

## Watford Borough Council Road to Renewal Plan

### Work Stream 1: Community

<b>DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE</b>	
Celebrate our diversity, heritage and culture to make Watford a place for people to succeed from childhood to old age	
<b>Commitment</b>	
Commemorate Watford's response to Covid-19	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with our community to provide opportunities for reflection and commemoration of Covid-19.</li> <li>• We will acknowledge the sacrifice made by key workers on behalf of the town, its residents and businesses.</li> <li>• We will bring together and thank our community for the town's collective response to Covid-19.</li> <li>• We will recognise the community spirit across the town during the pandemic.</li> <li>• We will collectively reflect on the personal losses of the town's citizens.</li> </ul>	As part of the Queens' Jubilee Green Canopy, we will establish a ring of trees in the Cassiobury Park around the Bandstand which can also act as a place of reflection for residents of all backgrounds and cultures
	Work with our community to design and install a Public Arts memorial to mark the pandemic
	Partake annually in NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers Day, marking the service and sacrifice of all frontline workers who have served the town throughout the pandemic
	Launch and continue to promote our Community Hero scheme, recognising those who have contributed to the town's response to Covid-19 and those who are integral to supporting our renewal
	Support the Watford BID 'above & beyond' awards to recognise the significant contribution made by individuals to support our town centre
	Lead a town-wide remembrance event to bring our town together and recognise those residents who have list their lives throughout the pandemic and the families and communities that have been impacted by Covid-19

<b>Commitment</b>	
Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing, including those with mental health issues	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure that support is in place for residents whose mental health has been impacted by Covid-19 and subsequent lockdowns.</li> <li>We will support our residents who are asked to self-isolate</li> <li>We will assist residents to make informed decisions about Covid-19 vaccinations</li> <li>We will continue to practically support the vaccine roll out across the town</li> <li>We will work to reduce health inequalities</li> </ul>	Provide support for residents whose mental health has been impacted by Covid-19 through the Watford Healthy Hub and other measures
	Continue to effectively and efficiently administer test and trace payments to those residents asked to self-isolate and provide targeted education to the community in order to address non-observance of self-isolation rules
	Ensure accurate information on Covid vaccinations reaches all areas of our community by continuing to work closely with faith groups, community leaders and others across the town to relive any winter pressure on our health and care services
	Facilitate the vaccination effort, including the booster jab programme, by utilising space at the Town Hall as a vaccination centre and continue to arrange walk in vaccination centres for residents of all ages
	Collaboratively work with internal and external stakeholders to reduce health inequalities in relation to vaccine uptake, and engage with disadvantaged groups within our communities to address any issues that may be barriers to them being vaccinated
	Continue our ambitious events programme, including utilising green spaces across the borough, to promote the use of award winning parks and contribute towards the health and wellbeing of our residents
	Work with the County Council, Hertfordshire district and borough councils and other key partners, such as the Hertfordshire Growth Board, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Police and NHS to develop a shared health and wellbeing strategy that will benefit all of our residents
<b>DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE</b>	
Work even more closely with the voluntary and community sector, to build a resilient community where people support each other	
<b>Commitment</b>	
Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will support charities and the voluntary sector impacted by Covid-19.</li> <li>We will strengthen our relationship with the voluntary and charitable sector.</li> <li>We will support the voluntary sector to remain sustainable</li> <li>We will harness the positive joint working across the sector and with the council throughout Covid-19.</li> </ul>	Support the Voluntary and Community Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams alongside traditional fundraising
	Work with Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities (including those from ethnic minority communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces) to enhance community cohesion

	Establish the Community Fund as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector
	Deliver our Voluntary Sector Strategy and associated action plan
	Building on the investment in our Colosseum and our focused support throughout the pandemic on our cultural organisations, engage with our Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure that their space requirements are understood and we work with them to find appropriate space across all of the community and cultural assets so that they can best serve the residents of Watford
<b>DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE</b>	
Make sure our council is a caring and collaborative organisation that puts what matters to people at the heart of everything we do	
<b>Commitment</b>	
Address digital isolation	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will retain the strong volunteer network established during Covid-19 to help address the issue of digital isolation</li> <li>• We will support those residents who do not have the skills to use digital devices</li> <li>• We will support our residents from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have access to digital devices</li> <li>• We will ensure that information and advice in relation to the support is available</li> <li>• We will ensure that we promote and champion digital device recycling</li> </ul>	Work with partners/volunteers/community groups to provide access to devices and digital training
	Develop a training programme to train volunteers to go out into the community and support people with using a range of digital devices including iPad, laptop, smart phone
	Source digital devices for distribution to the community to support the delivery of getting people digitally connected
	Help people to become digitally connected online by training them to use apps for grocery shopping and connecting with friends and family
	Support the development of a centralised database detailing resources available to support individuals
	Encourage businesses and organisations to contribute towards digital device recycling

## Work Stream 2: Business and Economy

<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY PRIORITY</b> Develop a Thriving and Productive Economy	
<b>Objective</b> Maximise the benefits of working across Hertfordshire to help shape our economic future and respond to current challenges	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will drive the economic recovery of Watford</li> <li>We will implement our Economic Growth Strategy plan</li> <li>We will support businesses to survive, restart and recover</li> <li>We will deliver commercial space</li> <li>We will create opportunities for businesses</li> <li>We will attract investment to Watford</li> <li>We will Review, Renew and Repurpose Watford's work spaces</li> </ul>	Maximise the benefits of working with Hertfordshire wide organisations
	Maximise the benefits from Watford's position at the heart of Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) in South West Hertfordshire by aligning planning and other policies. This will ensure Watford benefits from and supports growth in other economic areas
	Maximise the benefits from the work of the Herts Growth Board
	Respond to challenges to the economy and community presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, working with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership as part of a cross Hertfordshire response and taking advantage of any funding opportunities, building upon the recent application for Levelling Up funding.
	Respond to opportunities and challenges presented by Brexit and the new regulatory framework working with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
	Respond to the Climate Emergency

<b>Objective</b> Supporting Businesses To Thrive	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<i>Cont.</i>	Continue to develop effective engagement channels with businesses, so that we as a council we can champion their interests in Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, support networking and channel funding and signpost support to businesses where appropriate
	Continue to support businesses throughout the duration of the remainder of the pandemic
	Extend business engagement to encourage firms to make use of innovation funds and business support offers

	Use our account management system to help us understand the issues facing our largest employers
	Provide the conditions and assets, such as workspace, to encourage innovative companies to base and development themselves in Watford
	Support start-ups and scale-ups, including through the development of an Innovation and Incubation Hub as part of the Town Hall Quarter
	Review and relaunch Watford's Inward Investment Strategy

<b>Objective</b> Ensure Employment space and Investment opportunities are available	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<i>Cont.</i>	Protect existing employment space
	Work with developers to establish demand for high quality office space
	Deliver new employment space in the district, including a new Innovation and Incubation Hub as part of the Town Hall Quarter programme
	Work with the NHS to understand the timescale and support the extension of the Watford Hospital redevelopment
	Recognise the importance of the Watford Junction area and move forward with plans to create a new multi-purpose Watford neighbourhoods in this well connected area

<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY PRIORITY</b> Support our key sectors	
<b>Objective</b> Support our key sectors	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will leverage our sectors</li> <li>We will attract investment to Watford</li> </ul>	<b>Cross sector initiatives</b> Work with Herts Local Enterprise Partnership to develop and deliver sector action plans which support our key sectors and businesses

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will drive the economic recovery of Watford</li> <li>We will implement our Economic Growth Strategy plan</li> </ul>	<b>Key sector identification</b> - <i>Professional Services, Creative, Cultural Digital and film, Healthcare (medical services, medical equipment and pharma), Retail, Leisure and Hospitality</i>
	Work with all sectors to understand their plans and priorities, accommodation and skills needs
	Seek to retain existing businesses and work with them to attract similar businesses to co-locate here
	Prioritise key sectors in the Inward Investment Strategy
	Work with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, neighbouring districts and Herts Growth Board on a Creative and Screen Industries Working Group.
	Work with cultural entrepreneurs to establish the demand for space for cultural enterprises and identify opportunities to provide it
	Work with film studios, town centre strategic partners, Watford BID and high street occupiers to establish the potential to adapt the town centre so it can be used more regularly for filming

<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY PRIORITY</b> Create a new economic future for the Town Centre	
<b>Objective</b> Create Watford's place based brand narrative and marketing approach	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will reimagine the High Street, public realm and outside space</li> <li>We will champion and promote Watford effectively</li> <li>We will attract investment to Watford</li> <li>We will Review, Renew and Repurpose Watford's Town Centre</li> </ul>	Develop a shared vision, strategy and town centre partnership management approach for Watford town centre which aligns with our wider place brand narrative across the town
	Ensure that Watford town centre promotes a diverse experience and is a welcoming place

<b>Objective</b> Supporting Town Centre businesses	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<i>Cont.</i>	Build on the close relationships we have developed with retail hospitality and cultural sector businesses to trade safely and adapt to the new environment
	Make the case for our Innovation and Incubation Hub, utilising any successful Levelling Up Fund bid from our recent application, to support local businesses and start-ups across the town

<b>Objective</b> Master-planning, Investment and Accessibility	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<i>Cont.</i>	Develop a planning framework for Watford town centre
	Improve the public realm and utilisation of recreational space
	Transform the heart of Watford by delivering major improvements such as Town Hall Quarter (following the recent bid for Levelling Up funding) and other keys sites and facilitating the development of Watford Junction

<b>Objective</b> Develop marketing and promotion of Watford town centre	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<i>Cont.</i>	Develop the place based narrative strategy for the town centre, which aligns to the wider brand narrative for the town
	Review the delivery mechanisms for marketing and promoting Watford
	Ensure that the local economy works as a component of the wider local community

<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY PRIORITY</b>	
Support our communities to access opportunities	
<b>Objective</b>	
Consider how inclusive our economic decisions are	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will support people into employment, education and training</li> <li>We will create community wealth</li> <li>We will champion inclusivity</li> <li>We will leverage the council's scale and expertise</li> </ul>	Use our economic spending power to create opportunities locally
	Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments the council is responsible for, to create new well-designed communities
	Work with those residents in sectors most impacted by the pandemic, such as retail and hospitality
	Support our current and future workforce to be resilient following the pandemic, ensuring residents can access support for improving or developing new skills and increasing their employability, and for maintaining/improving their mental health
	Work with the Herts Skills and Employment Board, University of Hertfordshire, West Herts College, other providers and Local Businesses in our key sectors to develop and deliver a Watford skills and employment strategy
	Support the delivery of apprenticeships
	Attract new highly skilled workers and retain talented people in the Borough

<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY PRIORITY</b>	
Create the right environment for sustainable growth	
<b>Objective</b>	
Deliver an effective and efficient infrastructure	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure the town's infrastructure supports and attracts local business and the wider economy</li> <li>We will develop better places to live, work and relax</li> <li>We will Review, Renew and Repurpose Watford's work spaces</li> </ul>	Seek to maximise the growth benefits from planned infrastructure improvements
	Deliver high quality housing with a particular focus on increasing housing options to attract and retain residents/ employees



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support a green recovery</li> <li>• We will stimulate green economic growth</li> <li>• We will launch a green skills academy</li> <li>• We will embrace 21<sup>st</sup> Century Sustainable Mobility</li> </ul>	Encourage the delivery of high-speed broadband to attract new investment/ support the growth of businesses and housing
	Create a sustainable transport strategy for the town
	Ensure that the town's infrastructure attracts local business and supports the wider economy

<b>Objective</b>	
Managing environmental impact across the Borough	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<i>Cont.</i>	Encourage low carbon businesses to invest and grow in the borough

## Work Stream 3: Organisational Renewal

<b>DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE</b>	
Deliver high quality sustainable services	
<b>Commitment</b>	
Manage our organisational renewal post Covid-19	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing delivery of our Council Plan and business as usual services</li> <li>• Delivery of excellent services for our customers in a Covid-safe way</li> <li>• Services that remain accessible to all, including via digital channels where possible</li> <li>• Ongoing interest and engagement in local democracy</li> </ul>	We will continue to report regularly to Cabinet on progress against our Council Plan and highlight where our plans have been disrupted by the uncertain Covid-19 situation. We will also let our residents and businesses know how we have delivered against our Council Plan
	We will continue to review our risk assessments on a regular basis to protect our customers and staff, and will respond accordingly when the risk of Covid-19 changes
	We will continue to support our community and our health and care services by providing the Town Hall as our local vaccination centre, adapting our customer service centre so that we can continue to provide an excellent service to both our residents seeking council services and those wanting a vaccination
	We will continue to make sites available across Watford to support Covid-19 testing and other similar activity to support the response to the pandemic and protect our health and care services
	We will ensure that all council processes utilise existing council technology so that customers, whether residents or businesses, can transact with the council at a time that suits them, not just during the council's traditional opening hours
	We will retain the broadcasting of key council meetings online, building on the foundations established during Covid and introducing hybrid meeting solutions, to ensure our decision making is as transparent and accessible as possible and allows our residents to actively engage in local democracy
<b>DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE</b>	
Welcome innovation, technology and new ways of working to continuously improve	
<b>Commitment</b>	
Ensure that the council's future office accommodation is fit for purpose	
<b>What we want to achieve</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An agile workforce that can provide an excellent service to customers no matter from where they are working</li> </ul>	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 regular staff surveys to inform our Reimagining Watford project as part of the Town Hall Quarter

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared spaces which will foster joint working and collaboration</li> <li>• A corporate culture which values outcomes and benefits, rather than inputs and presenteeism</li> </ul>	<p>Through our Reimagining Watford project, we will continue to engage regularly with the Staff Ambassador Group and our Management Group so that our values and behaviours are co-designed</p> <p>We will bring our teams back together with our Reimagining Watford project, allowing them to develop Agile Charters which will determine the way in which they can best serve our customers in the future.</p> <p>Learning the lessons from Covid-19 and based on our new ways of working, we will, as part of our ambitious Town Hall Quarter programme, develop modern, fit for purpose, sustainable and value for money offices for our staff to collaborate in</p> <p>We will provide our staff with the tools and technology they need to provide the best experience to customers, no matter where they are working from</p>
<p><b>DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE</b> Welcome innovation, technology and new ways of working to continuously improve</p>	
<p><b>Commitment</b> Embed resilience across the organisation</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve</b></p>	<p><b>How we will do it</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the impact of Covid-19 on the health and wellbeing of staff</li> <li>• Excellent services that can continue to operate as we learn to live with Covid</li> <li>• A healthy, safe and educated workforce</li> </ul>	<p>We will continue to ensure that our staff are supported to work safely in the community by undertaking regular risk assessments (including specific risk assessments which recognise the increased risk of the virus for our ethnic minority colleagues) and putting in place measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19</p> <p>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</p> <p>We will continue our Time to Talk initiative, providing space for staff to reconnect and support their and colleagues' mental health</p> <p>We will regularly update our business continuity plans to recognise the need to live with Covid so that we can continue to deliver excellent services to our customers</p> <p>As we move out of the pandemic our commitment to developing our people outlined in our Organisational Development Strategy will grow so that they fulfil their potential and their aspirations. All our staff will participate in a meaningful appraisal, where performance, aspirations and potential are equally important, and we will actively seek development opportunities for our staff, retaining and growing our key talent to ensure that we can retain our talented teams</p> <p>We will continue to promote the benefits of Covid vaccinations to our staff to encourage take up and ensure that the organisation is less vulnerable to local outbreaks.</p> <p>We will offer all our staff a flu jab to mitigate any impact of winter variations in the number of Covid cases and the expectation of a bad flu season, supporting our health and care services</p>

We will provide our managers with a menu of options that can be used to support staff and their health and wellbeing, including time away from video calls and sufficient breaks between meetings

**DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE**

Focus our budget so we can deliver on our commitments and secure investment to work for Watford

**Commitment**

Deliver the council's financial recovery

**What we want to achieve**

- A sustainable and balanced budget which continues to support delivery of our services as well as our ambitious Council Plan
- Sufficient financial support to help the town, our residents, businesses and community recover and renew from Covid-19
- A robust local supply chain able to support our services and portfolio of projects

**How we will do it**

We will proactively manage our Renewal budget, ensuring that we are able to support our communities and businesses as they recover from Covid-19 and are able to thrive within our town

We will set a 2022/23 budget which allows us to deliver our Council Plan whilst supporting business as usual services for our residents, businesses and community

We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on our budgets and if necessary will reset our finances in the light of the pressures created by Covid-19 and based on insight about possible future pressures which will allow us to fund priorities to help Watford recover

We will close our grants processes by the financial year end but retain plans to scale this back up if required in the future so that our community and businesses continue to get the support they need

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

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

We will continue to carefully manage our property investment portfolio, ensuring that it continues to provide invaluable financial stability so we can continue to deliver our high quality services and ambitious programme of improvements for our local residents and businesses