out how the Council meets its statutory obligations to safeguard adults and children in all its work.

1.2 Types of abuse include;

- Domestic Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Abuse
- Radicalisation and Violent Extremism
- Neglect
- Financial Abuse

This list is not exhaustive

1.3 The Domestic Abuse policy which been developed as a separate document details how the Council provides support to people experiencing domestic abuse across the services it delivers itself and when working with its partners. The implications are that we able to identify people who are experiencing domestic abuse and offer support and practical help to protect their safety.

1.4 Both policies are concerned with how the council responds to suspicions of abuse to ensure they are addressed promptly and appropriately with the best interest of the child, young person or adult at risk at its heart. In their development consultation was undertaken with local third sector and statutory organisations.

1.5 In addition to responding to reports of, and suspicions of abuse the Council will seek to promote the welfare and the protection of all children, young people and adults at risk living in the community at all times.

1.6 The service the council delivers brings officers into contact with a wide variety of customers some of whom will be experiencing abuse or be the abusers themselves. It is also the case that there will be some employees who will also be abusers and victims.

2.0 Risks

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
There are risks of not implementing these policies	The Council would not be meeting its statutory duties to safeguard children, young people and adults.	The policies should be implemented and monitored to ensure they remain current and in line with legislation and the Councils responsibilities.	Treat	4

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the updated Joint Safeguarding Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy attached at appendices 1 and 2.

Further information:

Glen Channer, Safeguarding Manager glen.channer@Watford.gov.uk

Wendy Rollings Environmental Health Manager (Community)

Wendy.rollings@watford.gov.uk;

Report approved by: Justine Hoy, Head of Community Protection

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 Both policies under consideration relate to protecting vulnerable people from harm both as a provider of services and as an employer.

Joint Safeguarding Policy

- 4.2 The Joint Safeguarding Policy aims to protect children, young people and adults at risk of abuse from;
- Domestic Abuse
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced Marriage
 - Honour Based Abuse
 - Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 4.3 Children, young people and adults at risk have the right to participate, have fun and be safe, in the services provided for them and the activities they, or a guardian, choose for them.
- 4.4 Watford Borough Council is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, protecting them from abuse. We will endeavour to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe from abuse and suspicion of abuse, reports will be responded to promptly and appropriately. We will act in the best interest of the child, young person or adult at risk and we will proactively seek to promote the welfare and the protection of all children, young people and adults at risk living in the community at all times.
- 4.5 Watford Borough Council will ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through its Safe Recruitment procedures and will take any concern reported by a Member, employee, volunteer grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk seriously and deal with it sensitively.
- 4.6 Watford Borough Council will promote the welfare of children and young people by:
- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people and adults at risk by listening to them and minimising risks that may affect them.
 - Preventing abuse by adopting good practice and creating a safe and healthy environment to avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
 - Ensuring that Members, employees and volunteers understand the relevant Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.
 - Monitoring accountability and governance through the Council's procedures and through the Community Safety Partnership's Responsible Officers Group.
 - Raising awareness among members and officers of the safeguarding duty the Council has in relation to the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 where Hertfordshire County Council has the lead responsibility.
 - Ensuring that contracted, commissioned and grant funded services have policies and procedures commensurate with the level of involvement they have with children and young people.
 - Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate reporting, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
 - Supporting the National Prevent agenda by working with partner agencies to identify and support children, young people and adults at risk who are vulnerable to radicalisation.
 - Raise awareness about the forms of abuse and how to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe.
- 4.7 The implication of this policy is that both adults and children are protected and staff are made aware of how to report concerns about people they come into contact with and how these reports will be processed.

Domestic Abuse Policy

- 4.8 There are some 2.4 million victims of domestic abuse a year aged 16 to 74 (two-thirds of whom are women) and more than one in ten of all offences recorded by the police are domestic abuse related.
- 4.9 Domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- 4.10 The Council has a long-standing commitment to treat all known and suspected cases of domestic abuse seriously. The Council recognises that where it occurs domestic abuse is both harmful and damaging to the individuals involved and the wider community.
- 4.11 Domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- 4.12 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse regardless of sex or gender identity, cultural heritage or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or disability.
- 4.13 There are different kinds of abuse that can happen in different contexts. The most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs between couples, but the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as adolescent or adult child to parent violence and abuse between siblings.
- 4.14 The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
- psychological
 - physical
 - sexual
 - financial
 - emotional
- 4.15 As a key local partner to many service providers the Council recognises that it has an integral role to play in supporting work to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse and provide support to victims, as both an employer and a direct provider of services.
- 4.16 In the year ending March 2019, an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).
- 4.17 During the lockdown reports of domestic abuse dipped during the lockdown and increased as the restrictions were relaxed.
- 4.18 In Watford a proportion of the domestic abuse incidents happen in the town centre which has impacted on the figures of reported DA during the lockdown.

4.19 There are possible lessons that can be learned from the effect of the lockdown had on all crimes in particular domestic abuse, this information can be used so that a rise to previous levels can be avoided when the restrictions are relaxed.

4.20 **Domestic Abuse Act 2020**

The Domestic Abuse Act which gained Royal Assent this year aims to strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies. To achieve that aim the Bill;

- a) Creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse
- b) Establishes in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers.
- c) Provides for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order.
- d) Places a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- e) Prohibits perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.
- f) Creates a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts.
- g) Clarifies by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death.
- h) Extends the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.
- i) Enables domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody.
- j) Places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing.
- k) Provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- l) Ensures that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

5.0 **Implications**

Finance

5.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no new financial implications arising from this report'

Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the legal implications are contained in the report and appendices.

Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3 As this is an update of the existing safeguarding and domestic abuse policies an equalities impact analysis has been undertaken. The analysis is attached as Appendices 3 and 4 to this report. Domestic abuse affects all people, however research has shown that it can affect people with protected characteristics more than others.

The main conclusions of that analysis are:

- The service will be processing sensitive personal data about vulnerable people.
- Some information will be shared with partners and other council services.
- There is a reputational/financial risks associated with sharing this data.
- The service needs to ensure that the abusers do not accidentally obtain information about a potential the victim
- The service will ensure all data is kept secure and that staff are aware of the need to keep the data safe.

5.4 Article 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998 imposes a positive obligation on public authorities to protect people from serious ill-treatment by other individuals.

Staffing

5.5 There are no staffing implications with this policy other than training to alert staff to be aware of the signs of domestic abuse and other safeguarding issues and how to support individuals and refer victims.

Accommodation

5.6 There are no accommodation issues with this policy

Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.7 This policy supports the Councils Crime and Disorder and safeguarding responsibilities

Sustainability

5.8 Promoting the welfare and the protection of all children, young people and adults at risk at all times aims to reduce the incidence of abuse to give a more sustainable solution in the longer term.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Domestic Abuse Policy

Appendix 2 Joint Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 3 Safeguarding Policy Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 Domestic Abuse Policy Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 5 Domestic Violence and Safeguarding Policies Data Impact Assessment

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.



Domestic Abuse Policy

2021 - 2024

Version Control	Version Final
Status of Policy	
Sponsor	Glen Channer Safeguarding Manager
Author/Reviewer	
Approved	
Review Date	June 2022 or as required due to guidance or Legislation changes

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Definition.....	4
3. The Facts.....	4
4. The Effects the COVID Pandemic	5
5. Partnership Working	6
6. Corporate Policies that Support the Aims of this Policy	7
6.1. Safer Watford.....	7
6.2. Watford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25.....	8
7. Relevant Legislation	8
8. Service Delivery.....	9
8.1. The Role of the Safeguarding Manager	9
8.2. Case Management.....	9
8.3. Service standards	10
8.4. Case management.....	10
9. Watford Borough Council as an Employer.....	11
9.1. Managing the impact.....	11
9.2. Training.....	11
9.3. Service standards	12
9.4. Perpetrators	12
9.5. Employee case management.....	12
10. Equality.....	13
11. Record keeping, monitoring.....	13
12. Review.....	13

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Total Number of Offences (excluding fraud) flagged as domestic abuse-related, by month January 2018 to June 2020, England and Wales (Excluding GMP) .	5
Figure 2 Watford Community Safety Partnership	8

Appendices

Appendix 1 Further Guidance and Resources	14
Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse Reporting.....	15

Tables

Table 1 Provisional number of domestic homicides in England and Wales, by quarter, January 2016 to June 2020.....	5
---	---

1. Introduction

In the year ending March 2019, an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).

The Council has a long-standing corporate commitment to treat all known and suspected cases of domestic abuse seriously. The Council recognises that where it occurs domestic abuse is both harmful and damaging to the individuals involved and the wider community. As a key local partner to many service providers the Council recognises that it has an integral role to play in supporting work to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse and provide support to victims, as both an employer and a direct provider of services.

Services are available through the Health Hub which gives access to the Domestic Abuse worker where victims can get both practical and emotional support they need.

It is recognised that domestic abuse is not restricted to a specific age group, race, religion or socio-economic standing, but cuts across all sections of society and its effects can be debilitating on both the individual concerned and society as a whole.

The Council believes that:

- Domestic abuse is unacceptable and should not be tolerated;
- Those who abuse should be held accountable for their behaviour;
- Domestic abuse affects not only children and families but also the whole community; and
- The safety and empowerment of those experiencing domestic abuse should always be the priority in any response.

In achieving the aims of this policy the Council will:

- Adopt a strong partnership approach with agencies working within this field;
- Support both local and national agencies and the police to co-ordinate responses at strategic and operational levels;
- Make available to both service users and employees relevant information from appropriate agencies;
- Ensure a sensitive, consistent, confidential and prompt response in service delivery;
- Ensure that staff are trained to the appropriate level, and that this training is refreshed every 3 years or when legislation changes.
- Ensure Council Officers receive support and training to enable them to take appropriate action, including referral and signposting;
- Ensure all employees understand the important role they can play in addressing the effects of domestic abuse and develop a consistent approach across the Council;
- Provide a range of services to assist people to live in safety and security;
- Ensure that services are accessible to all and that any barriers to access, such as language and disability, are addressed;

- Offer support and understanding in the workplace to those experiencing domestic abuse, prioritising confidentiality and workplace safety;
- Support the police and other local partners to challenge perpetrators and make use of legal remedies where appropriate; and
- Be clear to employees and Members that any conviction of a domestic abuse-related crime could bring the Council into disrepute, and that such a conviction may trigger disciplinary or other conduct procedures.

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy the following cross-government definition is used:

NOTE

Domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

This definition includes so called honour based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group (Home Office 2009). It also takes into account elder abuse, male victims and same sex relationships.

3. The Facts

- Provisional figures show that from the period January 2018 to June 2020 there were a total of 538 domestic homicide deaths in England and Wales. This equates to 8 per month.

Table 1 Provisional number of domestic homicides in England and Wales, by quarter, January 2016 to June 2020¹

Period	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Quarter 1 (January to March)	37	29	37	29	34
Quarter 2 (April to June)	28	25	30	26	30
Quarter 3 (July to September)	29	26	37	30	:
Quarter 4 (October to December)	31	23	33	24	:

- In the year ending March 2019, an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).
- The police recorded 746,219 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2019, an increase of 24% from the previous year.
- According to Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data for the year ending March 2018, only 18% of women who had experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months reported the abuse to the police
- Women are much more likely than men to be the victims of high risk or severe domestic abuse: 95% of those going to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) or accessing an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service are women
- 130,000 children live in homes where there is high-risk domestic abuse
- 62% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others
- On average high-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.3 years before getting help
- 85% of victims sought help five times on average from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse

4. The Effects the COVID Pandemic

It is difficult to estimate the effect that the lockdown has had on domestic abuse. Figure 1 shows that nationally cases dipped during the lockdown and picked up again once the restrictions relaxed and the bars and clubs opened.

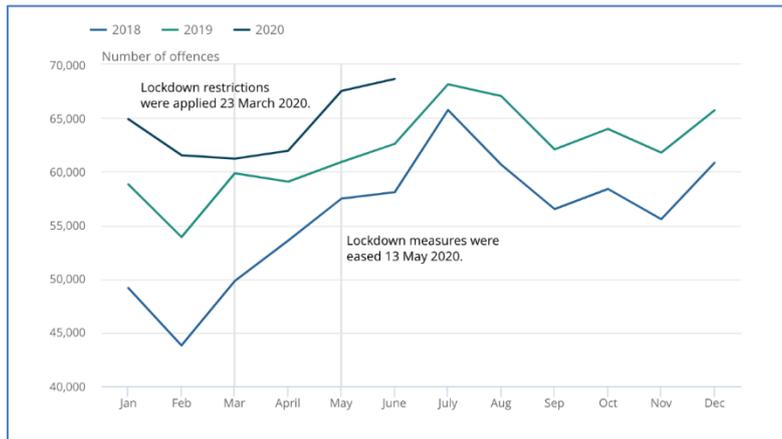
Figure 1: Total Number of Offences (excluding fraud) flagged as domestic abuse-related, by month January 2018 to June 2020, England and Wales (Excluding GMP)²

¹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicappendixtables>

²

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november2020#police-recorded-crime>



The town centre supports Watford's local economy, providing around 90,000 residents in Watford and 500,000 residents living within 20 minutes of Watford with a thriving sub-regional centre which meets their needs in terms of retail, business, social, leisure and cultural activities.

There are possible lessons that can be learned from the effect of the lockdown had on all crimes in particular domestic abuse, this information can be used so that working with our partners a rise to previous levels can be avoided when the restrictions are relaxed.

5. Partnership Working

Through its established inter-agency partnerships, the Council will contribute to wide and far reaching strategies to tackle domestic abuse. The Council adopts a strong partnership approach to domestic abuse, working with the following local agencies including:

- Community Safety Partnership
- The Police
- 'True Love' – a preventative programme to target teen abuse
- Sunflower Project
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences)
- Domestic Violence Forum
- Domestic Violence support providers
- Local refuge
- Safer Places
- Safe Lives
- Herts Young Homeless
- Perpetrator support
- Homicide reviews
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
- Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse partnership Board
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Public Health.
- I am Cherished Programme

- Watford Women's Centre
- White Ribbon

The Council is committed to playing an active role and ensuring that it is represented at multi-agency forums and meetings led by its partners.

The Council will work towards a proactive multi-agency approach with all relevant statutory and voluntary agencies working together to facilitate effective case management.

The Council will ensure that a multi-agency approach is taken by making use of referrals and signposting to local agencies, charities and other service providers within the partnership. The Council will however only involve other agencies where it has received consent from the person to do so, unless required to do so by law.

Where children are affected particular care will be taken to ensure that their interests are taken into account and that where appropriate the police and support agencies are involved, provided that parental rights and wishes are followed, unless the Council is required by law to share information.

6. Corporate Policies that Support the Aims of this Policy

Through its policies and procedures the Council is able to demonstrate that it is committed to:

- Preventing domestic abuse from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it, and intervening early to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.
- Reducing the risk to victims ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and supporting them to change their behaviour.
- Working in partnership to provide adequate levels of support where abuse occurs

6.1. Safer Watford

Safer Watford is the town's Community Safety Partnership, which brings together Watford Borough Council, Herts Constabulary, Herts Fire & Rescue, Herts County Council and other key local organisations. The Community Safety partnership includes initiatives related to domestic abuse.

Figure 2 Watford Community Safety Partnership



6.2. Watford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25

This strategy details how the Council will tackling the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping and improve the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act

The Action Plan states that together with internal and external stakeholders, including other local authorities, the Council will identify and develop timely responses to housing situations that may lead to homelessness, including cuckooing, gangs, domestic violence, and modern slavery including challenging and tackling illegal evictions.

7. Relevant Legislation

Watford Borough Council recognises that it operates within a legislative framework, including:

- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Family Law Act 1996
- Housing Act 1996
- Protection of Harassment Act 1997
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Housing Act 1985 and 1996
- The Homelessness Act 2002
- Civil partnership Act 2004
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015

8. Service Delivery

8.1. The Role of the Safeguarding Manager

The Council has a Safeguarding Manager who is supported by Designated Safeguarding Officers.

This Manager provides:

- An overview of service provision;
- Advice and training; and
- Up-to-date knowledge of good practice and legislation.

Relevant service areas have the responsibility for their own case management and will have staff trained in this regard.

The Safeguarding Manager will work with Designated Safeguarding Officers for each departmental service area and quarterly meetings will be used to share learning from recent cases, MARAC, and homicide reviews. This is in line with the Council's structure for safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Manager will also be able to provide support to Human Resources where an employee may be experiencing domestic abuse, particularly where the employee may be at threat within the work place.

8.2. Case Management

A person or household experiencing domestic abuse will have their case dealt with by the team appropriate given their housing situation:

- In the case that a person or household is homeless they will be dealt with in the first instance by the Housing Solutions Team.
- In the case that a person or household is a current licensee in council owned property, they will be dealt with in the first instance by the Housing Association managing the accommodation on the Council's behalf;
- In the case that a person or household is a current tenant in social housing, they will be dealt with in the first instance by their landlord; and
- In the case that a person or household is a private tenant or homeowner they will be dealt with in the first instance by the Community Protection team who will refer them to Housing Solutions Team to have their housing situation appropriately assessed.

The Council will provide suitable accommodation where the Council accepts that it is unreasonable for a person or household to return to their home in line with the requirements of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. Each case will be assessed on its own merits and will be viewed against statutory legislation.

Where action is to be taken against the perpetrator, the Council will signpost or refer residents affected by domestic abuse to agencies able to support them in making use of legal remedies available, including non-molestation orders, occupation orders, and property transfer orders.

The Council will facilitate and provide information on a range of housing options and services that provide support and counselling to residents affected by domestic abuse.

The Council will look to further develop partnerships with support providers to co-ordinate services to residents affected by domestic abuse.

Where a Housing Association tenant is experiencing domestic abuse the Council will work with and support communication with other partnership agencies to assist in securing out-of-area arrangements for accommodation in cases where there would be a continuing risk to the household by remaining in the Borough. This decision would be subject to a MARAC decision.

8.3. Service standards

If someone is experiencing domestic abuse they can expect the following:

- To have their situation dealt with sympathetically and in a non-judgemental manner;
- To be spoken to immediately or within 24 hours if more appropriate and to be fully involved in all decisions;
- To be offered the choice of speaking with a same-sex officer;
- To have arrangements made to have an interpreter available if English is not their first language;
- To be provided with details of other agencies that may be able to offer support and counselling;
- To have a referral made with their consent to a specialist service provider;
- To have the level of risk assessed to inform interventions and support available.
- To experience high levels of confidentiality. Any information given to staff will remain confidential and will only be given to other agencies with the consent of the person unless there is a statutory duty to do so (e.g. under section 47 of the Children's Act 1989);
- To be contacted safely and securely, contact should consider appropriate methods and using measures such as a code word if necessary.
- To not have staff contact the person responsible for the abuse unless express permission is given to staff to do so. The sole exception is where there is a clear reason to believe that there is an attempt to defraud the Council. Any decision to contact the person responsible will be approved by a Senior Officer;
- To be assisted in identifying emergency temporary accommodation as a result of experiencing domestic abuse;
 - o have arrangements made to ensure that the service is accessible and that appropriate advice and support is provided where there are barriers to communication or mobility, a learning disability, or if the abuser is relied on for care;
- To have safeguards put in place to maintain their safety, especially in relation to the Council making contact with them by phone, letters or visits; and
- To talk to staff who are culturally aware and who have received relevant training.

8.4. Case management

All cases involving domestic abuse will be kept open with regular reviews, until the person considers that their situation has been resolved satisfactorily in accordance with this policy.

- All cases should be risk assessed by a trained member of staff using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour-based violence risk identification, assessment and management model (DASH) risk assessment tool.
- All cases will be referred to and reviewed regularly by the relevant manager
- All cases assessed as high risk will be referred to MARAC
- Where a person is not in receipt of support services or declines support and WBC are still involved in the case it should be remembered that any risk assessment is dynamic and that changes in circumstances such as pregnancy should lead to the case being re-assessed as the risk may have altered.
- Where a person is dissatisfied with the investigation or a decision, they may pursue an appeal through the Council's complaints procedure.
- Information on available support networks should be given to all victims of Domestic Abuse to include specific cultural organisations.
- Case records should be maintained at all stages of the process

An easy to follow guide can be found at Appendix 1

9. Watford Borough Council as an Employer

9.1. Managing the impact

The Council is committed to the welfare of staff and where risks are identified precautions will be made to ensure protection for staff from situations that could make them potentially vulnerable.

The impact of domestic abuse experienced in the home has both direct and indirect impacts in the workplace, which include:

- Decreased productivity;
- Absenteeism;
- Errors; and
- Increased employee turnover.

The Council will provide all staff, in particular managers and HR staff with awareness of the main issues involved in domestic abuse, to recognise potential victims and perpetrators, and to provide a supportive structure in which to deal effectively with cases.

Those with line management responsibility should take a proactive stance in increasing awareness.

All employees and their family members may access independent free advice and support through the Council's Employee Assistance Programme.

9.2. Training

All new staff will need to sign a statement to say that they have read and understood the Domestic Abuse Policy

All staff will undertake training in safeguarding and domestic abuse awareness as part of the Council's mandatory training programme. This is to be managed through the Council's online HR Employee Information System and line managers are expected to make sure employees attend where required.

Where appropriate the Council will consider policy and mandatory training requirements when procuring contracts for services that could bring contracted staff into contact with the public.

For front line teams coming into contact with cases of domestic abuse on a more regular basis specialist training will be appropriate. Line managers are expected to make sure employees attend where required in line with County guidelines.

9.3. Service standards

Employees who have identified that they are experiencing domestic abuse will be treated without judgement, both personally and professionally, and provided with a sympathetic, supportive response.

Where risks in the work environment are identified managers and HR will support employees to put in place safety precautions to prevent exposure through work to situations that could make any employee vulnerable.

The Council will support employees in making positive changes and in providing a safe and positive working environment.

In considering formal action relating to issues of performance or attendance managers should take the impact of domestic abuse into account as far as is reasonable.

Discussions between a manager and an employee who is experiencing domestic abuse will be treated in confidence. In some circumstances this confidence may need to be broken in order to protect children or vulnerable adults or criminal offences revealed.

Managers will ensure that reasonable additional measures are taken to protect personal information regarding those who are known to be experiencing, or who have experienced, domestic abuse.

9.4. Perpetrators

An employee who is cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence may be subject to disciplinary procedures. The Council reserves the right to use disciplinary procedures should an employee's activities outside of work have an impact on their ability to perform the role for which they are employed, or be considered to bring the Council into disrepute.

9.5. Employee case management

Where an employee is dissatisfied with any actions or decisions made in relation to their situation, they may pursue this informally with their line manager or HR, or formally by

making use of review procedures outlined in the relevant HR policy/procedure, or if appropriate through the Council's grievance procedure.

10. Equality

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity policy.

When applying this policy we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

When applying this policy we will take the necessary positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.

11. Record keeping, monitoring

The Council's teams will keep confidential records in an electronic file with restricted access. The data will be stored and removed in accordance with the Councils Data Protection Policy and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and The General Data Protection Regulations 2016.

12. Review

The policy will be reviewed three yearly or in response to changes in relevant legislation or guidance.

Appendix 1 Further Guidance and Resources

Further guidance is available from:-

Glenn Channer - Safeguarding Manager
01923 278421

Liam Fitzgerald - Community Safety Manager
01923 278406

Justine Hoy - Line Manager
01923 278449

Designated Safeguarding Persons for Children and Young Persons only

Designated Safeguarding Persons for Child, Young Persons and Adults

Other useful resources and contacts

Hertfordshire Sunflower Service
www.hertssunflower.org

Safer Places – Domestic Abuse Services
www.saferplaces.co.uk

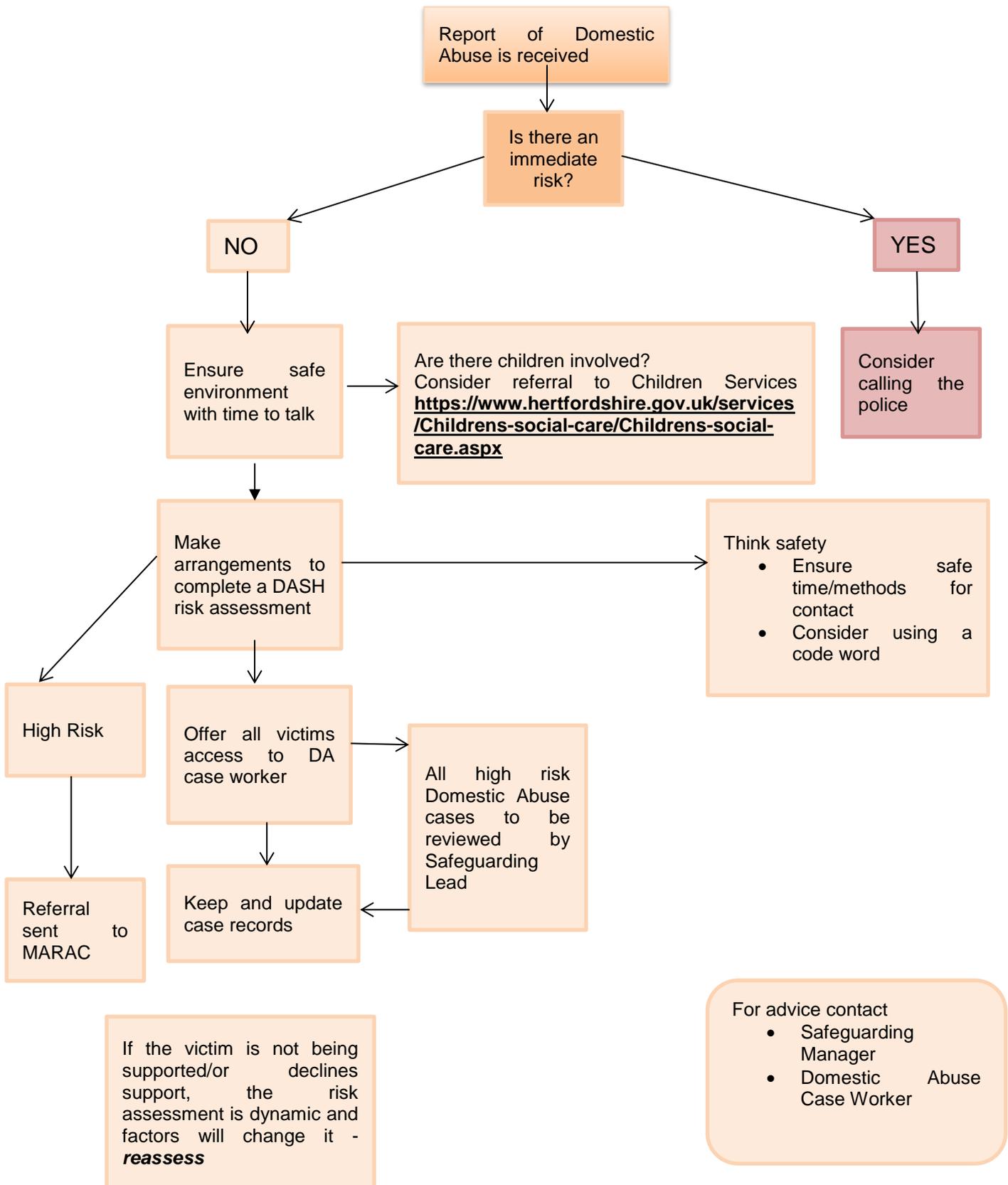
I am cherished
www.iamcherished.co.uk

Hertfordshire IDVA Services
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/herts-sunflower/hertfordshire-idva-flyer.pdf>

Watford Women's Centre
<https://wwcplus.org.uk>

Hertfordshire County Council website
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk>

Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse Reporting



Appendix 1



Children, Young People & Adult at Risk
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

2021-23

Version Control	Version 3
Status of Policy	FINAL
Sponsor	Chief Executive
Author/Reviewer	Glen Channer
Approved	
Review Date	Full review June 2022 with annual reviews of new legislation and practice. Appendices to be updated quarterly

Contents

PART 1 POLICY..... 0

1. Introduction 0

2. Safeguarding Policy Statement 0

3. Equality and Diverstiy 0

4. Definitions..... 1

5. Aims..... 2

6.	Scope of the Policy.....	3
7.	Obligations and responsibilities.....	4
7.1.	Children and young people.....	4
7.2.	Adults at risk.....	5
8.	Housing.....	6
9.	Disclosure and Barring Service checks.....	7
10.	Recognising potential incidences of abuse.....	7
11.	Domestic Abuse.....	7
12.	Child Sexual Exploitation.....	8
13.	Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).....	8
14.	Forced Marriage.....	8
15.	Honour Based Abuse.....	9
16.	Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.....	9
17.	Capacity and Self Determination.....	9
18.	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.....	10
19.	Responsibility, Monitoring and Review.....	11
	PART TWO: PROCEDURE.....	0
1.	Prevention.....	0
1.1.	Safe Working Practice.....	0
1.2.	Safe working procedures.....	1
1.3.	Operational Procedures and Standards.....	1
1.4.	First Aid and accidents.....	2
1.5.	Photography.....	2
1.6.	Off Duty Contact.....	3
1.7.	Breach of safe working practice and procedures.....	3
2.	Recognise, Respond, Refer.....	3
2.1.	Recognise - How?.....	3
2.2.	Child Sexual Exploitation.....	4
2.3.	Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse.....	5
2.4.	Female Genital Mutilation.....	5
		1

2.5. Prevent – Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 6

2.6. Financial abuse – Adults at risk..... 6

2.7. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking 7

2.8. Dealing with threats of suicide 8

3. Respond and refer – How? 8

4. Allegations against members, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers..... 10

5. Dealing with other allegations 11

6. ICT including Internet and email..... 11

7. Complaints 11

8. Dealing with malicious accusations 11

9. Confidentiality..... 11

10. Sharing of information 12

11. Dealing with the Media..... 13

12. Safe Recruitment, Contracts, Grants and Commissioning..... 13

PART 1 POLICY

1. Introduction

Children, young people and adults at risk have the right to participate, have fun and be safe, in the services provided for them and the activities they, or a child's parent, choose for them.

Watford Borough Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council who is the lead safeguarding agency for children, young people and adults at risk. The Council will also work with Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Boards as required under the Children Act 2004, and the amendments made to this Act in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, and in line with the multi-agency policy, procedure and practice for working with adults at risk of abuse or neglect in Hertfordshire (January 2017) and the Care Act 2014.

2. Safeguarding Policy Statement

Watford Borough Council is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, protecting them from abuse. We will endeavour to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe from abuse and suspicion of abuse, reports will be responded to promptly and appropriately. We will act in the best interest of the child, young person or adult at risk and we will proactively seek to promote the welfare and the protection of all children, young people and adults at risk living in the community at all times.

Watford Borough Council will ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through its Safe Recruitment procedures and will take any concern reported by a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk seriously and deal with it sensitively.

Referrals made by a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the agency and individuals who made that referral will be made known. This is because individuals may be required to give evidence and on occasion be required as a prosecution witness.

Watford Borough Council will not tolerate harassment of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk who raises concerns of abuse and it will be addressed through the most appropriate course of action or under the most appropriate policy.

3. Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity policy.

When applying this policy we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

When applying this policy we will take the necessary positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the phrase children and young people refers to: Any person under the age of 18 years.

When using the term 'parents' in the context of this document it will be in the broadest sense to include parents, carers and guardians.

The phrase adult at risk refers to: - Any person over the age of 18 who is, or may be in need of care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is, or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Lord Chancellor's Department, 1997)

"A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it".

(Department of Health).

Safeguarding children is defined as;

"...protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health and development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes"

Working together to safeguard children 2013¹.

¹ <https://www.childprotectioncompany.com/CPC/news/child-protection-policy/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2013/>

Adult safeguarding is defined by the Care Act 2014² as

“...the process of protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect”.

The phrase ‘Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded or contracted service providers’ is used to refer to all Borough Councillors (including the Elected Mayor), employees and people working on behalf of the Council either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations will be expected to have policies and procedures in place commensurate with the level of contact and involvement with children, young people and adults at risk. As a minimum, any organisation receiving funding from the Council, will be expected to have a statement of policy and procedure regarding safeguarding in place. This needs to be understood by employees and volunteers and available to service users. Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations with minimal contact with children and young people may wish to adopt the Council’s Policy.

The phrase ‘contracted service provider’ used subsequently in this document will refer to those organisations that have appropriately adopted this policy.

Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual and mental including bullying and exploitation, forced marriage, honour based abuse and female genital mutilation. In the case of adults or young people aged 16 and over there are additional areas of financial and domestic abuse.

5. Aims

Watford Borough Council will promote the welfare of children and young people by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people and adults at risk by listening to them and minimising risks that may affect them.
- Preventing abuse by adopting good practice and creating a safe and healthy environment to avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Ensuring that Members, employees and volunteers understand the relevant Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.
- Monitoring accountability and governance through the Council’s procedures and through the Community Safety Partnership’s Responsible Officers Group.
- Raising awareness among members and officers of the safeguarding duty the Council has in relation to the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 where Hertfordshire County Council has the lead responsibility.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1/crossheading/safeguarding-adults-at-risk-of-abuse-or-neglect/enacted>

- Ensuring that contracted, commissioned and grant funded services have policies and procedures commensurate with the level of involvement they have with children and young people.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate reporting, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Supporting the National Prevent agenda by working with partner agencies to identify and support children, young people and adults at risk who are vulnerable to radicalisation.
- Raise awareness about the forms of abuse and how to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe.

To achieve these aims, Watford Borough Council will endeavour to:

- Ensure that training appropriate to the level of involvement with children and young people and adults at risk is available for Members, employees and volunteers and where appropriate contracted service providers which includes training of staff to raise awareness of safeguarding and specific areas such as but not limited to: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); Prevent; to identify those vulnerable to radicalisation; Mental Capacity; deprivation of liberties; Forced Marriage; Honour Based Abuse and Female Genital Mutilation
- Respond appropriately to any concerns reported
- Develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents and accidents
- Develop and implement effective procedures for recognising, responding, recording and referring any allegations or suspicions of abuse to Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire's Children's Safeguarding Partnership and the District sub group and provide relevant reports.
- Promote the welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk within services including in the planning of services.
- Maintain a good level of safe working practice at all times to minimise risk to children, young people and adults at risk that come into contact with Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded and contracted service providers.
- Support all County and National initiatives to promote the Safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.
- Hold regular Safeguarding and Safe Working Practice meetings with designated officers from across the Council
- Provide as and when necessary advice and information to increase awareness about keeping safe

6. Scope of the Policy

This Policy and Procedure cover all Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded and contracted service providers (who have appropriately adopted this policy). However, not all Members, employees or volunteers will be working directly with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties or activities for or on behalf of the Council. Safe working practices, as detailed in the following procedure, should be used on all occasions where

Members, employees, volunteers or contracted services come into contact with children, young people and adults at risk.

It is always important to use safe working practices but there are some areas when it is of particular importance: -

- Contractors working in our Adventure Playground
- Working in supported housing
- School talks and events
- Work experience placements
- Community engagement including working with youth councils, diversionary activities and events.
- Housing visits for repairs, existing or new housing applicants and homeless families
- Revenue and Benefits home visits
- Visits to any home for inspections or enforcement purposes. This will include all visits eg: Planning, housing repairs, Regulatory Services and grant applications.
- Volunteers training and knowledge as required
- Parks and grounds maintenance
- Anti-social behaviour – enforcement and diversion projects
- Planning and assisting in VIP visits

This list is indicative only and there may be other occasions when particular importance should be paid to safe working practices.

7. Obligations and responsibilities

7.1. Children and young people

The Children Act 2004 imposes a duty on all organisations that have contact with children to ensure they make sufficient arrangements to protect them.

Statutory agencies are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Act requires every local authority to establish a Safeguarding Children Board to oversee all work to safeguard children. This duty is undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council.

The Children Act 2004 places responsibilities upon Watford Borough Council, as a relevant partner to Hertfordshire County Council's Children's Services, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Act requires that children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect. The Act requires that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and promotes early intervention. The Act promotes the principle that children and families are best supported and protected when there is a coordinated response from all relevant agencies.

In line with the Children Act 2004 Watford Borough Council must (in section 10) co-operate to improve wellbeing and (in section 11) have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

To meet the requirements of section 11 of the Children Act 2004, Watford Borough Council should have regard to statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government 2018). The Council has accepted its duty to co-operate with Hertfordshire County Council's Children's Services and it will ensure that it meets the requirements set out by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. Watford will achieve this by undertaking the following :-

- To have senior level responsibility for Safeguarding Children and Young People. The Managing Director fulfils this role at Watford Borough Council.
- To have a senior officer lead for Safeguarding Children and Young People – Watford have a team of officers responsible for safeguarding which is led by the Head of Community Protection and supported by the Safeguarding Manager.
- An elected member to champion Safeguarding – Watford Borough Council's champion is The Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding.
- Information to be available on intranet Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse folder accessed by quick links on the Safeguarding page.
- All corporate, community and team plans must ensure that safeguarding is a key priority.
- A clear structure must be in place to deal with all issues around safeguarding
- A clear policy on safeguarding must exist and be supported by procedures.
- There should be a clear statement on information sharing with partners with regard to safeguarding.
- There should be an appropriate programme of training for all staff and a full record of training undertaken should be maintained.
- Safe recruitment procedures/guidance should be followed for the recruitment of all staff.
- A whistle blowing policy must be in place and staff should be aware of the procedure – there is an existing whistle blowing policy and a copy is available on the Intranet
- All records relating to children or young people must be stored in a safe and secure place and only named persons should have access to these files.
- Each service area that is responsible for contracting work out on behalf of the Council must ensure that via the service level agreements or contract that the above provisions of section 11 of the Children Act 2004 are complied with.
- Each service area and contract manager is responsible for monitoring compliance by contractors of these provisions and an annual review should be undertaken and reported to the Manager.

7.2. Adults at risk

Hertfordshire County Council is the lead authority for safeguarding Adults at risk. The county council has responsibility for deciding where cases meet the threshold of the Care Act 2014, section 42. Watford Borough Council will support the lead authority in meeting these responsibilities.

The Care Act 2014 supplemented by the Care and Support Guidance (Department of Health 2014) requires Local Authorities including District Councils to “...promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. This may sometimes be referred to as “the wellbeing principle” because it is a guiding principle that puts wellbeing at the heart of care and support” (Care and Support Guidance P1)

Section 1 of the Care Act includes protection from abuse and neglect as part of the definition of wellbeing. Wellbeing is defined in the Guidance in a number of ways and includes protection from abuse and neglect.

The Council is required under statute to promote wellbeing in any function and/or service that involves care and support of adults and meet identified needs. Local authority statutory adult safeguarding duties apply equally to all adults with care and support needs regardless of whether their needs are being met by the local authority.

The guidance enshrines the six principles of safeguarding:

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Watford Borough Council commits to the principles of *Making Safeguarding every one's business* which is about person centred and outcome focussed practice. It is how professionals are assured by adults at risk that they have made a difference to people by taking action on what matters to people, and is personal and meaningful to them.

8. Housing

In discharging a range of duties as Local Housing Authority the Council will have regard to the above obligations and responsibilities.

In addition to this there are also requirements under the following legislation: -

- The Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 section 213A ensures that a housing authority contacts social services (with or where appropriate without consent) when a family with children is ineligible or intentionally homeless. This section also ensures that housing authorities cooperate with social service to provide advice and assistance to help ineligible or intentionally homeless households with children.

- The Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities powers and duties to take action against bad housing conditions and Environmental Health Officers will assess the impact of health and safety hazards in light of hazards that occupants are vulnerable to and consider safeguarding children as part of this process.

9. Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Watford Borough Council is not a Children's Services Authority, therefore the scope for working directly with children and young people is limited.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks can only be sought where their criteria is met. A list of the relevant posts are maintained and reviewed by Human Resources and, where necessary, the application of a DBS forms part of the safe recruitment process.

There is a group of employees for whom an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is necessary. This relates to services where there is a regulated activity, or regular contact which may be unsupervised such as where vulnerable adults are concerned. All posts are reviewed regularly.

It is a requirement of the Licensing of Hackney Carriages and for Personal Licenses that an enhanced DBS check forms part the application process. Details regarding this are contained within the relevant licensing policies available from the Licensing department at the Council which also contain a range of safeguarding measures.

Contracted, commissioned and grant funded organisations will need to undertake any checks commensurate with the level of their involvement with children, young people or adults at risk and have their own safe recruitment procedures.

10. Recognising potential incidences of abuse

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place even for those experienced in working with abuse cases. Watford Borough Council acknowledges its' members, employees, volunteers, grant funded and contracted services are not experts at such recognition.

There are however some indicators and areas of specific risk that are identified below and which also link to other policies. Further specific indicators of physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse are included in the procedure section of this document.

11. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse has been found to be a significant indicator of child abuse. Domestic Abuse is any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling, coercive and threatening behaviour or violence. A child may suffer from abuse not only by being physically abused directly, but also

seeing or hearing the maltreatment of another such as a parent or sibling. Watford Borough Council has a specific Domestic Abuse Policy that can be found on the Watford website³.

12. Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse, in which a young person is manipulated or forced into taking part in a sexual act. This could be as part of a relationship which seems to be normal and loving or in return for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol or somewhere to stay.

In many cases, victims will be 'groomed' by an abusing adult, who befriends them and makes them feel special by buying them gifts or giving them lots of attention. Usually the abuser will have power of some kind over the young person. It may be that they are older or more emotionally mature, physically stronger, or that they are in a position where they are able to control the young person.

This type of abuse could happen to any young person from any background. However, certain young people, such as those who are having difficulties at home, regularly go missing or who have experienced care, are more vulnerable.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and Hertfordshire Probation Trust have joined forces with Hertfordshire Constabulary in Operation HALO to identify cases of child sexual exploitation in Hertfordshire and prosecute offenders⁴

13. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. **It is a form of child abuse and violence against women.** FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

A further amendment to FGM Act 2003 by section 72 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced FGM Protection Orders. An FGM Protection Order is a civil measure which can be applied for through a family court by a range of agencies including Local Authorities. The FGM Protection Order offers the means of protecting actual or potential victims from FGM under the civil law. Watford Borough Council follows the Hertfordshire protocol for FGM.

14. Forced Marriage

In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure and abuse.

³

<http://dennis/Docs/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FDocs%2FDocuments%2FHealth%20and%20Wellbeing%2FSafeguarding%20and%20Domestic%20Abuse%2FDomestic%20Abuse>

⁴⁴ <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/hscp.aspx>

Forced marriage is primarily, but not exclusively, an issue of violence against females. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 and 30, although there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15 per cent of victims are male. This policy relates to children or young people under 18 years of age.

Forced marriage is a human rights abuse. It can constitute both child abuse and sexual abuse. The United Nations considers it a form of trafficking, sexual slavery, and exploitation. It is not a private, personal, domestic, family, religious, or cultural issue and cannot be justified as such whether a religious or civil ceremony.

A clear distinction must be made between a **forced** marriage and an **arranged** marriage. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the child/ young person.

In Watford we will follow the Hertfordshire County Council policy and procedure that should be followed in regards to any concerns about Honour Based Abuse and/or Forced Marriage.

15. Honour Based Abuse

The NPCC (National Police Chief's Council formerly ACPO) definition of Honour Based Abuse is "a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community". It is a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called 'honour'.

16. Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires Local Authorities to ensure that frontline staff should understand the Prevent Strategy and are able to recognise vulnerability to radicalisation, and know where to go to seek further help. Usual safeguarding procedures should be followed. Essential training is available for all staff via the Home Office website and face to face.

17. Capacity and Self Determination

Unless certain prescribed circumstances exist, adults should freely determine their own lives, take risks and make their own decisions. In legal terms, there is a presumption of capacity unless demonstrated otherwise.

Assumptions should not be made about a person's capacity eg. someone with dementia should not automatically be assumed to lack capacity. In some cases, capacity can fluctuate and a person can be deemed to have capacity to take responsibility for some decisions but not others.

There are two aspects to the issue of capacity within the context of abuse. Firstly, making assumptions about a person's capacity and denying them the right to self-determination may, in fact, be abusive. Secondly, where abuse has occurred or is suspected or alleged, the vulnerable person's capacity to understand and make decisions needs to be assessed.

Normally, the capacity of an individual to make key decisions is determined by their GP, Social worker and/or mental health team. Where a referral needs to be made for an assessment of an adult's capacity, then their consent needs to be obtained. If consent is withheld, then a judgement needs to be made with regard to whether the person lacks the capacity to make that decision. It is essential that an individual's capacity is considered at all times, if consent is withheld and a referral is made without considering capacity this would be deemed to be a breach of the Care Act 2014. Advice should be sought from designated safeguarding leads if you are unsure.

Before a safeguarding referral is made to HCC under this policy, the Council will seek the individual's consent. However, HCC state that "where an overriding public interest or vital interest or if gaining consent would put the adult at further risk, a concern must be raised but the lack of consent and the reason for it must be explicit". This must include the consideration of an individual's mental capacity.

This includes situations where:

- other people or children could be at risk from the person causing harm
- it is necessary to prevent crime
- there is a high risk to the health and safety of the adult at risk
- the person lacks capacity to consent
- the alleged abuser has care and support needs and may also be at risk
- staff, agents or contractors are implicated
- the adult at risk has mental capacity not to give consent but they may be under duress or being coerced
- a court order or other legal authority has requested the information
- where there is a need to take advice prior to notification or referral in relation to modern slavery or human trafficking

The adult at risk would normally be informed of the decision to refer and the reasons, unless telling them would jeopardise their safety or the safety of others".

18. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is an umbrella term encompassing slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, controlled by threats, punishment, violence, coercion and deception. Slavery violates human rights, denying people of their right to life, freedom and security.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced a range of measures to address this hidden crime and the following areas are specific to local authorities: -

Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires local authorities, along with Police and Gangmasters Licensing Authority, to notify the Secretary of State upon developing

reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking and in order to meet this requirement it is necessary to train staff frontline staff to recognise the indicators as they may find themselves in situations where they recognise the indicators of modern slavery or human trafficking and should be able to make the required notification.

Section 54 of this act deals with the transparency in supply chains and ethical procurement. It requires organisations with a global turnover in excess of £33 million to produce an annual statement in relation to this. The statement should detail what steps the business has taken to eradicate slavery from its own business and its supply chain or alternatively, because only the statement itself is compulsory, a statement could lawfully state that the business has taken no anti-slavery measures at all.

NOTE

It is important therefore to recognise that it is not Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted services responsibility to decide whether or not abuse of any kind is taking place, or if a child or adult is at risk, but to report where they have concerns or suspicions, or where an allegation has been made and be aware of what the signs could be.

In addition it is not the role of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service to investigate or judge any allegation or concern.

It is everyone's responsibility is to REPORT concerns or allegations to the relevant officer Designated Safeguarding Officers should be advised of all referrals for the purposes of recording and reporting.

19. Responsibility, Monitoring and Review

The GroupHead of Service will be the lead for the safeguarding of children and young people.

This role is supported by the Safeguarding Manager.

All allegations of abuse will be centrally recorded and the Designated Safeguarding officers and their Managers will be responsible for collating and monitoring referrals and reporting these to the Council's Safeguarding Group.

Effective information sharing underpins integrated working and is a vital element of both early intervention and safeguarding.

We will comply with current legislation at all times when processing information about children and adults at risk. This includes the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations which came into force in May 2018.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

PART TWO: PROCEDURE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AT RISK

1. Prevention

1.1. Safe Working Practice

When dealing with children, young people and adults at risk the corporate codes of conduct /customer care standards of behaviour should always be maintained as it is possible to reduce situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.

As a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider (in this document this reference relates to those contracted service providers that have adopted this policy and procedure) you should apply best practice and follow these guidelines:-

- Where ever possible, always be publicly open when working with children and young people.
- Avoid any situations where you and a child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Never leave children and young people unattended whilst they are in your care;
- Wear a name badge, employee identification badge and/or uniform to be easily recognised by children, young people and adults at risk
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of their activity or the service they undertake with the Council.

Members, employees, volunteers grant funded and contracted service providers should never in the course of their duties:

- Engage in rough, physical and sexually provocative games or activities;
- Share a bedroom with a child or young person;
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact;
- Allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- Enter areas designated only for the opposite sex.
- Solicit personal information other than that required for health and safety reasons, such as data required for registration purposes to attend facilities or applications for courses etc. on courses. This information must be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of all current Data Protection legislation.
- Become involved in the administration, prompt, storage or ordering of an individual's medication.

- Become involved in any financial transaction with, or on behalf of, a child, young person or adult at risk.
- Provide any personal care to an adult at risk. This includes helping them to get dressed.
- Take a child young person or adult at risk in their car.
- Access an individual's property without permission

Occasions may arise where an employee and/or volunteer does things of a personal nature for a child or young person particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. These duties should only be carried out within the boundaries of the role and with appropriate training and with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the child/young person involved.

If a child, young person or adult at risk is accidentally injured as a result of your actions, seems distressed in any manner, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, such incidents should be reported immediately to your line manager and documented. In the case of children and young people parents/carers should be informed of all incidents.

All Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers should be aware that they should not be in a situation where they are ever alone with a child and to always have a responsible adult or other children or young people with them in a group.

To be aware they do not:

- Spend any time alone with children and young people away from others.
- When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children or young people alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you.

1.2. Safe working procedures

Good standards of maintenance, hygiene and safety should be maintained at all times within Council buildings where children, young people and adults at risk use and have access to our services.

In order to support its Health and Safety Policy the Council ensures that general safety arrangements are supplemented by comprehensive safe working procedures within each service area.

Such procedures will incorporate an identification of hazards, assessment of risks, and use of personal protective equipment, training, supervision and safe systems of work. These will be regularly reviewed by responsible officers.

1.3. Operational Procedures and Standards

The safety of children, young people and adults at risk taking part in any meeting/activity and/or organised session on Council premises is paramount. If children, young people or adults at risk are attending Council premises or events without the supervision of a parent/carer/guardian, the following practices must be applied: -

All children and young people must be supervised at all times by an employee or volunteer who has undergone the appropriate DBS disclosure.

- Standard risk assessments are conducted prior to the organisation of any meetings, courses or activities.
- All employees, volunteers, members or contracted services must be aware of the procedure for the arrival and departure at any meeting/activity/course undertaken with the Council and any particular control measures identified in the risk assessment process.
- Any Supervisor or volunteer working with children, young people or adults at risk should familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures relevant to the area in which they work and take responsibility for those children and young people should an emergency arise.
- A DBS checked employee/volunteer must accompany a child, young person or adult at risk should they wish to leave the main group for whatever reason (e.g. first aid).
- All relevant safety checks must be made on the facilities and equipment prior to the start of each day or session.
- Parental consent should be sought
- All emergency contact details/medical information must be kept current for each child or young person.
- The correct ratio of adults to children and young people should be applied as published in guidelines by Ofsted.

Notwithstanding the above procedures, there will be a need for specific operational procedures relative to each site, service and activity.

1.4. First Aid and accidents

The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount. For children and young people parental consent for the administration of first aid is not always possible or necessary but without the relevant consent it must be a last resort.

For adults at risk first aid should also be seen as the last resort. It is the decision of the individual as to whether or not they would carry out first aid.

All accidents and incidents must be recorded in accordance with the Councils accident reporting procedures.

1.5. Photography

When taking photographs of any child or young person precautionary measures should be taken and the appropriate authority sought from parents or guardians.

When taking photographs of any adult at risk, consent should be sought.

1.6. Off Duty Contact

Employees, elected Members, volunteers grant funded organisations and contractors must maintain a professional relationship with children, young people and adults at risk during any off-duty contact, continuing to follow the guidelines and policies set out for contact during work and where relevant should adhere to the ICT usage guidance.

1.7. Breach of safe working practice and procedures

Watford Borough Council takes its responsibility very seriously. Employees who breach any of the code above will result in investigation and may be a matter of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal and the possibility of criminal investigation where there is evidence of illegal activity. Where an investigation results in dismissal the Disclosure and Barring Service will be informed where relevant.

Volunteers in breach of the above will have their services terminated with immediate effect. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the volunteer will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face criminal investigation.

If a Member does not adhere to the policy, there may be grounds for reporting their behaviour to the Standards Committee, who may require an investigation under the Member Code of Conduct. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the Member will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face criminal investigation.

2. Recognise, Respond, Refer

2.1. Recognise - How?

It is not the role of any Member, employee, and volunteer, grant-funded or contracted service provider to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse is actually taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk by referring concerns to the appropriate agency.

This procedure for reporting a concern or allegation informs all Watford Borough Council, Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers (that have adopted this policy and procedures) of the actions they should take if they have concerns about, or encounter, a case of alleged or suspected abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk.

Recognising a safeguarding concern can also relate to the environment that a child, young person or adult at risk is living in and this is often referred to as neglect. Visiting Officers may have concerns about what they see when carrying out an inspection or home visit to a property or whilst carrying out their duties.

Some of the more obvious signs of abuse, neglect or bullying could be:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food
- Constantly dirty or smelly condition
- Inappropriate dress for conditions
- Fear of parents or carers being approached for explanations
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example long sleeves in hot weather
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. Rocking, hair twisting
- Being unable to play or withdrawing from social situations
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their development age
- Sexual drawings or language
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Not allowed to have friends or socialise with others
- Neglect – unacceptable living conditions

2.2. Child Sexual Exploitation

In addition to the above the following signs can be a sign of child sexual exploitation which can take place up to the age of 18 years old.

- Regularly going missing from home
- Truancy from school
- Friends with significantly older people
- Being collected from home or school by people you don't know
- Unexplained injuries of bruising
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Secretive mobile phone use
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Associating with other young people who are vulnerable or are known to be involved in sexual exploitation
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Evidence of sexual bullying or vulnerability through the internet or social networking
- Self-harming
- Suicide attempts

- Overdosing
- Eating disorders
- Cannot account for money in their possession
- Association with known gang members or older males

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and 'Say Something If You See Something' are national campaigns. Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, HM Government 2009 tells us "Sexual exploitation is not limited to particular geographical areas and all Local Safeguarding Children Boards should assume it is an issue in their area".

2.3. Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse

The honour code to which forced marriage and honour based abuse refers to is usually set at the discretion of male relatives and girls or women who do not abide by the 'rules' are then punished for bringing shame on the family. Infringements may include a woman or girl having a boyfriend; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; interfaith relationships; homosexuality perceived inappropriate dress or make-up and even kissing in a public place. Crimes of honour do not always include violence, it can occur in many forms including:-

- domestic abuse/assault
- Attempted/ conspiracy to commit murder
- Manslaughter
- Procuring an abortion
- Encouraging or assisting suicide
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being held against their will

NOTE

It is very important that you do not speak to any family members if you have concerns about forced marriage or honour based abuse. You should speak to the designated officer immediately

2.4. Female Genital Mutilation

The FGM Act 2003 was amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015 and it introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

'Known' cases are those where either a girl informs the person that an act of FGM – however described – has been carried out on her, or where the person observes physical

signs on a girl appearing to show that an act of FGM has been carried out and the person has no reason to believe that the act was, or was part of, a surgical operation within section 1(2)(a) or (b) of the FGM Act 2003.

Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded or contracted service providers are not subject to this mandatory duty but this policy expects them to follow the duty as a matter of good practice and any concerns should be reported to the designated officer.

2.5. Prevent – Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

Children, young people and adults at risk are vulnerable to exposure to or involvement with groups or individuals who advocate violence as a means to a political or ideological end. Examples of extremist causes that have used violence to achieve their ends include animal rights, the far right and international terrorist organisations such as so called Islamic State (IS).

Children, young people and adults at risk can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include family members or friends, direct contact with groups and organisations or, increasingly through the internet. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

Work to safeguard children and adults, providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity, is at the heart of the revised *Prevent* strategy. Channel is a national programme which forms part of Prevent. More information can be found in the Channel Duty Guidance⁵ provided by Government.

Potential indicators identified in the Channel guidance include: -

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of the extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

2.6. Financial abuse – Adults at risk

5

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964567/6.6271_HO_HMG_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v14_Web.pdf

There is no statutory definition of financial abuse; however *No Secrets* published by the department of health defines financial abuse as the following:

“Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits”

(DH/Home Office, 2000)

Indicators of financial abuse can include:

- Missing personal possessions
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person’s financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property
- Rent arrears and eviction notices
- A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- Disparity between the person’s living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- Unnecessary property repair

2.7. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

There are a wide range of indicators relating to modern slavery and human trafficking which can be found on the link below.

If a member of staff has any concerns about any matter related to slavery they should discuss it with the designated officer as there is a duty for them to notify to home office and a structured procedure to follow.⁶

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims>

2.8. Dealing with threats of suicide

The underlying causes of suicidal feelings are likely to be a complex mix of personal and social factors and fortunately not something that is a normal part of the usual working day. That said there are occasions when officers are confronted with a statement from an individual that they intend to harm themselves or take their own life.

Some residents/customers/service users are already accessing support from us or other agencies but if a person tells you that they are going to, or feel like they are going to, take their own life then we should deal with them by: -

- Taking their statement seriously
- Asking if they are receiving any support i.e GP, CPN, mental health team or any other agency and recording the details.
- Asking if there is family support and if so who they are and their contact details.
- Giving them the number of the Samaritans and telling them we will be contacting the police.
- If the threat is considered or believed to possibly be genuine informing the local police (tel:101) who have the resources to check that they are OK at an immediate level. In an emergency call 999.

If a threat of suicide is received initial action should be taken and then a Safeguarding form completed and forwarded to the safeguarding mailbox. The safeguarding team will make a decision on any further referral that may be required.

NOTE

If you have any concerns about any situation or a discussion with a child, young person or adult at risk always speak to your Designated Safeguarding Officer or a Lead Safeguarding Officer – see Intranet for contact details. Remember it is not your responsibility to make any decisions or investigations – it is your responsibility to respond and refer by discussing with a Designated Officer.

The form and further guidance are available at Suicide Prevention Network on the Intranet.

3. Respond and refer – How?

To a child, young person or adult at risk disclosing

Children, young people and adults at risk who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to, and taking seriously what a child, young person or adult at risk is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them.

Create a safe environment by:

- Staying calm and not rushing into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Confirming you understand how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing.
- Reassuring the child, young person or adult at risk and stressing he/she is not to blame.
- Listening to what the child, young person or adult at risk tells you, show you are taking what is being said seriously.
- Where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere on your own.
- Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain you will have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening;
- Ensure you are quite clear about what the child, young person or adult at risk says so you can pass it on to the professionals. Use open questions to encourage them to use their own words but do not press for detailed information.

NOTE

The law is very strict and an abuse case can be dismissed if it appears the child/young person has been led or words have been suggested.

Record exactly what the child, young person or adult at risk has said to you, on a referral form as soon as possible after the incident. As far as possible use the child, young person or adult at risk own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion and record:

- The individual's name, address, date of birth.
- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- Your observations (e.g. a description of the individual's behaviour and physical and emotional state).
- Exactly what the child, young person or adult at risk has said and what you said. Record the account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Any action you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and resulting action, including any contact with your immediate line manager, internal protection officer). Where possible include names, addresses and telephone numbers;
- Sign and date what you have recorded.
- The form should then be given to the appropriate designated officer for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults risk in the first instance.
- **Do not** take sole responsibility – consult the designated officer in your service area or in their absence one of the designated lead officers should be contacted.

Where there are concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or radicalisation always discuss with the designated Lead Officers or the Community Safety Managers.

NOTE

In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with cases or suspicions relating to abuse. Your role is to recognise, respond and refer to your designated officer.

All referrals must be reported to the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officers in the relevant team via the Safeguarding email address for recording, monitoring and reporting purposes.

4. Allegations against members, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers.

Should an employee, elected member, volunteer or contracted service provider become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of an incident of abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

- Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child/young person or adult at risk and therefore report it
- Make a written record on of any details of which you are aware, as part of your report.
- Do not approach the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim yourself.
- Report the allegation to your designated officer or to the Lead Safeguarding Officer by completing the referral form giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details and email it to the Safeguarding mailbox.
- Referrals to the Hertfordshire Safeguarding team should be made on their form which can be found on the Council's Document Centre under the Safeguarding heading and sent to the Protected Referrals email address.
- In a case where your manager may be involved, report it to the Lead Safeguarding Officer, Group Manager directly and/or the Group Manager for People who is the senior officer for Human Resources. It is likely that they will need to get advice and support from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Hertfordshire County Council

Do not judge or investigate. As an employee, elected member, volunteer or contracted service provider it is important not to lose focus of your role. By reporting an allegation quickly, any necessary investigations and/or judgement can then be made by trained professionals;

It is paramount that you maintain confidentiality throughout this whole process. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary and only with specified persons) as any breaches could be damaging to both the alleged perpetrator, the child/young person and to any investigation that may follow.

Once the incident has been reported to the designated officer or Lead Safeguarding Officer they will inform Human Resources and the report will be suitably investigated. The Council's Conduct Procedure will be followed and, where appropriate, other relevant agencies such as the police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service will be informed

5. Dealing with other allegations

Should an employee, elected Member, volunteer or contracted service provider be informed by a third party that an incident of abuse may be occurring the procedure outlined above will apply. In no circumstances should you attempt to contact the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator yourself. Your role is to recognise and report any concern to your designated officer or to one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers.

6. ICT including Internet and email

The Adventure Playgrounds have a specific policy on e-safeguarding which relates to the children and young people who are service users which is visible to them and reviewed on a regular basis.

For Watford Borough Council systems please refer to Watford Borough Council's IT policies and refer any concerns to the designated Safeguarding Officers.

7. Complaints

Complaints about general service issues should be dealt with through the Council's corporate complaints procedures. Any complaint that makes a specific reference to concerns about a specific child, young person or adult at risk and their welfare should be dealt with through the safeguarding procedure in the first instance. Where it is not clear where the responsibility lies the matter should be referred to one of the designated Lead Safeguarding Officers who will advise.

8. Dealing with malicious accusations

Reports found to be malicious about an employee(s) and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding policies and procedures by relevant persons will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through Watford Borough Council's Human Resources Policies and procedures. If there is evidence of illegal actions the Police will be informed.

9. Confidentiality

When dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to abuse, confidentiality is of the highest importance as any breaches can have severe consequences and the protection of the persons involved is paramount.

It is important that only those persons who need to know are given the relevant information to protect the rights of the victim and alleged perpetrator. Employees, Members, volunteers and contracted service providers **must not:**

- Discuss any allegation of abuse of bullying, substantiated or not, with anyone from Watford Borough Council other than a designated Safeguarding Officer, Lead Safeguarding Officer or Director.
- Discuss any allegations of abuse or bullying, substantiated or not, with any member of an external agency, other than as part of a formal investigation.
- Discuss any allegation of abuse or bullying, substantiated or not, with any other interested party, including parents, carers and relatives of the child, or young person without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation. This person may be part of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Team.

This does not exclude any employee from the need or right to consult with a solicitor, trade union representative or other bona fide legal adviser.

NOTE

Please make yourself aware of the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy document which is available on the intranet.

10. Sharing of information

Employees, Members, Volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers may be anxious about the legal and ethical restrictions on sharing information, particularly with other agencies. However, the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is essential. In many cases it is only when information from a range of sources is put together that a risk of harm can be seen.

The main legal gateways for disclosure of information are:

- Common law duty of confidence
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016

Each of these areas needs to be considered separately. Other statutory provisions may also be relevant but in general the law will not prevent you from sharing information with other practitioners if:

- Those likely to be affected consent
- The public interest in safeguarding the child or young person's welfare override the need to keep the information confidential
- Disclosure is required or necessary under a court order or other legal obligation.
- It is for the prevention or detection for crime and disorder.

Sections 27 and 47 of the Children Act 1989 enables local authorities to request help from specified authorities (other local authorities, education authorities, housing authorities, NHS bodies) and place an obligation on those authorities to co-operate. A request could be for information in connection with an s17 assessment or an s47 enquiry. Neither provision would require an unjustified breach of confidence. But an authority should not refuse a request without considering all the circumstances.

Clause 45 of the Care Act 2014 focuses on 'supply of information'. This relates to the responsibilities of others to comply with requests for information from the safeguarding adults' board.

The statutory guidance to the Care Act emphasises the need to share information about safeguarding concerns at an early stage; information-sharing agreements or protocols should be in place.

Designated Safeguarding officers in the local authority and its partner agencies are responsible for ensuring that information shared about individuals alleged to have caused harm is in accordance with human rights, data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 enables any person to disclose information to a relevant authority for any purposes of the Act if they would not otherwise have the power to do so. Relevant authorities include local authorities, NHS bodies and police authorities. The purpose of the Act broadly covers the prevention and reduction of crime and the identification or apprehension of offenders.

All copies of the Safeguarding Reporting Form must be sent to and retained by the Designated Safeguarding Officers. These documents must be stored securely to ensure confidentiality and will be retained in accordance with Retention Policy Periods as defined in the organisations retention schedule. No other copies should be kept.

Full guidance on information sharing and myth busting can be found in the government guidance "Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people and carers"⁷ and "Practice Guidance on sharing adult safeguarding information"⁸ published by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

11. Dealing with the Media

All enquiries from the media regarding specific Safeguarding issues must be dealt with through one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers and the Team Leader – Communications or Group Manager, People.

12. Safe Recruitment, Contracts, Grants and Commissioning.

All recruitment and selection activity is required to comply with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and the Disclosure and Barring Service Policies.

⁷

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

⁸ <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/>

It is the policy of the Council that no person shall work or volunteer to work with children and young people within or on behalf of Watford Borough Council who has been convicted or who has received a formal Police caution concerning an offence against children.

There is a list of posts for which Disclosure and Barring checks are required and under no circumstances should an employee commence work until the checks have taken place. Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks are also compulsory for volunteers where the criteria are met.

The Council also has a duty to protect any young people who undertake work, whether temporary, part time or full time for the Council. Students and schoolchildren under 18 years including those engaged in work experience are covered by the Health and Safety at work regulations.

For all contracted, commissioned, grant funded services, a risk assessment will be taken regarding the availability and the implementation of appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. Contracts and grants will be awarded when the Council is assured that satisfactory checks have been undertaken where appropriate. This will form part of the contract/tender/application process.

In addition to the initial checks, ongoing monitoring of continued compliance will be made and information relating to the following areas will be required on a regular basis: -

- Numbers of referrals to Hertfordshire County Council call centre/protected referrals
- Numbers of staff who have/have not been trained or had refresher training
- Details of training provided – is the training approved by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Have a safe recruitment policy

6. Induction and training

Before a new employee starts their employment with Watford Borough Council they will be asked to read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and sign to acknowledge this.

Basic Safeguarding Awareness training will be provided as compulsory training for all employees and members as part of the formal induction process – this training is available as an e learning package on the Intranet.

This will also apply to volunteers, grant funded and contracted service providers where this policy is adopted or agreed as agreed as part of the contract/grant/commissioning process.

Safeguarding and the Promotion of Welfare of Children and Young People training will be provided to all staff that have any level of interaction with children and young people within their job role. Safeguarding adults at risk training will be provided to all staff who have a level of interaction with adults at risk.

All front line staff will attend the Workshop Raising Awareness of Prevent training and all relevant services will receive training to raise awareness of indicators of modern day slavery and how to make the appropriate notification.

Employees, volunteers, contracted service providers and members whose work brings them into significant contact with Children, young people or adults at risk will undertake the relevant level of Child Protection and safeguarding training which should be identified by team leaders and lead officers at appraisals. Advice on this can be given by the Designated Lead Officers.

Managers, Team Leaders, Employees and volunteers should be aware of their role and responsibilities under these procedures and be aware of the need to keep the training up to date. If there are any queries or if any advice is required regarding the level or type of training, please consult the Designated Lead Officer for advice

7. Review

This policy and procedures will be updated annually and fully reviewed every 3 years. The next full review will be June 2021 or in response to changes in good practice or legislation.

Appendix 1 Useful resources and other statutory guidance**[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-secure-childrens-future)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-secure-childrens-future>

Information Commissioners (ICO) website

<https://ico.org.uk/>

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused- advice for practitioners

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Child Line	-	080011 11
NSPCC Helpline	-	0808 800 5000

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

DECLARATION

Watford Borough Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children, young people and adults at risk and promoting their welfare.

Working as an employee, volunteer or contracted service provider of Watford Borough Council, or representing Watford Borough Council as an Elected Member, it is important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures documents.

By being made aware of the policy it is our intention to ensure that we all are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for the children, young people and adults at risk in our community.

.....

Declaration:

Having read and understood Watford Borough Council's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures documents, I accept the principles therein.

Signed: _____

Name (please print): _____

Position in organisation: _____

Date: _____



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Joint Safeguarding Policy
Lead officer	Justine Hoy
Person completing the EIA	Wendy Rollings
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Version & Date	V1. 13.5.21

1. Background

The Joint Safeguarding Policy is an update of previous policies to reflect emerging threats but there is not a significant difference in approach or legal duties.

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

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

These are:

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

3. Engagement and consultation

Consultation on the amendments to the Policy was undertaken in initial preparation of this review in 2019. Our legal team have been consulted again to approve the final policy in 2021.

This included:

- Circulation with affected Heads of Service at Watford Borough Council, HR and Legal.
- Other external agencies consulted included; The Women's Centre, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Hertfordshire Children's Safeguarding Board.

This was followed up by individual meetings as required.

All responses to this consultation were considered in developing the policy.

4. What we know about the Watford population

4.1. Ethnicity

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire; it is one of the strengths of our town and what makes us such a vibrant and diverse place. For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following main breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%), British other Asian (4.4%) and African (3.5%), White Irish (2.3%) and Caribbean (1.7%). In 2016, the ONS published population estimates by ethnicity. This did not report ethnicities to the level of granularity that the Census reported ethnicity. The estimates for 2016 were: White British (59% - 57,000 residents), Asian / Asian British (19% - 19,000 residents), All Other White (12% - 12,000 residents), Black / African /

Caribbean / Black British (4% - 4,000 residents), Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group (4% - 4,000 residents) and Other Ethnic Group (1% - 1,000 residents).

National insurance registration: Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant.

The National Insurance Registrations for January – March 2020 shows there were 2,194 registrations in Watford, of which 640 were from Romania and Bulgaria, 527 from South Asia and 395 from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. 148 came from sub Saharan Africa and 30 from North Africa.

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

The most selected African language spoken is Arabic (113 families – although not spoken exclusively in Africa) and Akan/Twi-Fante (78 families). The full breakdown for 2018 is at Appendix C. Births and origin of parents: In 2018, nearly 60% (59.6%) of children born to Watford based parents, had one or both parents born outside of the UK, with 42% having both parents born outside of the UK. 52% of new mothers in Watford were born outside of the UK (1397 births in total, with 667 to mothers born in the UK and 730 born outside of the UK. Of these 257 mothers were born in the ‘new’ EU countries – those that had joined since 2004) and 252 in the Middle East and Asia. 88 mothers were born in Africa. EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) quarterly statistics (28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020) – experimental data: In May 2020, the Government issued data on the number of applications made to the EUSS from 28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020, and applications concluded during the same time period. This shows that up to March 2020, 11,630 people in Watford had applied for EUSS. Of these the following were the highest number of nationalities who had applied: Romanian (3,530), Polish (1,810), Portuguese (1,020) and Bulgarian (580). The full analysis is at Appendix D. Age: The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

1. 35-39 years (8,537)
2. 30-34 years (7,921)
3. 40 -44 years (7,458)
4. 5 -9 years (7,027)

Compared with other districts in Hertfordshire, Watford has fewer 65+ year old residents. The age profile of the borough is more comparable with cities who have younger age profiles and where younger people are attracted by lifestyle opportunities, affordable housing and good transport links. Median age: the median age in Watford is 37 years. This compares to 40 for England (mid-year 2019 population estimates)

4.2. Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have 'good health' and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but they will include a wide range of physical and mental health disabilities or impairment (Census 2011). The 2019 NHS Health Profile's summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is 'varied' compared with the England average.

4.3. Understanding safeguarding issues

Safeguarding covers a range of issues and impacts on the individual or groups of individuals.

Below are some of the areas considered as safeguarding issues with national data to outline the known impact. This data is not presented at the Watford level as figures are not currently available.

- **Domestic Abuse**

Subject to a separate Policy and EIA

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation can occur in all communities and amongst all social groups and can affect girls and boys. However boys are less likely to report sexual abuse because of the stigma attached to it. Research has shown that children aged 13-15 are most at risk of being victims of CSE.¹

Recommendation

Awareness training should include that boys can be victims of CSE.

Age of children when first reported

¹ <https://cms.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/CSE%20research%20report%20-%20Sexual%20exploitation%20of%20children%20involved%20in%20the%20Children%E2%80%99s%20Hearings%20System%E2%80%99%20-%20October%202020.pdf>

Age when CSE first reported	Number of children	%
11 years	<5	<5%
12 years	<5	<5%
13 years	7	16%
14 years	12	27%
15 years	14	32%
16 years	<5	9%
17 years	<5	9%
Total children	44	

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there's no medical reason for this to be done.

FGM only affects women usually aged between infancy and adolescence and is carried out for a number of cultural, religious and social reasons. FGM is most commonly practiced in Africa and children are at a higher risk if it's already happened to their mother, sister or another member of their family.

Individual women and girls who have be subjected to FGM: by Country of Birth, England, April 2019-20²

Commissioning Region ³	Country of birth ²										Total
	Not recorded ⁴	Not stated or unknown ⁵	Eastern Africa	Northern Africa	Western Africa	Rest of Africa ⁷	United Kingdom	Western Asia	Rest of Asia ⁶	Rest of the world ⁸	
East of England	25	10	15	10	55	5	25	10	5	5	160
London	850	515	990	95	225	5	40	65	15	20	2,820
Midlands	315	60	335	185	150	5	55	85	10	15	1,220
North East and Yorkshire	35	210	120	100	125	5	45	70	10	5	725
North West of England	60	180	285	155	155	5	15	50	15	5	920
South East of England	25	50	55	15	70	0	20	5	5	5	245
South West of England	315	40	40	20	10	5	5	5	5	0	430
Total	1,630	1,070	1,870	585	805	20	205	300	60	50	6,590

³ Values 1-7 are rounded to 5 - all other values are rounded to the nearest 5.

² Source: NHS Digital

- **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is one in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities or mental incapacity, cannot) consent to the marriage, and violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is involved. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) dealt with 1,355 reports of forced marriage.

Of the cases that FMU provided support to in 2019:

- 363 cases (27%) involved victims below 18 years of age.
- 485 cases (36%) involved victims aged 18-25.
- 137 cases (10%) involved victims with a learning disability.
- 1,080 cases (80%) involved female victims, and 262 cases (19%) involved male victims.
- Gender in the remaining 13 cases was unknown.

The seven 'focus countries' with the highest number of cases in 2019 were:

² <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/0B/7A41CB/Female%20Genital%20Mutilation%20%28FGM%29%20-%20April%202019%20to%20March%202020%20-%20Report.pdf>

- Pakistan -559 cases (41%)
- Bangladesh - 144 cases (11%)
- India - 65 cases (5%)
- Afghanistan - 54 cases (4%)
- Somalia 2 - 31 cases (2%)
- Iraq - 23 cases (2%)
- Romania - 22 cases (2%)

Forced marriages are most common in the under 25s.

Number of cases the Forced Marriage Unit gave advice or support by age 2019³

Age	Numbers	Percentages
15 and under	205	15%
16-17	158	12%
18-21	298	22%
22-25	187	14%
26-30	138	10%
31-40	101	7%
41+	56	4%
Unknown	212	16%
Total	1,355	

Source: Forced Marriage Unit; Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Recommendation

Any awareness training should include that boys can be victims of a forced marriage

-
- **Honour Based Abuse (HBA)**

HBA is a broad umbrella term used to describe a combination of practices used principally to control and punish the behaviour of a member of a family or social group, in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs in the name of 'honour'.

3

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/894428/Forced_Marriage_Unit_statistics_2019.pdf

Proportion of offences involving so called ‘honour based’ abuse recorded by the Police, by offence category, England and Wales, 2019/20, 30 forces

Offence category	Percentage
Assault without injury	28
Assault with injury	17
Threats to kill	10
Kidnapping	10
Malicious Communications	7
Rape of a female aged 16 and over	6
Harassment	5
Stalking	2
Cruelty to children/young persons	2
Public fear, alarm or distress	1

Honour based abuse is most prevalent in cultures originating from South Asia, Africa and the Middle East with the highest victim group being Asian females. At its most extreme honour based abuse can result in a murder. In the UK, it is believed that there are 10 to 15 ‘honour based’ murders a year. However, the true figure could be much higher when considering that some may be commissioned or planned in the UK, but the act is committed abroad.

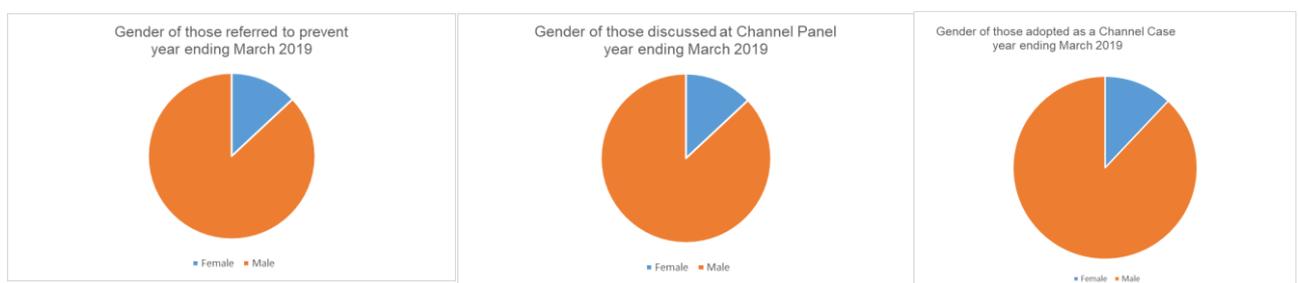
Women and girls are most often the victims of HBA, however men can also be victims, but they are less likely to report this abuse.

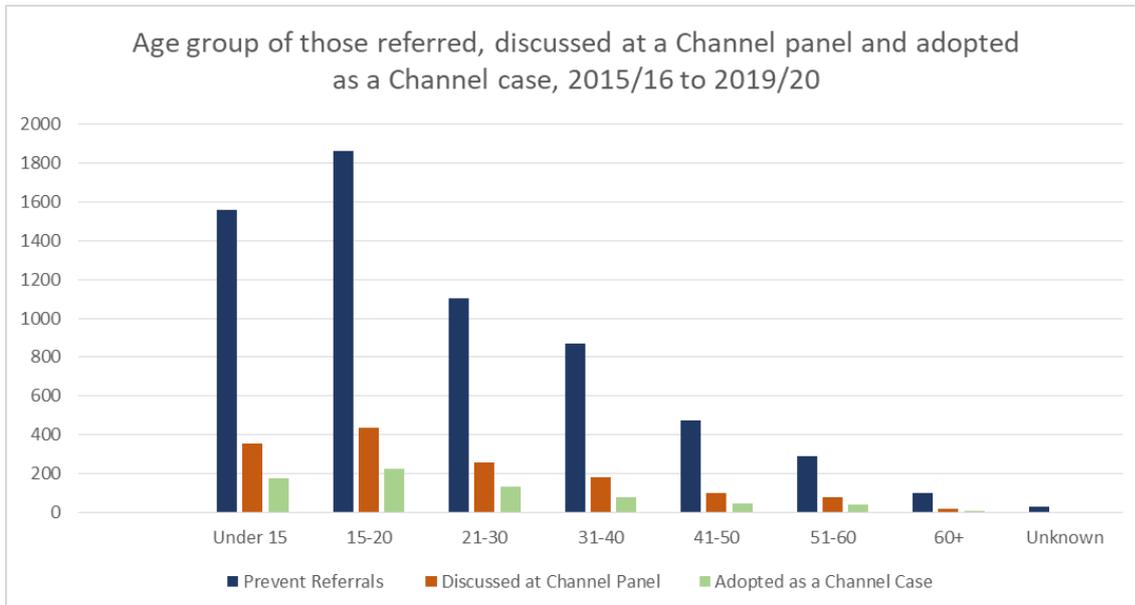
- **Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.**

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires Local Authorities to ensure that frontline staff should understand the Prevent Strategy and are able to recognise vulnerability to radicalisation.

If it is considered that somebody is vulnerable to radicalisation they make the referral to Prevent which may be discussed at the channel panel and adopted as a case if necessary.

The data shows that males are overwhelmingly more likely to be referred, discussed and adopted as a channel case





5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through the Domestic Abuse Policy and the Joint Safeguarding Policy Service Delivery

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

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

A. Positive impacts

The policy makes clear that safeguarding services will be accessible to everyone in the community, with no barriers that could prevent anyone who needs accessing services. This means that those with protected characteristics will have equal opportunity along with those who do not.

This policy will have a positive impact on all the protected characteristics and, particularly, where evidence shows that there are protected characteristics more impacted by safeguarding related issues as detailed in national evidence.

Recommended

To understand the impact of the policy, it is recommended, where possible to collect data and information on safeguarding cases at the Watford level.

Any Watford data would support the implementation of the policy and the council's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

B. Negative impacts

The policy has the potential to have negative impacts if the recommendations to ensure any barriers to those with protected characteristics are not addressed. These

are highlighted in this EIA as is the need to collect data and information at the local level to build a better understanding of the impact on the Watford community. Whilst the national data provides context for safeguarding, the local context will add to this, ensuring barriers are identified and, where appropriate, managed. It will also ensure that we can be confident that where safeguarding issues impact on a given protected characteristic that this is supported by evidence and appropriate steps are taken to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

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

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
This policy will have a positive impact on all protected strands.	All protected characteristics	<p>By applying the policy consistently and ensuring that help and support is available and is widely available to anyone</p> <p>Ensure that officers receive training which will include that boys and men can be victims of abuses traditionally associated with girls and women.</p>

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

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
Most safeguarding issues are criminal offences, for example where it involves FGM and honour based killings. These practices are more associated with some ethnic groups, religions and beliefs. It is likely, therefore, that investigations, reports and potentially criminal convictions will have a higher impact on some protected characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race • Religion or belief • Sex (gender) 	Watford Borough Council works with the County Council and Police, as the leads in this area, to promote education and awareness within our community and to support initiatives designed to reduce the likelihood of offences and to safeguard our community.

This EIA has been approved by:

..... **Date**



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Domestic Abuse Policy
Lead officer	Justine Hoy
Person completing the EIA	Wendy Rollings
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Version & Date	v.1 13.5.21

1. Background

The Domestic Abuse Policy aims to show how the Council responds to domestic abuse as a service provider and employer. Domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse regardless of sex or gender identity, cultural heritage or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or disability.

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of the Domestic Abuse Policy on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

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

3. Engagement and consultation

Consultation on the amendment to the Policy was undertaken in 2019 with internal and external key partners and statutory services.

This included:

- Circulation with affected department Heads at Watford Borough Council, HR and Legal.
- Women's Centre

This was followed up by individual meetings as required and all responses to this consultation were available.

4. What we know about the Watford population

4.1. Ethnicity

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire; it is one of the strengths of our town and what makes us such a vibrant and diverse town. For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following main breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%),

Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%), British other Asian (4.4%) and African (3.5%), White Irish (2.3%) and Caribbean (1.7%). The full breakdown from Census 2011 is at Appendix A. In 2016, the ONS published population estimates by ethnicity. This did not report ethnicities to the level of granularity that the Census reported ethnicity. The estimates for 2016 were: White British (59% - 57,000 residents), Asian / Asian British (19% - 19,000 residents), All Other White (12% - 12,000 residents), Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (4% - 4,000 residents), Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group (4% - 4,000 residents) and Other Ethnic Group (1% - 1,000 residents).

National insurance registration: Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant.

The National Insurance Registrations for January – March 2020 shows there were 2,194 registrations in Watford, of which 640 were from Romania and Bulgaria, 527 from South Asia and 395 from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. 148 came from sub Saharan Africa and 30 from North Africa.

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

The most selected African language spoken is Arabic (113 families – although not spoken exclusively in Africa) and Akan/Twi-Fante (78 families). Births and origin of parents: In 2018, nearly 60% (59.6%) of children born to Watford based parents, had one or both parents born outside of the UK, with 42% having both parents born outside of the UK. 52% of new mothers in Watford were born outside of the UK (1397 births in total, with 667 to mothers born in the UK and 730 born outside of the UK. Of these 257 mothers were born in the ‘new’ EU countries – those that had joined since 2004) and 252 in the Middle East and Asia. 88 mothers were born in Africa. EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) quarterly statistics (28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020) – experimental data: In May 2020, the Government issued data on the number of applications made to the EUSS from 28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020, and applications concluded during the same time period. This shows that up to March 2020, 11,630 people in Watford had applied for EUSS. Of these the following were the highest number of nationalities who had applied: Romanian (3,530), Polish (1,810), Portuguese (1,020) and Bulgarian (580). The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

1. 35-39 years (8,537)
2. 30-34 years (7,921)
3. 40 -44 years (7,458)
4. 5 -9 years (7,027)

Compared with other districts in Hertfordshire, Watford has fewer 65+ year old residents. The age profile of the borough is more comparable with cities who have younger age profiles and where younger people are attracted by lifestyle opportunities, affordable housing and good transport links. Median age: the median age in Watford is 37 years. This compares to 40 for England (mid-year 2019 population estimates)

4.2. Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have ‘good health’ and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but they will include a wide range of physical and mental health disabilities or impairment (Census 2011). The 2019 NHS Health Profile’s summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is ‘varied’ compared with the England average.

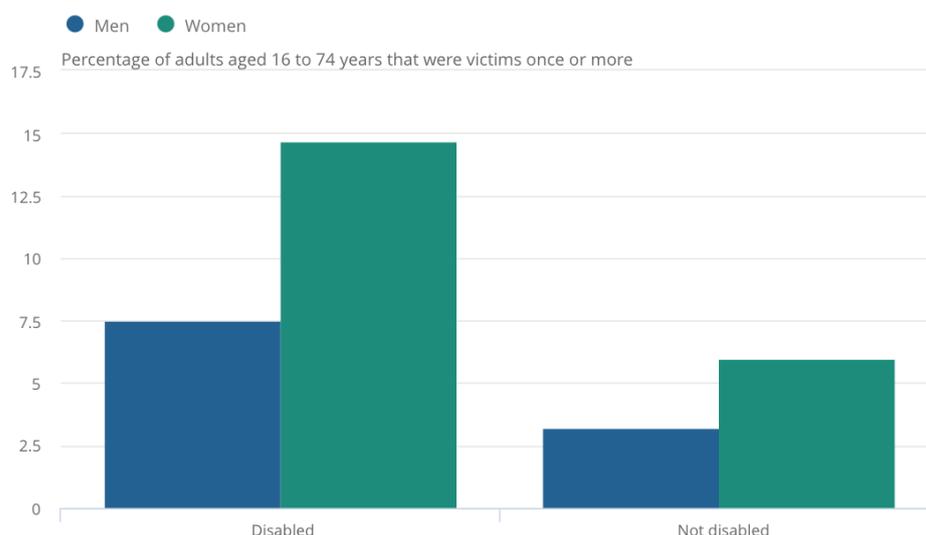
Understanding domestic abuse

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse regardless of sex or gender identity, cultural heritage or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or disability. However the prevalence is higher in people within some protected characteristics.

4.1. Disability

For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that men and women aged 16 to 74 years with a disability¹ were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without.

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years by disability and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2020.



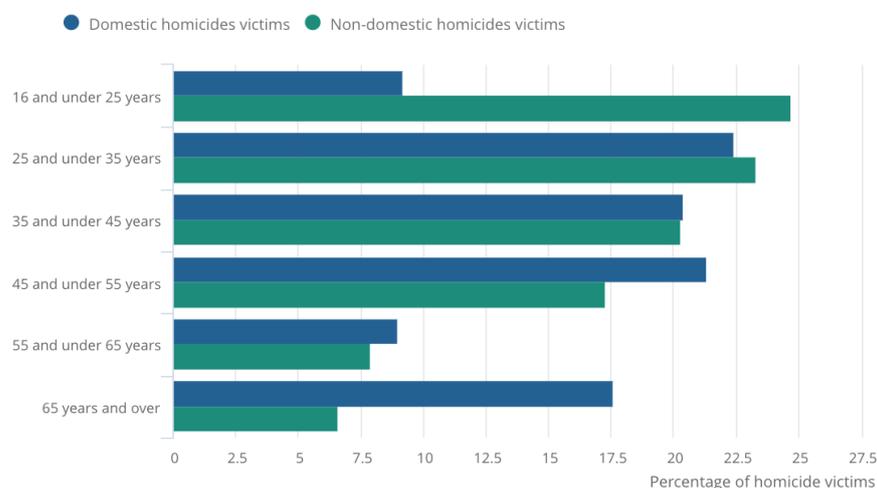
Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales

¹ As the CSEW questions include stalking by a current partner, it is not consistent with the [legal definition of stalking and harassment](#).

4.2. Age

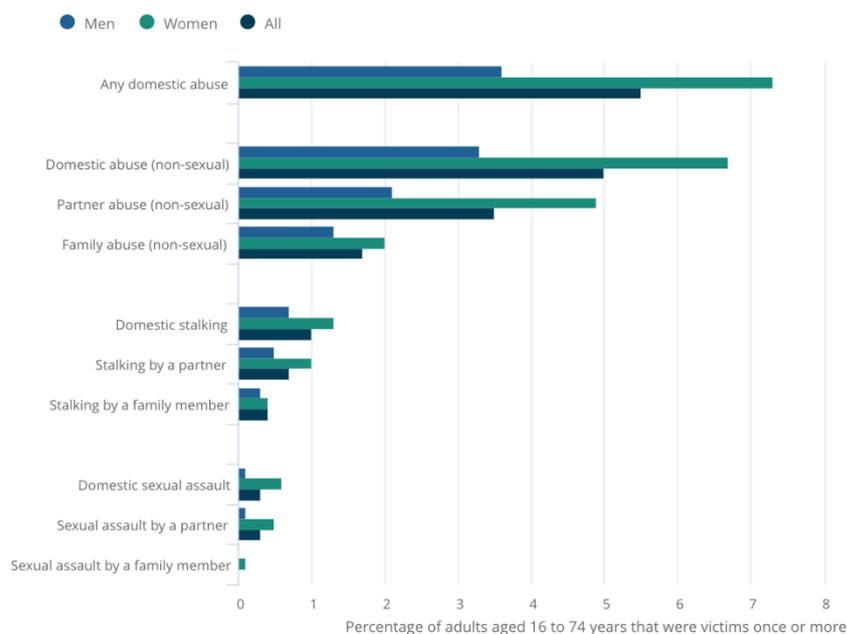
Figure 14: The majority of domestic homicide victims were aged 25 to 34 years

Percentage of homicide victims by homicide-type and age, England and Wales, year ending March 2017 to March 2019



Women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year.

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2020.



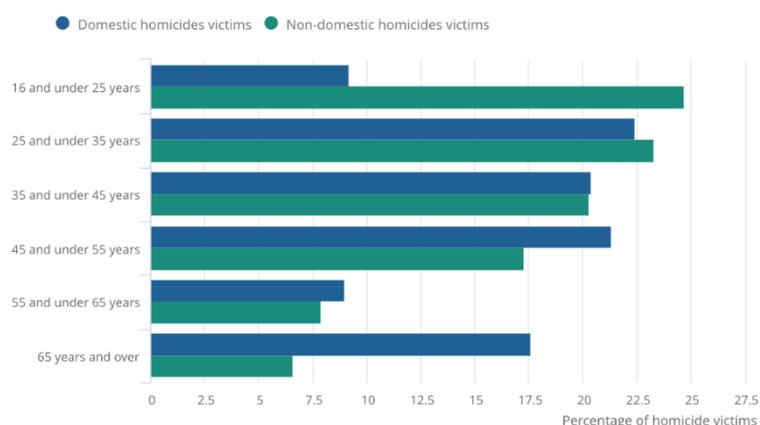
Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales

Data from the Home Office Homicide Index for the year ending March 2017 to the year ending March 2019 show that over three-quarters of victims of domestic homicide were female (77% or 274 victims). This contrasts with non-domestic homicides where the majority of victims over the same time period were male (87% or 786 victims)

The highest proportion of domestic homicide victims fell within the 25- to 34-year age category (22%), whereas the highest proportion of non-domestic homicide victims fell within the 16- to 24-year age category (25%). However, larger proportion of domestic homicide victims were aged 65 years and over (18%) compared with non-domestic homicide victims (7%).

Figure 14: The majority of domestic homicide victims were aged 25 to 34 years

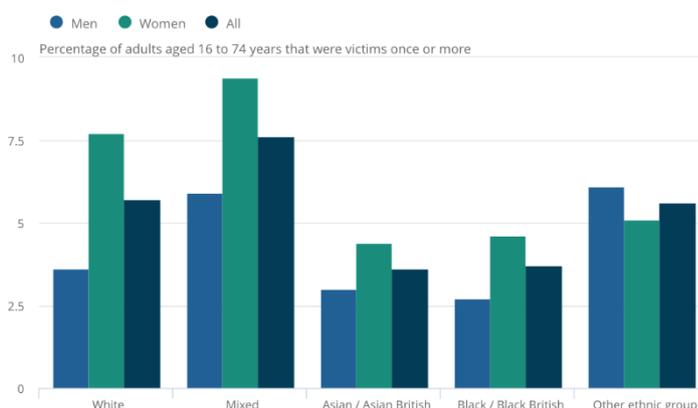
Percentage of homicide victims by homicide-type and age, England and Wales, year ending March 2017 to March 2019



For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey of England and Wales showed that those in the Mixed ethnic group were significantly more likely to experience domestic abuse within the last year than those in the Black or Asian ethnic groups.

In the White ethnic group, women were significantly more likely than men to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (7.7% of women, compared with 3.6% of men)

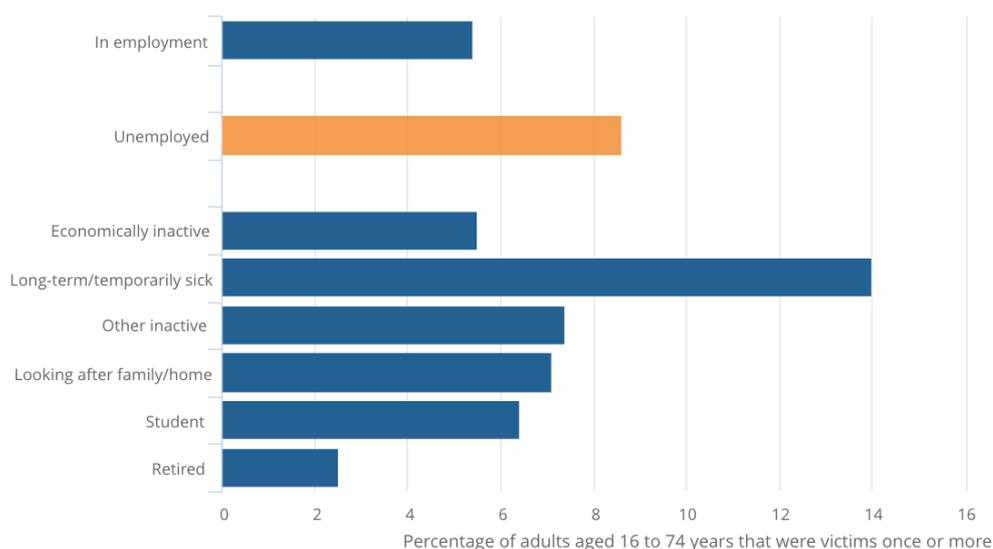
Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years by ethnicity sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2020.



Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales

Unemployed people were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were employed or economically active.

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years by employment status, England and Wales, year ending March 2020.



Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales

5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through the Domestic Abuse Policy and Service Delivery

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

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

A. Positive impacts

The policy recognises that domestic abuse can happen across any of the protected characteristics and implementation will have a positive impact across these characteristics. National data shows that some characteristics do suffer disproportionately from domestic abuse and it is important to recognise this but without overlooking that it does go beyond these.

It is recommended that data at the local level is collected as far as possible to understand

how the policy is impacting across protected characteristics.

Disability/Carers (including mental health)

The EIA recognises that people with disabilities are disproportionately represented in those who suffer from domestic abuse. To support people with a disability and any associated communication needs, there is a requirement to develop accessible information and advice to ensure people are informed of their entitlements and support. It has also been identified that practitioners working in service areas supporting individuals with disabilities (including learning disabilities) and/or health conditions will benefit from greater awareness of domestic abuse in order to identify issues, support disclosures being made safely and that, where needed, develop local solutions so domestic abuse provision is co-located within these settings (and clear pathways for support are established).

Accessibility of service provision also needs to be addressed in terms of physical access for example; specialist provision would support people with specific physical disabilities.

B. Negative impacts

No negative impacts identified but the service will ensure that the support to victims as both an employer and a direct provider of services is accessible to people in all of the equality characteristics.

6. Overall conclusions

The key potential for cumulative impacts on particular groups have been summarised below;

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

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	V
This policy will have a positive impact on all protected strands.	All protected characteristics	By applying help and s translated included.

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

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	
There are no negative impacts on any of the protected strands		

This EIA has been approved by:

..... **Date**

Data Protection Impact Assessment

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (“DPIA”) is a process that assists organizations in identifying and minimizing the privacy risks of new projects or policies.

The DPIA will help to ensure that potential problems are identified at an early stage, when addressing them will often be simpler and less costly.

Working through each section of this form will guide you through the DPIA process.

The requirement for a DPIA will be identified by answering the questions below. If a requirement has been identified, you should complete all the remaining sections in order.

Conducting a DPIA should benefit the Council by producing better policies and systems, and improving the relationship with individuals.

The Data Protection Impact Assessment Statement in **Section 7** should be completed in all cases, and a copy of this document should be sent to the Data Protection Officer to record and review.

The Data Protection Officer will review the DPIA and will provide feedback. The feedback will confirm whether the proposed measures to address the privacy risks identified are adequate, and make recommendations for additional measures needed.

These measures will be reviewed once in place to ensure that they are effective.

Advice can be found at the beginning of each section, but if further information or assistance is required, please contact the Data Protection Officer on 01923 278362 or via email to bahzad.brifkani@watford.gov.uk.

More information on DPIA can be found on ICO [website](#)

This checklist helps you make that assessment and provides a springboard for some of the issues you will need to consider in more detail if you do need to carry out a DPIA.

1. Are you collecting more than an individuals’ name and contact details.

Yes No

2. Are you going to use the data you collect to do any evaluation or scoring relating to that individual

Yes No

3. Is the system you are going to use able to make automated decisions relating to the individual

Yes No

4. Is the system capable of undertaking systematic monitoring of the individual

Yes No

5. Is the system going to process sensitive or highly personal data

Yes No

6. Is the system going to process large volumes of personal data

Yes No

7. Is the system going to be used to record the personal data of vulnerable individuals

Yes No

8. Is the system using untried or cutting edge technology

Yes No

If you have answered Yes to any of these statements a DPIA may be required

Section 1 - Identifying the Need for a DPIA

Briefly explain what the project aims to achieve, what the benefits will be to the Council, to individuals, and to other parties.

Explain broadly what project aims to achieve and what type of processing it involves. You may find it helpful to refer or link to other documents, such as a project proposal. Summarise why you identified the need for a DPIA.

The Joint Safeguard and Domestic Abuse policies bring together partner organisations and the council to identify and support people experiencing abuse. This involves collected storing and sharing sensitive data about individuals. The support offered will be provided by the Council and its partners. This will require keeping and sharing sensitive personal data about vulnerable individuals to ensure victims and those at risk of abuse are properly supported and that any suspicions of abuse can be investigated by the appropriate organisation.

Section 2 - Describe the Processing

Describe the nature of the processing: how will you collect, use, store and delete data? What is the source of the data? Will you be sharing data with anyone? You might find it useful to refer to a flow diagram or other way of describing data flows. What types of processing identified as likely high risk are involved?

All allegations of abuse will be centrally recorded and the Designated Safeguarding officers and their Managers will be responsible for collating and monitoring referrals and reporting these to the Council's Safeguarding Group.

Effective information sharing underpins integrated working and is a vital element of both early intervention and safeguarding. Information sharing agreements are in place with the partners the service works with to safeguard vulnerable adults and children

Describe the scope of the processing:

Does it include special category or criminal offence data?

Yes. Special category data will be processed as well as criminal offence data.

How much data will you be collecting and using?

The data collected could potentially be from several different agencies and could be substantial.

How often?

This is included in the Information Sharing agreement already in place.

How long will you keep it?

The data will be securely retained indefinitely. This allows the Council to respond to any future serious incidences which may be subject to a serious case review and may involve cases that do not have a statute of limitations. The data obtained will be used to ensure that safeguarding issues are addressed. Once the information is no longer needed it will be deleted.

How many individuals are affected?

There will be few individual cases referred annually where we will need to store their data

What geographical area does it cover?

Only data about Watford individuals will be stored by the Council

Describe the context of the processing:

What is the nature of your relationship with the individuals?

The individuals could be suspected perpetrators of abuse or potential victims

How much control will they have?

The individual will have little control over the data we hold due the potential criminal offences involved

Do they include children or other vulnerable groups?

Yes the data will relate to children and vulnerable groups

Are there prior concerns over this type of processing or security flaws?

No

What is the current state of technology in this area?

Cases that are referred are currently kept in an excel spreadsheet. Access is limited to the Safeguarding Manager, the Community Safety Manager and the Environmental Health Manager (Communities).

Are there any current issues of public concern that you should factor in?

No

Are you signed up to any approved code of conduct or certification scheme (once any have been approved)?

The service has information sharing agreements with all partners the Council shares data with.

Describe the purposes of the processing:?

What do you want to achieve?

The data relates to sharing information related to potential safeguarding concerns. Sharing data has been shown to be critical to safeguarding residents from abuse and to ensure that the appropriate agencies are able to support the individual.

What is the intended effect on individuals?

Sharing safeguarding data will reduce the harm caused to victims of abuse and prevent perpetrators from continuing their abusive behaviour.

What are the benefits of the processing – for you, and more broadly?

Sharing data helps the Council meet its statutory safeguarding responsibilities and to protect vulnerable residents

Section 3 – Consultation Process

Consider how to consult with relevant stakeholders: describe when and how you will seek individuals' views – or justify why it's not appropriate to do so. Who else do you need to involve within your organisation? Do you need to ask your processors to assist? Do you plan to consult information security experts, or any other experts?

No

Section 4 Necessity and Proportionality

Describe compliance and proportionality measures, in particular:

What is your lawful basis for processing?

The following substantial public interest conditions set out in Schedule 1 of the DPA 2018 apply to the both the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse policies:

- Statutory and government purposes
- Preventing or detecting unlawful acts
- Protecting the public
- Regulatory requirements
- Suspicion of terrorist financing or money laundering
- Support for individuals with a particular disability or medical condition
- Safeguarding of children and individuals at risk

Does the processing actually achieve your purpose?

Yes: Sharing information about vulnerable people at risk will meet the conditions set out above and will meet our legal obligations to safeguard vulnerable adults and children

Is there another way to achieve the same outcome?

No: Agencies need to process data so that victims of abuse are supported by all partner agencies and patterns of abuse can be identified

How will you prevent function creep?

The DPIA will be reviewed annually to ensure the aims of the data sharing remains in line with the current policies

How will you ensure data quality and data minimization?

These polices fall under data sharing agreements and the quality and quantity of data is set out in that agreement.

What information will you give individuals?

Information will only be withheld from the individual if it is in the interest of the vulnerable adult or child.

How will you help to support their rights?

We will support the individual's rights by being rigorous when assessing whether to inform the individual about the information held and to ensure that there is limited access to their data.

What measures do you take to ensure processors comply? How do you safeguard any international transfers?

There will be no international transfers of data

Section 5- Identifying the Privacy Risks

Describe source of risk and nature of potential impact on individuals. Include associated compliance and corporate risks as necessary.	Likelihood of harm	Severity of harm	Overall risk
Hackers get access to the data through breaches in WBCs or partners databases.	Remote	Severe	Medium
People obtaining access to the data without a legal reason	Possible	Minimal,	Medium
Perpetrators of abuse might get information about the victim if there is unauthorized access to the data	Unlikely	Severe	Medium

Section 6- Identifying measures to reduce the Risks

Identify additional measures you could take to reduce or eliminate risks identified as medium or high risk in step 5				
Risk	Options to reduce or eliminate risk	Effect on risk	Residual risk	Measure approved
	<p>Corporate information security in place</p> <p>Files containing sensitive data will be password protected and access restricted to officers who need it to carry out their safeguarding duties and to provide resilience</p>	Reduced	Low	Yes/no

Section 7 – Sign Off and record outcomes

Item	Name/position/date	Notes
Measures approved by:		Integrate actions back into project plan, with date and responsibility for completion
Residual risks approved by:		If accepting any residual high risk, consult the ICO before going ahead
DPO advice provided:		DPO should advise on compliance, step 6 measures and whether processing can proceed
Summary of DPO advice:		
DPO advice accepted or overruled by:		If overruled, you must explain your reasons
Comments:		
Consultation responses reviewed by:		If your decision departs from individuals' views, you must explain your reasons
Comments:		
This DPIA will kept under review by:		The DPO should also review ongoing compliance with DPIA

Agenda Item 8

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 7 June 2021

Report author: Head of Housing

Title: Balmoral Road Garage Site - proposed use for interim move-on homes for Watford's Single Homeless Pathway

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report recommends the use of the Balmoral Road Garage site for the development of 15 x one bedroom self-contained homes aimed at ex-rough sleepers who have been assisted through Watford's Single Homeless Pathway. These units will form an essential element of the Pathway by introducing throughput from other parts of the Pathway.

1.2 The development requires contributions from the council in the form of foregone best value on the land and development costs, totalling £941,000. The rest of the development costs will be met by the proposed developer, One YMCA and a bid for capital and revenue funding to Homes England/MHCLG's¹ Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) submitted on 29 April 2021, the outcome of which is expected end of May/early June 2021.

1.3 There is a strong social value case for the proposal.

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)
Funding from Homes England under RSAP is	There is insufficient funding to develop the Balmoral Road site	Resubmit to Homes England under an alternative funding programme	Treat	12

¹ MHCLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <small>(treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)</small>	Risk Rating <small>(combination of severity and likelihood)</small>
not forthcoming				
Fund from Homes England is lower than expected	The project is unviable and requires additional subsidy from WBC	Agreed levels of contribution prior to option development	Treat	8
Planning rejects viable schemes	Project has to continue on unviable basis which means additional subsidy from WBC	Confirm pre-planning agreements for viable schemes and assess viability at this stage.	Treat	8
The council is unable to plug the gap in funding required (£291,000)	The project is financially unviable and cannot continue	Request OYMCA to deliver a reduced scheme if they or Homes England are unable to increase their contributions.	Treat	12
Heads of terms not agreed with developer	Project is either delayed or is not delivered at all	Project delays or non-delivery can be mitigated by starting negotiations early with OYMCA, aiming to agree main principles before the June Cabinet meeting. Project delays can also be mitigated by commencing some	Treat	8

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <small>(treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)</small>	Risk Rating <small>(combination of severity and likelihood)</small>
		development activities early, eg any costs associated with planning application. The costs of doing this could be forward funded and shared between WBC and OYMCA with WBC using its £291K contribution.		
Low quality of development due to viability issues	An unsustainable development is left on previously owned Council land leading to reputational consequences and sooner than expected redevelopment of the site	Ensure the site is tested at design review panels and the Council has oversight into the development proposals	Treat	8

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That subject to Homes England agreeing to provide the capital and revenue funding of £2,588,667 for the scheme, the council agrees to lease the land at the Balmoral Road Garage site at a peppercorn for a period of 60 years to One YMCA for the purpose of providing interim move on accommodation for single homeless people.
- 3.2 That the council contributes £291,000 towards the development costs through s106 affordable housing Commuted Sums funding.

- 3.3 That the final agreement of the heads of terms of the lease, including the valuation of the land be delegated to the Head of Community Asset Management in consultation with the Head of Housing.
- 3.4 That the council considers that disposing of this land to One YMCA for the purposes of providing interim move on accommodation for single homeless people will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area for the reasons set out in this report and therefore agrees to dispose of it for less than best consideration.

Further information:

Ayaz Maqsood
ayaz.maqsood@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by:

Tom Dobrashian
Tom.dobrashian@watford.gov.uk

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

4.1 **Context**

The site at Balmoral Road used to contain 19 x garages which were let out to local residents. The site was earmarked for development as temporary accommodation for homeless households to enable the council to meet its statutory homelessness duties. This project stopped in 2017 due to commercial issues with the chosen contractor. The site was subsequently explored for the development of family social rented housing by Watford Community Housing. This option proved unviable due to the costs of developing family housing with car parking on site. The site has been vacant since 2017 with the garages already demolished.

4.2 **What is being proposed?**

- 4.2.1 It is proposed the Balmoral Road Garage site is used for the development of 15 x one bedroom self-contained interim move-on homes aimed at ex-rough sleepers who have been assisted through Watford's Single Homeless Pathway. These units will form an essential element of the Pathway by introducing throughput from other parts of the Pathway (see section 4.3 below and Appendix 1) enabling new rough sleepers to be assisted in the future.
- 4.2.2 The development requires contributions from the council in the form of foregone best consideration on the value of the land and a contribution towards development costs (see sections 4.5 and 4.6 below). The rest of the development costs will be met by the proposed developer, One YMCA and a bid for capital and

revenue funding to Homes England/MHCLG's² Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) submitted on 29 April 2021, the outcome of which is expected end of May/early June 2021.

4.2.3 The development of 15 self-contained homes will be accompanied by 11 parking spaces.

4.2.4 The scheme is future proofed as should it no longer be needed for ex-rough sleepers the homes can be let to single people (and childless couples) on low incomes.

4.3 **Current issues, priorities and implications of not undertaking the proposed project**

4.3.1 Leaving the Balmoral Road garage site undeveloped will mean opportunities to address the following will be foregone:

- Development of social rented move-on homes as part of the council's Single Homeless Pathway which will lead to significantly minimising levels of rough sleeping in Watford
- The overarching aim of the council's Surplus Sites programme to create new homes for local people.
- Financial returns from the value of council-owned land
- A site continuing to remain underdeveloped, neglected and a potential attractor of anti-social behaviour
- Increased reputational risk of the Council for not addressing neighbourhood concerns

4.4 **What is the Watford Single Homeless Pathway?**

4.4.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the role of Watford's Single Homeless Pathway (WSHP) in detail. The WSHP provides a range of supported accommodation in the town which meets the needs of single homeless people, including rough sleepers, with unmet needs such as with mental health, substance misuse, domestic and childhood abuse and so on. There are currently over 300 bed spaces of low, medium and high needs supported accommodation in Watford. The pathway sees people moving within the WSHP which assists them to progress with support as needed to eventual complete independence. The units proposed at Balmoral Road represent the penultimate step to independence, providing interim move-on, self-contained accommodation with light support where occupants will be able to re/establish the skills, knowledge and confidence required to be independent. Some will be working, often on minimum wage, so it is important the rents are as affordable as possible. There are 34 similar units currently being developed on the first, second and third floors at One YMCA's Charter House building in Central Watford funded through Homes England. All these interim units will provide essential throughput for the Pathway

² MHCLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

making it viable by enabling spaces in the rest of the Pathway to be freed up assisting the council and local partners to effectively minimise the number of rough sleepers on the streets of Watford. Without this type of interim accommodation and the throughput it represents, the Pathway will become silted up and blocked to new rough sleepers or those in danger of rough sleeping.

4.5 Funding the proposal

4.5.1 The development costs for the proposal is £4,030,730. This does not include the value of land. Funding the development costs will come from three sources:

- £2,588,667 from Homes England funding through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)
 - The RSAP bid was submitted on 29 April 2021 and a decision on whether the bid is successful is expected late May/early June
- £1,151,063 from One YMCA
- £291,000 from Watford Borough Council

4.6 The land value and disposing of it at less than best consideration

4.6.1 The land at Balmoral Road garage site was valued in June 2020 at £650,000 by external valuers, Avison Young.

4.6.2 It is proposed to dispose of the land to One YMCA at less than best consideration. The disposal terms proposed are a 60 year lease at a peppercorn rent in return for the development of 15 self-contained homes with 11 car parking spaces and to subsequently undertake the landlord role when the units are tenanted.

4.6.3 In determining disposal at less than best consideration a social value impact case for the development of the site has been explored. This has used values derived from a social value impact case undertaken for One YMCA by the national homelessness organisation, Homeless Link, for the interim move-on homes currently being developed at their building, Charter House, in central Watford. The units being developed at Charter House are to play exactly the same role as the ones proposed at Balmoral Road (see section 4.3 above).

4.6.4 The social value case estimates the cost consequences for the community of not providing supporting housing compared with the added social value of assisting people to move into settled housing. The cost consequences for the community include higher hospital admissions because people who sleep rough have more severe health needs and have greater interaction with community safety services. These costs are currently borne by the NHS through the local Clinical Commissioning Group and Watford General Hospital, the Home Office through funding the local Safer Neighbourhood police teams, by the county council in public health

expenditure and the council itself in dealing with safeguarding or anti-social behaviour or cleaning the streets of abandoned tents or drug paraphernalia. The outcomes of the Charter House social value impact report applied to Balmoral Road have resulted in the following financial implications:

- Without the proposed accommodation at Balmoral Road, the cost consequence to the local community is calculated to be £156,780 per annum
- By contrast, providing the accommodation at Balmoral Road results in a contribution from residents in the new homes calculated to be £66,405 in total per annum. This is because the individuals accommodated are settled, able to work, volunteer and contribute by paying taxes and buying local goods and services
- Combining the avoidance of costs consequences by not providing the accommodation together with the cost contributions of providing the accommodation results in a positive financial contribution to Watford and the wider community of £223,185 per annum.
- Over a 15 year period this positive financial contribution amounts to £3,347,775 which far outweighs the financial contribution to development costs the council proposes to make (£291,000) and the value of the land it is foregoing (£650,000).

4.6.5 The proposal is to dispose of this property based on a lease for more than seven years and it therefore falls within the rules set out in S123 Local Government Act 1972 and the subsequent General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.

4.6.6 S123 states (inter alia) that; ‘Except with the consent of the Secretary of State, a council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.’

4.6.7 The General Disposal Consent (which can be viewed here):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7690/462483.pdf

provides an exemption to the above, subject to conditions that can be précised as meaning that:

“specific consent is not required for the disposal of any interest in land which the authority considers will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area”. (General Wellbeing) and:

“That the undervalue does not exceed £2,000,000 (two million pounds).”

4.6.8 In accordance with the guidance set out in the circular, a formal valuation has been instructed and received that shows the unencumbered value of the property to be £650,000 (six hundred and fifty thousand pounds) and as the proposal is to dispose at nil premium the undervalue is also £650,000. This is clearly below the £2m threshold set out in the circular and therefore satisfies the requirement.

4.6.9 Consideration has been undertaken of whether the council is providing a subsidy within the rules of Subsidy Control legislation (which has replaced State Aid legislation) in relation to the Balmoral Road development proposal. There are four tests of Subsidy Control, all of which must be met for a proposal to be considered a subsidy. The four tests are:

Subsidy Control Test	Met or not
1. The subsidy must constitute a financial (or in kind) contribution such as a grant, loan or guarantee.	Met
2. The financial contribution must be provided by a public authority.	Met
3. The award must confer a benefit on the recipient in the sense of an economic advantage that is not available on market terms.	Met
4. The subsidy must cause distortion in or harm competition, trade or investment.	Not met

4.6.10 The fourth test is not met because it is unlikely that the council granting a lease at less than best consideration and providing additional funding for providing supported housing to accommodate rough sleepers will harm competition, trade or investment. As all four tests have not been met, the proposed disposal at less than best consideration does not fall within the subsidy control regime.

4.7 **Protecting the use of the land for the purpose intended**

4.7.1 The council will implement a Local Lettings Plan (LLP) which will detail that lettings to the homes developed on the Balmoral Road garage site will be prioritised to single homeless people (and childless couples) who are being assisted through Watford's Single Homeless Pathway. In line with best practice, the LLP will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains relevant. Should single homelessness, and rough sleeping in particular, be resolved in the future, the LLP can be amended to ensure that the homes are let to single people (and childless couples) who are on low incomes. A requirement to abide by the terms of any LLP in force for this site will be incorporated into the terms of the lease with One YMCA.

4.7.2 It is also intended to have a long stop date in the lease by which these properties need to be built, so that in the event that building does not progress the council will

get the land back. In addition there will be a covenant only to use the land for these purposes.

4.8 Risks of the proposal which currently score greater than 9

4.8.1 There are two risks which currently score 12 after control measures have been put in place:

- Funding from Homes England under RSAP is not forthcoming:
 - One YMCA has undertaken considerable work with Homes England to brief them of the efficacy of the proposed scheme. Homes England are aware that the Balmoral Road garage site is a very difficult and hence more expensive site to develop. The future development of the site depends on Homes England’s agreement to contribute the bulk of the funding for it.
- The council is unable to plug the gap in funding required (£291,000)
 - It has been made clear to both Homes England and One YMCA that the gap funding cannot be increased as there is limited Commuted Sums available.

4.9 Proposed timescales for developing the Balmoral Road garage site

4.9.1 It should be noted that One YMCA have shown their commitment to this project by already working on its delivery, including incurring expenditure, so that when favourable decisions are made by the council and Homes England, they can begin work in earnest and without delay.

Current timescales are as follows:

Activity	Completion Date
Consideration by Cabinet	7 June 2021
Decision by Homes England	11 June 2021 (estimate)
Heads of Terms finalised	17 June 2021
Planning application and agreement	25 September 2021
Procurement activity	24 April 2022
Construction and handover	26 December 2022

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the scheme is dependent upon receiving the grant funding from Homes England funding through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) set out in the body of the report. Budget is available through the use of commuted funds for the Council's contribution of £291,000.

5.1.2 The land has a value of £650,000. If disposed of, this capital receipt will be foregone. The Council intends to protect the use of the land for the purpose set out in this report.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the legal implications are considered in detail in the body of the report.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

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

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

Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that as a new policy or service is not involved in this proposal an equalities impact assessment is not required.

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

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 There are no staffing issues related to the report's proposal.

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 There are no accommodation issues related to the report's proposal.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 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. The Balmoral Road garage site will make a considerable contribution to reducing rough sleeping in Watford and in turn reduce police and council community safety involvement in dealing with any associated anti-social behaviour or crime locally.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 The development will be developed using modern methods of construction which involve much reduced adverse impacts on the environment. Homes will deliver high levels of insulation to enable reduced fuel consumption which is good for the environment and means the homes are more affordable to people on low incomes.

Appendices

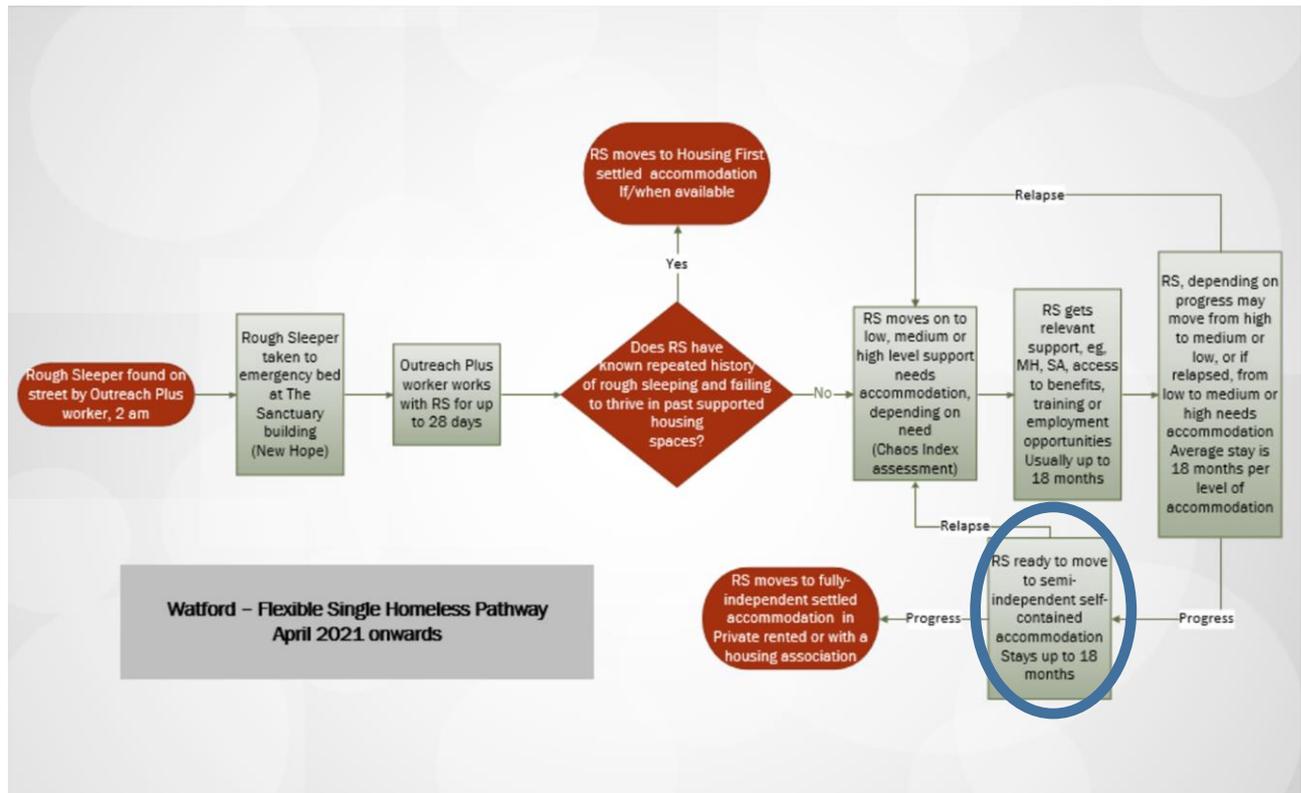
- Appendix 1 – What is the Watford Single Homeless Pathway

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Appendix 1: What is Watford's Single Homeless Pathway?

- 1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a long-held vision within the Housing Department to create, with local partners, a comprehensive, coherent and flexible single homeless pathway in Watford in which any single homeless person, either on the streets or in danger of rough sleeping, can be assisted at some point in the pathway, appropriate to their needs. The idea of Watford's Single Homeless Pathway (WSHP) is summarised in the diagram below:



- 1.2 The movement of a single homeless person through the single homeless pathway will vary according to their needs; it is not always a linear, forward progress journey, things can also go backwards (relapse).
- 1.3 Within the town there is currently a variety of supported accommodation for single people providing assistance with low and medium support needs. A single person with low support needs would be allocated to a scheme where support offered is relatively light touch (eg, The Sanctuary, run by New Hope). Medium complex needs support is currently delivered on 4th, 5th and 6th floors at One YMCA's Charter House. The council, in partnership with One YMCA, is also delivering a high complex needs scheme in the town from 1 April 2021.
- 1.4 Move-on from the supported bed spaces are key to the single homeless pathway working properly. Without the move-on element, clients within it will not be able to progress through and out of the pathway. Instead the pathway will become full up

with no more supported bed spaces available for new rough sleepers or those in danger of becoming so. This will result in new levels of rough sleepers building up in the town again. No-one wants to see a return to the situation in March 2020 of 80+ rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.

- 1.5 The move-on part of the WSHP is shown in the box with a blue circle in the diagram above. Semi-independent accommodation and support is an intermediate stage between full accommodation and support and complete independence. It is that penultimate stage of recovery where a single person re/learns to fully care for themselves with a small level of support in a self-contained home. This move-on stage will last for up to 18 months. Those housed in this type of accommodation may be working, often at minimum wage, perhaps volunteering, budgeting, cooking for themselves, and in control of any mental health or substance misuse issues they may have. A single person may then move on to a settled home with a housing association or into the private rented sector and be fully independent without support, rather than back to the street.
- 1.6 Thirty four interim move-on units, i.e. the same purpose as proposed for Balmoral Road, are currently being developed by One YMCA on the 1st 2nd and 3rd floors of their Charter House building in central Watford. Funding for this has been secured from the Homes England/MHCLG Next Steps Accommodation Programme (3rd floor, as part of the council's application to this programme) and Homes England Affordable Housing Programme (1st and 2nd floors). The third floor homes are due to be available for the single homeless pathway by the end of June 2021 and the rest will follow over the period until autumn 2021.
- 1.7 The proposed use of the Balmoral Road site for self-contained move-on homes will enable more single people to benefit from the WSHP by creating increased throughput or movement within it. This means more bed spaces within the low, medium and high supported elements of the pathway can be freed up for those on the streets or indeed prevent single people in need from reaching the streets in the first place. In addition, Balmoral Road (together with the Charter House self-contained move-on units) represent a way of maintaining the financial investment already put into the move to independence that individuals have made whilst in the low, medium or high support parts of the single pathway.

Part A

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	7 June 2021
Report of:	Economic Development Officer and Group Head of Place Shaping
Title:	Watford Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Watford Borough Council has identified a prosperous economy and a flourishing business sector as a priority within the Council Plan 2020-24. Under the theme, a thriving, diverse and creative town, it sets out its ambitions and plans to support a successful economy, where everyone benefits from the opportunities Watford offers and where the town leads the way in creativity and better environmental choices.
- 1.2 The experiences of the last year have accelerated the need for a robust, forward looking and ambitious Economic Growth Strategy that sets the right framework for Watford to build on its reputation as a great place for business to thrive, offering a diverse range of career choices and a well-skilled workforce. Whilst the council recognises the challenges of a post-Covid and Brexit world, the strength of the town's economic and business partnerships and drive to do more mean that, through the new strategy, Watford will be well-placed to manage these and take advantage of new opportunities.
- 1.3 The Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25 has been developed through engagement and input from Watford's business partners and other key stakeholders who will be fundamental in ensuring its successful delivery.
- 1.4 Through the development of the strategy, a longer term vision for Watford has emerged, which will underpin not just the strategy but also the associated action plan:

'for Watford to be known as a successful, diverse and premier location for business, acting as the vibrant centre for the South West Hertfordshire economy, attracting forward-looking businesses and entrepreneurs who recognise its super-connectivity, outstanding skill base and flair for innovation'.
- 1.5 We want businesses in Watford to join with us in championing Watford's exceptional qualities and advantages, sharing in our ambition for a carbon-neutral future, whilst

our residents will benefit from the town’s energy and drive and the prosperity and opportunities it brings.

- 1.6 This draft Economic Growth Strategy, a high-level action plan and a more detailed Project Plan (18 months) are submitted for consideration, together with a supporting report.
- 1.7 Keeping track of the delivery of the strategy through monitoring the action plan and project plan are critical to successful delivery. A quarterly update will be provided to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny. This aligns with the council’s overall strategic reporting framework for the Council Plan 2020-24, the Road to Renewal Plan and Organisational Development Strategy. In recognition of the importance of the support and input of our partners, progress will also be reported to our business community through One Watford for Business.

2.0 Risks

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Watford does not have a current Economic Growth Strategy	Lack of confidence from partners. Less able to bid for external funding	Develop appropriate strategy and resulting action plans.	Treat	Likelihood = 2 Severity =4 Total risk = 8
Pandemic has impacted on Watford’s businesses and community causing permanent ‘economic scarring’	Lower levels of business activity and employment, taking longer to recover	Maximise access to government and regional help and advice and develop measures to help improve long-term employment and skills as recommended by proposed EGS.	Treat	Likelihood = 3 Severity =4 Total risk = 12

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Longer term structural changes in the economy impact adversely on Watford	Reduction in employment and GVA creation across Watford's key sectors	Focus on key sectors to retrain, grow or evolve businesses as recommended by proposed EGS.	Treat	Likelihood = 2 Severity = 4 Total risk = 8
As the external economic climate is in a state of flux, EGS is not appropriate	Wrong strategy adopted and measures to support growth are not effective	Install appropriate review mechanisms to monitor external economic forces and monitor effectiveness of delivery. Conduct a review in 18 months.	Treat	Likelihood = 2 Severity = 3 Total risk = 6
EGS does not link to other Council initiatives	Opportunities to maximise synergistic opportunities are missed	Cross reference to sustainability transport strategy, cultural strategy, Town Hall Quarter, Watford Junction, brand positioning work.	Treat	Likelihood = 2 Severity = 4 Total risk = 8
Insufficient employment land for businesses to settle or scale up in Watford	Watford's available employment space diminishes	Section 4 notices to protect employment space, Local Plan allocations and planned developments can mitigate these risk as recommended by EGS.	Treat	Likelihood = 2 Severity = 3 Total risk = 6

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Opportunities are not taken to build stronger links with businesses and skills providers	Council becomes disconnected with concerns of businesses and longer- leading to businesses and employees moving away term skills requirements	Key Account system, business groupings, work with West Herts college and skills providers	Treat	Likelihood = 2 Severity = 4 Total risk = 8
Watford does not engage and support sub-regional growth and Herts wide initiatives	Watford fails to maximise the opportunities that are available, and is left out of joint initiatives	Full participant of SW Herts JSP, Herts Growth Board, HLEP. Increase resources allocated to Economic Development.	Treat	Likelihood =3 Severity =3 Total risk = 9

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Approve the draft Economic Growth Strategy, High Level Action Plan and detailed Project Plan.
- Agree to the development of a Watford Skills and Employment Plan, led by West Herts College.
- Note that the strategy will be monitored through quarterly updates to Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the business partnership, One Watford for Business.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact:

Jane Mason Economic Development Officer

Telephone: 01923 278029

Email: Jane.Mason@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Tom Dobrashian, Group Head of Place Shaping

4.0 Introduction

- 4.1 Watford Borough Council's previous Economic Development Strategy covered the period 2015-2020. The need to review and refresh the Strategy was timely, given the events of 2020 and the very different economic landscape that the town will be facing in the short and longer term. The council recognises that we are at a pivotal point in Watford's economic wellbeing and that a new strategy is critical in ensuring that, with the support of our partners and stakeholders, the town's economy thrives, adapting and making the most of future opportunities. Watford is starting from a strong base. Since the major recession of 2008-10, Watford has had a successful growing economy – we have more jobs than working age residents, we have seen the largest productivity increase in Hertfordshire, our residents are becoming increasingly well-educated and we have high levels of economic activity.
- 4.2 However, like the rest of the world, we can't take future growth for granted and assume that it will just continue, particularly in the light of the impact of COVID-19 on the global, national and local economy. Whilst the full effects of this, along with the additional impact of EU exit, are not yet fully known, we can expect to see some of the short term changes experienced in the last year – greater remote working, the move to online retail - continue
- 4.3 Supported by an external consulting company, officers have prepared a new Economic Growth Strategy (EGS) for Watford. The EGS was prepared with the help of business partners and stakeholders and supported by research, including a business survey. The EGS is attached to this report, together with a high level action plan, a more detailed project plan for the next 18 months and a supporting background report. The EGS is being prepared as a publication document, to ensure it is more assessable to residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- 4.4 This report covers the vision, main points of the strategy and priorities for growth. It is not seeking to summarise the content of the EGS or action plans, but does provide an overview. In developing the vision, we have established a number of ambitions for Watford to achieve in the next ten years. This time period was chosen to provide sufficient time for the strategy and actions to have had an impact, without being too far in the future to lose their relevance to residents, businesses and stakeholders.

5.0 Vision, ambitions, strategy and priorities

- 5.1 We have developed the following vision and ambitions for Watford:

Watford will be known as successful, diverse and premier location for business, acting as the vibrant centre for the south west Hertfordshire economy, attracting forward looking businesses and entrepreneurs who recognise its super connectivity,

outstanding skill base and flair for innovation. Our businesses will join with us in championing what is great about Watford, sharing our ambition for a carbon neutral future whilst our residents will benefit from the town's drive and the prosperity and opportunities it offers.

5.2 This is underpinned by the following ambitions that we are targeting to achieve by 2031. Through the successful delivery of our Economic Growth Strategy, Watford will be recognised for:

- **Securing long-term prosperity and success as a low-carbon economy, transitioning existing businesses to low-carbon practices, attracting and growing businesses that operate in low-carbon sectors, and developing financially and environmentally sustainable ways of working.**
- **Advancing the prospects of our residents**, providing the right support and gateways for those who need to improve or reskill to adapt to career changes.
- **Our strong sense of community**, with opportunities for people to meet, socialise and build rewarding networks; we will have successfully promoted new neighbourhoods, sustainable transport and increased inclusion and employment opportunities for our diverse communities.
- **Playing a pivotal role as the heart of South West Hertfordshire's economy** and across county, regional and national partnerships, to develop successful frameworks and initiatives to drive the area's prosperity and attractiveness as a place to live and work.
- **Working with our businesses to take advantage of the best in digital and new technology and innovation** to boost productivity and job density, expand their reach into new markets and grow sustainability, keeping Watford's economy strong and resilient.
- **Reinforcing our position as the premier office location in the subregion**, known for high-quality accommodation, building on Watford's super-connectivity and outstanding London+ offer to businesses, providing solutions for both business needs and employee aspirations.
- **Revitalising our town centre**, enhancing its reputation as a top destination for leisure, culture retail and hospitality, offering a diverse mix of national and independent retail and leisure offers, combined with a new residential community.
- **Transforming the heart of the town** with major new commercial and residential developments, and the right services, facilities and infrastructure to make them outstanding places to live and work, encouraging a significant modal shift from cars to public and active travel.
- **Establishing Watford as the gateway to the UK's TV and film sector** as it expands in South West Hertfordshire and as a centre for culture and entertainment enterprises, building on the region's reputation as the premier UK location for creative industries.

- **Ensuring Watford Borough Council is recognised by investors, developers and our community** as forward-looking, relentlessly ambitious, committed to enterprise and quality growth that benefits our residents and businesses and the wider economy.

5.3 Our EGS is intended to send a clear message to the business sector, employees and local residents that we are ambitious to do more. We will be focused and partnership orientated to make a difference to our business and resident communities for the better. To deliver the vision we have developed the following priorities underpinned by the following five priorities:

- Developing a thriving and productive economy
- Supporting our key sectors
- Supporting our communities to access opportunities
- Creating a new economic future for Watford town centre
- Creating the right environment for sustainable growth.

5.4 These are explained further:

Developing a thriving and productive economy

Developing a thriving and productive economy will require strong partnership working at local and regional level, the development and provision of tailored business support programmes and tangible actions to retain employment space for now and the future.

- We will maximise the benefits of working across Hertfordshire , using our influence to reflect the needs of our business community
- We will support businesses to start and grow by signposting and providing support to innovate and utilise digital technology
- We will ensure planning policy and other actions preserve existing employment space and work with developers and existing landlords to ensure there is a supply of right sized accommodation available.

Supporting our key sectors

Supporting our key sectors will require developing strong partnership working to develop and deliver cross Hertfordshire sector action plans and to develop more local strategies to work with the four key sectors that are essential for future growth and employment.

- We will work with HLEP to develop and deliver relevant sector action plans, drawing on county wide resources.
- All our sectors are important to our resilience but the following four are particularly important to growth and employment. They are:

- Professional services - especially accounting, legal, finance, and insurance
- Creative, cultural, digital and film
- Healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals)
- Retail, hospitality and leisure
- We will build on existing relationships to understand different issues in each of these sectors and work with partners to seek to resolve them.

Supporting our communities to access opportunities

Supporting our communities to access opportunities requires us to look the impact of the decisions we take, and how our local skills systems works so that both businesses and residents have the skills need for a prosperous future.

- We will review how economic decisions increase inclusivity, looking at how our and our partners use of social value can contribute to this
- We will seek to ensure that new developments are designed to support sustainable communities
- We will continue to support existing mechanism to help resident find or change employment
- We will develop a Watford Skills and Employment Plan with businesses and further and higher education providers to support businesses and residents in developing skills that are in demand now and in the future.

Creating a new economic future for Watford Town Centre

Creating a new economic future for Watford town centre will require action by all stakeholders.

- We will jointly agree a vision, a strategy and a marketing plan which we will implement through a strategic and operational group of partners coming together
- We will reflect that vision by drafting, consulting on and agreeing a planning framework to shape the future development of the town centre
- We will improve the accessibility of the town centre and ensure it offers a diverse and interesting experience
- Partners will invest in a range major infrastructure improvement from developing out the Town hall quarter to the redesign and redevelopment around Watford Junction.

Creating the right environment for sustainable growth

Creating the right environment for sustainable growth means that we will embed our commitment to sustainability into all of our actions in supporting and sustaining a growing economy.

- We will develop an effective and efficient infrastructure, including a digital infrastructure, for the Town
- We will develop a sustainable inward investment strategy

These actions contribute to delivering the securing long-term prosperity and success, transforming the heart of the town and our strong sense of community elements of our vision.

5.5 The Cabinet are asked to review the EGS accompanying this report, some wording may change as it is prepared for publication.

5.6 In terms of outcomes, adopting the strategy would commit the Council to the following major initiatives:

- Development of a Watford Town Centre Strategy underpinned by a Watford Development Framework
- Reviewing its policies on social value/community wealth building and working with partners to maximise the benefit of anchor organisation spend in Watford
- The development of a Watford Skills and Employment Plan working with HLEP and West Herts College, other further and higher education providers and local businesses. It is proposed that this would be delivered through the creation of local sector boards of businesses and FE providers working together to design and deliver training and qualifications to fill vacancies and provide better career opportunities for local people. Meetings with West Herts College have been positive to this end, and the Principal of the College has indicated a willingness to lead the work. We would seek endorsement of this at Cabinet.
- Developing a new Inward Investment Strategy on the back of a new brand narrative for Watford.

More detail is set out in the action plans accompanying the EGS and this report.

5.7 Reporting progress on the strategy

The Economic Growth Strategy delivery is vital to promoting the prosperity of the town, securing a strong, involved and forward looking business community, good job prospects, a thriving town centre and a skilled workforce to support local businesses. The associated action plan and project plan have been designed to focus on delivery,

keeping the strategy on track and will be monitored continually throughout the life of the strategy. Quarterly update reports will be presented to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny and to our business partners through the One Watford for Business forum.

Implications

6.0 Financial

6.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. The Council in response to COVID-19 did review its finances and established a renewal reserve. This is being used to increase the level of resourcing allocated to economic development within the Council and associated initiatives, such as developing a town centre strategy with partners.

7.0 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

7.1 There are no legal issues as a direct result of this report.

8.0 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

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

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

8.2 The Council has carried out an Equalities Impact Analysis (EIA) of the economic growth strategy. The EIA found that the EGS and accompanying programme of activity will have positive impacts for the Watford community as it responds to the potential impact of COVID-19 on our economy and community, the climate change emergency, and the technological changes taking place in society. Specifically it has a priority, supporting our communities to access opportunities. This element of the strategy is focussed around skill provision and community wealth building.

8.3 Article 1 of The First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions and that no one shall be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. These provisions do not impair the rights of the state to enforce such laws as it deems

necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

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

9.0 **Staffing**

9.1 The Council has increased the resourcing allocated to Economic Development, supplementing the current officer, with a manager and a technical support officer. As the projects are developed in the action plan with accompanying business cases, further support may well be identified and supported.

10.0 **Sustainability**

10.1 Sustainability and addressing the climate change emergency features throughout the EDS as a key theme, and runs as a thread through all five priorities.

Attachments:

1. Draft Economic Growth Strategy 2021-25
2. Draft Economic Growth Strategy high level 5 year SMART Action Plan
3. Draft 2021-2023 Economic Growth Strategy Detailed Project Plan
4. Draft Economic Growth Strategy background report

Attachment 1 – Draft Economic Growth Strategy 2031

Delivery 2021 – 2026

Consultation Draft

DRAFT

Foreword: Our Town, Our Future

To be prepared – from the Mayor

Kathryn can you start to look at please

DRAFT

Introduction

This Economic Growth Strategy marks a pivotal point for Watford and our local economy and future prosperity.

Following the impact of the worldwide recession of 2008 – 2010, the town bounced back with renewed energy and success. Our economy grew and, by any measure, Watford was building an outstanding reputation as a town with a drive to succeed, where businesses thrive and employment is strong.

We have more jobs than residents of working age, and have seen the largest increase in productivity in Hertfordshire. Our residents are becoming increasingly well-educated and skilled, and we have seen high levels of economic activity – an enviable foundation for the next chapter of our economic story.

Planning for the future

We recognise that we cannot take this success for granted and now, more than ever, planning for the future is imperative. As a major economic engine in the region, Watford has felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, many new opportunities, as well as challenges, have arisen during this exceptional period in our town's history. Our strong partnerships, in tandem with the energy and dynamism of our town, our businesses and our residents, mean we are well placed to build on future prospects, strengthen our prosperity and deliver a renewed and revitalised economy for everyone.

Rising to the challenge

Watford has always been a town that dares to be different, using its flair for innovation and creativity to go further than what's expected and look beyond the usual solutions. These qualities stand us in good stead to find the best ways to respond to the challenges of the pandemic, its aftershocks and any economic challenges to come, including operating in a post-Brexit economy and transitioning to a low-carbon way of life.

An evolving town centre

Underlying structural changes to our town have been further accelerated by the pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, town centres across the country were already undergoing a shift from a purely retail focus, being reimaged to provide more leisure and experiential opportunities to customers, in response to the growing preference for online shopping. We recognised this trend early on and we have been successfully growing our leisure offering since 2018, driven and strongly supported by the Atria Watford shopping centre extension, which

brought a cinema and bowling alley, along with new destination restaurants, to the town centre. This has extended its appeal, marking the start of the shift towards leisure and entertainment that other town centres now recognise as so vital to future prosperity. However, COVID-19 has led to many businesses leaving town centres in the UK and moving online, heralding the end of many well-known high-street brands and department stores. Watford will need to respond.

Blended ways of working

Working from home has now become the norm for a significant proportion of the population as a result of COVID-19. With many companies actively promoting a hybrid model of working, employees have both the opportunity to work from home and the office, with the latter focused on team working and collaboration

This new way of working may have a knock-on effect on the town's office sector and town centre footfall. Many companies have been using automation and artificial intelligence as part of their core business processes for some time and may choose to accelerate this to increase productivity, reduce costs and support their recovery. All of these changes will feed through into a demand for different, more flexible workplaces and a different set of skills will be required for those seeking the opportunity for more flexible and agile careers, affecting our sectors and strong office offer.

The combined, cumulative impact of these changes requires a new approach to how the council supports and enables future economic growth.

Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, our ambitions for our local economy, businesses and community are as strong as ever. Together with our partners, we will continue to forge a step change in Watford's economy, delivering those key interventions that will deliver an exciting and successful future for our town, its businesses and residents, driving renewed prosperity and growth.

Our 2031 economic vision for Watford

We have set an ambitious vision for Watford in ten years' time, underpinned by a set of outcomes set out further in the document. Over the next ten years, our priorities and actions will have achieved a real step change in Watford's economic future and the experience of those who live and work in the town.

It is our aim for Watford to be known as a successful, diverse and premier location for business, acting as the vibrant centre for the South West Hertfordshire economy, attracting forward-looking businesses and entrepreneurs who recognise its super-connectivity, outstanding skill base and flair for innovation. Our businesses will join with us in championing Watford's exceptional qualities and advantages, sharing in our ambition for a carbon-neutral future, whilst our residents will benefit from the town's energy and drive and the prosperity and opportunities it brings.

Our economic context

The national picture

Underpinning our strategy is a clear understanding of the national economic context and how this will influence and inform our ambitions and delivery.

The government's National Industrial Strategy in 2017 outlined five Key Foundations of Productivity (ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places) and four Grand Challenges (Artificial Intelligence [AI] & data, future mobility, clean growth and aging society). In early 2021, the government announced a transition to its *Plan for Growth: Build Back Better* and related strategies, subsequently supported by proposals for a Planning Bill, and a Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, with the aim of creating and supporting jobs and helping to drive growth in existing, new and emerging industries. Other key national elements are a focus on infrastructure, skills, innovation, levelling up, transitioning to a net-zero carbon economy and a focus on a global Britain. Our new economic strategy reflects all aspects of this national focus, highlighting that Watford will be in a good position to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

The impact of Brexit

The UK officially left the EU on 31 January 2020, with a transition period in place until 31 December 2020 to allow time to agree the terms of a new trade deal. A deal was finally agreed on 24 December, seven days before the end of the transition period.

As a result of the lengthy negotiations, many UK businesses did not have adequate time to prepare for the new arrangements, a situation that was further compounded by the impact of COVID-19.

The LSE's Centre for Economic Performance published [*The local economic effects of Brexit*](#) analysis in 2017, looking at the potential impact of a soft vs. hard Brexit at the local-authority level and placed Watford in the 'Top 10 most affected' places, based on potential GVA contraction under a hard Brexit.

The Hertfordshire LEP [*Brexit & Hertfordshire: Understanding the risks and potential impacts*](#) report provides a comparative analysis of the Brexit impact in Hertfordshire, but points out the challenge in terms of analysing the prospective economic risk, impacts and opportunities of Brexit.

Due to the economic downturn brought about by COVID-19 and the fact that many businesses have had to close since the end of the transition period, the full impact of Brexit locally is still unknown. There has been a significant rise in claimant count numbers since the start of the pandemic, so it is not possible to disaggregate these numbers to determine whether any new claims are as a result of Brexit, or a combination of other causes.

The County picture

The Hertfordshire context is equally important for Watford and we want to play an active role in boosting and adding value to the county's economic prosperity. Much of the government's thinking and pre-pandemic economic support has been targeted via Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) but, with recent initiatives, we are seeing government increasingly channel-funding through local authorities, which makes having a targeted and dynamic Economic Growth Strategy critically important, providing focus and direction for any funding opportunities.

The County and Districts have established a Growth Board to support economic growth through the delivery of infrastructure projects. For the benefit of Watford, and our neighbouring residents, we will play an active role in county-wide initiatives and support proposals to central government to harness sustainable growth throughout Hertfordshire.

The impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has presented the world with its biggest economic challenge since the Second World War. The UK has been particularly hit by the pandemic, with three national lockdowns having profound impacts on the economy, business, employment and on the population as a whole.

The government responded to the crisis by introducing a package of financial measures to support businesses and jobs, including loans, grants, business rates relief, tax deferment and salary replacement through both the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

At a more local level, [Unlocking Hertfordshire](#), the county's Recovery Plan, was launched by Hertfordshire LEP, along with a £3.28m package of measures to help businesses mitigate the immediate impacts of the pandemic.

Watford Borough Council led on the delivery of direct business grants and business rates relief to local businesses under the umbrella of the government schemes. In the 12-month period from April 2020 it paid out in excess of £25 million in grants to over 1,500 small businesses and more than £36 million in business rates credits to businesses in our retail, hospitality and leisure sector, helping them to survive the pandemic and continue to operate.

The council recognised early on that more action and initiative was required to support local businesses so, working through our Road to Renewal Plan, we introduced a number of initiatives to increase awareness of the support available to our business community, signposting trusted sources of support, capturing business sentiment and, working with partners, developing and delivering a series of business support initiatives, including the Watford Business Recovery and Growth Programme and Watford Business Growth Grant Scheme.

Whilst the national and local packages of measures have gone a long way to see business through the most difficult days, we know that the pandemic has brought real challenges and changes to our local economy and business sector, with some businesses unfortunately not making it through. Understanding the long-term effects on the economy will be vital to the successful delivery of the strategy, providing context for our interventions and activities.

Who we are

Watford is an urban borough in South West Hertfordshire, on the edge of the East of England region to the north-west of London. It covers an area of 8.3 square miles and is the only non-metropolitan borough wholly contained within the M25 and is the largest town in Hertfordshire.

Graphical representation of Watford location and connectivity to be inserted

Sitting at the heart of the economically vibrant subregion of South West Hertfordshire (our Functional Economic Market Area), Watford benefits strongly from its geographical location and position as a strategic transport hub. Its road, rail and aviation connections – adjacent to the M25 and M1; less than 20 minutes to central London by rail, with direct links to the Midlands and six international airports, all of which can all be reached within 1 hour – cement Watford’s status as an established, proven business and employment centre. Commuter flows into Watford itself and through Watford, south to London and north towards the Midlands, further enhance the town’s position as a business destination and subregional centre for retail, cultural, entertainment and leisure activities. We recognise that working in partnership to support economic growth in the subregion must form a central part of our strategy.

Key statistics: *This section is to be represented graphically as a series of infographics.*

<p>Population</p> <p>96,600 residents (2019) 11.67% increase in 10 years to 2019 4,507 residents per sq. km, top 40 most densely populated local authority area 64.39% working age 22.33% under 16, 13.31% over 65, young population 37 mean age</p>	<p>Labour supply</p> <p>74.3% economic activity rate (2020), 9% decrease on pre-pandemic level 4,400 claimants (March 2021), 182.96% rise since January 2020 7.1% claimant count rate 49.9% employed in SOC 1-3 49% educated to L4+ 13.3% no or unrecognised qualifications</p>
<p>Labour demand</p>	<p>Businesses</p>

<p>1.16 jobs density, more jobs than residents of working age</p> <p>52% jobs in just four industry classifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional, scientific & technical: 19.53% • Health: 11.72% • Retail: 10.94% • Business administration & support services: 10.16% <p>£608.10 per week, average resident's wages (2020)</p> <p>28,814 daily inflow of commuters (2011)</p> <p>24,790 daily outflow of residents (2011)</p>	<p>5,405 enterprises (2020), 28.38% increase since 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97.9% micro and small businesses, small business economy • 2.2% medium and large businesses, higher than Hertfordshire <p>6,365 local units (2020), 25.17% increase since 2015</p>
<p>Socio-economics</p> <p>195 out of 317 authorities on IMD 3rd most deprived local authority in Hertfordshire</p>	<p>Productivity</p> <p>£42.541 GVA per head (2016), the highest in Hertfordshire</p> <p>£4.1 billion economy (2016)</p>

Watford's opportunities

Watford has a strong, diverse business base and enterprise culture, a young, well-educated population, a strong supply of jobs, with a high number of knowledge-intensive jobs, and a strong track record of attracting private-sector investment. It has the right foundations in place to build and develop a new economic future for the town centre, benefit from the growth of cultural, creative and digital businesses in the area and grow its healthcare sector.

Perfectly placed

Watford is an outstanding location for business, attracting international, national and regional headquarters, as well as many smaller local companies. Our broad base of different sectors will help the town remain resilient and retain high job density, creating employment and providing the right environment for local residents to build their careers, enhancing life opportunities and overall quality of life.

We recognise there are challenges in realising some of these opportunities. It is vital that the council works closely with property owners and agents to protect and support the repurposing of business accommodation as it becomes available, and we need to plan effectively to support the development of remaining sites. Our inward investment, start-up and scale-up approach will need to focus on attracting and retaining innovative and low-carbon businesses that can best take advantage of what our town has to offer.

Telling our story

Watford has a lot to shout about. We recognise there is always more that can be done in terms of promoting our town, telling our story beyond its boundaries. We can do more to reinforce our reputation as a great place to do business, live, work and visit, and more to position Watford as the heart of the South West Hertfordshire subregion, maximising the opportunities associated with offering a London+ solution for businesses.

We need to move our story on by developing and delivering a sustainable transport strategy, facilitating the provision of new commercial premises and a wide range of housing and ensuring there is easy access to relevant skills development and retraining.

Key sectors for growth

Our focus on four key sectors will help our economy to stay resilient. Every sector holds growth potential and faces opportunities and challenges that could reshape the way businesses operate within them. Working with each sector will enable us to develop the right interventions together, to address both their specific challenges and importantly those faced by all businesses, including appropriately sized accommodation and a workforce that is able to meet current and future needs.

Skills for the future

Building a skill base fit for the future will require closer working between the council, the business community and the higher and further education sector, to develop a Watford Skills and Employment Plan, closely linking employers and education providers to match business skill requirements with appropriately trained people. It will aim to smooth the transition for people from employment in areas where demand for staff may be subject to change or decline. This will be key in the post-pandemic climate to help people access a wide range of employment opportunities and career pathways, resulting in higher, long-term wages.

Our 2031 economic vision for Watford

It is our aim for Watford to be known as a successful, diverse and premier location for business, acting as the vibrant centre for the South West Hertfordshire economy, attracting forward-looking businesses and entrepreneurs who recognise its super-connectivity, outstanding skill base and flair for innovation. Our businesses will join with us in championing Watford's exceptional qualities and advantages, sharing in our ambition for a carbon-neutral future, whilst our residents will benefit from the town's energy and drive and the prosperity and opportunities it brings.

Our economic ambitions for 2031

Through the successful delivery of our Economic Growth Strategy, Watford will be recognised for:

- **Securing long-term prosperity and success as a low-carbon economy, transitioning existing businesses to low-carbon practices, attracting and growing businesses that operate in low-carbon sectors, and developing financially and environmentally sustainable ways of working.**
- **Advancing the prospects of our residents**, providing the right support and gateways for those who need to improve or reskill to adapt to career changes.
- **Our strong sense of community**, with opportunities for people to meet, socialise and build rewarding networks; we will have successfully promoted new neighbourhoods, sustainable transport and increased inclusion and employment opportunities for our diverse communities.
- **Playing a pivotal role as the heart of South West Hertfordshire's economy** and across county, regional and national partnerships, to develop successful frameworks and initiatives to drive the area's prosperity and attractiveness as a place to live and work.
- **Working with our businesses to take advantage of the best in digital and new technology and innovation** to boost productivity and job density, expand their reach into new markets and grow sustainability, keeping Watford's economy strong and resilient.
- **Reinforcing our position as the premier office location in the subregion**, known for high-quality accommodation, building on Watford's super-connectivity and outstanding London+ offer to businesses, providing solutions for both business needs and employee aspirations.
- **Revitalising our town centre**, enhancing its reputation as a top destination for leisure, culture retail and hospitality, offering a diverse mix of national and

independent retail and leisure offers, combined with a new residential community.

- **Transforming the heart of the town** with major new commercial and residential developments, and the right services, facilities and infrastructure to make them outstanding places to live and work, encouraging a significant modal shift from cars to public and active travel.
- **Establishing Watford as the gateway to the UK's TV and film sector** as it expands in South West Hertfordshire and as a centre for culture and entertainment enterprises, building on the region's reputation as the premier UK location for creative industries.
- **Ensuring Watford Borough Council is recognised by investors, developers and our community** as forward-looking, relentlessly ambitious, committed to enterprise and quality growth that benefits our residents and businesses and the wider economy.

DRAFT

Our growth strategy and priorities for Watford

Watford has an enviable history as a vibrant town that has long welcomed business and industry, successfully adapting and transforming its economy to secure prosperity and vibrancy for its community and the wider region. The town thrives on its reputation as a dynamic place that embraces new ways of doing things and, thanks to its super-connectivity to the rest of the country, is firmly on the map as a great place for businesses to locate and succeed and for people to live and flourish.

Our Economic Growth Strategy will focus on the best of Watford and the advantages that will take our town to the next level. It sends a clear message to the business sector, employees and local residents that we are ambitious to do more. We will be focused and partnership orientated to make a difference to our business and resident communities for the better.

A shared strategy for success

We recognise that to be successful, we have to bring our vision for Watford to life, and this means identifying the right priorities and actions that are focused on delivery and making a difference. This not only relates to our Economic Growth Strategy, but to the town as a whole, which is why we have engaged with our community and partners to find out what is important to them, tested ideas that have emerged, and underpinned our findings with up-to-date data and information.

Our five priorities for prosperity and success for Watford

- Developing a thriving and productive economy.
- Supporting our key sectors.
- Supporting our communities to access opportunities.
- Creating a new economic future for Watford town centre.
- Creating the right environment for sustainable growth.

Developing a thriving and productive economy

Developing a thriving and productive economy will require: strong partnerships, working at local and regional level, the development and provision of tailored business support programmes and tangible actions to retain employment space for the present and the future.

- We will maximise the benefits of working across Hertfordshire, using our influence to reflect the needs of our business community.

- We will support businesses to start and grow by signposting and providing support to innovate and utilise digital technology.
- We will ensure that planning policy and other actions preserve existing employment space, and work with developers and existing landlords to ensure there is a supply of appropriately sized accommodation.

These actions will contribute to Watford's ability to play a pivotal role at the heart of the South West Hertfordshire economy, securing long-term prosperity and success and reinforcing Watford's position as the premier office location in the subregion.

Supporting our key sectors

Supporting our key sectors and business base will require developing strong partnerships, working to develop and deliver cross-county, sector-based action plans and to develop more local strategies to work with the four key sectors that are essential for future growth.

All our sectors are important to our resilience, but the four particularly important to growth and employment are: professional services, especially accounting, legal, finance and insurance, creative, cultural, digital and film, healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals) and retail, hospitality and leisure

- We will work with HLEP to develop and deliver relevant sector action plans, drawing on county-wide resources
- We will build on existing relationships to understand different issues in each of these sectors and work with partners to resolve them.

These actions will contribute to a number of elements of our vision: playing a pivotal role at the heart of the South West Hertfordshire economy; securing long-term prosperity and success; reinforcing Watford's position as the premier office location in the subregion; working with our businesses to take advantage of the best in digital and new technology and innovation; establishing Watford as the gateway to the UK's TV and film sector and as a centre for culture and entertainment; and revitalising our town centre.

Supporting our communities to access opportunities

Supporting our communities to access opportunities requires us to look the impact of the decisions we take to support inclusive growth, and how our local skills systems work, so that both businesses and residents have the skills they need for a prosperous future.

- We will review how council decisions increase inclusivity, looking at how we and our partners can contribute more to social value outcomes in our investment decisions.

- We will seek to ensure that new developments are designed to support sustainable communities.
- We will continue to support existing mechanism to help residents find or change employment.
- We will develop a Watford Skills and Employment Plan with businesses and further and higher education providers to support businesses and residents in developing skills that are in demand now and in the future.

These actions will contribute to our strong sense of community, advancing our vision to enhance the prospects of our residents.

Creating a new economic future for Watford Town Centre

Creating a new economic future for Watford Town Centre will require action by all stakeholders.

- We will jointly agree a vision, a strategy and a marketing plan, which we will implement through a strategic and operational group of partners.
- We will reflect that vision by drafting, consulting on and agreeing a planning framework to shape the future development of the town centre.
- We will improve the accessibility of the town centre and ensure it offers a diverse and interesting experience.
- Partners will invest in a range of major infrastructure improvements, from developing out the Town Hall Quarter, to the redesign and redevelopment around Watford Junction station.

These actions will contribute to our vision to revitalise our town centre and transform the heart of the town.

Creating the right environment for sustainable growth

Creating the right environment for sustainable growth means that we will embed our commitment to sustainability in all of our actions to support and sustain a growing economy.

- We will develop an effective and efficient infrastructure, including a digital infrastructure, for the town.
- We will develop a sustainable inward-investment strategy.

These actions will contribute to our vision to revitalise our town centre and transform the heart of the town.

Delivering the strategy

Watford's strong local partnerships and networks are key to the delivery of this strategy, working alongside Watford Borough Council. These include, amongst others:

- Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Growth Board
- Hertfordshire Growth Hub
- Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- University of Hertfordshire
- Watford Business Improvement District
- Watford Chamber of Commerce
- Wenta
- West Herts College

This joint-working approach will require working across traditional boundaries on a range of enabling actions and will reinforce and advocate the case for external funding opportunities by demonstrating a collective and united voice for Watford.

This Economic Growth Strategy is accompanied by a high-level, forward-looking SMART action plan, which covers the next five years, a supporting report and a detailed project plan for the next 18 months.

We will monitor and report on the implementation of the action plan to Cabinet. In addition, we are developing a set of measures showing Watford's comparative performance nationally and locally to support the measurement of success, for each priority.

Attachment 2 - Five-Year Economic Growth Strategy SMART Action Plan

This Five Year SMART Action Plan sets out a high level programme of work to be delivered against the Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2025 priorities.

As an annual activity Watford Borough Council will produce an update on the programme, provide a more detailed 12 month action plan and review the progress on outcomes for each of the workstreams under our five priorities.

Under each priority we are showing the following for each strategic objective:

- Our role
- Our partners
- Costs, resources and funding
- Challenges and risks
- Timeline (short/medium/long)
- Monitoring and measurement

This Action Plan captures potential costs to Watford Borough Council on a scale of £ indicators:

- A single £ represents under £25k
- Two ££ represents up to £100K
- Three £££ represents up to £500k
- And ££££ represents over £501k

The timeline is set out as Short, Medium or Long term:

- Short term relates to projects that will be completed within 12 months
- Medium term equates to delivery in 1 to 3 years
- Long term projects will take over 4 years to complete

DEVELOPING A THRIVING AND PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Maximising the benefit of working with Hertfordshire wide organisations.	WBC is a key partner who helps to shape the nature of the Hertfordshire-wide offer.	HCoC HGB HGH HLEP WCoC Wenta	£	Challenge relates to time required to fully contribute to discussions, signpost enquiries and attendance at partner meetings.	Short	Monitoring of progress will be conducted quarterly.
Maximising the benefits from the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) by aligning planning and other policies to ensure that Watford benefits from and supports growth in adjacent areas.	WBC will actively work with HLEP and FEMA Councils to develop joint strategic planning and transport policies.	FEMA Councils HCC HLEP	££	The FEMA amplifies the impact of economic activity in a broader area. This can both be very advantageous or potentially very dampening on economic activity.	Medium	Progress will be measured by progress on agreed joint planning approaches and partnership projects.
Responding to challenges to the economy and community presented by COVID-19 pandemic.	WBC has a number of roles including supporting business and enterprise, enforcing compliance and	HCC Health authority HLEP	££	The Hertfordshire Economic Recovery Plan sets out a strategic direction for recovery.	Short, Medium	Targets will be set in recovery plan and regularly updated as the current situation changes.

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
	supporting citizens.					
Responding to opportunities and challenges presented by Brexit and new regulatory framework.	WBC will have roles in supporting business and residents adapt to the emerging situation.	Government Departments HGH HLEP Wenta	£	It is too early to formulate a strategic response on this issue but information will be gathered by a range of organisations, shared and analysed.	Short, Medium	Targets will be developed as the understanding of the changes required emerges.
Using our Account Management system to help us understand the issues facing our largest employers.	WBC has a lead role in engaging with its businesses	HCoC WCoC	£	We will ensure that there are single points of contact with business leaders to fast-track enquiries.	Short, Medium, Long	Number of jobs safeguarded. Number of businesses supported.
Providing the conditions and assets, such as workspace, to encourage innovative companies to base and expand in Watford.	WBC will lead and support the delivery of new workspace.	Co-working space providers Developers HLEP Serviced office providers	£££	Watford needs to be able to attract and house entrepreneurs in high quality facilities.	Medium	Progress will be measured on a project by project basis. Jobs and businesses created/attracted to Watford.

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Supporting start-ups and scale-ups.	WBC has a funder, partnering and promoter role to support the lead agencies.	HCoC HGH HLEP WCoC Wenta	££	Challenge relates to time required to signpost enquiries, ability to access funding and attendance at partner meetings.	Short, Medium	Monitoring of progress will be conducted quarterly. Progress to be measured against forecast of 1,300 new jobs and the number of new businesses establishing a presence.
Protecting existing employment space.	WBC will provide a lead role through planning.	Developers Private investors	££	Watford needs to ensure that there is sufficient space to support company growth and inward investment.	Medium, Long	Progress will be measured on a project-by-project basis.
Reviewing the availability of employment space and working with the developer community to establish the demand for high quality, affordable workspace.	WBC has a lead role in reviewing the amount and quality of workspace within the Borough.	Developers	££	The key challenge relates to understanding the demand for workspace as we move into a new economic phase beyond the pandemic.	Short, Medium	We will assess the demand during 2021/22 and develop updated proposals subsequently.

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Delivering commercial space to support business growth, such as at Croxley Park, WBP and Clarendon Road.	WBC will be a funder and use its planning role.	Developers HLEP Private Investors	££££	Market demand, viability.	Medium, Long	Delivery of floor space.

SUPPORTING OUR KEY SECTORS

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Working with HLEP to develop Sector Action Plans which support our key sectors and businesses.	WBC has a partnering role supporting HLEP to develop and deliver the Action Plans.	HLEP Private sector businesses	£	We will work with HLEP to define actions which support our business community.	Short	Number of businesses assisted. Number of jobs safeguarded. Number of new jobs.
Focusing on retaining and growing businesses in all of our key sectors.	WBC has a partnering and problem solving role.	BROs Business forums Developers HLEP Private sector businesses Skills providers	££	We recognise that our key sectors all face differing degrees of long-term structural change. The challenge is to identify actions that will support the sectors respond positively to these challenges.	Medium	Number of major employers retained. Number of jobs safeguarded. Number of new jobs created. Number of new businesses attracted to Watford.
Working with the professional services sector to retain and grow businesses in this sector.	WBC has a partnering role.	Headquarters operations Legal, banking and financial businesses	££	There are a very wide range of businesses in these sectors, the challenge is to understand the issues and their	Medium, Long	Number of major employers retained. Number of jobs safeguarded.

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
				<p>planning for the future. They create the highest GVA and highest employment levels in Watford.</p>		<p>Number of new jobs created.</p> <p>Number of new businesses attracted to Watford.</p>
<p>Working work with the creative, cultural, digital and film sector to maximise the opportunities from the SW Herts film and TV sector, and the potential for clustering of creative sector businesses in Watford.</p>	<p>WBC has a partnering role.</p>	<p>Arts Council Creative sector businesses HGB HLEP Neighbouring Districts Skills providers SW Herts film studios</p>	<p>££</p>	<p>HGB has commissioned a workstream on the creative, TV and film sector and HLEP is developing a Sector Action plan. SW Hertfordshire is recognised as the centre of the UK TV and Film Industry.</p> <p>Watford has an opportunity to maximise the benefits of investment and employment opportunities in this growth sector.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Progress on the initiative will be reviewed on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Working with the healthcare (medical</p>	<p>WBC has a partnering role.</p>	<p>Healthcare businesses HLEP</p>	<p>££</p>	<p>WBC has targeted this sector for Inward</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>During 2021/22 we will undertake further research</p>

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
services, medical equipment and pharma) sector to retain and grow businesses in this area.		NHS		Investment. There is the opportunity to attract more supply chain and headquarters businesses.		and produce an action plan.
Working with the retail, hospitality and leisure services sector to diversify their offer and become more sustainable in the medium term.	WBC has a partnering role.	HCoC HLEP Retail sector businesses, inc. headquarters WBID WCoC	££	WBC recognises that the retail sector has underlying structural changes, pressures exacerbated by the pandemic and provides a key element of Watford's offer.	Short, Medium	We will develop a town centre strategy in the next 12 months.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Continuing to ensure that our economic decisions are inclusive, and support our business and local communities to access opportunities.	WBC has a lead role through our procurement strategy and planning role (including S106).	Community groups HCoC Voluntary sector organisations WCoC WHC	££	We will work with our businesses and community organisations to review the current impact of decisions and identify actions that we are able to take that will promote inclusivity.	Medium	Metrics to be developed after proposals are formulated.
Ensuring the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments the council is responsible for create successful, well-designed new communities.	WBC has a lead role through its planning role and in neighbourhoods we are developing, e.g. Riverwell, delivering on the community needs.	Community groups Developers	££££	We will work with developers and community groups to ensure that our major projects, when delivered are high quality and sustainable.	Long	Number of new homes. Number of new schools, and other community facilities. Success in developing accessible transport.
Working with those residents in sectors most impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, such as retail and	WBC has a partnering role in securing the economic recovery following the pandemic.	HLEP	££	The challenge will be ensuring that support is offered to both residents and businesses at the earliest opportunity in	Short, Medium, Long	Number of residents supported. Number of businesses assisted.

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
hospitality, through the delivery of the Hertfordshire Economic Recovery Plan.				order to alleviate any pressure caused by the pandemic and ensure that our residents have transferable skills.		
Supporting our current and future workforce to be resilient following the Coronavirus pandemic. We want to ensure residents can access support for improving or developing new skills and increasing their employability.	WBC has an influencing role in ensuring our residents are able to secure new employment opportunities.	Childcare providers DWP HELP Skills providers Voluntary sector organisations WHC	£	With the pandemic impacting on our communities and business we will provide signposting support which help our residents secure new opportunities and enable business to recruit staff.	Short	Key metrics will include the number of residents securing new employment and training opportunities and positive changes to the rate of unemployment and number of businesses supported.
Working with the Hertfordshire Skills Advisory Panel, University of Hertfordshire, West Herts College, other providers and local businesses in our key sectors to develop a	WBC has a partnering role to facilitate the development of a strategy and underpin regular and closer working between the FE sector and businesses.	HLEP LEA Skills providers WHC UoH	£	The main challenge is to ensure that Watford businesses are engaged and participating in activities, particularly in the four key growth	Medium	The Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Strategy will set out key metrics. Key indicators will include number of schools / college and businesses engaged in

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Watford skills and employment strategy and put in place mechanisms to deliver this.				sectors and Key Accounts.		delivery and longer term if skills shortages diminish.
Supporting the delivery of apprenticeships.	WBC has a partnering role encouraging businesses to establish apprenticeship roles and supporting lead agencies to offer apprenticeship training qualifications. This will be considered as part of the Watford Skills and Employment Plan.	Businesses HCoC HLEP Skills providers WCoC WHC	£	The key risk is change to apprenticeship policy. At present this is not foreseen, however the impact of the pandemic may create a change in approach.	Short, Medium	Key metrics will include the number of apprenticeships secured and the number of companies actively supporting apprenticeships locally.
Attracting new highly skilled workers and retaining talented people in the Borough.	WBC has a planning role in ensuring high quality housing and employment space is available.	Businesses Developers (to attract jobs, housing and quality environment)	£	We will focus on promoting Watford's brand and its attractiveness as a place to live and work.	Long	Key metrics will be agreed within the strategy and will focus on attracting and securing new high skilled workers.

CREATING A NEW ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR THE TOWN CENTRE

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Creating a new vision, strategy and marketing plan for the Town Centre.	WBC to lead coordination of project.	Businesses Residents WBID Developers/ Stakeholders	££	Challenges are that the pandemic and underlying structural trends will require strong vision and plan to sustain Town Centre.	Short, Medium	This will be proposed as part of the project plan.
Ensuring that Watford Town Centre promotes a more diverse experience and is a welcoming and safe place.	WBC to lead the delivery of improvements building on work undertaken to date to support the Town Centre through the pandemic.	Global Mutual (managers of Atria) Herts Constabulary WBID	££	Challenges relate to securing funds to support identified initiatives.	Short, Medium	Projects will be reviewed on a monthly basis. Key measures include footfall crime rates and retaining our Purple Flag status.
Supporting Town Centre businesses	We will build on the close relationships we have developed with retail hospitality and cultural sector businesses to trade safely and adapt to the new environment.	Herts Constabulary Town Centre Partnership bodies WBID	££	Challenges relate to the pandemic and understanding of requirements.	Short, Medium	Vacancy rates. New businesses attracted into Watford.

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Developing a Town Centre planning framework.	WBC to lead the development of the framework.	Town Centre Strategic Forum	£	Resident and stakeholder support for the changes.	Short	Publication of the Town Centre framework.
Transforming the heart of the town by delivering public realm improvements such as Watford Junction and Clarendon Road.	WBC to lead coordination of project development and in dealing with planning aspects of projects.	Developers HCC HGB Homes England Landowners Network Rail	£££££	Risks relate to secure development funding for individual schemes and ensuring high quality design.	Long	Project monitoring will be at each individual project level and reported to Cabinet on a regular basis.
Encouraging investment and improving accessibility.	WBC will lead on delivering major improvements in conjunction with partners.	Developers HCC Landowners	££	Risks relate to secure development funding for individual schemes and ensuring high quality design.	Short, Medium	Key metrics will be developed
Developing the proposition, how we market and improve the promotion of Watford Town centre offer.	WBC to lead review to determine how additional measures can be implemented.	Town Centre Strategic Forum	££	A key challenge will be developing a shared way of working, and establishing the right partnerships and delivery paths.	Medium	Progress on the programme will be presented to Cabinet / Town Centre Strategic Forum partners and reviewed on an annual basis.

CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
Ensuring the delivery of Infrastructure improvements to act as a catalyst for economic growth by meeting the needs of employment and housing growth.	<p>WBC has a strategic and an enabling role. Working with HGB it has a partnership role to support the delivery of the investment prospectus with key infrastructure, sites and opportunities identified.</p> <p>WBC is producing a Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) with HCC.</p>	<p>HCC Network Rail Private sector transport operators TfL</p>	<p>££££</p>	<p>Challenge is to secure private sector funding and attract funding from Government.</p>	<p>Medium, Long</p>	<p>We will monitor opportunities to secure funding and report back to Cabinet on regular basis.</p>
Delivering new high-quality housing with particular focus on increasing housing options to attract and retain residents / employees.	<p>WBC has a lead role through its planning function and direct interventions enabling sites to come forward to encourage higher quality housing and to ensure that the borough's</p>	<p>Developers Homes England RSLs</p>	<p>££</p>	<p>The ambition to secure new high-quality housing is an ongoing feature of our planning service.</p>	<p>Short, Medium, Long</p>	<p>Key metrics will include the type of housing securing planning consent.</p>

Strategic objective	Our role	Our partners	Costs, resources and funding	Challenges and risks	Timeline Short, Medium, Long	Monitoring and measurement
	housing needs are met.					
Encouraging delivery of high-speed broadband to attract new investment / support the growth of businesses and residencies.	WBC has a promoting role in attracting investment and delivery of improved broadband services.	Government (to lobby) HGB Private sector network providers	£	The challenge will be to attract third party provider.	Long	Initially progress will be measured on our ability to develop a relationship with a provider.
Encouraging our businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and using planning policy to influence.	WBC has a partnering and sign posting role in encouraging businesses to take measures to reduce their carbon footprint.	Businesses HCoC HLEP WBID WCoC	£	Improvements are dependent on stakeholders seeking to reduce their carbon footprint.	Short, Medium	Key metrics will include the number of businesses engaged and the extent of reductions they make to their carbon footprint.
Encouraging appropriate low carbon businesses to invest and grow in the Borough.	WBC has a lead role in attracting new businesses to the Borough.	HLEP	£	The challenge will be to build a broad proposition that attracts new investment..	Medium	Number of new businesses. Number of jobs created.

Key:

Abbreviation	Partner
BRO	Business Representative Organisation, includes Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions / Jobcentre Plus
FEMA Councils	Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City & District Council and Three Rivers District Council

Abbreviation	Partner
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
HcoC	Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
HLEP	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
HGB	Hertfordshire Growth Board
HGH	Hertfordshire Growth Hub
LEA	Local Education Authority
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
TfL	Transport for London
UoH	University of Hertfordshire
WBC	Watford Borough Council
WBID	Watford BID
WBP	Watford Business Park
WCoC	Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce
WHC	West Herts College

Attachment 3 – Draft 2021 – 2023 Economic Growth Strategy Detailed Project Plan

Members requested a more detailed action plan than that in the background document. This Economic Growth Strategy Action plan is intended to provide those actions and milestones we intend to progress for the next 18 months, with detailed milestones for the next 12 months. This action plan is still in draft format, and we welcome comments.

It is intended to report on progress via quarterly Business & Economy work-stream Road to Renewal Plan updates.

We will review and update on a 12-month basis.

Page 288

OBJECTIVE Description, including defining our role		Project	Key Milestones
Implement our Economic Plan 2020-2024.	This programme sets out key projects from our Economic Plan. It builds upon our Renewal Plan and will be subject to annual review and modification as the local, regional and national economy develops.	Economic Growth Strategy	Q1 – review and sign-off by Cabinet Q2 – strategy published
Establish and implement a comparator set of data to monitor the strategy.	This project will include developing a longitudinal data set including nationally published data, similar local economies, and ongoing data from monitoring the corona virus pandemic impact. Data sets can also include other key Watford metrics including progress on Inward Investment after the strategy has been relaunched.	Economic Growth Strategy	Q2 – develop proposals for comparator data set and seek agreement to them Q4 – submit first report on progress and report six-monthly

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy			
Maximise the benefits of working across Hertfordshire to help shape our economic future and respond to current challenges			
Maximise the benefits of working with Hertfordshire wide organisations.	We will engage with our business and partnerships forums when responding to consultations on Hertfordshire wide-strategies developed by our key partners to ensure that, as far as possible, they meet the needs of business communities in Watford. Our role will be to consult our business community on draft documents and use our influence to seek to secure outcomes that meet our requirement It will be to then consider how best to support the implementation of any agreed plans, including promotion, signposting and developing localised approaches.	Responding to Skills and Employment Strategy Sector plans Innovation and Enterprise Plan	<i>See section on skills and employment</i> <i>To be established</i> <i>To be established</i>
Maximise the benefits from Watford’s position at the heart of the South West Hertfordshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) by aligning planning and other policies. This will ensure Watford benefits from and supports growth in other economic areas.	The development of a Joint Strategic Plan has been agreed by the SW Herts Districts and HCC. Our role will be a key participator.		Q2 - Agree Collaboration agreement with 5 districts and County to progress JSP more formally Q3 - JSP initial consultation on Vision and content Q3 '22 - Section 18 consultation on JSP

OBJECTIVE Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Maximise the benefits of working across Hertfordshire to help shape our economic future and respond to current challenges (cont'd)			
Maximise the benefits from the work of the Herts Growth Board.	We will build upon the recently agreed Herts Growth Board Plan and Governance arrangements, and stream of projects agreed at the Hertfordshire Growth Board.		Q1/2 - Continue to develop Watford Junction redevelopment Business Case for Growth Board/MHCLG/Homes England funding. Q3 - Outline business case prepared for Watford Junction Support the Creative and Screen industries workstream
Responding to challenges to the economy and community presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, working with HERTS LEP as part of a cross Hertfordshire response.	We have a number of roles including supporting business and enterprise respond, through sign-posting support.		WBC will review and update its Renewal Plan in June 2021 when this strategy is published
Responding to opportunities and challenges presented by Brexit and the new regulatory framework working with Herts LEP.	We have a number of roles, with the main one signposting, in supporting business and residents adapt to the emerging situation.		Q1 - We will gather and share information on this issue and initiatives Q1 - We will improve signposting to business support and guidance to respond to EU Exit. We will subsequently update on a quarterly basis
Responding to the Climate Emergency.	We will ensure that we embed the principles set out in declaration of Climate Emergency in all the actions that we take In this strategy		We will directly reference the sustainability/climate change measures where appropriate and look to promote this agenda in our work with businesses.

OBJECTIVE Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Supporting Businesses to Thrive			
Develop effective engagement channels with businesses.	During 2020/21 we improved our communication and engagement with businesses and will continue to do so, so that we as a council can champion their interests in the HLEP, support networking and channel funding and signposting support to businesses where appropriate.		Q1 - Review and embed CRM approach Q2 - Review newsletter/communication channels
Continue to support Businesses throughout the duration of the remainder of the pandemic.	We will build upon the business and economy stream of the Renewal plan and continue to support businesses to recover from the impact of the pandemic. We will fund additional projects from this tranche of the Additional Restrictions Grant and bring forward proposals for the next tranche of the grant if our indicative allocation is confirmed.	Refreshed Renewal Plan	Q1 - Contract and deliver a high growth potential/ smaller SMEs support programme with Herts Growth Hub Q1 - Consider need to provide further advisory support to businesses to fill any gaps in Herts wide support Q1 - Develop proposals for a young entrepreneurs programme Q1 - Develop additional support for cultural sector organisations Q1 - Develop proposals aimed at helping businesses recover by reducing carbon footprint or by developing new low carbon products Q1 - Establish marketing campaigns on the above Q2 - Prepare proposals for the allocation of further tranche of ARG grant Q3/4 - Monitor and adapt depending on take up and report on outputs and outcomes

OBJECTIVE Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Supporting Businesses to Thrive (cont'd)			
Extend business engagement to encourage firms to make use of innovation funds and business support offers.	We will explore potential growth funds that are available and undertake business engagement and marketing to encourage firms to make use of innovation funds/business support offers.		Q1 - Extend briefings on government support for businesses to include information on growth funds and tax breaks Q1 - Work through business partners, networks and social media to spread information and signpost businesses to support Q2 - Review effectiveness of outreach in terms of uptake/contacts and feedback from businesses and proposed any revisions to approach Q3 - Repeat effectiveness review
We will use our account management system to help us understand the issues facing our largest employers.	We have developed this system as part of our Renewal Plan, along with other channels of communication to big and small businesses. The strength of this network will be the ability of the feedback from it to influence real change in the way in which Watford responds to businesses and encourages businesses to expand and locate in the borough.	Key Accounts CRM	Q1 - Review the extent to which the account management system has been rolled out, identify any gaps relating to priorities in this strategy and seek to engage with businesses in that sector Cross reference to skills work Q3 - Prepare findings and capture any next steps
Providing the conditions and assets, such as workspace, to encourage innovative companies to base and development themselves in Watford.	We are seeking to promote business growth and innovation through the establishment of support mechanisms and facilities, this will be more effective if we gain HLEP/Gov't support.	Watford Town Centre Ops Group Innovation and Incubation Hub	Q2 - Prepare report for Cabinet outlining business case and costing associated with establishing an innovation and incubation hub Q2 - Commission study of high growth/ innovation companies

OBJECTIVE Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Supporting Businesses to Thrive (cont'd)			
...	Q3 - Produce report and action plan to support innovative companies grow in Watford and attract similar companies to Watford Q2 - Establish database on current space availability and make available to those seeking space
Supporting start-ups and scale ups.	We will utilise ARG funding to establish a business support programme on start-up and scale ups. We will evaluate the learning from this programme and prepare a business case for any additional incentives required. We will use our signposting service to help businesses navigate regulatory issues with the Council.	ARG programme Wenta programmes	Q1 - Business support programme already listed above established Q2 - Promote signposting services from Council to help facilitate regulatory issues Q2 - Evaluate learning and prepare business case proposals for further support
Review and relaunch Watford's Inward Investment Strategy.	We will review Watford's Inward Investment Strategy in light of this Economic Strategy and Hertfordshire -wide inward Investment plans and the development of a Watford Brand narrative.	Brand Positioning	Q1 - New 'vision, purpose, branding & narrative for Watford'
		Engage with Key Sectors to secure support for and participation in Inward Invest strategy	Q2 - develop business ambassador network to support Inward Investment strategy (<i>this is no more sophisticated than a network of successful pro-Watford businesses who would be happy to chat to people thinking about relocating here It's fairly standard practice for LEPs.</i>)

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)			
Supporting Businesses to Thrive (cont'd)			
Review and relaunch Watford's Inward Investment Strategy (cont'd)	...	Consider how to include expectations of low carbon business practices for those relocating to Watford and attracting more businesses that work in the Low Carbon sector in the narrative	Q2 - Review how to reference the sustainability strategy in this strategy and seek additional business ambassadors from the low carbon sector Q4 - include metrics on Inward Investment and business churn in data set
		Relaunch of inward investment strategy	Q3 - Review Inward Investment Strategy Q4 - Relaunch
Employment space and Investment opportunities			
Protect existing employment space.	We have designated employment space in the Local Plan. We will review changes in Planning Policy when made to understand the impact of this on employment space and take action where appropriate. We will consider the balance of retail, office based, cultural sector and employment use in the Town Centre when developing a Town Centre Planning Framework.	Local Plan	Q1 - Initiate work on the Town Centre Framework Q2 - Local Plan submitted to Inspector Timescales as appropriate: Section 4 notices in place Work with Planning Officers to generate reports for Members on changes to Govt planning policies when appropriate Q4 - Complete work on Watford Town Centre Planning Framework
		Watford Business Park	Q2 - Main contractor appointed Q2 - Marketing and letting strategy agreed Q2 - Contractor's proposals Q3 - Start on site Q2 '22 - Completion of Phase 1 Q3 '22 - Practical completion Q1 '23 - Marketing and letting period concludes

OBJECTIVE Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Employment space and Investment opportunities (cont'd)			
Protect existing employment space (cont'd)	...	Croxley Business Park	Q4 - Lettings within Building 1 Q2 – Complete refurbishment of Suites 5&6, Building 4 Q2 - Complete refurbishment of various suites within Building 6 Q4 – Letting of Building 6 suites Q4 - Business case approval for refurbishment of additional suites within Buildings 3 and 6
	...	Clarendon Road redevelopment	Q2/3 - Work with developers/landlords to develop a Clarendon road investment and delivery plan
Encourage private sector to deliver high quality office space.	We will seek to pinpoint demand for and availability of high- quality office space, and market those opportunities in our inward investment strategy.	Work with developers/landlords to establish demand for high quality office space	Q1 - undertake agent's/landlords focus group Q2 - agree data set / showcase for available space Q3 include this in revised Inward investment strategy
Deliver new employment space in the district.	We will deliver the following major projects to improve the supply of employment space.	Croxley Business Park	Q4 - Lettings within Building 1 Q2 – Complete refurbishment of Suites 5&6, Building 4 Q2 - Complete refurbishment of various suites within Building 6 Q4 – Letting of Building 6 suites Q4 - Business case approval for refurbishment of additional suites within Buildings 3 and 6 Q4 - 75% letting of Building 1

OBJECTIVE Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Employment space and Investment opportunities (cont'd)			
Deliver new employment space in the district (cont'd)	...	Watford Business Park	Q2 - Main contractor appointed Q2 - Marketing and letting strategy agreed Q2 - Contractor's proposals Q3 - Start on site Q2 '22 - Completion of Phase 1 Q3 '22 - Practical completion Q1 '23 - Marketing and letting period concludes
		Clarendon Road office plan	Q2/3 - Work with developers/landlords to develop a Clarendon Road investment and delivery plan
Watford Hospital redevelopment.	Work with the NHS to understand the timescale and extent of the redevelopment of the acute hospital and opportunities to create premises for business co- location.	Riverwell	<i>WHHT have been asked to provide some milestones for inclusion in this plan</i>
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 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	Q1 – Complete strategic transport review work Q1 – Procure consultants to help deliver collaborative funding and development strategy Q2 – Work with landowners to prepare collaborative funding and development strategy Q3 – Complete work on outline business case for funding Q3/4 Prepare requirements for Supplementary Planning Document

OBJECTIVE Supporting our key sectors		Project	Key Milestones
Cross sector initiatives			
We will work with HLEP to develop and deliver sector action plans which support our key sectors and businesses.	We will review the sector plans as they emerge and work with the LEP and Businesses to develop and deliver the action plans.		Milestones will be determined by the LEP's schedule for developing and delivering the sector action plans and their relevance for Watford
Key sector identification			
We have identified Professional Services, Creative, Cultural Digital and film, Healthcare, (medical services, medical equipment and pharma) Retail Leisure and Hospitality as our key sectors.	There are common actions for all of the sectors which are set out opposite. Some specific initiatives relating to key sectors are listed below. Actions relating to retail leisure and hospitality are shown in the Watford Town Centre section.		Q2 - Prioritise these areas in the Inward Investment Strategy Q2 - Work with all sectors to understand their plans and priorities, accommodation and skills needs and feed into work programmes Q2/4 - Share a summary analysis and every six months with sectors Q3 - Seek to retain existing businesses and work with them as part of the Inward Investment strategy to attract similar businesses to co-locate here
Creative and Screen Industries Working Group.	We will continue to work with LEP, neighbouring districts and Herts Growth Board on this workstream. We note that a Sector Action Plan is being developed. We will produce detailed proposals for actions Watford can take when recommendations are available.		Q1-4 - Herts Growth Board has established a Creative and Screen Industries Working Group. Project underway to identify evidence base and produce key insight reports. Further bilateral and meetings to be held to discuss insights and LEP enterprise and innovation strategy

OBJECTIVE Supporting our key sectors <i>(cont'd)</i>		Project	Key Milestones
Key sector identification <i>(cont'd)</i>			
Creative and Screen Industries Working Group <i>(cont'd)</i>	...		Q2 - Production of report and action plan including roles/ projects for local authorities
Cultural enterprises.	We will work with cultural entrepreneurs to establish the demand for space for cultural enterprises and identify opportunities to provide it. We will work to support the implementation of the cultural strategy including providing support to cultural sector businesses.	Cultural strategy	Q1 - As part of the Town Hall Quarter programme we will identify cultural body space demand, and sign-post potential locations to those businesses Q1 - With the Palace theatre we will develop a business support package for cultural freelancers/small businesses Q2 - We will employ external support to work with cultural leaders to identify further actions to strengthen the cultural bodies in the town
Filming opportunities.	We will work with film studios, Watford Town Centre strategic partners, Watford BID and high street occupiers to establish the potential to adapt the town centre so it can be used more regularly for filming.		Q2 - Review current activity levels with film officer and produce report for members on how best to progress this

OBJECTIVE Supporting our communities to access opportunities		Project	Key Milestones
Consider how inclusive our economic decisions are			
Using our economic spending power to create opportunities locally.	We will review the learning from Community Wealth Building and the adoption of Social Value Strategies to identify the best way forward for Watford. This will include working to harmonise approaches with other anchor organisations that operate in Watford, with a view to developing policies that create short supply chains to local businesses and employment and skills development opportunities for local people.		Q1 - Gather learning from national practitioners and prepare action plan Q2 - discuss principles with local anchor organisations, business sector and community organisations Q2 - Produce policy paper for Members on Community Wealth building, Social Value and the benefits of joint working with other local anchor organisations Q2 - Prepare proposals with procurement to target recruitment of local residents and apprenticeships and encourage local procurement where possible Q3 - Develop detailed proposals for Cabinet, including implementation dates Q3 - Consider and consult on programmes to support businesses improving capacity to tender for contracts
Ensure the right mix of facilities services and transport links as part of new developments the Council is responsible for to create new well-designed communities.	We recognise that well-designed communities enable people to access good quality affordable housing, health education retail and employment opportunities without prohibitive and high carbon transport costs. We will include these proposals in our Local Plan. We will implement transport to facilitate low carbon low-cost travel for existing residents We will ensure that proposals are developed in a COVID-safe way.	Local Plan	Q1 - Local Plan submitted

OBJECTIVE Supporting our communities to access opportunities		Project	Key Milestones
Consider how inclusive our economic decisions are			
Work with those residents in sectors most impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic, such as Retail and Hospitality.	The Renewal Plan and the HLEP Economic Recovery Plan contains measures to support our workforce. We will continue to provide support both through signposting and promotion of the Herts Opportunity portal.	Renewal Plan	Regularly quarterly update
Support our current and future workforce to be resilient following the Coronavirus Pandemic. We want to ensure residents can access support for improving or developing new skills and increasing their employability.	We are proposing to develop a Watford skills strategy. We will work with West Herts College and other FE organisations to encourage access to higher education and to encourage people to train and retrain in skills that are in demand.	KickStart programme Generation Watford	Q1 – KickStart roles available in WBC Q1 – KickStart ‘Jobshop’ We will continue the initiatives in the Renewal plan Promotion of the Herts Opportunity portal Work related to Watford skills strategy
Work with the Herts Skills and Employment Board, University of Hertfordshire, West Herts College, other providers and Local Businesses in our key sectors to develop a Watford skills and employment strategy put in place mechanisms to deliver.	We will establish a working group to utilise skills data, map all education providers and their offer and, in conjunction with businesses identify current and future needs and skills gaps. We will establish local sector skills boards to continue a partnership between FE and businesses to ensure a pipeline of suitably qualified staff We will work together with partners to promote opportunities to train, and re train into areas with strong future prospects.		Q1 - Establish partnership, terms of reference and work programme

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Supporting our communities to access opportunities (cont'd)			
Consider how inclusive our economic decisions (cont'd)			
Support the delivery of apprenticeships.	<p>We will include an analysis of the current level of apprenticeships in the mapping exercise set out above.</p> <p>We will work with our business networks, education partners and other key stakeholders to promote the development and take up of apprenticeships.</p>	KickStart programme	An analysis of apprenticeships will be undertaken as part of the above exercise
Attract new highly skilled workers and retain talented people in the Borough.	We will promote Watford's brand and its attractiveness as a place to live and work.	Brand Positioning	Q2 - Include this element in Inward Investment strategy

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Creating a new economic future for the Town Centre			
Vision Strategy and marketing			
Develop a shared vision, strategy and town centre partnership management approach for Watford Town centre.	We will develop a common vision & strategy.	Strategic Framework	<p>Q1 - Workshop with key stakeholders to develop and share a vision and strategy</p> <p>Q2 - Assess Watford Town Centre against the Institute of Place Management Criteria and develop a number of recommendations for improving the vision and operation of the town centre</p> <p>Q3 - have an agreed strategy with partners</p>

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Creating a new economic future for the Town Centre (cont'd)			
Vision Strategy and marketing (cont'd)			
...	We will embed a Place Management approach.		Q1 - Establish a Place Management approach Governance Structure Q2 - Agree secretariat/project support for strategic and operations groups Q2 - Agree a set of metrics to manage progress
We will ensure that Watford Town centre promotes a diverse experience and is a welcoming place.	We will increase the diversity of the offer and encouraging innovation.	Creating maker/artisan spaces	Q1 - Define programmes for these projects Q1 - Define supply potential premises in the town centre Q1 - Define demand of use by creators and artisans who would like to sell and/ or create in the town centre Q1 - Produce a brief as to what can be achieved Q1 - Define the need and what is required to deliver this and create brief Q2 - Create a business case Q4 - Pending approval of a business case implement a 2 year pilot Q4 - Measure progress
		Implement Watford Market improvements	Q1 - Put in place web and social media presence Q1 - Put in place the first phase of physical improvements to maximise attractions Q1 - Attract a wider diversity of traders offering a range of different opportunities including pop-up

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Creating a new economic future for the Town Centre (cont'd)			
Vision Strategy and marketing (cont'd)			
We will ensure that Watford Town centre promotes a diverse experience and is a welcoming place (cont'd)	We will increase the diversity of the offer and encouraging innovation (cont'd)	Implement Watford Market improvements (cont'd)	Q1 - Re-arrange traders units to improve the flow of the Market Q2 - Move on more physical improvements to attract traders and customers Q2 - Create attraction by trialling monthly Friday evening markets Q4 - Consider offering a range of local specialised markets
		Broaden the events programme	Q1 - Bring together all town centre events into a shared calendar Q1 - Establish an shared events approach that incorporates both strategic oversight a and operational delivery Q2 - Aim to include different opportunities for events that cover both national and local initiatives that may be of interest (e.g., sustainability, Women's Institute etc) Q2 - Align programme to promotion Q2 - Jointly market events Q3 - Attract speciality markets of a national nature that enhance the current offers
Supporting Town Centre businesses			
Supporting the retail leisure and hospitality sector.	We will build on the close relationships we have developed with retail, hospitality and cultural sector businesses to trade safely and adapt to the new environment.	Watford Town Centre Operations Group programme of projects	Q1/2 - Work with partners to agree a plan and a set of measures that can be revised as circumstances change

OBJECTIVE Creating a new economic future for the Town Centre (cont'd)		Project	Key Milestones
Supporting Town Centre businesses (cont'd)			
Supporting the retail leisure and hospitality sector (cont'd)	Provide opportunities for specialist support for small and micro independent traders who trade in Watford's Town Centre and High Streets.	Watford Town Centre Operations Group programme of projects (cont'd)	Q2 - Pilot wrap around business support for small and micro independent Watford High Street and Town Centre traders Q3 - If pilot successful, consider partnership expansion of programme
Master-planning, Investment and Accessibility			
Developing a planning framework for Watford Town Centre.	Cultural and leisure uses. We will take actions to improve the accessibility of the Town centre.		Develop Planning Framework. Support investment in Clarendon Road and Watford junction (see above) Improve the public realm Reduce the severance impact of the ring road and improve the provision/ use of open space Consider the 15 minute city/ neighbourhood concept.
		We will seek to develop a 'masterplan 'for the town centre, reflecting on post pandemic changes of use and seeking to provide optimal amounts of space for large and small retail, hospitality	<i>Timescales to be defined</i>
		We will seek to increase investment in the town centre through the development of key sites	<i>Timescales and detailed plan to be defined</i>
Improving the Public Realm and utilisation of recreational space.		We will continue to improve wayfinding and invest in the public realm.	Q2 - Complete Clarendon Road public realm Q3 - Deliver market street improvements Q4 - Deliver lower high street

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Creating a new economic future for the Town Centre (cont'd)			
Master-planning, Investment and Accessibility (cont'd)			
Improving the Public Realm and utilisation of recreational space (cont'd)		Watford Town Centre Operations Group programme of projects	Q2 - Agree a programme for wayfinding and public realm improvements alignment with online and app wayfinding and development Q2 - Discuss how an events programme could be structured for when it is safe to do so Seek opportunities to create a Public Art Programme
		We will work with the BID, cultural organisations and other town centre partners to develop a longer-term events programme to increase the utilisation of the recreation space	Q2 - Develop a strategic sub-group from the Strategic Forum to oversee and shape a long term programme together with other parties Q1 - Review best practise Q2 - Propose new strategy Q3 - Put in place a detailed delivery plan for implementation
Transform the heart of Watford by delivering major improvements such as Town Hall Quarter and Watford Junction & key sites.	The cumulative impact of the delivery of these major projects will create a more sustainable future for the town centre.		Q1 - Create a timeline showing the impact of these projects from 2021 - 2030 Q2 - Include this in the brand narration strategy
Develop Marketing and promotion of Watford Town centre			
Develop the brand narrative strategy for the town centre.	Review information and feedback from placemaking, inward investment, and opinion surveys to develop a brand narrative strategy for the town centre.	Brand Positioning	Q1 - New 'vision, purpose, branding & narrative for Watford'

OBJECTIVE Creating a new economic future for the Town Centre <i>(cont'd)</i>		Project	Key Milestones
Develop Marketing and promotion of Watford Town centre <i>(cont'd)</i>			
Develop the delivery mechanisms.	Review Visit Watford delivery mechanism.	Brand Positioning	Q3 - Undertake this review Q4 - Link to inward Investment strategy

OBJECTIVE Creating the right environment for sustainable growth		Project	Key Milestones
Deliver an effective and efficient infrastructure			
We will seek to maximise the growth benefits from planned infrastructure improvements.	We will work with the Herts Growth Board, HCC and network rail and other partners to support funding bids for infrastructure improvements.	Herts Growth Board	This is a medium to longer term project. Specific projects will be listed in the plan as they are developed
We will deliver high quality housing with a particular focus on increasing housing options to attract and retain residents/ employees.	We will work through our planning function and direct interventions to enable sites to come forward. We will encourage higher quality housing and seek to ensure the boroughs housing needs are met.	Local Plan Strategic Housing Market Assessment Housing Strategy	Q2 - Produce Housing delivery Action plan Q3 - Produce draft housing strategy

OBJECTIVE		Project	Key Milestones
Creating the right environment for sustainable growth (cont'd)			
Deliver an effective and efficient infrastructure (cont'd)			
We will encourage the delivery of high-speed broadband to attract new investment./support the growth of businesses and housing.	We will develop a digital strategy for Watford reviewing levels of connectivity in both employment and residential areas. We will work with major providers to upgrade infrastructure.		Q2 - Outline report on digital strategy for Watford prepared for cabinet Q3 - Tender study and develop specific costed phased proposals for implementation. Q4 - present proposals to cabinet for consideration
We will create a sustainable transport strategy for the town.			Q2 - produce draft strategy Q3 - consult on draft Q4 - Adoption by Cabinet
We will 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/IDP	Q2/3 - Infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) preparation with external consultant with Q4 – IDP consultation launched
Managing environmental impact across the Borough			
We will produce and deliver a comprehensive new Local Plan for Watford.	The Local Plan will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 30 years, boosting growth within the local economy. This plan has been developed in tandem with the Council's sustainability strategy and taken together provide a framework for more sustainable development.	Local Plan	Q1 - Complete consultation (Section 19) Q2 - Submission to Planning Inspectorate Q4 - Local Plan adopted <i>Cross reference here to the sustainability strategy 2023</i>

OBJECTIVE Creating the right environment for sustainable growth <i>(cont'd)</i>		Project	Key Milestones
Managing environmental impact across the Borough <i>(cont'd)</i>			
Encourage low carbon businesses to invest and grow in the borough.	We will encourage low carbon businesses to invest and grow in Watford. The UK government defines the Low carbon and renewal energy sector in 5 categories. The bulk of Watford's Low carbon businesses fall into Category 5 – Low carbon services: Low carbon financial, IT and advisory services. These make up the Professional Services sector that this action plan focuses on. There are Watford based businesses that develop and sell services and products to support the transition to low carbon. Watford is very keen to support more of these businesses to relocate here and will reflect this in the Inward Investment Strategy.		Q2 - Develop an outline for inclusion in the inward investment prospectus and include in discussion about the Watford Brand



**Economic Growth Strategy
2021-2025**

Background Document

DRAFT – MAY 2021

Watford Borough Council

Preface

The Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2025 – Our Town. Our Future – was prepared using the information and analysis in this document and its appendices. This document is here to provide more detailed background information on each of the topics in the main Economic Growth Strategy document, and to enable readers to look in more detail at areas of particular interest to them.

DRAFT

Introduction

This Economic Growth Strategy is being produced at a pivotal point in Watford's economic wellbeing. Since the major recession of 2008-10, Watford has had a successful growing economy – we have more jobs than working age residents, we have seen the largest productivity increase in Hertfordshire, our residents are becoming increasingly well-educated, and we have high levels of economic activity. However, we can't take this growth for granted and assume that it will just continue. We have been one of the hardest hit economies in Hertfordshire by the COVID-19 pandemic and we need to work to ensure that our economy recovers and is resilient. Working strategically with partners the council wants to act to ensure that Watford continues to have a successful growing economy that supports our community – businesses and residents – now and in the future.

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic and its immediate response rightly dominated much of 2020 and early 2021, the council continued to look at how it could support Watford's future. We have been considering how we can do things differently in response to the economic shock caused by the pandemic and other macro-economic challenges Watford faces, including the potential threats and opportunities that operating in a post Brexit economy and transitioning to a low carbon economy presents for Watford.

Underlying structural changes have accelerated during the pandemic. Town centres and retail operations were already being reimagined to provide more leisure and experiential opportunities to customers because of the threat posed by online shopping. Watford recognised this early and has successfully grown its leisure offer since 2018 driven by the intu Watford extension which opened that year. However, with additional COVID-19 pressures and restrictions, the rise in online shopping has outstripped all predictions and has led to many businesses leaving high streets in the UK and moving on-line, heralding the end to many well-known high street brands and the department store. Watford will need to respond.

Working from home was always a possibility for some but has now become the norm for a significant proportion of the population as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. This means that many companies may adopt a hybrid model of employee working with implications for the office sector and town centre footfall. Many companies have been using automation and artificial intelligence as part of their core business processes for some time and may choose to accelerate this to increase productivity, reduce costs and support their recovery. All of these changes will feed through into a demand for different, more flexible, types of workplaces and a different set of skills required by employers from their workforce.

Taken together, the cumulative impact of these changes requires a rethink in the way in which the Council supports and facilitates economic growth. The ambition behind the Economic Growth Strategy is to support business and the community through a step change in activity focussing on partnership working and key interventions to drive prosperity and growth. We believe it provides an exciting economic future for the town, its businesses and residents.

About Watford

Watford is an urban borough in South West Hertfordshire, on the edge of the East of England region to the north-west of London. It covers an area of 2,142 hectares (8.3 square miles) and is the only non-metropolitan borough wholly contained within the M25 and the largest town in Hertfordshire.

However, about 20% of the Borough forms part of the Metropolitan Green Belt and this is supplemented by a variety of green, open spaces. It is a compact borough with 96,600 (2019) people living within the Borough boundary making it one of the most densely populated local authority areas in the country.

The Borough has excellent transport links with mainline rail connections to London, the Midlands and the North, Underground and Overground connections to central London (under 20 minutes travel time), its north-west suburbs and the rural Chilterns, community rail connections to St Albans, coach services to Heathrow airport, bus services to Luton airport and convenient road connections via the M1, M25 and A41.

A long-established urban centre, with a market charter dating to the 12th century, Watford has always been a strong location for business and industry. Today the town remains a successful commercial hub and is a desirable place in which to live, work and enjoy leisure time. Demand for housing is high for those seeking homes to buy or rent. This has meant house prices and rental costs in the town have grown in recent years but they remain competitive compared to London prices.

Local businesses are active and engaged in local governance and partnerships, which help underpin commercial vitality, and the large, skilled working-age population makes a significant contribution to the local economy. The town is currently home to around 5,405 enterprises (2020) with a good mix of company size and sector, including a higher than average number of large businesses and HQs. There is representation from financial and professional services sectors, pharmaceutical, health sciences, creative media, manufacturing and retail and leisure industries, amongst many others.

Watford is the centre of a sub-region with more than 500,000 people living within a 20-minute travelling time catchment. Once known for traditional industries including printing, the town has successfully diversified into an attractive and popular regional business centre and a focus for culture and recreation. The completion in late 2018 of the £180 million extension to intu Watford, accompanying public realm enhancements and comprehensive events programme enabled the High Street to fare well pre-pandemic during what was an already challenging period for town centres across the UK. CACI placed Watford in the top 20 retail destinations list in 2018, as a result of these enhancements, demonstrating the towns continued attractiveness to the market as one of the premier retailing destinations nationally.

State of the economy

Macroeconomic context

The Watford Economic Growth Strategy is set within a broader policy framework established by the UK government and sub-regional bodies who are tasked with securing economic growth that is sustainable, tackles inequality and drives competitive advantage.

The Government's Industrial Strategy has driven thinking and approaches in this area. It established a set of principles that both the Hertfordshire Local Economic Partnership, in developing a Hertfordshire Local Industrial Strategy and Watford Council have considered in their approach to sustainable growth. These principles include:

- The growing recognition of the pace of climate change as an economic threat
- The need to ensure people have the skills/ambition needed to succeed in locally-important/growing sectors
- The role of modern infrastructure in providing improved access to jobs/education and securing investment
- The value of local assets in supporting an ecosystem of enterprise and innovation.
- The current and future role of digital technology in delivering economic and social value.

Whilst all of these principles remain pertinent, the current situation has changed dramatically due to the combined and parallel impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit. The Government's response to this – in addition to the measures put in place to manage the pandemic, has been to publish a new plan for growth. This was outlined in the March 2021 Budget. It focuses on three key pillars – infrastructure, skills and innovation as the basis for building back better. In addition, it incorporates the proposals for a Green Industrial Revolution published in December 2020. The [Build Back Better: our plan for growth](#)¹ publication states that further detailed proposals will be brought forward in due course. Watford's Economic Growth Strategy identifies actions that recognise the importance of the three pillars and will be refined to address government priorities should this be necessary.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had and continues to have a major impact on the national, regional and local economy. The government has put in place an economic support package, including grants, furlough payments and other measures to support enterprises during period of compulsory lockdown. Hertfordshire LEP has produced a county-wide recovery strategy, [Unlocking Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire Recovery Plan 2020](#)², and Watford has implemented a *Road to Renewal Plan*, which covers community, business and economy, and the Council.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth>

² <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/ix4hbcdw/hertfordshire-recovery-plan-august-2020.pdf>

Pre-pandemic (2019) Watford businesses employed over 72,000 people³, with an economic activity rate of 83.3⁴. Watford has historically had low levels of unemployment: the claimant count was approximately 2.5% in December 2019 and January 2020. This rate increased to 6.7% in January 2021 and 7.1% in March 2021⁵. The claimant count increased by 183% between January 2020 and March 2021.

It has proved difficult to disentangle the impact of Brexit from that of COVID 19 closures of businesses across Europe. It is already clear that developing the new import / export arrangements and unanticipated impacts on supply chains are causing challenges, and others may emerge over the next six to twelve months.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) documents these changes. It produces a summary of all of its relevant available data [Understanding the UK economy](#)⁶ which includes details of International Trade. In April 2021 it identified that exports of goods, excluding non-monetary gold and other precious metals, fell by £5.3 billion (19.3%) in January 2021 because of a £5.6 billion (40.7%) fall in exports to the EU. Imports of goods, excluding non-monetary gold and other precious metals, fell by £8.9 billion (21.6) in January 2021 because of a £6.6 billion (28.8%) fall in exports from the EU.

As more detail emerges, Central Government is providing more advice and guidance on managing the new requirements. Other business-led organisations are identifying problems and lobbying for further changes. Our more proactive business engagement strategy will signpost and direct businesses to the support that is available nationally and regionally. This strategy will be reviewed annually and adjusted to ensure it is pertinent as circumstances change.

Regional context

Regional partnerships and arrangements

Local Industrial Strategies and the 'Plan for Growth' will operate on a regional basis. In Watford's case this will be within a Hertfordshire context and the Council will continue to be a proactive partner in Hertfordshire-wide work.

Watford have been engaging with Hertfordshire LEP, the nine other Hertfordshire Districts and the County Council to produce a Strategic Economic Plan, a draft Local Industrial Strategy, and a Hertfordshire Recovery Plan 2020. In addition, Hertfordshire LEP has produced a [Hertfordshire Local Skills Report](#)⁷ and will publish a Hertfordshire Skills Strategy later in 2021.

The Council is a proactive member of [Hertfordshire Growth Board](#). This body brings together Hertfordshire LEP and all the Hertfordshire Councils. The aim of the Growth Board is to respond to key challenges facing the area over the coming years, to provide joined up leadership and

³ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?town=watford#tabjobs>

⁴ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?town=watford#tabempunemp>

⁵ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?town=watford#tabwab>

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/articles/dashboardunderstandingtheukeconomy/2017-02-22>

⁷ <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/maf1pk3y/hertfordshire-local-skills-report-2021.pdf>

governance and to provide a single point of contact for central government over funding opportunities for the future. The Growth Board has produced the [Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Funding Prospectus 2018-2031](#)⁸ to identify the Investment needed to unlock potential growth. This is key because it identifies strategic transport issues which are outside the District Council's remit, and in particular key East- West routes which span wider geographies. The Watford Junction Quarter Transformation programme, and the creative and screen industries programme mentioned elsewhere in this report are key Hertfordshire Growth Board programmes.

Regional geographies and plans: South West Hertfordshire

Underpinning the approaches taken by the Hertfordshire Growth Board is an analysis undertaken by the Hertfordshire LEP of the transport focussed growth corridors that exist within Hertfordshire. The West M1 Growth Corridor provides businesses with access to the M1 and connections to London, Luton, Milton Keynes and beyond, a locational strength that will help drive future growth. Watford sits at the pivotal point in this transport corridor, being the key interchange for public transport networks. The other South West Hertfordshire Districts: Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council, are also part of this Growth Corridor.

There are strong economic linkages between the five District Councils, and they form a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). The FEMA area will maximise their potential if they adopt joint planning approaches which consider the determinants of growth on a FEMA wide basis. The five South West Hertfordshire Districts and the County Council have agreed to develop a Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for the area and will in the future review their Local Plans against the JSP. As part of the process of developing the JSP an economic study was commissioned in 2019 which includes some interesting findings pertinent to this strategy.

The study identified that the FEMA was co-terminus with the Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA). The 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment analysed migration between the Districts. Excluding long distance and moves to and from London, it showed an 84% level of self-containment, well above the 70% threshold for an area to be considered to be a self-contained housing market. This has implications for the supply of housing to support growth in Watford, suggesting that housing growth in adjacent districts is as important as housing growth in Watford itself.

In addition, it looked at evidence of retail spending patterns. Key findings demonstrated that whilst most convenience shopping is very local, a significant proportion of expenditure by Three Rivers (29%) and Hertsmere residents (10%) occurs in Watford. Watford is the dominant centre for comparison goods expenditure and accounts for sizeable proportions of spending by residents of Three Rivers (65%), Hertsmere (34%), Dacorum (11%) and St Albans (7%). Whilst this is pre pandemic information, it will help with the development of the Town Centre Strategy proposed in this report.

FEMAs amplify what happens in an area. Watford Town Centre retail will be affected by the impact of the pandemic on residents in surrounding districts as well as those living within the Borough. This

⁸ <https://www.hertfordshiregrowthboard.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HIFP-Final-Report-low-res.pdf>

means that the impact could be more severe than anticipated if one was only considering how the pandemic had affected Watford residents

The South West Herts Economic Study Update (2019)⁹ has been used to inform decisions about the creation and retention of office space. It identified that there has been strong demand for office space in South West Hertfordshire with net take up of 9,000 sq. m between 2013 and 2018. Demand was strongest in Watford town centre and St Albans city centre because of their connections to London and close proximity to town centre amenities. Watford has protected its office space by the use of planning powers to minimise conversion to residential accommodation and is encouraging owners and developers to develop out available sites, such as at Clarendon Road, for new office accommodation as part of a response to this. The Economic Growth Strategy encourages this strategy to continue.

The economic study identified that the industrial market saw strong growth in demand between 2009 and 2018. Whilst its geography means that Watford cannot supply high levels of industrial space, other districts in the FEMA can do so. The Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ) enterprise zone covers seven sites, with the bulk of these adjacent to each other at the Maylands Business Park to the east of Hemel Hempstead. The creative force behind this enterprise zone includes the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and Rothamsted Research which host other Herts IQ sites. The project is led by a consortium of seven Hertfordshire institutions.

In summary, there is strong evidence tested over a period of years that a strong FEMA exists in South West Hertfordshire. This has led to formalised joint planning to develop a Joint Spatial Plan. The area has been identified for investment priorities to improve connectivity, increase housing stock and support and encourage growth industries. Watford sits at the heart of the FEMA, both as the strategic transport intersection, the prime retail destination and the most desirable office location across the area. This Economic Growth Strategy recommends Watford continues to engage strongly with partners to make the most of this situation for the benefit of its residents and businesses.

The relationship with London

Watford's geographical location, northwest of London, and within the M25 means that it is influenced by pressures and activity within the London economy. Whilst this brings the benefits of a buoyant economy, it brings significant growth pressures including housing land, employment land and infrastructure pressures. The proximity to London may provide more opportunities in the future as companies and households seek to be close to but not part of the capital, in part a response to COVID-19.

Comparisons with other economies

It is proposed to develop a set of comparator data to enable regular comparisons to measure recovery and economic growth. Where possible we will use comparator, data produced by others for this purpose. The outcomes from this exercise will enable Watford to explore whether or not particular actions taken elsewhere have accelerated progress towards recovery and growth and we

⁹ <https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/967/south-west-herts-economic-study-update-2019>

will benefit from lessons learnt and identify if we believe their approaches are transferable to Watford.

Examples of this type of analysis include the [Grant Thornton Sustainable Growth Index](#)¹⁰. In 2019 it ranked Watford within the top 20% Local Authorities nationally for prosperity and in the top 25% of Local Authorities for health, wellbeing and happiness. Grant Thornton has undertaken an analysis of the resilience of Hertfordshire Districts in work it undertook for the Association of County Councils in 2020, and in its [Hertfordshire Ltd](#)¹¹ work with Hertfordshire LEP, it assessed Watford as being one of the most resilient of the Hertfordshire Districts to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Going forward different studies predict different futures for Watford. KPMG's analysis [The future of towns and cities post COVID-19](#)¹², gave Watford a score of -0.81, ranking it in the bottom 10 of the 50 authorities it surveyed. Lambert Smith Hampton came to a different view in its [UK Vitality Index 2021: A definitive health check on the UK's towns and cities](#)¹³. It ranked Watford as being 7th highest nationally. Each used different assumptions, and we will monitor the situation carefully and produce annual updates as to what we believe the situation to be in Watford.

Study	2019	2020	2021
Grant Thornton Sustainability Growth Index	Overall 76/324		
• Prosperity	Top 20%		
• Health and Wellbeing	Top 25%		
Grant Thornton Hertfordshire Ltd		County relatively resilient	
KPMG – the future of towns and cities post COVID-19 2021 (100+ towns)			-0.81- 43/50
Lambert Smith Hampton 2021 Vitality Index (100 towns)			7 th highest

Table 1: National comparisons

In addition, we will develop a second set of data, which will include identifying which economies are suitable benchmarks against Watford and will draw up a list of similar comparators. Slough, Reading, Croydon and Woking have been identified as potentially useful comparators in our background analysis. It is proposed to explore whether this is the best comparator data set or if there are others which would prove more useful. A review of these Council's economic growth interventions will then be made to assess their relevance to Watford. The aim is to establish longitudinal data sets that Watford can use to measure progress over time and to help shape the priorities for the next iteration of the strategy. By having both national and local comparators one may be able to draw outline conclusions as to the differences between sector trends and location-based trends.

¹⁰ <https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/sustainable-growth-index-how-does-your-place-score/>

¹¹ <https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/hertfordshire-limited/>

¹² <https://home.kpmg/uk/en/home/insights/2021/01/future-of-towns-and-cities-post-covid-19.html>

¹³ <https://www.lsh.co.uk/explore/research-and-views/research/2021/feb/vitality-index-2021>

Location	GVA per head (£) (2016)	Employment (jobs / density)	No. of large enterprises	Residents' Gross weekly pay (£)	Qualification NVQ Level 4+ (%)
Watford	42,451	72,000 / 1.16	30 (0.6%)	593.10	49.0
Slough	46,599	94,000 / 0.99	40 (0.6%)	629.70	41.5
Reading	44,408	125,000 / 1.16	50 (0.7%)	637.10	53.9
Croydon	20,212	144,000 / 0.58	40 (0.3%)	675.90	49.1
Woking	32,564	58,000 / 0.94	20 (0.4%)	665.70	60.1

Table 2: Comparison with other similar South Eastern economies.

This analysis is a starting point and it needs further refinement. The objective is to be able to track and analyse how Watford is performing on a national basis and against a subset of similar economies over time.

Local Context

Population

Watford has a resident population of 96,600 (2019)¹⁴ split almost equally between male (49.59%) and female (50.41%). This split is in line with the resident population of Hertfordshire and England.

The population stood at 86,500 in 2009¹⁵ so there has been an increase of 10,100 (11.67%) over the 10 year period compared with a 8.47% and 7.83% increase in Hertfordshire and England respectively over the same period.

Population density (mid 2019) in Watford is high at 4,507¹⁶ people per sq. km compared to just 724 and 432 people per sq. km in Hertfordshire and England respectively. This puts Watford in the top 40 most densely populated local authority areas in the UK.

Projections of population growth (2018-based estimates)¹⁷ suggest that Watford will see growth of 0.4% by 2025 compared to 1.7% for Hertfordshire and 3% for England over the same period. Given the previous level of population increase in Watford this low estimate seems unlikely.

¹⁴ Source: ONS Population estimates -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabrespop>

¹⁵ Source: ONS Midyear population estimates -

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/subreports/pop_time_series/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699

¹⁶ Source: ONS Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

¹⁷ Source: ONS Population projections for local authorities -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

When compared to the England average of 19.22% aged under 16, Watford has a young population profile with 22.3% (mid 2019) of residents aged under 16, more than 3% above the England average, and higher than the Hertfordshire average (20.63%). In terms of working age residents (age 16 to 64), Watford continues to have a higher proportion of residents, 64.39%, compared to 62.2% for Hertfordshire and 62.39% for England.

In the 65+ age group, Watford has a significantly lower number of residents with just 13.31% aged over 65 compared to 17.17% and 18.39% for Hertfordshire and England respectively.

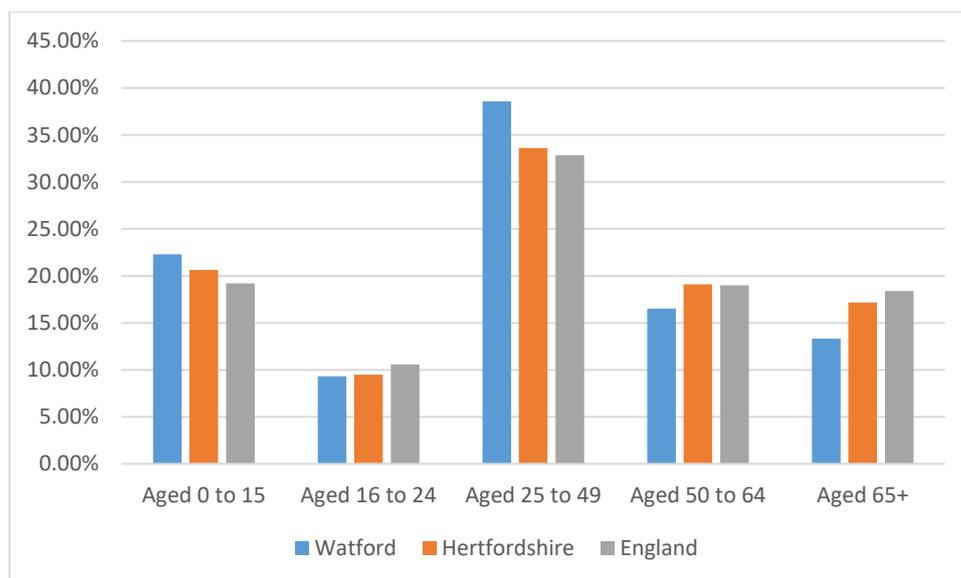


Figure 1: Population (mid 2019) by age band

The median age of Watford residents (mid 2019) is 37 compared to 40.2 and 40 for Hertfordshire and England.

This population profile provides Watford with an advantage – a large working age workforce and supply of young people entering the workforce over time. The challenge will be to ensure that our young people have the necessary skills to equip them to meet the future needs of business and the economy. This age profile and availability of a skilled workforce is a key determinant to attract and retain businesses and investment.

Labour supply

Watford has an economic activity rate of 74.3% (December 2020)¹⁸, compared to 83.3% in December 2019, a reduction of 9% on the pre-pandemic level. This rate is lower than the economic activity rates of Hertfordshire and England which stand at 81.8% and 79.5% respectively.

The economic activity rate has fallen quickly in Watford since the beginning of the pandemic with the rates in Hertfordshire (-0.2%) and England (+0.3%) remaining fairly static over the same period.

¹⁸ Source: ONS Annual Population survey -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabempunemp>

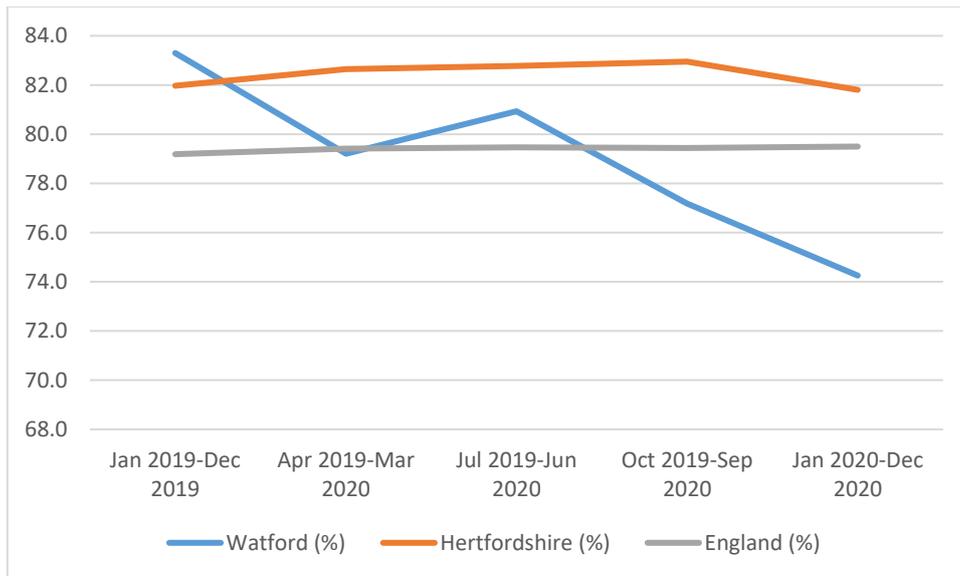


Figure 2: Economic activity rate

Evidence of the fall in economic activity in Watford manifests itself in an increase in the claimant count level over the same period. In January 2020 the claimant count stood at 1,555 and had risen to 4,400 in March 2021¹⁹, an increase of 182.96% over the period.

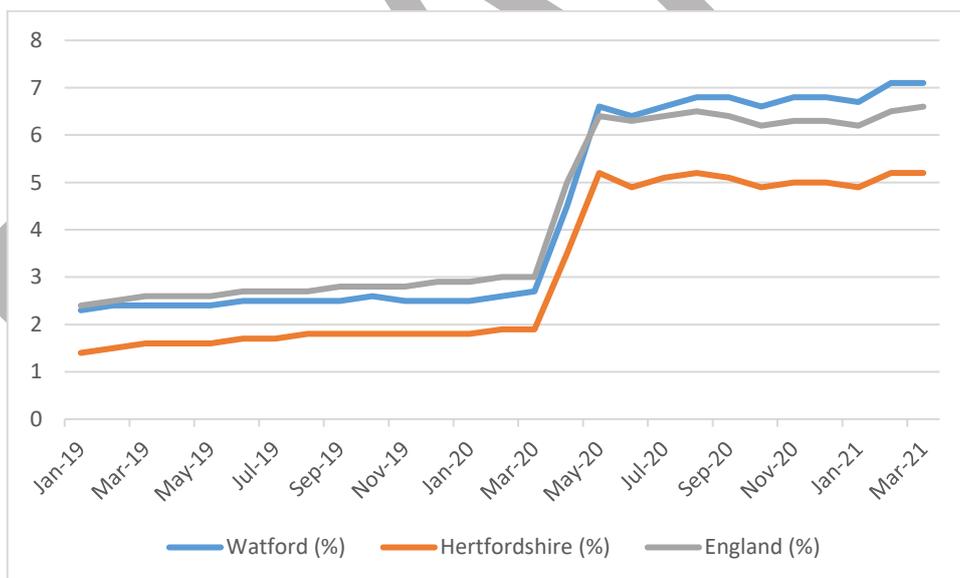


Figure 3: Claimant count rate

Gender-based economic activity rates mirror this pattern, with 78.5% of males and 70.7% of females economically active in Watford. The female economic activity rate has been lower in Watford for a number of years, this is thought to be linked to the age profile of Watford residents and the cultural traditions of some of our communities.

¹⁹ Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age - <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabwab>

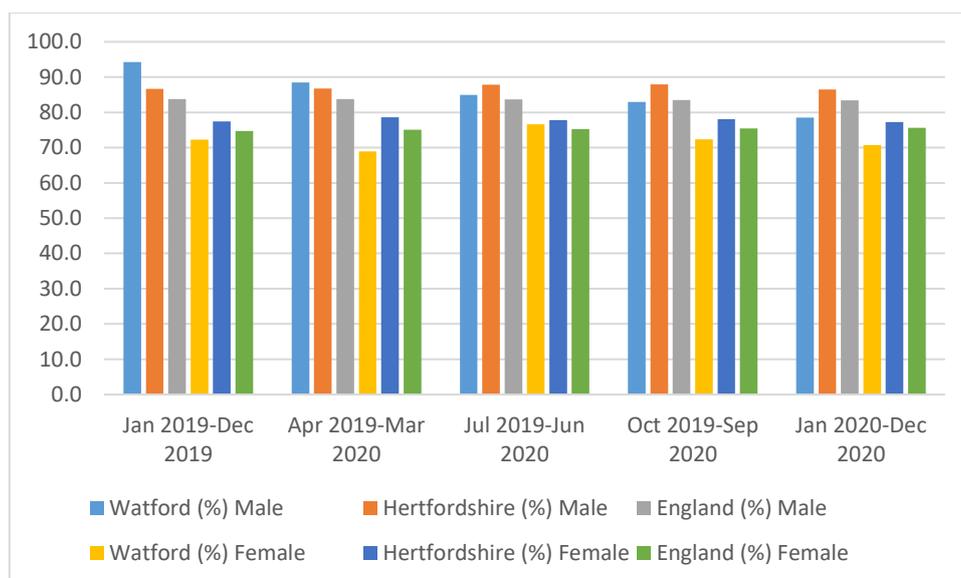


Figure 4: Economic activity rate (by gender)

Traditionally Watford has had high levels of economic activity, pointing to a strong economy that provides jobs for its residents, but equally it is attracting employees from a wider geography to meet business demand. Watford's jobs density figure over time is evidence of this.

The occupation structure of Watford shows a large proportion of residents employed in the highest Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) level, SOC major group 1-3 (managers, directors and senior officials). Employment in this group accounts for 49.9% (December 2020)²⁰ of all employment compared to 58.2% and 50.7% of employment in Hertfordshire and England respectively.

In December 2019, SOC major group 1-3 employment stood at 55% in Watford, 54.4% in Hertfordshire and 48.1% in England indicating that Watford residents have been more adversely since the beginning of the pandemic with a loss of 5,900 jobs at this level.

Occupation	Watford (Number)	Watford (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	England (%)
SOC 2010 major group 1-3	23,900	49.9	58.2	50.7
• 1 Managers, directors and senior officials	#	#	15.7	11.8
• 2 Professional occupations	10,400	21.7	24.7	22.9
• 3 Associate professional & technical	10,100	21.2	17.8	15.9
SOC 2010 major group 4-5	8,500	17.7	19.4	19.2
• 4 Administrative & secretarial	#	#	11.4	10.1
• 5 Skilled trades occupations	#	#	8	9.1

²⁰ Source: ONS Annual population survey -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabempocc>

Occupation	Watford (Number)	Watford (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	England (%)
SOC 2010 major group 6-7	#	8.2	10.2	15.4
• 6 Caring, leisure and other Service occupations	#	#	5.6	8.7
• 7 Sales and customer service occupations	#	#	4.6	6.7
SOC 2010 major group 8-9	11,600	24.2	12.1	14.6
• 8 Process plant & machine operatives	7,700	16	4.6	5.4
• 9 Elementary occupations	#	#	7.5	9.2

Table 3: Employment by occupational classification (January 2020-December 2020)

Conversely, employment in SOC major group 4-5 rose from 14.6% in December 2019 to 17.7% in December 2020 and employment in SOC major group 8-9 rose from 18.5% in December 2019 to 24.2% in December 2020, an increase of 1,600 jobs over the 12-month period. This SOC major group 8-9 figure is double that of Hertfordshire at 12.1% and significantly higher than England at 14.6%.

Watford residents are well educated with 49% (2020)²¹ educated to NVQ level 4+ compared to 47% and 42.8% for Hertfordshire and England respectively. The number educated to NVQ level 3+ is also higher than both Hertfordshire and England but drops below these comparator levels for qualifications above NVQ level 2 and NVQ level 1.

It is estimated that 13.3% of Watford residents have no or unrecognised qualifications compared to 10.4% and 11.9% for Hertfordshire and England. This lack of qualifications is a cause for concern in what will become an increasingly competitive jobs market as businesses recover from the pandemic.

	Watford (Number)	Watford (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	England (%)
NVQ4 and above	31,600	49.0	47.0	42.8
NVQ3 and above	41,600	64.3	61.9	61.3
NVQ2 and above	48,300	74.8	79.8	78.2
NVQ1 and above	56,000	86.7	89.6	88.2
Other qualifications	#	#	5.8	5.7
No qualifications	#	#	4.6	6.2

Table 4: Qualification levels (January 2020-December 2020)

Resident's average weekly wage in Watford is currently £593.10 per week (2020)²² down from £663.90 in 2019, a reduction of £70.80 per week. This compares to £684.80 in Hertfordshire which is a £14 per week increase on 2019 and £589.80 in England which is a £2.30 decrease on 2019.

²¹ Source: ONS Annual population survey -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabquals>

²² Source: ONS Annual survey of hours and earnings (ASHE) - resident analysis -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tab>

Year	Watford (£)	Hertfordshire (£)	England (£)
2015	611.30	613.30	531.90
2016	628.30	632.50	544.70
2017	640.00	650.00	555.80
2018	589.60	664.90	574.80
2019	663.90	670.80	592.10
2020	593.10	684.80	589.80

Table 5: Earnings by place of residence (average weekly wage)

The reduction in resident's weekly wages appears to be linked to the reduction in SOC major group 1-3 employment; jobs at this level are more likely to attract higher salaries than those further down the occupational classifications. Traditionally Watford residents have enjoyed higher salaries than those working in the town, but living elsewhere, suggesting that residents commuting out of the borough to work have been impacted by job losses.

There is a correlation between qualification level, occupational level and salary and it is hoped that as the job market recovers post-pandemic, Watford's well educated residents will be able to access higher level occupation jobs once again and that weekly wages will rise and return to pre-pandemic levels.

Labour demand

Watford has a strong jobs base with a jobs density of 1.16 (2019)²³, i.e. there is more than one job for every resident aged 16-64. This compares to a job density of 1.0 and 0.88 for Hertfordshire and England respectively. The jobs included in the density figure is a workplace-based measure and comprises both employee and self-employed jobs.

The jobs density in Watford has consistently been above one since 2000 (the start of the published data set) demonstrating that the Borough has a strong supply of job opportunities and performs as a natural regional employment centre.

Watford has a mixed economy with employment spread across all eighteen industry classifications²⁴ but over 50% of employee jobs come from just four industry classifications:

- Professional, scientific & technical: 19.53%
- Health: 11.72%
- Retail: 10.94%
- Business administration & support services: 10.16%

[earn](#)

²³ Source: ONS Jobs density -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabjobs>

²⁴ Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabjobs>

Industry	Watford (Employee Jobs)	Watford (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	England (%)
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	5	0.01	0.24	0.60
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	100	0.16	0.78	1.14
3 : Manufacturing (C)	1,875	2.93	5.56	7.95
4 : Construction (F)	3,500	5.47	6.58	4.83
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	950	1.48	1.96	1.87
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	3,000	4.69	5.25	4.01
7 : Retail (Part G)	7,000	10.94	9.17	9.22
8 : Transport & storage (inc. postal) (H)	1,250	1.95	3.61	5.04
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	4,250	6.64	5.96	7.51
10 : Information & communication (J)	5,000	7.81	5.49	4.49
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	1,750	2.73	2.27	3.55
12 : Property (L)	1,250	1.95	1.57	1.77
13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	12,500	19.53	13.17	9.07
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	6,500	10.16	14.73	9.03
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	850	1.33	1.96	4.04
16 : Education (P)	3,500	5.47	7.99	8.67
17 : Health (Q)	7,500	11.72	9.17	12.66
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	2,500	3.91	4.55	4.54
Total	64,000			

Table 6: Employment by broad industry classification (2019)

When compared to Hertfordshire's industry classification composition Watford is able to demonstrate more specialism within professional, scientific & technical (+6.43%), health (+2.62%), information & communication (+2.32%) and retail (+1.77%).

These specialisms are not surprising given Watford's business make-up and base, that the acute hospital serving SW Hertfordshire is located in the Borough and its position as a regional centre for retail, hospitality and leisure.

Traditionally, Watford resident's average weekly wage has been higher than the average weekly wage of those working in the Borough but living outside but this was reversed in 2020. The

workplace average weekly wage in Watford is currently £608.10 per week (2020)²⁵ down from £630.70 in 2019, a reduction of £22.60 per week. This compares to £613.30 in Hertfordshire which is a £3.70 per week decrease on 2019 and £589.80 in England which is a £2.30 decrease on 2019.

Year	Watford (£)	Hertfordshire (£)	England (£)
2015	535.20	551.80	531.60
2016	569.60	570.60	544.20
2017	580.30	591.20	555.80
2018	537.40	603.00	574.80
2019	630.70	617.00	592.20
2020	608.10	613.30	589.90

Table 7: Earnings by place of work (average weekly wage)

The reduction in resident's weekly wages compared to their workplace equivalent suggests that Watford residents working outside the Borough in higher paid jobs have lost their jobs during the pandemic.

Year	Watford (£) by place of residence	Watford (£) by place of work
2015	611.30	535.20
2016	628.30	569.60
2017	640.00	580.30
2018	589.60	537.40
2019	663.90	630.70
2020	593.10	608.10

Table 8: Earnings by place of residence vs place of work (average weekly wage)

Businesses can draw on a much wider labour market pool than just residents. Watford's location and connectivity supports easy commuting using road and rail connections opening up access to potential employees from across a wide geographical area.

Travel to work patterns identified in the 2011 census showed that on a daily basis, Watford is receiving an inflow of 28,814 commuters, while 24,790 residents travel out of the Borough, predominantly to work in London.

Businesses

In March 2020 Watford was the home to 5,405 enterprises²⁶ and 6,365 local units, up from 4,210 and 5,085 respectively in 2015. This represents a 28.38% increase in the number of enterprises compared to a 15.21% increase in Hertfordshire and a 12.98% increase in England over this time

²⁵ Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - workplace analysis -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabjobs>

²⁶ Source: ONS Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabidbr>

period. Over the same period the number of local units increased by 25.17% in Watford, 13.84% in Hertfordshire and 11.23% in England.

The number of businesses in Watford, both enterprises and local units, has increased every year since 2010 (the start of the published data set) demonstrating that the Borough is an attractive place to operate a business from and suggesting there are advantageous conditions for businesses to start and grow.

Watford supports high levels of small enterprises with 90.2% (2020) classed as micro (employing nine or fewer employees). This is in line with Hertfordshire at 91% and England at 89.7%. A further 7.7% are classed as small (employing between 10 and 49 employees), compared to 7.2% and 8.4% for Hertfordshire and England respectively.

For medium (50 to 249 employees) and large (250+ employees) Watford has a higher proportion of enterprises than both Hertfordshire and England reflecting the role the Borough plays in supporting headquarters and regional offices of major companies.

Enterprises	Watford (Number)	Watford (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	England (%)
Micro (0 To 9)	4,875	90.2	91.0	89.7
Small (10 To 49)	415	7.7	7.2	8.4
Medium (50 To 249)	85	1.6	1.4	1.5
Large (250+)	30	0.6	0.4	0.4
Total	5,405			

Table 9: Enterprises by size

This position is broadly mirrored when looking at local units.

Local Units	Watford (Number)	Watford (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	England (%)
Micro (0 To 9)	5,425	85.2	87.3	84.9
Small (10 To 49)	745	11.7	10.2	12.2
Medium (50 To 249)	170	2.7	2.2	2.6
Large (250+)	25	0.4	0.3	0.4
Total	6,365			

Table 10: Local Units by size

This economic profile distributes employment across a large number of businesses of differing sizes potentially protecting the economy from economic shocks.

Socio economics

The English Indices of Deprivation (IoD) 2019²⁷ were published in September 2019. The IoD measure relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 small areas or neighbourhoods, called Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), in England. The IoD 2019 is based on 39 separate indicators, organised

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

across seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined and weighted to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019.

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

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

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

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

The ten most deprived LSOAs in Watford, as ranked in the IMD 2019 are as follows (the ranking for the last IMD data in 2015 is shown in brackets in the first column).

Watford rank	Ward	LSOA code	Hertfordshire		England	
			Rank	Decile (1st = most deprived)	Rank	Decile (1st = most deprived)
1 (1)	Central (Water Lane, Gladstone Road, Grosvenor Road, part of Radlett Road, Brockleberry Close, Raphael Drive, top part of Queens Road)	E01023860 (009B)	5 (5)	1st (1st)	5055 (5005)	2nd (2nd)
2 (3)	Holywell (Caractacus Green, part of Charlock Way, Moor View, Jellicoe Road, Stripling Way, Rose Gardens)	E01023865 (011C)	21 (22)	1st (1st)	7239 (7800)	3rd (3rd)
3 (2)	Meriden	E01023876 (003D)	26(19)	1st (1st)	7924 (7590)	3rd (3rd)

Watford rank	Ward	LSOA code	Hertfordshire		England	
	(Garsmouth Way, Aldbury Close, Harvest End, part of York Way)					
4 (4)	Holywell (Ascot Road, Greenhill Crescent, Caxton Way, Croxley View)	E01023866 (011D)	27 (30)	1st (1st)	8294 (9203)	3rd (3rd)
5 (7)	Woodside (Haines Way, Queenswood Crescent, Sheriff Way, Nottingham Close)	E01023906 (001C)	61 (41)	1st (1st)	10719 (10062)	4th (4th)
6 (10)	Oxhey (Deacons Hill, Blackwell Drive, Riverside Road, Eastbury Road, Thorpe Crescent)	E01023883 (012B)	62 (49)	1st (1st)	10758 (10710)	4th (4th)
7 (13)	Callowland (Maude Crescent, St George's Road, Breakspeare Close, Nicholas Close)	E01023857 (006C)	67 (56)	1st (1st)	10894 (10812)	4th (4th)
8 (9)	Meriden (Gaddesden Crescent, Bovington Crescent, Garston Lane)	E01023877 (003E)	73 (75)	2nd (2nd)	11225 (11837)	4th (4th)
9 (12)	Leggatts (The Harebreaks, Chestnut Walk, Foxhill, Brushrise, Elm Grove)	E01023870 (004C)	78 (52)	2nd (1st)	11515 (10734)	4th (4th)
10 (5)	Stanborough (Clarke Way, Rushton Avenue, Orbital Crescent, Harris Road)	E01023891 (002B)	92 (31)	1st (1st)	11970 (9377)	4th (3rd)

Table 11: Ten most deprived LSOAs in Watford

The Herts Insight data observatory provides a [visual representation of IMD ranking across Watford](#).

The MOSAIC Consumer Classification allow us to further understand resident’s characteristics. The most recent analysis (2020) backs up the age, education and occupation demographic data. The top ten MOSAIC profiles in Watford cover 71.2% of our residents and show them to be ambitious, successful and stable.

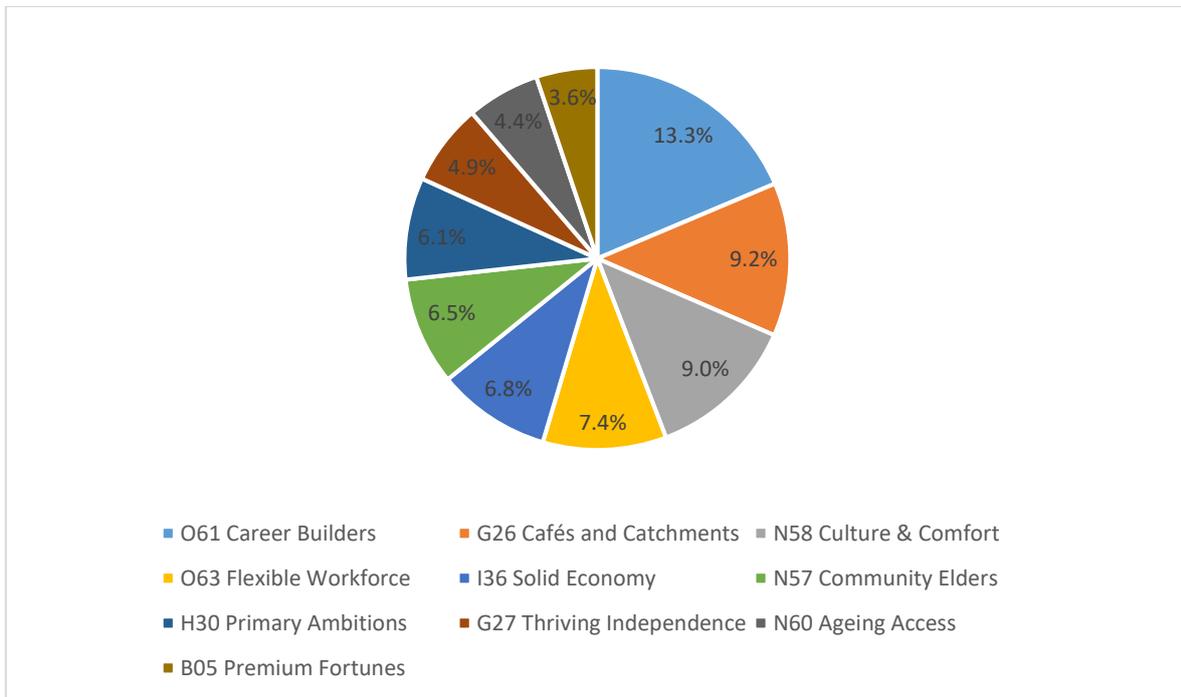


Figure 5: Watford’s MOSAIC profile (2020)

MOSAIC Type	Description
Career Builders	Professional singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties
Cafés and Catchments	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs
Culture & Comfort	Thriving families with good incomes in diverse suburbs
Flexible Workforce	Successful young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs
Solid Economy	Stable families with children, renting higher value homes from social landlords
Community Elders	Established older households owning city homes in diverse neighbourhoods
Primary Ambitions	Families with school-age children, who have bought the best house they can afford within popular neighbourhoods
Thriving Independence	Well-qualified older singles with incomes from successful professional careers in good quality housing
Ageing Access	Older residents owning small inner suburban properties with good access to amenities
Premium Fortunes	Asset-rich families with substantial income, established in distinctive, expansive homes in wealthy enclaves

Table 12: MOSAIC descriptors

Sectors

One of Watford's key strengths is that it has a mixed economy with employment spread across all eighteen industry classifications (2019)²⁸ but over 50% of employee jobs come from just four industry classifications:

- Professional, scientific & technical: 19.53%
- Health: 11.72%
- Retail: 10.94%
- Business administration & support services: 10.16%

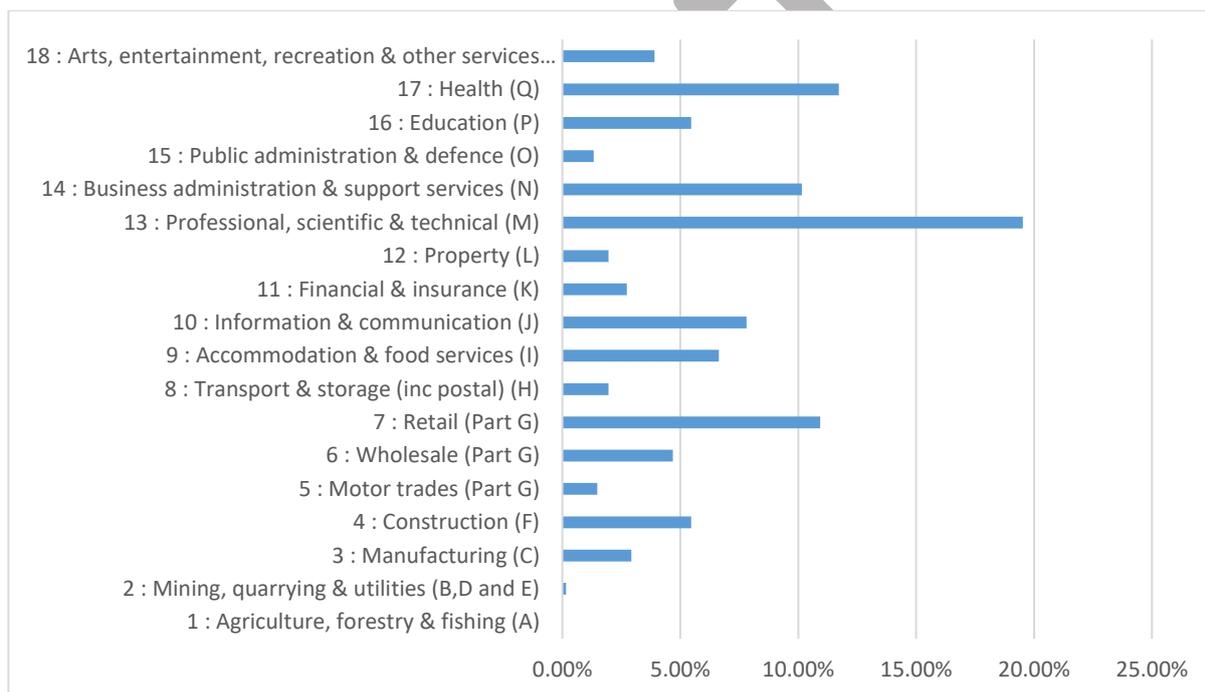


Figure 6: Employment (%) by broad industry classification (2019)

The number of businesses (enterprises)²⁹ operating in each of these eighteen broad industry classifications generally supports the employment specialisms with the highest number of business, across all sizes, in:

- Professional, scientific & technical: 925
- Construction: 775
- Information & communication: 770
- Retail: 730
- Business administration & support services: 430

²⁸ Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey -

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabjobs>

²⁹ Source: ONS Inter Departmental Business Register UK Business Counts-

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabidbr>

- Wholesale: 255
- Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services: 255
- Accommodation & food services: 220

These eight broad industry classifications account for 80.67% of the businesses (enterprises) operating in Watford.

Industry	Micro (0 to 9)	Small (10 to 49)	Medium (50 to 249)	Large (250+)	Total
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	10	0	0	0	10
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	10	5	0	0	15
3 : Manufacturing (C)	150	25	5	0	185
4 : Construction (F)	725	40	5	0	775
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	100	15	0	0	115
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	195	45	10	5	255
7 : Retail (Part G)	680	40	0	5	730
8 : Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	195	5	5	0	205
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	175	30	5	5	220
10 : Information & communication (J)	735	25	5	5	770
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	80	5	0	0	90
12 : Property (L)	155	10	0	0	165
13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	880	35	10	5	925
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	370	50	10	5	430
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	0	0	0	0	0
16 : Education (P)	55	15	10	0	80
17 : Health (Q)	135	40	5	0	185
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	220	30	5	0	255
Column Total	4,875	415	85	30	5,405

Table 13: Enterprise count by broad industry classification and size (2020)

Watford has a range of sectors that are important to our economy but looking at the level of employment in each broad industry classification together with the number of businesses operating in each, the growth sectors identified by Hertfordshire LEP and feedback from stakeholders, the following four sectors have been identified as priorities for Watford:

- Professional services
- Creative, cultural, digital, media and film, including IT
- Healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals)
- Retail, hospitality and leisure

In identifying these as priority sectors we continue to recognise the importance of all sectors and businesses in Watford, it is the diversity of our business base that helps drive our economic success. All sectors have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, will demonstrate varying degrees of resilience and ‘bounce-back’ as economic restraints are removed, and will need support in order to maximise their recovery and any future growth.

We will work with each sector through our Key Account Management programme to understand current challenges being faced by our businesses and explore whether there are mutually beneficially activities which could boost the economic performance of each sector and that of the Borough.

Our approach to working with identified priority sectors will vary dependent on the specific needs of the sector, forthcoming opportunities and the rate of return on investment of resources.

Our objectives	Our actions
<p>Growth in our most important sectors will create wealth and jobs. We are creating the base for business to grow through major development and regeneration sites, and focusing on training and skills. All sectors are important to the Watford economy.</p> <p>We continue to implement our Account Management approach to engaging with our businesses. This will enable us to work more closely with each sector to address key challenges they are facing.</p>	<p>We will strengthen local clusters through enhanced collaboration, with the Council working with business representative organisations to act as a catalyst (particularly in support of innovation). We will develop a programme of support that engages with business and seeks to strengthen local clusters.</p> <p>We will work with local businesses to understand emerging employment and skills gaps and work closely with education providers to ensure that provision helps address these gaps and begin a journey to ensure that Watford can meet business demands for skills and ensure that residents possess skills to work within the local economy.</p> <p>We will review the availability of employment space and work with the developer community to establish the demand for high quality, affordable workspace.</p> <p>We will work with the development community to understand the nature of enquiries that are received within the Borough and ensure that this demand is fed into the planning process. Thereby ensuring a proactive approach to growth opportunities in the short and long term.</p>

Professional services

This sector encompasses accountancy, financial services, insurance, legal and management consultancy businesses and represents c. 835 (2020)³⁰ Watford businesses of varying sizes including Hillier Hopkins, KPMG, Myers Clark, PWC and VVW amongst many others.

³⁰ Source: ONS UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry

These sectors have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Law Society³¹ have identified that legal firms will have experienced a 10-20% drop in revenue for the 2020/2021, while KPMG³² have reported that the finance and banking sector faced significant instability and high volatility in global capital markets.

The success of this sector is closely linked to Watford's performance. This strategy requires partners to work closely and collaboratively to understand the changes that these sectors will go through as the recovery gets underway and they adopt further automation. The latter meaning that the skills required by the sector will need to be more specialised yet flexible. Similarly there may be different levels of employment matched with the level of automation.

The sector is facing wider pressure due to new technology and increased automation which is removing a number of back office functions and reducing employment. However this creates the opportunity for high skilled careers that provide higher value remuneration. Technology such as Blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics and internet of things (IoT), are just some of the ways technology is disrupting the sector, these technologies will continue to have an impact into the future.

Innovation in legal services using AI was captured by the UK Law Society in Capturing Technological Innovation in Legal Services (Chittenden 2017)³³. This included a section specifically on AI describing several AI systems under development and gaining traction, such as Kira, which are now becoming more well-established following test uses and adoption by law firms. Kira is being adopted by many law firms in the UK to reduce administration and gain efficiencies.

Creative, cultural, digital, media and film

This sector is one that is growing rapidly across the UK, despite the pandemic. The sector currently represents c. 870 (2020)³⁴ Watford businesses of varying sizes, is seeing growth in both employment and the supply chain and there is potential for further growth. The sector offers high levels of employment for young people and it will be important that young people have the skills required by local companies.

The film sub-sector offers considerable opportunity to increase Watford's GVA, employment levels and visibility. Working with the film studios there is potential to place South West Hertfordshire and Watford at the heart of the UK Film industry.

The creative industries' contribution to the UK was £111.7bn in 2018³⁵ and it is growing at twice the rate of the economy. The sector now makes up more than five per cent of the UK economy's GVA. Much of the increase has been driven by a boom in the computer services sub-sector. While this includes video games, it also covers wider digital industries.

³¹ <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/research/larger-law-firms-Covid-19-survey>

³² <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/07/Covid-19-impact-on-banking-m-and-a-2020.html>

³³ <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/en/topics/research/capturing-technological-innovation-report>

³⁴ Source: ONS UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry

³⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-creative-industries-contributes-almost-13-million-to-the-uk-economy-every-hour>

Watford is part of a significant concentration of creative industries located in North London and South West Hertfordshire which includes Warner Bros. UK and Elstree Studios, and is home to an expanding creative, digital and information technology cluster. It is important to recognise the support that this sector offers the wider economy by contributing to making Watford an attractive and increasingly popular place to live and work.

Work is underway to provide further stimulus for the sector which will help yield further job growth, support the redevelopment of the town centre and serve to assist in attracting further inward investment. Creative businesses represent an important contributor to job growth and are a key high-wage contributor to the local economy sector.

Watford has the correct demographics to continue the development and growth of the sector. With this considerable potential to grow further, we therefore see this as a key sector.

Healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals)

In addition to being at the centre of the sub-regions' acute medical services provision, Watford is home to c.195 (2020)³⁶ businesses across the wider healthcare sector, including patient care, medical services, medical equipment, medical devices and pharmaceuticals. Watford businesses included in this sector grouping include Sigma Pharmaceuticals, Smith+Nephew, Rocket Medical and Pharmasure amongst many others.

The healthcare sector as a whole is a significant contributor to the UK economy:

- The UK medical device market is the third largest in Europe, behind Germany and France, and the sixth largest in the world. It was valued at \$9.5 billion in 2015 (Emego³⁷).
- The annual turnover of pharmaceutical goods wholesalers in the UK (2017) was over £42 billion, while the gross revenue from retail sales of pharmaceutical products amounted to almost £5 billion in 2015. The net capital expenditure in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical goods was over £1 billion in 2017 (Statista³⁸).
- The Medical Technology (MedTech) subsector, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen the development and adoption of medical technologies increase at an unprecedented rate³⁹. The MedTech landscape review⁴⁰ (2019) sets out the scale and scope of the subsector.

The Office for Life Sciences Life Sciences Competitiveness Indicators 2020⁴¹ report backs up the importance and significance of the sector to the UK.

³⁶ Source: ONS UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry

³⁷ <https://www.emergobyul.com/resources/market-united-kingdom>

³⁸ <https://www.statista.com/topics/5056/pharmaceutical-industry-in-the-uk/>

³⁹ <https://www.srgtalent.com/blog/the-long-term-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-uk-medtech-sector>

⁴⁰ <https://www.ahsnnetwork.com/app/uploads/2019/02/MedTech-Landscape-Review-AHSN-Network.pdf>

⁴¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/977265/Life_Science_Competitiveness_Indicators_2020_report.pdf

With the planned redevelopment of Watford General Hospital, the range of healthcare sector businesses located in Watford and our location within the London-Oxford-Cambridge 'Golden Triangle' there is an opportunity to grow this sector and supply chain businesses.

The [Pharmaceutical Industry Network Group](#) (PING) was established in 2010 by the Pharmaceuticals & Life Sciences practice of Watford-based law firm VWV LLP to bring people together from across the pharmaceutical supply chain in the local area.

From its founding sector members from Watford, Hertfordshire and beyond. Today, PING exists as a networking group for people across the pharmaceutical supply chain, to discuss and share best practice, ideas and generally help each other at a time of great change.

Members range from suppliers to pharmacists, including prescription-based suppliers, OTC suppliers, generics suppliers, manufacturers, wholesalers, logistics, orphan drugs, named patient suppliers, comparator drug suppliers, specials suppliers, exporters, importers, regulatory advisers, pharma researchers, clinical trial statisticians, and market access and pharma data consultants.

Retail, hospitality and leisure

This sector is the most visible and one that our residents engage with on a daily basis. The sector currently represents over 1,000 (2020)⁴² Watford businesses of varying sizes.

Retail sector analysis for Watford relates to the performance on the High Street and secondary shopping areas, but also that of the retail brands that have headquarters in the town, such as TJX Europe, Ralph Lauren, and Costco. Both elements have been faced with challenges both prior to, and now as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The retail sector has been visibly changing since 2009. The impact of online shopping and e-commerce has dramatically impacted upon the High Street. The strength of the supermarkets has grown and many household name retailers have closed. Watford, like other locations, has been affected by the 2020 closure of major chains such as Debenhams and John Lewis.

The structural changes we are seeing in the retail sector are having a profound impact on our High Street, this is being further accelerated by the pandemic - a 57% increase in online retailing was reported in 2020. With Watford's role as a sub-regional centre for retail, hospitality and leisure (South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018))⁴³, it is vital to work in partnership with the sector to ensure that our High Street is able to adapt and become a new destination by including greater housing, leisure and visitor experiences.

Ensuring that the retail, hospitality and leisure sector is able to adapt and remain profitable and operational in Watford is an important strategic focus for the Council, working with the Watford BID and other key stakeholders.

⁴² Source: ONS UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry

⁴³ https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/972/south_west_herts_retail_and_leisure_study_2018

Employment and skills

Pre-pandemic Watford businesses employed over 72,000 people⁴⁴, including 64,000 employee jobs, with an economic activity rate of 83.3⁴⁵. Watford has historically had low levels of unemployment: the claimant count was approximately 2.5% in December 2019 and January 2020. This rate increased to 6.7% in January 2021 and 7.1% in March 2021⁴⁶. The claimant count increased by 183% between January 2020 and March 2021.

It is anticipated that the full longer-term impact of the pandemic will not be known for some time, with key milestones including the end dates for Government support measures such as the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) (CJRS)⁴⁷ and [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme](#) (SEISS)⁴⁸, and whether or not businesses will be able to pivot again and successfully reopen after successive lockdowns.

The immediate response to the pandemic – and the unemployment caused by it, has been addressed through the [Unlocking Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire Recovery Plan](#)⁴⁹ published in August 2020. This included a large skills and employment support package of measures, including the further development of the [Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal](#) (HOP) website, and has been supported by all partners. Watford Borough Council's key role has been signposting businesses and residents to available sources of help and guidance to support them through the impact of the pandemic. This has included signposting businesses to Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce and Wenta, both of whom are intermediaries in the [Kickstart Scheme](#)⁵⁰.

There have been major changes to the way people work, shop and study triggered by COVID-19 and the necessary lockdowns. These are expected to further accelerate changes and innovation across all sectors, speeding up the need both for new skills where demand is growing and re-skilling away from sectors that are evolving or declining to need a smaller and differently skilled workforce.

The skills infrastructure

The Government's approach to improving Skills Provision in England has been to establish 36 regional Skills Advisory Panels, which bring together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. The Hertfordshire LEP led Skills and Employment Board discharges this role for Hertfordshire. The role of the Board is to develop a clear understanding of the current and future Hertfordshire skills and labour market needs and employment support provision in the region.

Hertfordshire has a well-developed Higher and Further Education infrastructure. This includes the University of Hertfordshire, network of Further Education Colleges, including West Herts College which serves Watford and the wider South West Hertfordshire area in

⁴⁴ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?town=watford#tabjobs>

⁴⁵ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?town=watford#tabempunemp>

⁴⁶ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?town=watford#tabwab>

⁴⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

⁴⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

⁴⁹ <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/8346/hertfordshire-recovery-plan-august-2020.pdf>

⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

particular, and specialist organisations with a good track record of working together. Collectively providers deliver initiatives to increase access to further education, respond to identified skill shortages by establishing organisations such as the Institute of Technology, (digital, construction, life science and Together Training Limited. Together Training Ltd is a Joint Venture between Oaklands College and West Herts College to support apprentice levy paying employers and serves Hertfordshire and beyond.

Skills strategies

Skills have been a key part of the government’s response to the pandemic – one of three pillars in the *Plan for Growth: Build Back Better*, and the subject of a Further Education White Paper [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#)⁵¹, which builds on the work undertaken recently to make employers more central to the skills agenda.

Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) is a major programme co-financed by the Education and Skills Agency (ESFA) and the European Social Fund focussed on supporting small & medium-sized businesses to upskill their employees. In Hertfordshire Serco is the prime contractor for the programme. In 2020 the ESFA commissioned Serco to conduct research with employers to provide key information to inform the development of the new Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Strategy and related plans. The detailed [Hertfordshire Employment, Skills and Enterprise Review](#)⁵² (the summary covers three LEP areas) was compiled from the responses of 57 Hertfordshire based businesses. Hertfordshire LEP has incorporated this information into its analysis and published an updated [Hertfordshire Local Skills Report](#) (March 2021)⁵³. It is due to publish a revised Skills and Employment Strategy in June 2021.

Both of these documents provide a detailed analysis of current and future skills needs in Hertfordshire. They are comprehensive and cover all stages of a working career and key sectors identified elsewhere in the Hertfordshire LEP Local Industrial Strategy⁵⁴. The documents have been developed in consultation with business, which is well represented on the Skills and Employment Board. There will continue to be a strong focus on apprenticeships, on digital skills and on ‘light and dark green skills’ as businesses respond to the changes in practice needed to meet the requirements of the climate emergency (light green) or manufacture specific products (dark green).

The views of business

The Hertfordshire wide analysis conducted by Serco identified that 60% of employers identified that they have one of more skills gaps in their organisation, which impact on productivity and growth. These include digital, numeracy, planning and organisational skills. 20% of employers had a hard to fill vacancy over the last 12 months. They also predicted

⁵¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>

⁵² <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/qoflflks/hertfordshire-employment-skills-enterprise-review-nov-2020.pdf>

⁵³ <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/maflpk3y/hertfordshire-local-skills-report-2021.pdf>

⁵⁴ <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/7569/hertfordshire-lis-consultation-draft-2019.pdf>

increased opportunities and skills needs in the health and social care, digital, construction and planning, the green economy and professional services sectors.

There are concerns that the scope and scale of apprenticeships and that their value as a qualification is not fully understood, although 47% of employers said they would consider taking an apprentice in the near future. Employers were seen to be willing to invest in new technologies to support learning, although there were concerns about applicability in practical situations. Equally 17% of employers said they would be likely or very likely to support employees to undertake a higher qualification in the next three years.

These Hertfordshire-wide views were mirrored in the local consultation conducted as part of the process of creating this strategy. A number of local businesses reported that they are increasingly unable to recruit, or when they do, skills are not at the level they require, and they had at least one vacancy that was hard-to-fill. Employers stated that the key factors in filling these vacancies is not having applicants with the required skills, a small number of applicants or applicants lacking the required attitude, motivation or personality.

Developing a Watford Skills and Employment Plan

The aim of the Watford Skills and Employment Plan is to support economic growth and productivity by working with businesses to address skills requirement both now and for the future, looking at the new Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Strategy through a Watford lens and using this as a platform to move forward.

In order to develop a skills and employment plan to support the Watford economy it will be necessary to drill down the Watford specific data in the Hertfordshire-wide skills report and strategy. It will also be necessary to map further and higher education provision by organisation and subject area in and, if appropriate adjacent to Watford, and then work closely on a sector-by-sector basis with local businesses to formulate and implement plans.

The purpose of the joint working would be to share information, identify current and future gaps and needs and then work to shape a pipeline of suitably qualified individuals. This would include drawing on and adapting planned local and regional programmes and if necessary developing new relevant qualifications.

This would fit well with wider strategies. A Programme Board could be established to oversee the development of the strategy, bring together Watford Borough Council, businesses, schools, further and higher education, Hertfordshire LEP, and other key stakeholders, such as the University of Hertfordshire, Serco and the DWP.

Some of the key ingredients of the plan are already in place. There is a suggestion in the [Hertfordshire Local Skills Report](#) that the data analysis could also be broken down on a district basis and it is assumed that the same analysis could be undertaken of the Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Strategy. This would provide a strong platform for further detailed work.

This could then be supplemented by creating a database and network of all the skills providers active in Watford identifying which qualifications they provide. This mapped against the information from Hertfordshire LEP would enable us to identify potential gaps in provision.

There needs to be a dynamic mechanism to shape the development of the skills offer on the ground. It is proposed in the first instance to focus on working with businesses in the four key sectors we have identified elsewhere in this report for Watford (Professional Services; Creative, Cultural Digital and Film; Healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharma) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure) and to establish sector skills boards for each of them.

These boards would, with appropriate provider representation, go through the analysis and identify what needs to happen. This could range from wider dissemination of information to enable businesses to link up with existing providers and courses, either locally or in Hertfordshire, to working together to develop new qualifications to meet emerging needs.

Local residents and organisations supporting them in searching for employment and reskilling opportunities may also benefit from the directory of organisations and qualifications being made freely available as a linkage to the [Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal](#) or other employment sources.

It is also proposed to establish a cross-cutting apprenticeship board to develop a strategy to help non levy paying and levy paying businesses understand the full range of apprenticeship opportunities and build these into their businesses. This would draw on work being undertaken elsewhere and not replicate it.

Watford sits at the heart of a FEMA and its sectors may spread across borough boundaries into other South West Hertfordshire Districts. It may be appropriate to work with adjacent districts to create joint sector skills boards and to establish if they are also creating locally based skills strategies.

Watford Borough Council's role

The Council has a key role in creating an environment where better linkages are built between the wider business community and local skills providers. The account management system, the business forums, the link to business organisations and its business sign posting services are key elements in this.

Analysis

Watford has many strengths. It has an excellent geographical location, with strong transportation links by road, rail and air and close proximity to key London assets including the City of London and six international airports within a one-hour travel time. It sits at the heart of a strong economic sub-region and is the home of the sub-regions' acute health, retail, cultural, leisure and hospitality offer. This makes it an ideal location for headquarters and regional hubs as well start-ups and SMEs wanting to operate in a well-established centre for business.

It sits within and is part of the South West Hertfordshire's TV / film industry cluster - a growth sector in the UK. Watford has a strong enterprise culture, a young, well-educated population, a strong supply of jobs, a high number of knowledge intensive jobs and a strong track record of attracting private sector investment.

Watford is well positioned to take advantage of many of the opportunities, changes and innovations that have been brought about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes developing a new economic future for the Town Centre, with a shared vision, strategy, and town centre partnership management approach. This would include supporting the retail, leisure and hospitality sector to further innovate and evolve.

It is in a strong position to benefit from the growth of cultural, creative and digital businesses in the area. Watford will continue to actively participate in the Hertfordshire Growth Board work stream to develop South West Hertfordshire's profile as the centre of the UK film and TV industry and attract new and different inward investment across this sector.

Watford's broad base of different sectors should help Watford remain resilient and continue to have a high job density. COVID-19 has increased joint working and communication between the Council and businesses and there is an opportunity to continue to work together to support business growth.

Watford is presented with a number of challenges in realising some of these opportunities. As identified elsewhere, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated longer term structural changes in all sectors, and particularly those being driven by the application of digital technology to redesign services or provide them on-line. It has created a step change in the numbers of people working from home. This is both a threat and an opportunity for Watford, as it is an outstanding location for office-based business, attracting international, national and regional headquarters as well as smaller local companies. There is much current speculation that businesses will seek to relocate out of cities and there may be an opportunity for Watford to capitalise on its proximity, affordability and more environmentally friendly location.

The council is developing its relationship with businesses through an account management approach, allowing it to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by businesses individually and collectively. This enhanced understanding provides an opportunity, for example, to develop a Watford Skills and Employment Plan. This would help match business skill requirements with appropriately trained people and smooth the transition for people from employment and careers in those areas where demand for staff may change or decline. This will be key post pandemic in assisting people into a wide range of employment opportunities and enabling them to access career pathways resulting in higher long-term wages.

Watford should seek to make more of its position at the heart of the South West Hertfordshire FEMA. There is an opportunity to strengthen linkages across Hertfordshire to ensure that all the areas in the FEMA are playing to their strengths and can mutually benefit each other, amplifying demand and providing employment opportunities. This includes the inward investment proposition, which is currently under-developed.

Due to lack of land availability and increasing demand, the council will need to work closely with property owners and agents to protect and re-purpose business accommodation as it becomes available, and plan to develop out its remaining sites with modern, fit for purpose commercial uses. Our inward investment and start up / scale up strategy will need to focus

on attracting and retaining innovative and low carbon businesses which do not require large sites.

Other key factors in delivering inclusive and sustainable growth will need to be progressed in tandem with developing a thriving and productive economy. Watford will need to work on developing and delivering a sustainable transport strategy, facilitating the provision of a wide range of housing types and ensuring there is easy access to relevant skills development and retraining as mentioned above.

DRAFT

Economic Vision, Growth Strategy and Priorities

Our vision for Watford by 2031

Watford will be known as successful, diverse and premier location for business, acting as the vibrant centre for the south west Hertfordshire economy, attracting forward looking businesses and entrepreneurs who recognise its super connectivity, outstanding skill base and flair for innovation. Our businesses will join with us in championing Watford's exceptional qualities and advantages, sharing our ambition for a carbon neutral future whilst our residents will benefit from the town's energy and drive and the prosperity and opportunities it brings.

Our ambitions for 2031

Through the successful delivery of our Economic Growth Strategy, Watford will be recognised for:

- **Securing long-term prosperity and success as a low-carbon economy, transitioning existing businesses to low-carbon practices, attracting** and growing businesses that operate in low-carbon sectors, and developing financially and environmentally sustainable ways of working.
- **Advancing the prospects of our residents**, providing the right support and gateways for those who need to improve or reskill to adapt to career changes.
- **Our strong sense of community**, with opportunities for people to meet, socialise and build rewarding networks; we will have successfully promoted new neighbourhoods, sustainable transport and increased inclusion and employment opportunities for our diverse communities.
- **Playing a pivotal role as the heart of South West Hertfordshire's economy** and across county, regional and national partnerships, to develop successful frameworks and initiatives to drive the area's prosperity and attractiveness as a place to live and work.
- **Working with our businesses to take advantage of the best in digital and new technology and innovation** to boost productivity and job density, expand their reach into new markets and grow sustainability, keeping Watford's economy strong and resilient.

- **Reinforcing our position as the premier office location in the subregion**, known for high-quality accommodation, building on Watford's super-connectivity and outstanding London+ offer to businesses, providing solutions for both business needs and employee aspirations.
- **Revitalising our town centre**, enhancing its reputation as a top destination for leisure, culture retail and hospitality, offering a diverse mix of national and independent retail and leisure offers, combined with a new residential community.
- **Transforming the heart of the town** with major new commercial and residential developments, and the right services, facilities and infrastructure to make them outstanding places to live and work, encouraging a significant modal shift from cars to public and active travel.
- **Establishing Watford as the gateway to the UK's TV and film sector** as it expands in South West Hertfordshire and as a centre for culture and entertainment enterprises, building on the region's reputation as the premier UK location for creative industries.
- **Ensuring Watford Borough Council is recognised by investors, developers and our community** as forward-looking, relentlessly ambitious, committed to enterprise and quality growth that benefits our residents and businesses and the wider economy.

Our growth strategy and priorities for Watford

Watford has an enviable history as a vibrant town that has long welcomed business and industry, successfully adapting and transforming its economy to secure prosperity and vibrancy for its community and the wider region. The town thrives on its reputation as a dynamic place that embraces new ways of doing things and, thanks to its super connection to the rest of the country, is firmly on the map as a great place for businesses to locate and succeed and for people to live and flourish.

Our Economic Growth Strategy seeks to focus on the best of Watford and the advantages what will take our town to the next level. It sends a clear message to businesses, employees and local people that we are ambitious to do more. We will be focused and partnership orientated to make a difference to our business and resident communities for the better.

A shared strategy for success

We recognise that to be successful we have to bring our vision for Watford to life, and this means identifying the right priorities and actions that are focused on delivery and making a difference. This not only relates to our Economic Growth Strategy, but to the town as a whole, which is why we have engaged with our community and partners to find out what is important to them, tested ideas that have emerged, and underpinned our findings with up to date data and information.

Our five priorities for prosperity and success for Watford

- Developing a thriving and productive economy
- Supporting our key sectors
- Supporting our communities to access opportunities
- Creating a new economic future for Watford town centre
- Creating the right environment for sustainable growth.

Priority 1: Developing a thriving and productive economy

We are fortunate in Watford to have a strong and resilient economy. We are home to a good and diverse mix of businesses, ranging from sole traders to large multinationals that operate across a range of sectors. We benefit from a high GVA and job density. We want to champion this success, recognising the impact of COVID-19 and Brexit on the long-term fortunes of businesses and job sectors.

We will work with our partners to build a thriving and productive Watford economy, influencing and engaging where it is in Watford's best interests, targeting support where it is needed and increasing employment space to match the needs of business.

Our objectives	Our actions
Maximise the benefit of working with Hertfordshire wide organisations.	We will actively engage to influence the development of countywide economic strategies, so they reflect the needs of Watford and its business community, strengthening our work with Hertfordshire LEP and as a member of Hertfordshire Growth Board. This includes: countywide strategies to support business throughout the pandemic, strengthen key sectors, to the challenges from Brexit and address the climate emergency.
Maximise the benefits from the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) area by aligning planning and other policies to ensure that Watford benefits from and supports growth in adjacent areas.	We will maximise the benefits for Watford from being at the heart of the South West Hertfordshire FEMA, working productively with partner councils to develop the Joint Strategic Plan and Local Plans, which support the successful development of our economies and communities. We will engage with Hertfordshire Growth Board to secure funding for the projects in the Investment Prospectus within the FEMA.
Respond proactively to challenges to the economy and community presented by the COVID 19 pandemic.	We will implement Watford's Road to Renewal Plan, deploying funding assigned to the Council to support businesses and the community, signposting businesses and residents to the right support and funding. We will develop a programme of support that really engages with business, responding to their need and seeks to strengthen our local clusters.
Respond to opportunities and challenges presented by	We will work with Hertfordshire-wide organisations to understand the emerging impact of Brexit, listening to feedback from local businesses,

Our objectives	Our actions
Brexit and new regulatory framework(s).	championing their experiences and signposting them to programmes of support.
Use our account management system to help us understand the issues facing our largest employers.	We will foster meaningful and dynamic relationships with our business leaders, creating a single points of contact to fast-track enquiries. .We will analyse what they are telling us to understand emerging themes and trends and use this insight to inform our discussions and decision making. We will develop a 'one-council' approach to make sure these businesses stay, expand and meet their recruitment needs in Watford.
Provide the right environment, services and facilities, such as workspace, to encourage innovative companies to base and develop themselves in Watford.	We will encourage more companies to invest in research and development, and innovation by providing what they need to flourish, we will work to promote new innovation and incubator workspaces and the right business advice. We will explore solutions for delivering more high-quality commercial space through our forward-looking plans for areas such as Watford Junction and Clarendon Road, and champion new employment and business space in the town centre.
Support start-ups and scale ups.	We will support small independent businesses thrive in Watford as they seek to innovate and create jobs in the town, signposting them to the right financial advice, staff training and new technologies.
Protect existing employment space.	We will use our planning powers to limit the conversion of commercial space to residential use.
Review the availability of employment space and work with the developer community to establish the demand for high quality, affordable workspace.	We will work with our development community to understand the nature of enquiries that are received within the Borough and ensure that this demand is fed into the Planning process. .Thereby ensuring a proactive approach to growth opportunities in the short and long term.
Deliver commercial space to support business growth, such as Croxley Park, Watford Business Park and Clarendon Road.	We will progress the development of our major projects such as Watford Business Park, Croxley Park and Clarendon Road. We will deliver Watford Business Park's redevelopment of the 'Gateway Zone' (Greenhill Works) at the northern entrance, we will deliver Building One at Croxley and work with developers and investors to create a compelling business plan for Clarendon Road.

Priority 2: Supporting our key sectors

Watford has an outstanding diversity of businesses, but we know from data and feedback from that our economy is underpinned by four key employment sectors:

- Professional services – especially accounting, legal, finance and insurance
- Creative, Cultural Digital, Media and Film
- Healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharma)
- Retail Hospitality and Leisure

Whilst all our business sectors are important for our future prosperity, we recognise these four provide significant employment opportunities and offer real potential for growth, linking to sector action plans commissioned by Hertfordshire LEP. We will work alongside these sectors to understand their opportunities and aspirations and to build Watford's reputation as a town where businesses in these sectors can flourish.

Our objectives	Our actions
Work with Hertfordshire LEP to develop sector action plans which support our key sectors and businesses.	We will actively engage in discussions on sector action plans, reviewing plans in our partnership networks as they emerge so they reflect the voice of businesses.
Focus on retaining and growing businesses in all of our key sectors.	We will develop a shared understanding of what is important to businesses that have chosen to locate and stay in Watford, supporting them to thrive and grow. We will work with businesses, partners and skills providers to shape provision that meets their needs and aspirations. Working with partners and business community we will develop Watford's brand narrative and relaunch our inward investment marketing material.
Work with the professional services sector to retain and grow businesses.	We will welcome the growth of our professional services sector, which brings so much to our economy, working alongside them to build Watford's reputation as an outstanding location for the sector, combining a great base for office and home working.
Work with the creative, cultural, digital and film sector to maximise the opportunities from the SW Herts Film and TV sector and the potential for clustering of creative sector businesses in Watford.	We will promote Watford as the gateway to the creative, cultural, digital and film sector and a prime location for new office based and start up creative sector businesses, joining those already prospering here.
Work with the healthcare sector to retain and grow businesses in this area.	We will build on our successful healthcare sector, linking to the proposed major investments in Watford General Hospital, which will provide an added impetus to retaining and growing healthcare businesses.
Work with the retail hospitality and leisure services to diversify their offer and become more sustainable in the medium term.	We will champion our retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, supporting them to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the sector, particularly post the pandemic, enriching Watford town centre and ensuring it remains a premier regional retail and cultural destination.

Priority 3: Supporting our communities to access opportunities

We want Watford to be a town where people can fulfil their potential and where no one gets left behind. A strong and successful local economy is fundamental to achieving our ambition for a happy and healthy town, offering access to a variety of jobs, opportunities to build careers and providing pathways to enhance or develop new skills. We are passionate about our success being shared across our community and will work with partners to ensure people are equipped to fully participate in our economy, creating jobs, providing training and education that will develop the skilled flexible workforce we need now and in the future.

Our objectives	Our actions
Ensure our economic decisions are inclusive, and support our business and local communities to access opportunities.	We will review our approach to Social Value, ensuring we maximise the benefits for the local community. We will challenge our actions throughout this plan, making sure they are making a meaningful contribution to driving economic inclusivity for local people.
Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links are integrated into the council's new developments, creating successful, well-designed new communities.	We will ensure our new developments are well-designed, providing good access to employment and supported by quality new community facilities, so they are inclusive and effectively integrated into the wider town.
Work with those residents in sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as retail and hospitality, through the delivery of the Hertfordshire LEP Economic Recovery Plan.	We will focus our Road to Renewal Plan economic and business activity on supporting our business community to revive and thrive post COVID-19, offering practical help, including grants, training packages and employment support through the Herts Opportunities Portal.
Support our current and future workforce to be resilient following the COVID-19 pandemic.	We will ensure our residents can find the right support for improving or developing new skills and increasing their employability, developing a culture where training and retraining is easy to access and seen as a normal part of working life, creating a strong, adaptable local workforce and employment base.
Work with the Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Board, University of Hertfordshire, West Herts College, other providers, schools and local businesses in our key	We will work alongside our businesses to develop a Watford Skills and Employment Plan, enhancing the Watford perspective in the Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Board by identifying gaps, delivering a step change in how businesses, the council and skills providers work together to support employers and employees to create a strong and resilient workforce.

Our objectives	Our actions
sectors to develop a Watford Skills and Employment Plan and put in place mechanisms to deliver this.	
Support the delivery of Apprenticeships.	We will champion apprenticeships, building on Watford's successful approach that has put employers at the heart of the apprenticeship system, benefiting trainees and businesses. We will include this in the Watford Skills and Employment Plan.
Attract new highly skilled workers and retain talented people in the borough.	We will promote Watford's strength as a place to work, highlighting the career and training opportunities and the range of benefits Watford offers as part of our inward investment strategy.

Priority 4: Creating a new economic future for the town centre

Watford town centre is the engine of our local economy and is a vital part of the town's offer to businesses and employees. A top 20 retail destination, with an exciting mix of leisure, culture, retail and hospitality, Watford is responding to the changing nature of the High Street, recognising the changing ways people use their town centres, a trend accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will build on our outstanding town centre partnerships, including with Watford BID, the Atria shopping centre and the wider private sector, to maximise opportunities for the High Street, seeking to create the right balance of attractions, facilities and activities that will secure its future success. Underpinning our ambitions for the town centre, will be a range of initiatives including a jointly created Town Centre vision strategy and marketing plan and major infrastructure works to improve connectivity and increase the amount of employment space available.

Our objectives	Our actions
Create a new Vision Strategy and marketing plan for the town centre.	We will drive forward our work with partners to benchmark the Town centre against a national placemaking framework, jointly developing a shared vision, strategy and marketing plan to support the Town Centre.
Ensure Watford town centre promotes a more diverse experience and appeal as a welcoming, safe destination.	We will work with partners and stakeholders to ensure the town centre is a clean and safe environment that is welcoming to residents, visitors and people who work in the town. Through the regeneration of the town centre, we will create new spaces to improve the ambience and experience, encouraging more people to enjoy all it offers and stay longer. We will explore tourism initiatives, seeking to increase footfall and bring new visitors to the town.
Support town centre businesses.	We will target support to our town centre businesses, particularly those experiencing recent difficulties, reviewing regulation to help businesses operate safely.
Develop a town centre planning framework.	We will develop a specific town centre planning framework, facilitating future development, working alongside partners,

Our objectives	Our actions
	businesses and residents to shape a successful future for our High Street.
Transform the heart of the town by delivering improvements such as Watford Junction and Clarendon Road.	We will transform the heart of the town, working with our partners, delivering improvements within the town centre, including Watford Junction and Clarendon Road. We will also explore the delivery of new residential units and workspaces to help diversify the town centre and provide an even more attractive environment for residents and visitors.
Encourage investment and improve accessibility.	We will promote the town centre as a super connected, well situated business location, taking the best of the 15-minute city concept where good quality services and facilities are easy to access and enjoy

Priority 5: Creating the right environment for sustainable growth

We want our economic growth and prosperity to reflect our commitment to making Watford a carbon neutral town by 2030, recognising the greatest challenge of our times is to successfully blend the need to thrive and grow with securing a more sustainable and greener future for our town and community.

We are well placed to do this, supporting our commitment with a Sustainability Strategy, setting out our targets for carbon reduction for the council, businesses and residents, linking more sustainable ways to travel, build and live with shaping our economic growth.

Businesses can play a vital role in reducing Watford’s carbon emissions and we are eager to work with them to highlight how they could be more energy efficient and adopt greener ways of working. We know there is a growing wealth of green businesses we want to attract to the town, supporting our sustainability ambitions and putting Watford on the map as a location where they can thrive, joined by others committed to carbon reduction, waste reducing and energy saving.

Our objectives	Our actions
Ensure the delivery of infrastructure improvements to act as a catalyst for economic growth by meeting the needs of employment and housing growth.	<p>We will encourage key infrastructure improvements to act as a catalyst for growth, improving our sustainable transport links to connect people to jobs, businesses to knowledge and markets and employers to talent.</p> <p>We will work with partners to influence and support, where it is in Watford’s best interests, priority commercial developments such as Watford Junction and Clarendon Road.</p> <p>We will work with Hertfordshire County Council to address congestion in the town, tackling known pinch points that can hinder journeys. We will champion investment in active travel and better public transport prior to programmes of house building so people living in Watford have greater transport choices and are less reliant on the car.</p>

Our objectives	Our actions
	<p>We will seek investment in schools, health provision. Community and sports facilities and outdoor space (as well as other important social infrastructure), recognising the critical role they play in building strong and successful communities.</p> <p>We will promote sustainable travel options and campaign for a long-term modal shift towards public transport and active travel.</p>
<p>Deliver new high-quality housing with a particular focus on increasing housing options to attract and retain residents / employees.</p>	<p>We will support the delivery of quality new homes in line with the Local Plan and where it meets our aspirations for the town, ensuring local people are able to access a range of housing to meet their needs.</p>
<p>Encourage delivery of high-speed broadband to attract new investment, support the growth of businesses and our community.</p>	<p>We will support the delivery of high speed broadband, boosting the town's digital offer to business and our flourishing cultural and creative sectors.</p>
<p>Encourage our residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint.</p>	<p>We will support the work to implement the Sustainability Strategy by promoting cycling, walking and the use of public transport and work with our stakeholders to promote a less wasteful, low carbon economy.</p>
<p>To encourage low carbon businesses to invest and grow in the Borough.</p>	<p>We will develop inward investment collateral that promotes Watford to low carbon companies and encourages all businesses relocating here to adopt low carbon measures.</p>

Appendix A: Specification and process

Specification

The Council had a clearly defined specification produced which it used to engage with prospective consultants. This specification can be summarised as follows:

The Council sought an Economic Growth Strategy to:

- Provide a vision and strategy for economic development for Watford that embraces economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equity and inclusive growth
- Identify Watford's contribution and potential to the economies of the region
- Guide the economic development, regeneration and investment activities of the Council and its partners, provide a business rationale and the actions required to achieve the identified goals.

The Council's priority outcome was that, in summary, the strategy should include the following:

- An economic vision and Economic Growth Strategy
- Priorities for Watford's economic growth
- How the Council should support business growth
- How the Council can work with partners to support employment and skills, including addressing identified skills shortage and hard to fill vacancies, and how local skills provision addresses skills needs
- Identification of existing business sectors (specialisms/growth potential), along with any complementary sectors and supply chains, that the Council should seek to retain and attract to Watford, with a corresponding rationale, together with proposed actions to achieve proposals
- Identification of areas where we should work with regional partners to deliver economic growth, including an analysis of the opportunities and threats presented by Hertfordshire Growth Board, Enterprise Zone and Local Industrial Strategy projects and priorities. It should identify initiatives that will deliver on the opportunities and mitigate any threats
- Identification of where the Council should invest resources and finances to support economic growth, with appropriate business case justifications
- An executive summary in a visual format to be shared with members, stakeholders, the public
- Action and implementation plan.

The Council required the consultant team to:

- Engage with Watford's Elected Mayor, Members, representatives of Watford's business community and regional stakeholders
- To create proposals to build consensus around the future plan in a cost effective way
- Engage with the Council's leadership team and senior officers – so that ownership, buy-in and input were achieved
- Work hand-in-hand and in a collaborative way with Council officers.

Process

Our consultants, Deyton Bell Limited, were appointed following a competitive tender and proposed a five phase approach which was adopted and can be summarised as follows:

Phase 1 - Inception

A virtual meeting with the Watford Borough Council contract manager/Steering Group to:

- Engage with key people, finalise expectations and agree the project scope
- Identify data and intelligence availability, including relevant existing projects
- Agree communications protocols with the Council to reach stakeholders, and key contacts
- Agree reporting; frequency and form; project risks and escalation procedures for issues
- Agree the format for reports, the strategy and presentations as required

Phase 2 - Gathering Data/Details of Existing Initiatives/Planning

This included review and analysis of economic data including:

- Compilation of a list of existing initiatives which can be built upon
- Compilation and agreement of a 'long list' of key stakeholders
- Agreement on any additional data gathering that may be required
- Review with the Council of the list of existing initiatives to ensure there are no omissions.

Phase 3 - Stakeholder engagement

- This involved agreement on the key stakeholders to be consulted.
- This list was then prioritised for on-line, phone, and face to face meetings and be agreed
- The content of all forms of communication with stakeholders was then agreed and drafted
- An on-line survey of stakeholders was devised to inform the Strategy.
- Various stakeholders, plus selected survey respondents were contacted by way of

follow up

- The stakeholder engagement phase included both Council staff and external parties.

Phase 4 - Proposed New Initiatives/Production of draft (interim) Delivery Document:

- Using survey responses, outputs from stakeholder meetings and data gathered
- An initial working draft was presented to the Council for review.
- Using feedback received and as planned, four further drafts of the report were produced

Phase 5 - Final phase:

- Feedback to date was incorporated and final consultations undertaken
- The strategy was then finalised and a Delivery Plan created.

Throughout the five stages the Council and Deyton Bell worked closely together, regularly discussing issues and ideas, and shaping the emerging recommendations.

Deyton Bell adapted both process and outputs to meet the Council's needs and to reflect changing circumstances and requirements.

DRAFT

Appendix B: Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholder consultation was an integral and important part of the process adopted by Deyton Bell during their work to develop this strategy. Their work focussed on 5 key actions, namely:

- Identification and validation of stakeholder communities
- Development and distribution a stakeholder survey
- One 2 one discussions with selected stakeholders
- Review and analysis of stakeholder commentary
- Adoption of key themes during strategy drafting

Deyton Bell utilised a list of core stakeholders provided by the Council as the primary focus for their research. In some instances there was insufficient information to enable them to make an informed approach, and in some instances those approached did not respond, but numerous consultees were kind enough to offer opinion.

Meetings were held with over 20 stakeholders representing industry, professional services firms, business service and support groups, faith groups, politicians, banks and housing providers.

The details of conversations which resulted must remain confidential as promised to respondents, but selected highlights of commentary offered by respondents during interview includes the following:

- Watford's location is key, particularly proximity to London, LHR, LTN, STN, M4/M1/M25
- Watford should re-explore its relationship with London to leverage proximity and transport links
- Connectivity to London for work/leisure, combined with remoteness for homes/countryside is key
- Watford must decide if it is a dormitory town reliant on London or an economic hub in its own right
- The relationship with London and Hertfordshire could be Urban Hertfordshire / Rural London
- Watford should explore London centric university linkages via a possible satellite campus
- A University would stimulate ideas amongst youth
- Watford could capture ideas via enterprise initiatives and offer start up help
- The TV/film industry would be perfect for this via blending young people, new ideas, new skills
- TV/film potential is considerable but should be carefully promoted to avoid conflict with neighbours

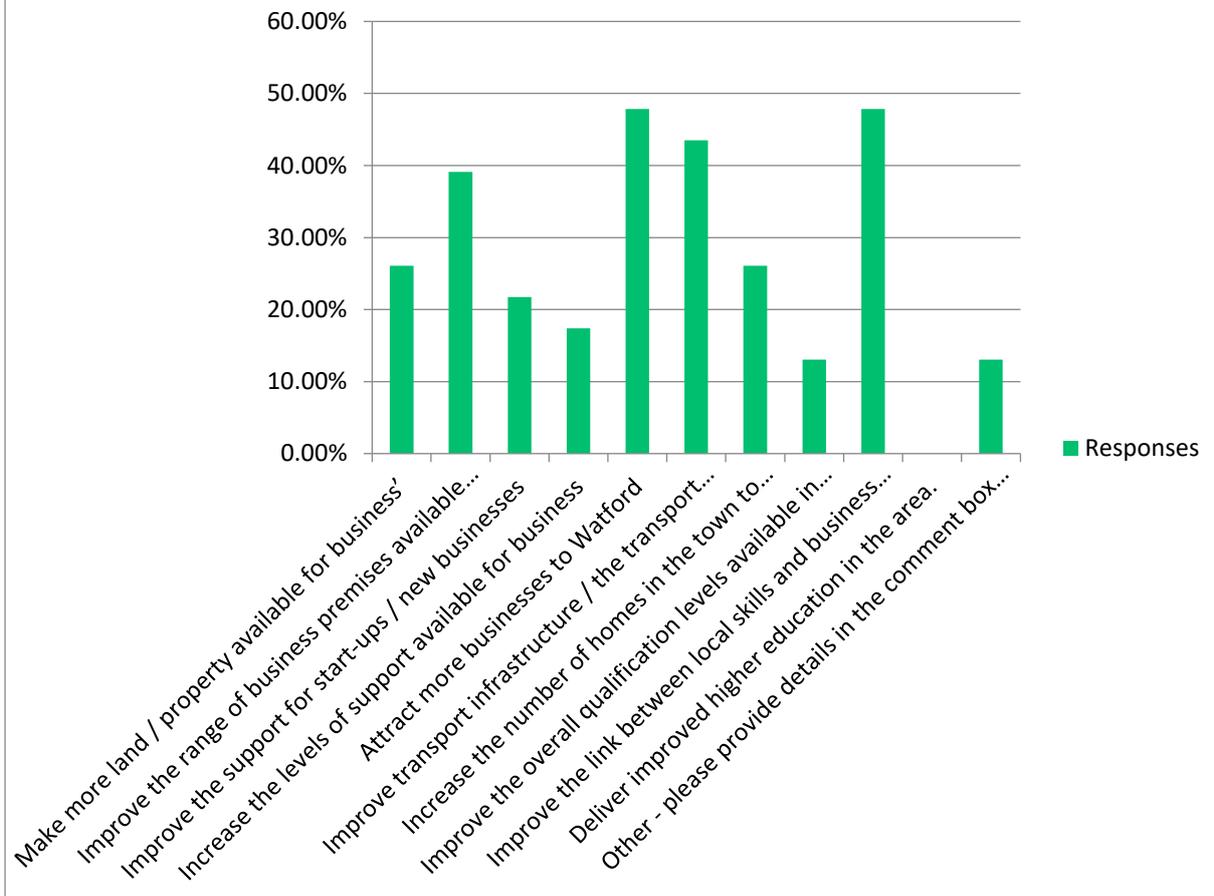
- Consider attracting special effects firms and build a new cluster – build bridges with studios
- Watford has limited land available for development so as businesses grow they would leave
- This is a key constraint so any growth strategy should avoid land based solutions
- However, it may be possible to work in partnership with other initiatives offering land/space
- Watford must decide what it wants to be good at – the local economy is weak/poor in some regards
- Leaders must accept what Watford can do/be and understand and avoid what it can't do/be
- Business support seems to be focussed on Growth – this could miss out new and struggling business
- Skills shortages are a real problem and living costs are high – however local big firms create opportunity
- Relationships with investors are key to stimulate enterprise - London investors are reticent about Watford
- Hertfordshire has perception challenges as there is no single dominant town – Watford must self-promote
- Business owners do not know where to go for help – growth services should be replaced by survival services
- Hi growth/international/knowledge driven business are no longer key – survival is key and Watford must react
- Traditional businesses have been forgotten by support providers and need help now
- High Street revitalisation is required and possible but local digitalisation is a key threat

The list above represents selected highlights drawn from stakeholder interviews, but the comments made came from a wide range of organisations operating across public, private and not for profit sectors in/around Watford.

Deyton Bell drafted a set of questions to be asked of further stakeholders via an online survey. Together we refined this and the Council then distributed the questionnaire to contacts on its database.

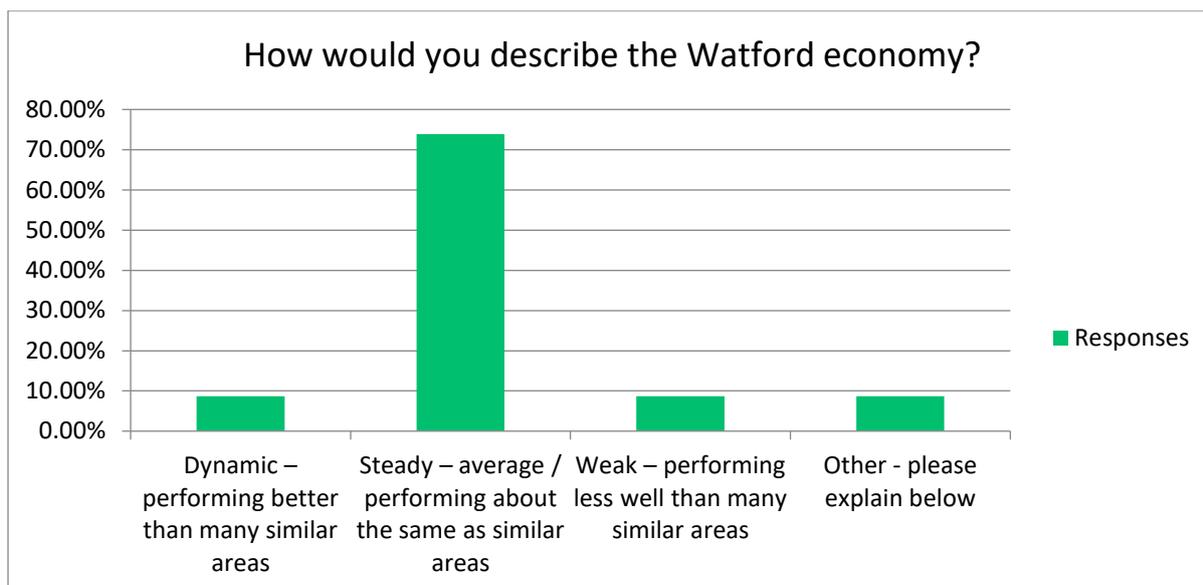
The results of the survey are too detailed to reproduce in full but a summary of key responses is outlined below:

What do you think are the most important factors in building a strong and successful Watford economy. Please select your top 3 factors.



These results have informed this strategy and we must pay attention to the views of our stakeholders when formulating future policy. Inevitably views vary across respondents but the emphasis on skills linkage to business is particularly telling, particularly as they relate to building a strong and successful economy.

This is doubly important, as further responses suggest that Watford's economy has room to improve:



The core questions addressed by the stakeholder survey included the following:

1. How would you describe the Watford economy?
 - Dynamic – performing better than many similar areas
 - Steady – average / performing about the same as similar areas
 - Weak – performing less well than many similar areas
 - Other - please explain below

2. What do you think are the most important factors in building a strong and successful Watford economy? Please select your top 3 factors.
 - Make more land / property available for business
 - Attract more businesses to Watford
 - Improve the link between local skills and business needs
 - Improve the range of business premises available in the town
 - Improve transport infrastructure / the transport network across the town
 - Deliver improved higher education in the area
 - Improve the support for start-ups / new businesses
 - Increase the number of homes in the town to support a local workforce
 - Increase the levels of support available for business
 - Improve the overall qualification levels available in Watford
 - Other - please provide details in the businesses comment box below

Please add any further comments below and outline details of good examples you know of from other areas / elsewhere.

3. What do you think are the top 3 challenges / barriers / issues facing the Watford economy that may hold it back in future?

4. What do you think are the top 3 opportunities / ideas / positives that could stimulate economic growth in Watford?

5. Thinking about the following sectors, which do you think are the most important to Watford's economy going forward? Please rank the sectors below in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.
- Professional services
 - Bio/Pharma/Life sciences
 - ICT/Digital
 - Manufacturing
 - Leisure / Tourism / Retail
 - Creative industries/Film
6. Please tell us if you think there are any other sectors you think will be important to Watford in the future?
7. What do you think the vision for Watford's economy should be?
8. What additional facilities do you think would support Watford's economy?
9. What do you think would improve Watford as a place where people can develop their careers?
10. Is there anything else on the Watford economy you would like to add?
11. In what capacity are you responding to this survey?
- A local business
 - A business support organisation
 - A developer
 - An investor
 - A community based organisation
 - A local authority member of staff
 - Other (please write in below)
12. In which sector/category does your organisation mainly operate in?
13. Where do you normally work / operate?
- Watford
 - Elsewhere (please write in below)

Appendix C: The impact of COVID-19

On 11 March 2020 the World Health Organisation characterised COVID-19 as a pandemic and on 23 March 2020 the UK entered a national lockdown⁵⁵. This lockdown, the first of three, heralded the introduction of restrictions on how businesses operate triggering an economic downturn leading to recession.

The Government response was to introduce a package of financial measures to support businesses and jobs including loans, grants, business rates relief, tax deferment and salary replacement through the Coronavirus Job Retention and the Self-Employment Income Support Schemes.

At a more local level Unlocking Hertfordshire, the Hertfordshire Recovery Plan, was launched by Hertfordshire LEP along with a £3.28m package of measures to help businesses mitigate the immediate impacts of the pandemic.

Despite the national and local package of measures to support businesses Watford has been knocked by COVID-19 economically and socially – businesses have closed and people have lost their jobs. The most visible business closures have occurred on the High Street with the closure of the town's Debenhams and John Lewis stores – the first was unsurprising, the second was a blow as the store's roots dated back to 1880.

The role of Watford Borough Council

Watford Borough Council led on the delivery of direct business grants and business rates relief to local businesses under the umbrella of the Government schemes and in the 12-month period from April 2020 paid out in excess of £25 million in grants to over 1,500 small businesses and more than £36 million in business rates credits to businesses in our retail, hospitality and leisure sector helping them to survive the pandemic and continue to operate.

It was recognised early on that more was required to support local businesses so working through the business and economy workstream of its Road to Renewal Plan the council introduced a number of initiatives to increase awareness of the support available to our business community, signpost to trusted sources of support, capture business sentiment and, working with partners, develop and deliver a series of business support initiatives including the Watford Business Recovery and Growth Programme and Watford Business Growth Grant Scheme.

In parallel through the community workstream of the Road to Renewal Plan the council provided far ranging support to residents and the local community.

Economic impact

⁵⁵ Source: HM Government, PM address to the nation on coronavirus
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/articles/coronavirusandtheeffectsonukgdp/2020-05-06#practical-challenges>

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented impacts on national, regional and local economies. By April 2020, GDP was 24% lower than February 2020⁵⁶. For greater context, this was over three times the 7% decline in GDP recorded during the 2007-2009⁵⁷ recession.

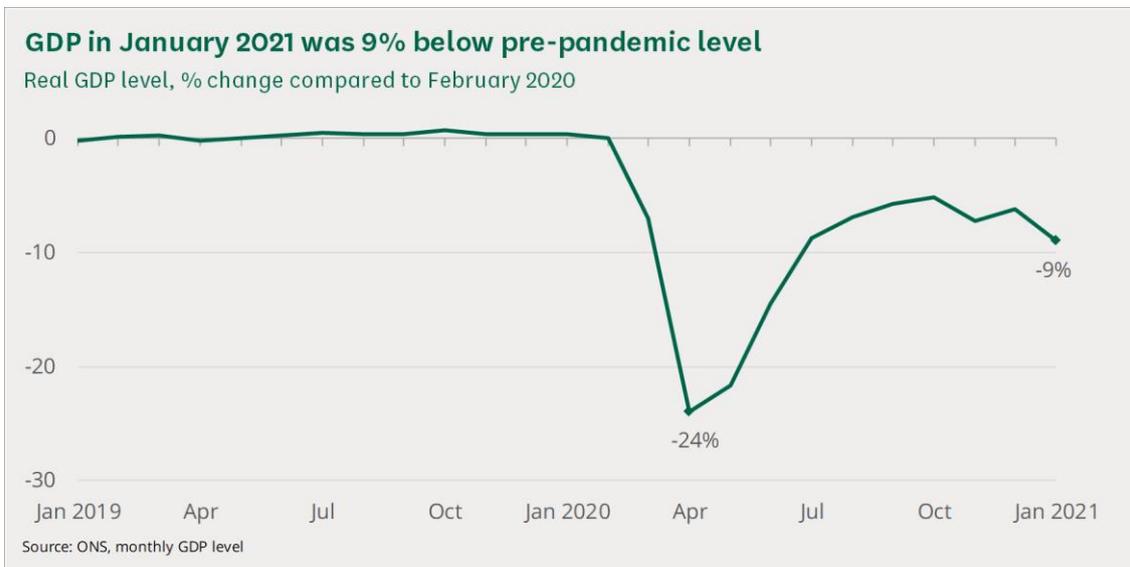


Figure 7: Monthly GDP level (ONS)

Economic activity increased over the spring and summer of 2020 as the result of national lockdown restrictions being lifted in May 2020, and GDP started to increase between May and September but then began to decline in October as a result of second national lockdown. National restrictions were eased, briefly, in December and as result GDP increased slightly, although GDP was 6% lower than pre-pandemic figures. By the end of 2020 national GDP had declined 9.8%, the biggest decline since consistent records began in 1948⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ Source: ONS, GDP monthly estimate

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/latest>

⁵⁷ Source: ONS, Coronavirus and the impact on output in the UK economy

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/latest>

⁵⁸ Source: House of Commons, Briefing Paper Number 8866 - <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8866/>

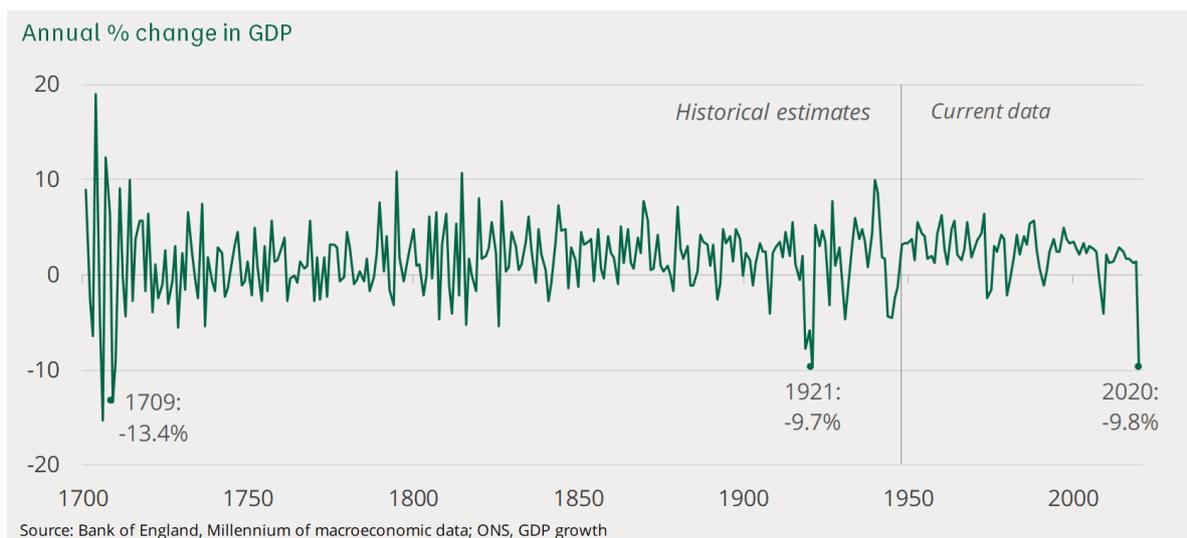


Figure 8: Annual percentage change in GDP

The pandemic has affected different sectors of the economy to different degrees. Sectors reliant on social contact and in-person service, including hospitality and entertainment, have been especially badly hit. Some sectors, such as financial services, have fared relatively better.

The unemployment rate has risen from 4.0% before the pandemic to 5.1% by the end of 2020. However, the Government's economic support measures have to date stemmed a larger increase from occurring⁵⁹.

COVID-19 economic support

The government and the Bank of England introduced a number of economic measures to help boost and sustain the economy during the pandemic. These measures were designed to preserve businesses and prop-up employment levels as the lockdowns and restrictions had resulted in many industries and sectors not being able to trade or work.

The economic impact and take up of Government financial measures by businesses in Watford is outlined in the sections below. Where possible comparisons to neighbouring districts, as well as the regional and national experience are made. The data will also take into account gender and age when this level of granularity is available.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)

The scheme – often described as the furlough scheme – aims to keep workers attached to their employers with the Government paying up to 80% of their wages. The CJRS is set to close on 30 September 2021⁶⁰. Since its commencement, over 11.5 million jobs have been

⁵⁹ Source: House of Commons Library - <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8866/>

⁶⁰ Source: House of Commons Library - <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/the-furlough-scheme-one-year-on/>

furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme⁶¹. 4.2 million jobs were on furlough on 31 March 2021⁶².

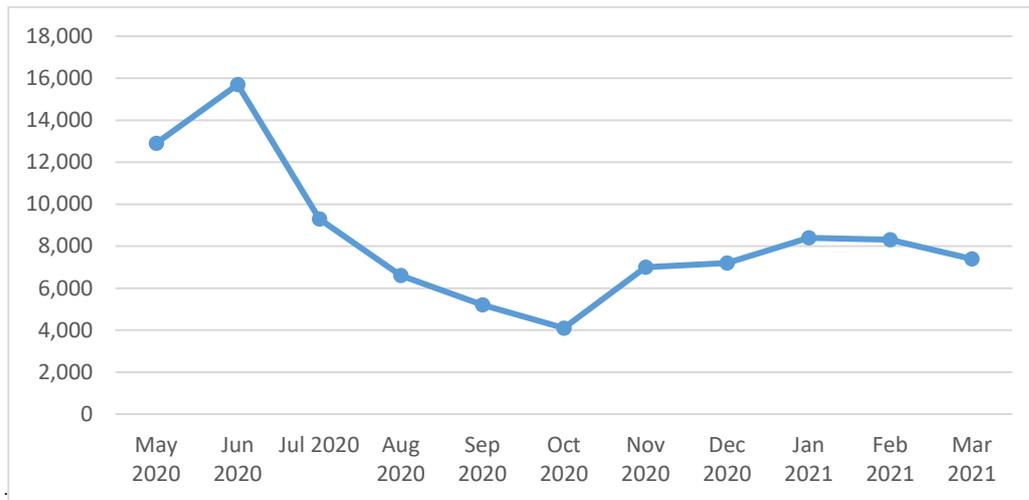


Figure 9: Total CJRS Claims in Watford

In Watford over 92,000 jobs have been furloughed between May 2020 and March 2021. During the first lockdown a total of 28,600 employments were furloughed, 15,700 of those claims were applied for in June 2020. As lockdown restrictions were eased CJRS claims within Watford began to gradually decline, only starting to peak again in October and November as a second national lockdown was introduced.

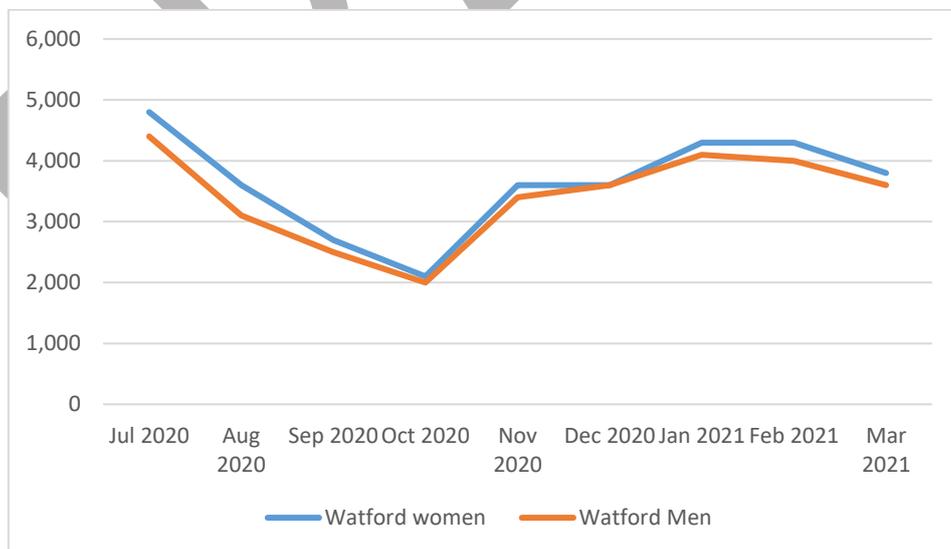


Figure 10: Watford CRJRS claims by Gender

Within Watford, female CJRS claims were higher than male claims - with a differing margin of 4%. 52% of CJRS claimants within Watford were female and 48% of claimants were male.

⁶¹ Source: HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-6-may-2021>

⁶² Source: HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-6-may-2021>

Sector	Total Employments Furloughed	
	Jan 2021	Feb 2021
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining and Quarrying, Energy Production and Supply & Water Supply, Sewerage and Waste	Jan 2021	40
	Feb 2021	30
	Mar 2021	30
Manufacturing	Jan 2021	310
	Feb 2021	320
	Mar 2021	270
Construction	Jan 2021	440
	Feb 2021	430
	Mar 2021	390
Wholesale and Retail; Repair of Motor Vehicles	Jan 2021	1,630
	Feb 2021	1,590
	Mar 2021	1,410
Transportation and Storage	Jan 2021	320
	Feb 2021	340
	Mar 2021	320
Accommodation and Food Services	Jan 2021	1,980
	Feb 2021	1,850
	Mar 2021	1,670
Information and Communication, Financial and Insurance & Real Estate	Jan 2021	640
	Feb 2021	630
	Mar 2021	610
Professional and Scientific and Technical	Jan 2021	540
	Feb 2021	540
	Mar 2021	510
Administrative and Support Services	Jan 2021	860
	Feb 2021	850
	Mar 2021	750
Education	Jan 2021	260
	Feb 2021	280
	Mar 2021	190
Health and Social Work	Jan 2021	310
	Feb 2021	320
	Mar 2021	260
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	Jan 2021	610
	Feb 2021	610
	Mar 2021	570
Public Administration and Defence; Social Security, Households & Other	Jan 2021	360
	Feb 2021	360
	Mar 2021	340
Other Service Activities	Jan 2021	90
	Feb 2021	100
	Mar 2021	90

Table 14: CJRS Claims by Sector in Watford

Between January 2021 and March 2021, during the third national lock down, the most impacted sectors in Watford were the wholesale, retail, motor vehicle repair, accommodation and food services.

In comparison to the other nine districts in Hertfordshire, the CJRS claim totals in Watford were most similar to those experienced in Hertsmere and Welwyn Hatfield.

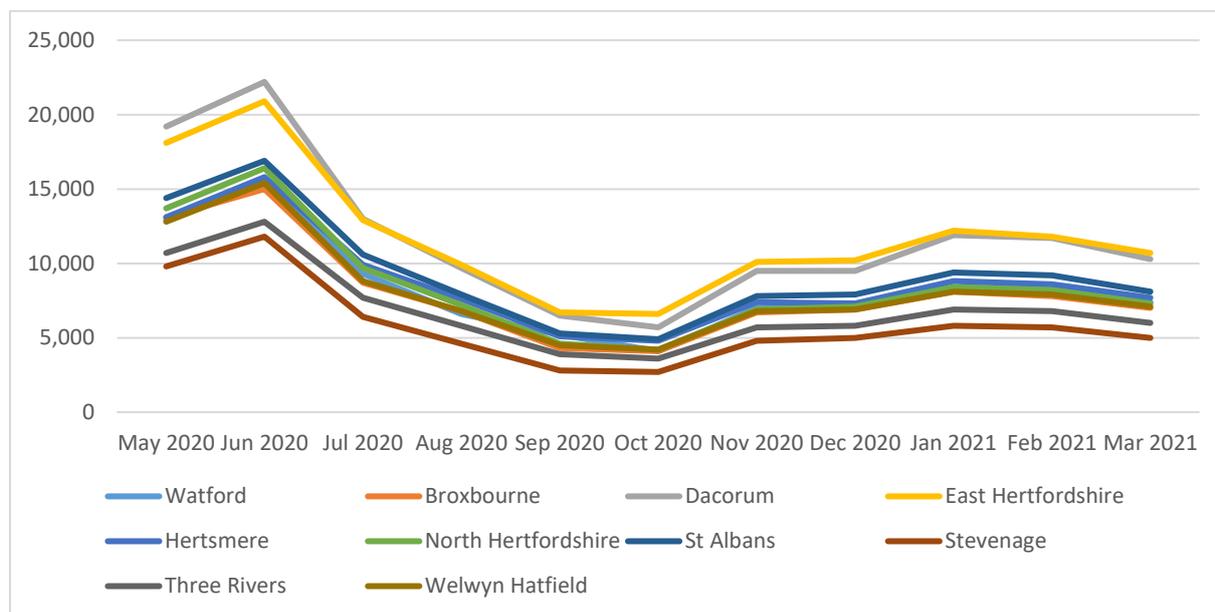


Figure 11: Total CJRS claims in Hertfordshire

	May 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
Watford	12,900	15,700	9,300	6,600	5,200	4,100	7,000	7,200	8,400	8,300	7,400
Broxbourne	13,100	15,000	8,700	6,800	4,300	4,100	6,700	6,900	8,100	7,800	7,000
Dacorum	19,200	22,200	13,000	9,700	6,500	5,700	9,500	9,500	11,900	11,700	10,300
East Hertfordshire	18,100	20,900	12,900	9,900	6,700	6,600	10,100	10,200	12,200	11,800	10,700
Hertsmere	13,100	15,800	9,900	7,600	5,100	4,800	7,400	7,300	8,800	8,600	7,700
North Hertfordshire	13,700	16,400	9,700	7,200	4,600	4,200	6,900	7,100	8,400	8,200	7,300
St Albans	14,400	16,900	10,600	7,900	5,300	4,900	7,800	7,900	9,400	9,200	8,100
Stevenage	9,800	11,800	6,400	4,600	2,800	2,700	4,800	5,000	5,800	5,700	5,000
Three Rivers	10,700	12,800	7,700	5,800	3,900	3,600	5,700	5,800	6,900	6,800	6,000
Welwyn Hatfield	12,800	15,400	8,800	6,800	4,500	4,200	6,800	6,900	8,100	7,900	7,100

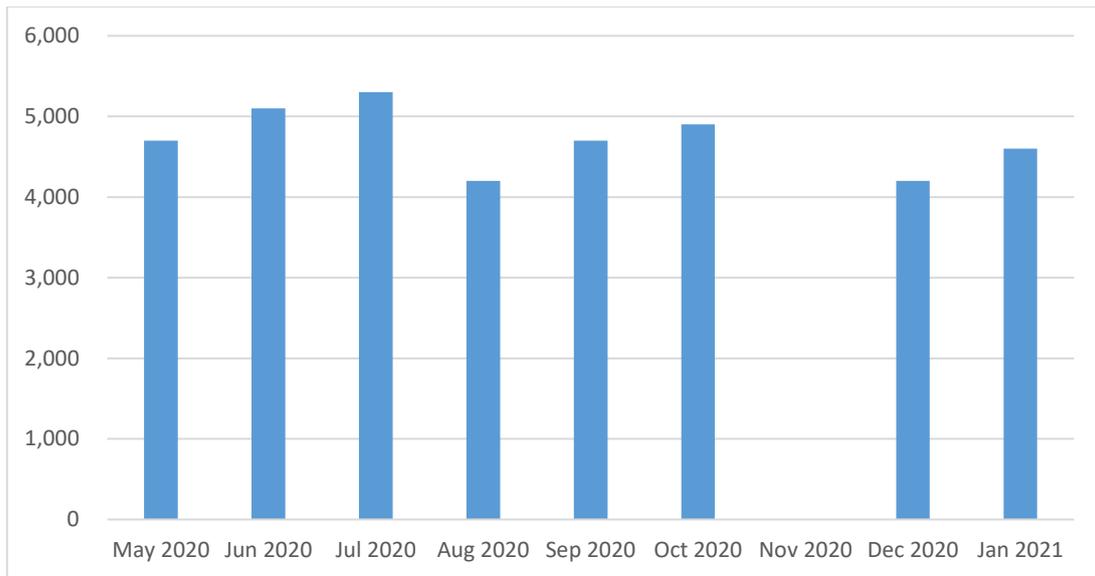
Figure 12: Monthly Breakdown of CJRS Claims in Hertfordshire

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) aims to provide similar support to the CJRS but for the self-employed with average annual profits of £50,000 or less⁶³. The SEISS has paid taxable grants to those qualifying in three tranches. The final grant will cover May to September 2021 and will be the fifth tranche. By 31 March 2021, 2.1 million individuals had claimed a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant, with 2 million individuals claiming in all three tranches⁶⁴.

⁶³ Source: HM Treasury News Release - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-gives-support-to-millions-of-self-employed-individuals>

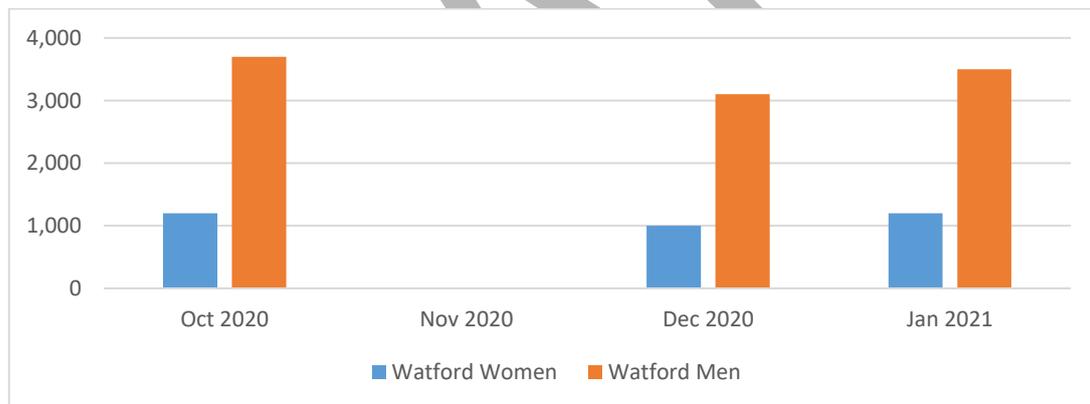
⁶⁴ Source: HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-february-2021>



*Figures for November 2020 were unavailable

Figure 13: Total SEISS Claims in Watford

SEISS Claims within Watford gradually increased between May and July 2020 as result of the first lockdown and then began to decline in August. As the second lockdown begun in autumn of 2020, SEISS claims began to increase again and then declined in December as lockdown was eased briefly.

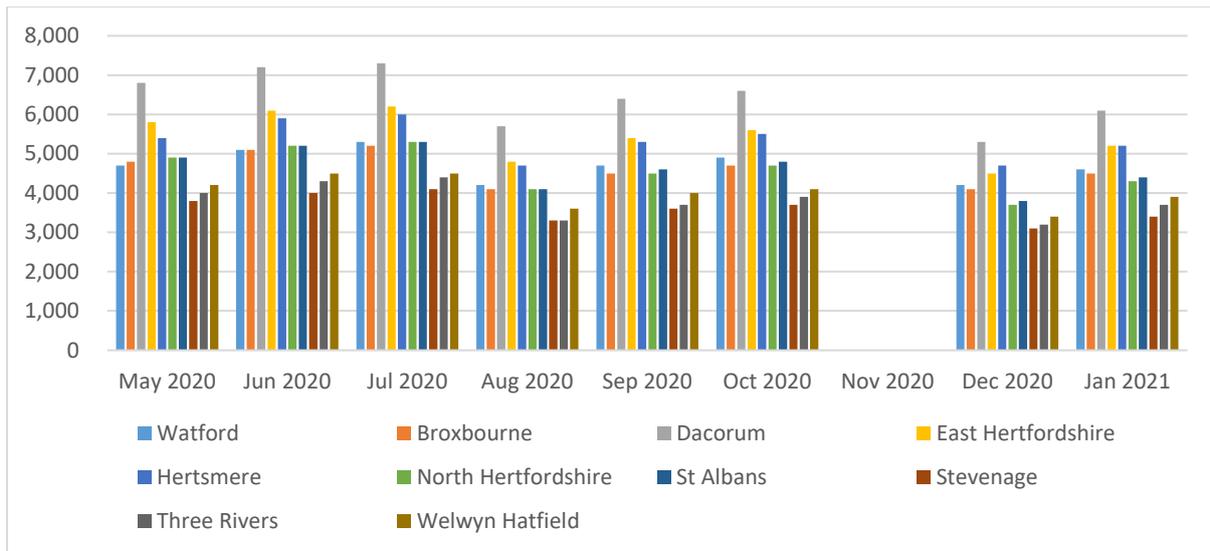


*Figures for November 2020 were unavailable

Figure 14 Watford SEISS Claims by Gender

Considerably more men applied for SEISS than women within Watford. A total of 13,700 SEISS claims were made between October 2020 and January 2021, with 75% of claims being made by men and 25% of claims coming from women.

Within Hertfordshire - Watford, Broxbourne, North Hertfordshire and St Albans shared a similar experience in regards to the total number of SEISS claims made between May 2020 and January 2021. Dacorum experienced the highest number of SEISS claims within the county.



*Figures for November 2020 were unavailable
 Figure 15: Total SEISS claims in Hertfordshire

	May 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021
■ Watford	4,700	5,100	5,300	4,200	4,700	4,900	0	4,200	4,600
■ Broxbourne	4,800	5,100	5,200	4,100	4,500	4,700	0	4,100	4,500
■ Dacorum	6,800	7,200	7,300	5,700	6,400	6,600	0	5,300	6,100
■ East Hertfordshire	5,800	6,100	6,200	4,800	5,400	5,600	0	4,500	5,200
■ Hertsmere	5,400	5,900	6,000	4,700	5,300	5,500	0	4,700	5,200
■ North Hertfordshire	4,900	5,200	5,300	4,100	4,500	4,700	0	3,700	4,300
■ St Albans	4,900	5,200	5,300	4,100	4,600	4,800	0	3,800	4,400
■ Stevenage	3,800	4,000	4,100	3,300	3,600	3,700	0	3,100	3,400
■ Three Rivers	4,000	4,300	4,400	3,300	3,700	3,900	0	3,200	3,700
■ Welwyn Hatfield	4,200	4,500	4,500	3,600	4,000	4,100	0	3,400	3,900

*Figures for November 2020 were unavailable
 Figure 16: Monthly Breakdown of SEISS Claims in Hertfordshire

Loans and finance for business

Five Government-backed financial loan schemes have been operating, each targeted at businesses of different sizes impacted by coronavirus:

1. The Bounce Back Loans Scheme (BLS) offered all businesses loans of up to £50,000 or 25% of turnover. The scheme offered streamlined application procedures and loans are 100% backed by the Government.
2. The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) offered loans of up to £5 million for businesses with a turnover under £45 million. The loans are 80% backed by the Government.
3. The Coronavirus Larger Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) extended the standard CBILS approach to larger businesses with turnover over £45 million.
4. The Future Fund provided convertible loans up to £5 million to UK-based companies that are unable to access other government support programmes because they rely on equity

investment and are pre-revenue or pre-profit. Government support was subject to companies having at least equal match funding from private investors.

- The Recovery loan Scheme was launched on 6 April 2021 and will run until 31 December 2021⁶⁵. It will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on eligible loans between £25,000 and £10 million. The scheme will be open to all business, including those who have already received support under the existing guaranteed loan schemes.

The loans are provided by commercial lenders with the exception of the Future Fund which is being delivered by the government-owned British Business Bank. The BBLs and CBILs were the most subscribed loan schemes.

Coronavirus business loan statistics		
As at 21 March 2021		
	Total value of loans (billion)	Number of loans approved
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)	23.3	98,344
Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)	5.3	716
Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs)	46.5	1,531,095
Future fund	1.1	1,140
TOTAL	76.2	1,631,295

Figure 17: HM Treasury COVID-19 business loan scheme statistics⁶⁶

Region	Number of Loans Offered	Value of Loans Offered (£)	Proportion of Offered Facilities	Proportion of UK Business Population
Watford	3,830	123,115,936		
East of England	137,741	4,192,234,249	10%	10%

Table 15 : Regional Breakdown of Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Region	Number of Loans Offered	Value of Loans Offered (£)	Proportion of Offered Facilities	Proportion of UK Business Population
Watford	193	52,819,672		
East of England	7,460	1,766,950,464	10%	10%

Table 16: Regional Breakdown of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

⁶⁵ Source: HM Treasury press release - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/recovery-loan-scheme-launches-today>

⁶⁶ Source: HM Treasury - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-treasury-coronavirus-covid-19-business-loan-scheme-statistics>

Eat Out to Help Out

The scheme was designed to stimulate the hospitality sector by offering discounts to diners to encourage them to eat out Monday-Wednesday during August 2020. A 50% discount of up to £10 per head to those eating in was available at any participating restaurant, café etc. In total, over 160 million individual meals (covers) were claimed under the scheme⁶⁷.

Alongside the scheme a temporary VAT rate of 5% was introduced for the hospitality and accommodation sector. It is up to individual businesses to decide whether or not to pass on this reduction to customers.

Eat Out to Help Out Claims: Watford		
Total number of restaurants claimed	Total number of meals claimed for	Total amount of discount claimed (£)
64	142,000	142,000

Table 17: Eat Out to Help Out Claims in Watford

Eat Out to Help Out Claims: Hertfordshire		
Total number of restaurants claimed	Total number of meals claimed for	Total amount of discount claimed (£)
941	1,401,000	8,837,000

Table 18: Eat Out to Help Out Claims in Hertfordshire

Within Watford a total of 142,000 meals were claimed for under the Eat Out to help Out Scheme. Making up 10% of the meals claimed in Hertfordshire. Within the East of England, 16% of Eat Out to Help Out meals claimed for, were made within Hertfordshire.

Eat Out to Help Out Claims: East of England		
Total number of restaurants claimed	Total number of meals claimed for	Total amount of discount claimed (£)
4,973	8,735,000	48,509,000

Table 19: Eat Out to Help Out Claims in East of England

Eat Out to Help Out Claims: England		
Total number of restaurants claimed	Total number of meals claimed for	Total amount of discount claimed (£)
50,592	90,008,000	517,102,000

Table 20: Eat Out to Help Out Claims in England

Redundancies

Despite the introduction of the CJRS and SEIS schemes there has been a marked increase in the number of redundancy notifications reported by the Insolvency Service. Between June 2020 and March 2021 a total of 5,957 redundancy announcements (jobs) were lodged in Hertfordshire. The

⁶⁷ Source: HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eat-out-to-help-out-statistics>

pattern of redundancy announcements broadly follows national lockdown periods and interim end dates of the CJRS scheme. Encouragingly there has been a marked decrease in the number of redundancy announcements reported since the start on 2021 suggesting that the worst is over but it should be noted that as we approach the end of CJRS (currently set at 30 September 2021) figures may rise again if businesses are not able to operate under near normal conditions.

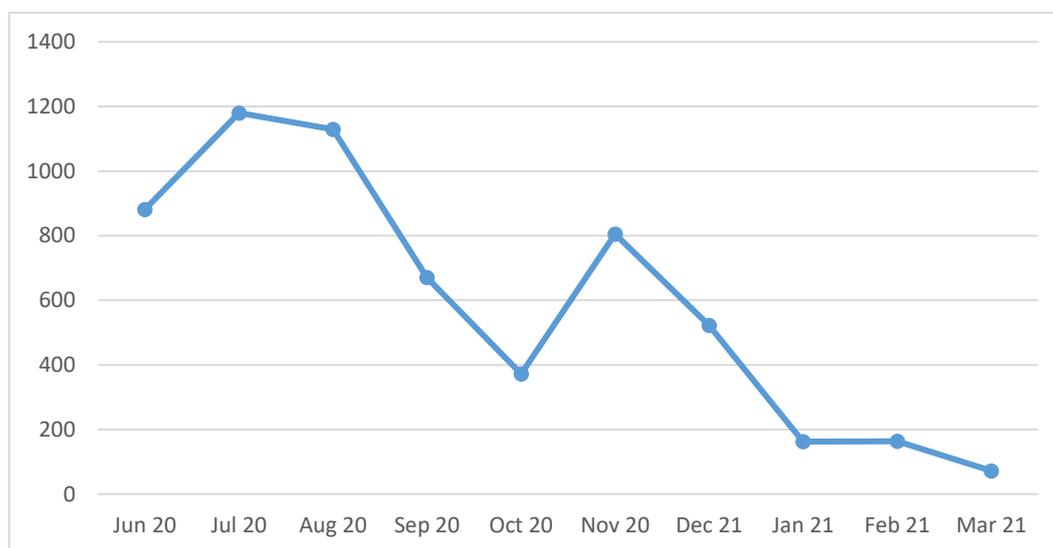


Figure 18: Total redundancy announcements in Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire LEP analysis)

As is to be expected different sectors have been impacted to varying degrees resulting in different rates of redundancy announcements. In Hertfordshire the sector with the highest number of announcements is the Professional, scientific & technical industry classification (15.3%) which is more than double that of England (6.4%). The number of redundancy announcements in this sector is concerning as this is the largest employment sector in Watford (19.53%) so ongoing trends in redundancy notifications will need to be monitored closely to see what impact there is on Watford's key employment sectors.

Top 5 impacted sectors	Hertfordshire		England	
Professional and scientific	912	15.3%	28,839	6.4%
Manufacturing	904	15.2%	60,002	13.4%
Distributive trades (inc. retail)	852	14.3%	49,787	11.1%
Accommodation and food services	840	14.1%	91,225	20.4%
Administrative and support services	397	6.7%	29,009	6.5%
Total Redundancies	5,957	100%	448,240	100%

Table 21: Top 5 impacted sectors in Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire LEP analysis)

Redundancy announcements will inevitably be reflected in increased numbers of people claiming out of work benefits and being included in the claimant count figures.

Unemployment

The impact on jobs and the labour market has been significant. In January 2020 Watford's claimant count rate was 2.5%, by March 2021 it was 7.1%, the highest rate in Hertfordshire and above the

national rate. In absolute terms the number of residents claiming out of work benefits rose from 1,555 in January 2020 to 4,380 in March 2021⁶⁸, a 181.67% increase over the 14 month period and the second highest number in Hertfordshire.

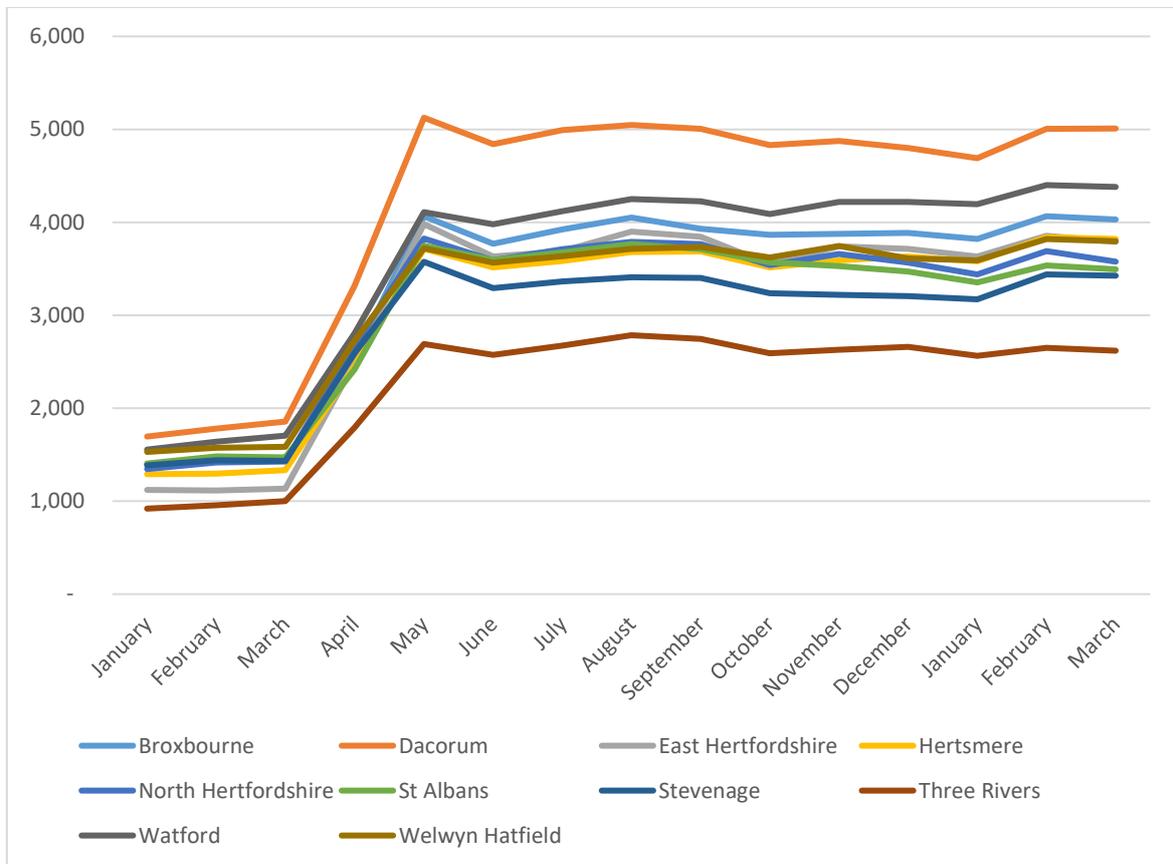


Figure 19: Claimant count rate (January 2020 to March 2021)

The increase in claimant count numbers can be seen across all ages, gender and wards suggesting that all sections of the Watford community has been impacted.

⁶⁸ Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age - <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tabwab>

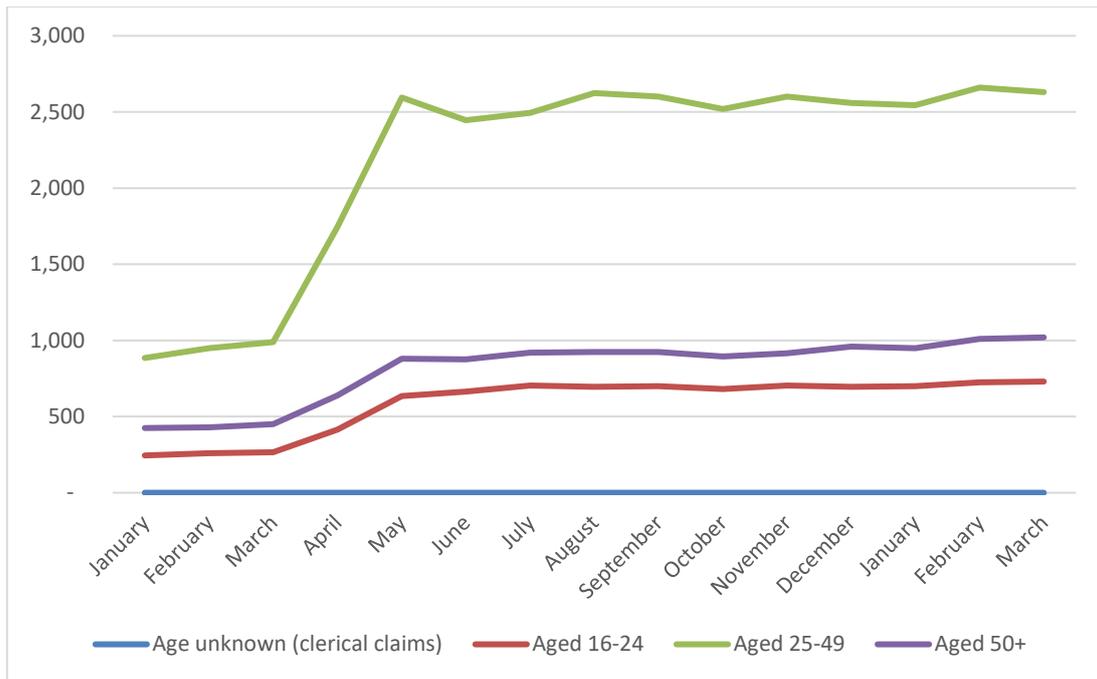


Figure 20: Claimant count by age (January 2020 to March 2021)

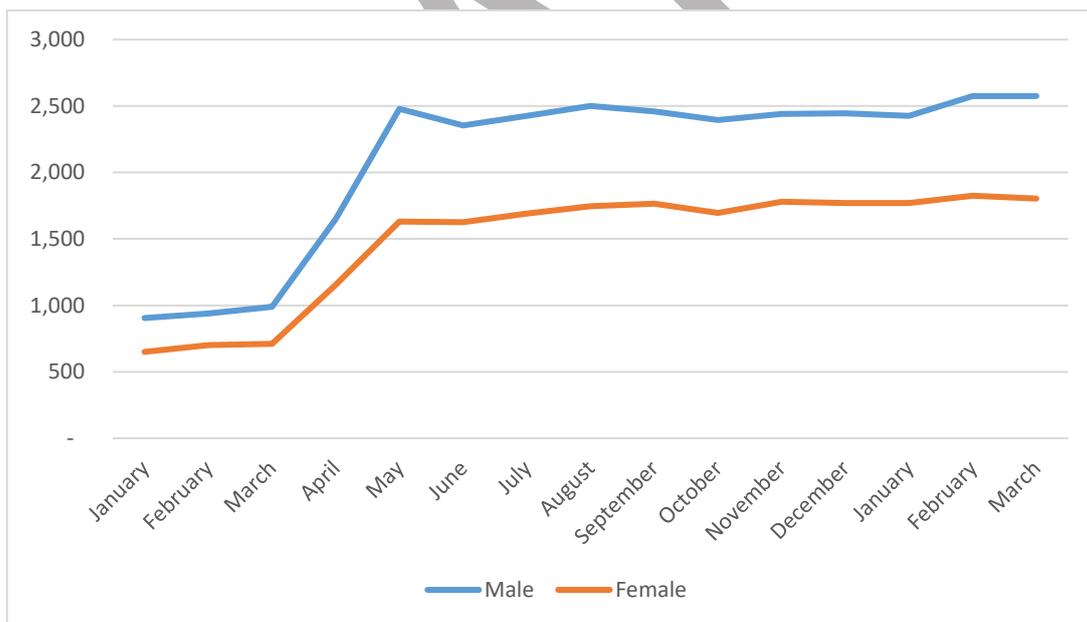


Figure 21: Claimant count by gender (January 2020 to March 2021)

The increase in claimant count is reflected in the economic activity rate. In December 2020 the economic activity rate was 74.3%⁶⁹, compared to 83.3% in December 2019, a reduction of 9% on the pre-pandemic level.

⁶⁹ Source: ONS Annual Population survey - https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157230/report.aspx?c1=1941962834&c2=2092957699#tab_empunemp

Appendix D: The impact of Brexit

The UK voted to leave the EU in 2016 and officially left the trading bloc on 31 January 2020. However, both sides agreed to keep many things the same until 31 December 2020 – the Brexit transition period – to allow time to agree terms of a new trade deal. A deal was agreed on 24 December just seven days before the transition period ended.

Consequently many businesses were unprepared, in part due to the late agreement of a deal but largely because their focus had been on managing the impact COVID-19 was having on their business.

The LSE's Centre for Economic Performance published [The local economic effects of Brexit](#) analysis in 2017 looking at the potential impact of a soft vs hard Brexit at the local authority level and placed Watford in the top 10 most affected places based on potential GVA contraction under a hard Brexit.

In 2018 the UK Trade Policy Observatory at the University of Sussex published [The vulnerability of different parliamentary constituencies to Brexit economic shocks](#) which looked at the economic impact of 'no deal' and 'soft' Brexit scenarios. This calculated the effect of Brexit on the residents in an area rather than jobs in that area and suggested that 2,650 Watford residents could lose their jobs as a result of a 'no deal' Brexit, the highest across all constituencies. All of the constituencies with the largest potential losses among residents are located either within or close to London and all show significant job losses among workers who work outside the constituency.

The Hertfordshire LEP [Brexit & Hertfordshire: Understanding the risks and potential impacts](#) report provides a comparative analysis of the Brexit impact in Hertfordshire but points out the challenge in terms of analysing the prospective economic risk, impacts and opportunities of Brexit.

Due to the economic downturn brought about by COVID-19 and the fact that many businesses have been required to close since the end of the transition period the full impact of Brexit locally is still unknown. There has been a significant rise in claimant count numbers since the start of the pandemic so it is not possible to disaggregate these numbers to determine whether any new claims are as a result of Brexit.