

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 24 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	<p>Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for our town and residents.</p> <p>Potential impact on the reputation of the Council.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Robust project and programme management</p>	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Failure to recognise milestones / completion of commitments	Lost opportunity to celebrate success internally and externally	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Robust project and programme management</p> <p>Clear communication of milestones / achievements</p>	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	<p>Regular, robust and accurate reports for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny that is owned across service areas</p> <p>Linking delivery to staff and team objectives</p>	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Slippage on delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy	<p>Failure to deliver our commitments to staff potentially resulting in failure to deliver our Council Plan.</p> <p>Potential impact on staff's health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Robust project and programme management.</p> <p>Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group</p>	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	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Robust project and programme management.</p> <p>Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group</p> <p>Build into recruitment literature</p>	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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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 (and then subsequently Overview and Scrutiny Committee) 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

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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 EP MO 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