



Covid-19

Our Road to Renewal

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1. Introduction

The emergence of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown has had a significant impact across the town and council. Whilst the focus initially has been on the immediate coordinated response to support the town during the lockdown period, the focus is now on ensuring that the council has a clear plan in place to lead the renewal for both the town and the council.

As outlined in the report that introduces the Council Plan 2020—2024, the council's Road to Renewal Plan forms part of a package of forward looking strategies which will ensure that the council provide a focus on the way forward after Covid-19, whilst clearly aligning this to the long-term ambitions for the town and organisation. The plans have been developed in conjunction with one another and are intended to be read within the shared context of the post-Covid world.

Our Road to Renewal Plan details the specific activity to be undertaken by the council in order to lead the renewal of the town and council following Covid-19. As well as alignment with the Council Plan, it builds upon both the positives, such as the overwhelming community-spirited reaction to the crisis, and the lessons learnt, from the council's initial response.

Our Road to Renewal Plan also details the separate work streams established to deliver a comprehensive and joined-up renewal of the town and council. Within the framework of the Council Plan, the Road to Renewal Plan outlines specific objectives for each area of focus, covering the community, economy and business and the council's organisational renewal, including the financial resilience of the organisation.

2. Background

There is little doubt that Covid-19 has had a substantial impact across the country. This applies not only to the immediate reaction and response to the pandemic but also in relation to the future and the inevitable renewal required moving forwards.

Following the Bank of England's confirmation that the economy contracted by over 20% in April 2020 alone, Hertfordshire's Growth Board have commissioned a review of the probable impact on Hertfordshire. Despite Central Government's £50 billion support package, the review predicated a rise in unemployment across the County, with a particular reduction in entry-level jobs. The Office for Budget Responsibility further predicts an unprecedented national economic contraction of up to 35% in the next quarter of the year, leaving an additional 2 million people across the country unemployed. The starkness of these figures highlights the need for a co-ordinated and robust Renewal Plan, led by the council, to mitigate the impact to the town and council as much as possible.

Such plans for Renewal cannot be made in isolation. The unprecedented nature of the Covid-19 crisis has meant that existing plans and strategies no longer necessarily meet the future reality of the council's ambition. Furthermore, the appointment of a new Managing Director has provided the opportunity for a new Council Plan to set the strategic direction of the council over the next four years in the context of our renewed ambition as well as Covid-19, with our Road to Renewal Plan forming a key component of its delivery to ensure an ongoing focus on renewal of the town and council.

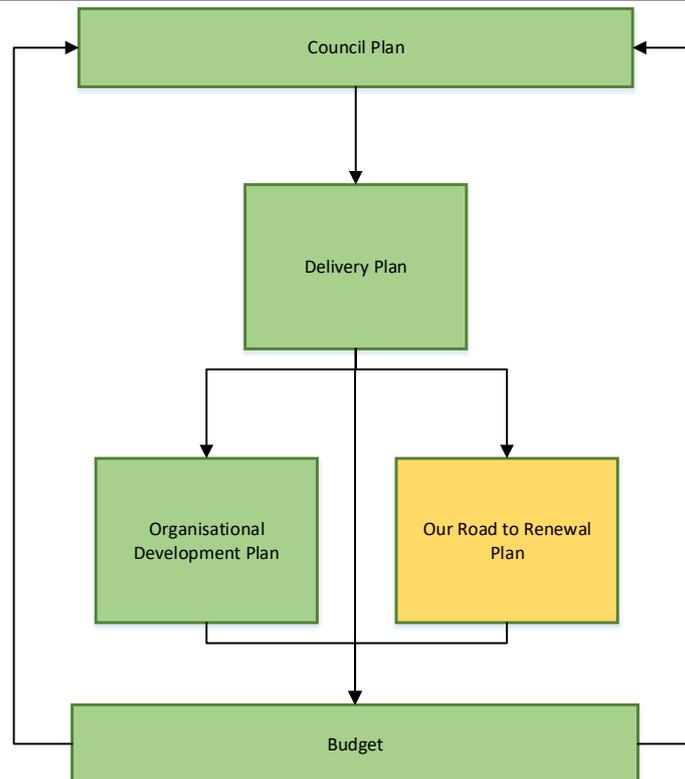


Diagram 1 – Council Plan Golden Thread

The diagram above illustrates the way in which the different components within the council’s package of plans will work together and, specifically where the Road to Renewal Plan (highlighted in yellow) sits within this structure. The Council Plan is the overarching document which outlines the council’s key themes and commitments. This is linked directly to the Delivery Plan which provides further detail of the activities that will deliver the commitments. The Organisational Development acts as a key component to ensure that our staff have the right skills, knowledge and opportunities to support the Delivery Plan and fulfil the activities detailed within it. Equally, the Road to Renewal Plan provides the clear focus required for the renewal of our community, economy and council in light of Covid-19 by identifying the specific range of measures within the Delivery Plan that will provide the support and intense activity required to ensure that our renewal is as swift and robust as it can be. All of this is then underpinned by the budget which must reflect the ambition of the council to ensure that the package of plans can be funded. If the council’s future budget position changes and the budget is subsequently unable to continue supporting the plans, there will be a need to tailor the Council Plan to ensure that it reflects the reality of the council’s financial position.

3. Work Streams

Whilst the economic impact of Covid-19 is clearly significant, the council’s Renewal Plan is not limited to the economic renewal of the town. To ensure that appropriate focus and resource is committed to supporting a holistic renewal, four work streams have been established:

- Community
- Economy and Business

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- Organisational Renewal
 - Financial Resilience

These work streams are consistent with the themes of the Council Plan to create a ‘thriving and creative town’, a ‘healthy and happy town’ and a council ‘that serves our residents’. Each work stream will be led by a Group Head of Service reporting directly into the council’s Renewal Co-ordination Group, as per Appendix 2. In line with the council’s standard programme management methodology, progress will be closely monitored and risks, issues and dependencies actively managed. Updates will be provided on the progress of the Road to Renewal Plan through quarterly updates to Cabinet on the Council Plan

4. Road to Renewal Plan Structure

To ensure ongoing focus as the Road to Renewal Plan is developed and then delivered, Portfolio Holders have approved a number of objectives for each work stream. Specific Renewal Plan actions are listed below under the objectives that they seek to deliver. Listed in red adjacent to each activity is the Council Plan commitment that the activity is linked to.

5. Our Road to Renewal Plan

5.1 Work Stream One – Community

The community response to Covid-19 across Watford was really positive and highlighted the huge number of community, voluntary and charitable groups that exist within the town. Supporting the Council Plan theme to create ‘a healthy and happy town’, the Community work stream, led by the Group Head of Community and Environmental Services, seeks to harness this positive aspect of the recent crisis as well as identifying how our community can be supported following the initial response to Covid-19 and lockdown. This will include maintaining and utilising the army of volunteers who signed up to help the most vulnerable in our community, ensuring that those who require help after lockdown has ended continue to be supported, celebrating the town’s community response to the crisis and providing leadership and support during any period of economic downturn.

| Recognise Watford’s fantastic community | | |
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| 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 | Maximise the cultural opportunities for the town |
| 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 | Commemorate Watford’s response to Covid-19 |
| 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 | Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need |
| 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 | Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need |



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| <p>Ensure we are best placed to utilise volunteers to support community responses in the future</p> | <p>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</p> | <p>Embed resilience across the organisation</p> |
| <p>Support our residents living with, or caring for someone living with, dementia</p> | <p>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</p> | <p>Create a Dementia Friendly Community</p> |
| <p>Engage our community in the renewal process</p> | | |
| <p>Work with our community to reflect and commemorate Covid-19</p> | <p>We will engage with community, faith leaders and councillors to identify an appropriate memorial to mark the pandemic and act as a place of reflection for our residents</p> | <p>Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19</p> |
| <p>Ensure our residents remain supported after Covid-19</p> | <p>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</p> | <p>Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need</p> |
| <p>Ensure our residents receiving support from partners continue to be supported after Covid-19</p> | <p>We will work with our partners to support mutual aid groups and online communities who have provided support throughout the crisis to ensure that those receiving support from these groups are able to access help over the medium to long term if they require it</p> | <p>Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need</p> |
| <p>Continue to work closely with our community, voluntary and faith groups who contributed to the community response to Covid-19</p> | <p>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</p> | <p>Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need</p> |

| Support and facilitate the ongoing welfare of residents who have suffered hardship, loss and trauma as a result of the pandemic | | |
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| Ensure that support is in place for residents with mental health issues | We will work with our partners to ensure that support is in place for residents whose mental health has been impacted by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown | Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing, including those with mental health issues |
| Make the best use of online resources to maintain support for our residents | We will utilise the large amount of information collated during the pandemic to ensure that it remains accessible to those who may need support after lockdown and is available in the event of a second wave of the virus or increase in the infection rate | Ensure a continual focus on customer needs |
| 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 | Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19 |
| 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 | Ensure a continual focus on customer needs |
| Put in place mechanisms to identify those with ongoing vulnerabilities and a strategy for addressing these needs | | |
| 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 | Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need |
| Address the issue of digital isolation that impacted many in our community as result of Covid-19 | We will work with partners to tackle the issue of digital isolation in the community, using new partnerships to drive social value in this area | Address digital isolation |

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| 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 | Ensure a continual focus on customer needs |
| 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 | Achieve and maintain zero rough sleepers on the streets on Watford |
| Maintain the ability to remobilise resources in the event of a second wave of Covid-19 | We will ensure that Watford Helps is able to remobilise as quickly as possible in the event of a second wave of the virus in order to support the most vulnerable residents in our community | Embed resilience across the organisation |
| Identify funding opportunities to assist in the renewal process | | |
| 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 | Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need |
| 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 | Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need |
| Deliver and support appropriate memorial and thank you events and initiatives | | |
| 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 | Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19 |

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| 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 | Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19 |
| Bring together and thank our community for the town's collective response to Covid-19 | Subject to social distancing guidance and government requirements, we will sponsor a Watford Thanks You Parade, bringing our community together following a period of physical isolation as a result of the pandemic and an opportunity to recognise the work of our key workers across the town | Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19 |
| 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 | Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19 |
| 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 | Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need |
| Provide community reassurance through effective community leadership | | |
| 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 | Ensure a safer Watford |
| 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 | Ensure a safer Watford |

5.2 Work Stream Two – Business and Economy

The economic consequence of Covid-19 is likely to be significant for Watford. This work stream, led by the Group Head of Place Shaping, subsequently provides a focus on how the council can not only support the local economy to survive the economic shock but, in line with the Council Plan theme to 'create a thriving

and creative town’, also to revive and then thrive. A comprehensive programme of activity has been established to drive forward the economy of the town by remobilising the Town Centre, invigorating small and medium businesses and attracting and retaining big businesses.

| 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 | | |
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| 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 | Drive the economic renewal of Watford |
| Develop our Economic Plan 2020-2024 | We will develop an Economic Plan for the next four years (2020-24) which will set out our plans to support our local economy and businesses to thrive in the years to come | Drive the economic renewal of Watford |
| Establish new, stronger and more focused partnerships with businesses of all sizes across the town | | |
| 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 | Attract and retain big business in Watford |
| Understand the needs and concerns of our small businesses | We will review our forums for small and medium businesses to ensure that they have a clear purpose, allow business to have a strong voice in the town and are promoted effectively. This will allow us to understand the needs and concerns of our businesses and to support them accordingly and will include representatives of SME groups on our Business Stakeholder Group | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |

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| 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 | Maximise the cultural opportunities for the town |
| Ensure that the council communicates effectively with our businesses | We will ensure that our corporate communications plan has a clear focus on communicating effectively with businesses of all sizes across the town, promoting genuine and meaningful two-way engagement | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town / Attract and retain big business in Watford |
| Actively support initiatives intended to assist SMEs to survive and grow | | |
| 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 | Re-mobilise our Town Centre and local economy and support its renewal |
| 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' | Re-mobilise our Town Centre and local economy and support its renewal |
| Keep businesses informed | We will introduce a monthly business newsletter for our businesses, providing us with an opportunity to provide support, advice and guidance | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| Understand business need | We will launch a Watford Business Survey so that we can understand business needs and the impact of Covid-19 on our local businesses and wider economy. This will inform our Economic Review and Thrive Strategy so that it best meets the needs of our businesses | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| 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 | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |

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| 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 | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| 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 | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| Support businesses to work safely | We will support our local economy by producing and delivering a Safe Working initiative for taxis & other sectors | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| Attract and retain big businesses to the town | | |
| Develop our 50 Key Accounts approach | We will identify 50 key businesses operating within the town and introduce a key accounts approach whereby we work closely on a one-to-one basis with businesses to understand their needs and concerns, ensuring that we both attract and retain them within the town, further supporting our local economy and residents | Attract and retain big business in Watford |
| Promote Watford effectively | We will develop a Brand Positioning strategy to establish a strong brand for Watford as the place to do business | Attract and retain big business in Watford |
| Ensure Watford Town centre remains a regional leisure and shopping destination which supports the local economy and local people | | |
| 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 | Re-mobilise our Town Centre and local economy and support its renewal |

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| 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 | Re-mobilise our Town Centre and local economy and support its renewal |
| 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 | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| Through links with partners, act as a conduit to central government and other bodies where there are unmet support needs for businesses | | |
| Advocate for our local businesses | We will use the results of our Watford Business survey to influence the business support package delivered by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Hertfordshire Growth Hub | Maximise opportunities for Watford |
| 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 | Attract and retain big business in Watford / Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| Support growth and development aspirations so that Watford remains an economic leader in the sub-region | | |
| 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 | Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town |

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| 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 | Develop the Watford Junction Quarter |
| 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 | Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town |
| Collectively pursue relevant opportunities for funding | | |
| 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 | Maximise opportunities for Watford |
| Deploy our investment to achieve appropriate commercial returns in conjunction with driving the economic growth potential of Watford | | |
| Develop Watford Business Park | We will develop Watford Business Park to create new, high quality business space and employment opportunities | Develop Watford Business Park |
| 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 | Maximise opportunities for Watford |
| 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 | Assess the feasibility of Growth Fund |

| Work with ‘anchor’ institutions in Hertfordshire to maximise the benefits of economic growth for local residents | | |
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| 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 | Drive the economic renewal of Watford |
| 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 | Drive the economic renewal of Watford |
| Ensure there is the appropriate office space, industrial facilities and infrastructure to attract and retain businesses in the borough | | |
| 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 | Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town |
| 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 | Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town |
| 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 | Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town |

| Deliver transport improvements to support the retention of businesses and a flourishing town centre | | |
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| 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 | Champion proposals for a mass-rapid Transport Scheme for Watford |
| 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 | Continue to investigate opportunities to create a low Carbon Transport Hub |
| 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. | Improve the cycling and walking network in Watford |
| 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 | Implement a demand responsive transport scheme |

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| Position Watford as a Sustainable Travel Town | We will consult with a range of stakeholders to develop a sustainable Transport Strategy. The Strategy will position Watford as a sustainable travel town that promotes greener ways to travel, reduces congestion, helps people to make healthy travel choices and stimulates economic growth. | Position Watford as a Sustainable Travel Town |
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5.3 Work Stream Three – Organisational Renewal

Like all organisations, the council itself has been impacted by Covid-19. Whilst internal resilience, recently upgraded IT systems and staff dedication has meant that the net effect was mitigated, the re-allocation of resources to respond to the crisis has meant that there is a need for an internal operational renewal, as well as the opportunity to apply the learning from Covid-19 to do things differently in the future. The organisational renewal work stream, led by the Group Head of Transformation, will take the learning from this progress, feedback from staff, members and partners to ensure that key improvements are sustained to become business as usual, embedding a ‘one council’ approach and ensuring that we create a ‘council that serves its residents’.

| Restore service delivery to agreed business as usual in a planned way | | |
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| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |

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| 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. | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Embed resilience across the organisation |
| 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 | Improve our internal decision making so that it is agile and effective |

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| Ensure that we have sufficient resourcing to deliver on our Renewal Plan commitments | We will review our existing resource to ensure that we are able to deliver on the commitments of our Council Plan and Renewal Plan, alongside continuing to deliver the usual services provided to our resident and businesses | Embed resilience across the organisation |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| Ensure the consistent application of appropriate policies during the renewal phase | | |
| Modernise our working practices | We will modernise our working practices through the revision of policies, including updating our smart working policy and the production of social distancing policy to ensure ongoing alignment with government restrictions and guidelines | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| Ensure the management of backlogs, identifying any extra resources required to restore normal services | | |
| Understand the impact of Covid-19 on our projects | We will review the timelines for all of our projects and understand the impact of Covid-19, including ensuring that all projects continue to support the delivery of our Council Plan and priorities for our residents | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |

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| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| Identify employee support needs and vulnerabilities and respond to these | | |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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. | Embed resilience across the organisation. |

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| 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 | Embed a continuous improvement approach across all of our services. |
| 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 | Introduce a new Organisational Development approach |
| 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 | Introduce a new Organisational Development approach |
| 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 | Introduce a new Organisational Development approach |
| Capture learning through a process of debriefing, both single and multi-agency | | |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |

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| React to feedback from colleagues | We will report back on our recent Covid-19 staff survey with a clear action plan for delivery, based on the feedback received from our colleagues | Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19 |
| 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 | Embed resilience across the organisation |
| Ensure that learning is used to identify opportunities and inform future changes, such as modernisation and transformation, linking to the existing programme | | |
| 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 | Introduce a new Organisational Development approach |
| 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 | Introduce a new Organisational Development approach |
| Digitise our processes | We will ensure that all council processes utilise existing council technology, such as the council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system so that customers, whether residents or businesses, can transact with the council at a time that suits them, not just during the traditional opening hours | Provide an excellent customer experience |

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| 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 | Enhance agile ways of working for our staff |
| 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 | Enhance agile ways of working for our staff |
| Ensure that there are appropriate commemorative events for colleagues/Members | | |
| 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 | Introduce a new Organisational Development approach |

5.4 Work Stream Four – Financial Resilience

Operating as part of the local and national economy, the council itself is not immune from the economic impacts of Covid-19. Nationally emergency funding of £3.2 billion has been announced to support councils through the immediate pressures. This has been made available through two tranches of non-ringfenced grant funding of £1.6bn. The first funding announcement was 20 March and the council was allocated £50k; the second was announced on 18 April with the individual allocations released on 29 April. Watford was been allocated a further £959k, taking the total amount of emergency funding available to the council up to £1m. A further £0.4m worth of savings have been identified and work in this area continues to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.

The current estimate of the direct financial impact of the crisis on the council was recently assessed as £3.1m, of which £0.7m related to additional costs and £2.4m were as a result of loss of income. With the crisis also expected to impact Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income from the 2021/22 financial year, this work stream will focus on closing the financial gap, modelling the impact of disrupted revenue streams and provide some focus to our partnerships and contracts, particularly in relation to supply chains.

| Quantify the budgetary impact of the pandemic on the council and identify and pursue external opportunities for funding | | |
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| 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 | Deliver the council's financial renewal |
| Understand the wider impact of Covid-19 on the public sector | We will contribute fully locally and nationally to the work being carried out to identify the impact on district councils and lobby for additional resources to support our Road to Renewal Plan whilst continuing to deliver services for our residents and businesses | Deliver the council's financial renewal |
| 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 | Deliver the council's financial renewal |
| Model the effects of disrupted revenue streams | | |
| 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 | Deliver the council's financial renewal |

| Ensure the prompt administration of national and local financial schemes during the renewal phase | | |
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| 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 | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| 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 reprofiled so that it supports our priorities | Deliver the council's financial renewal |
| Assess the impacts of supply chain disruption (including key contractors) | | |
| Understand the impact of supply chain disruption on our projects and contracts (whether as a result of a second wave of the virus or Brexit) | 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 | Embed resilience across the organisation |
| 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 | Invigorate our small and medium businesses across the town |
| 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 Brexit) | 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 | Embed resilience across the organisation |

