

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 17 March 2022

**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 (Quarters 2 and 3, 2021/22), Organisational  
Development Strategy 2020 – 24 (Quarters 2 and 3, 2021/22) and  
Road to Renewal Plan (Quarter 3)

**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 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 last update to Cabinet in October 2021 is shown in the updates appended to this report (Appendices 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 continue to faced tremendous challenges since the last update, particularly following the emergence of the Omicron variant which has seen increased infection rates and the reintroduction of working from home guidance. Whilst these have not deflected the council's focus on delivery, it has impacted on some specific areas of work within the plans, particularly activities which require face to face contact, which are being re-profiled to ensure delivery within the life of plans. However, there has been noticeably less impact on activity than in previous waves of the pandemic.

- 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 parts 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 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 have formed the basis of an annual report to our community, which was included within About Watford in November 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; even after almost two years of the pandemic, the situation remains uncertain and significant changes have occurred since the plan was first approved by Cabinet in July 2020. As such, a refreshed version of the plan was formally adopted by Cabinet in October 2021 which has ensured that the plan 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.

## 2.0 Risks

### 2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Slippage on delivery of the Council Plan	Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for our town and residents.  Potential impact on the reputation of the Council.	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny  Robust project and programme management	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Failure to recognise milestones / completion of commitments	Lost opportunity to celebrate success internally and externally	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny  Robust project and programme management  Clear communication of milestones / achievements	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Failure to promote and recognise the Council's strategic approach and culture that is focused on delivery and outcomes	Lost opportunity to embed a renewed strategic approach and culture that ensures Watford BC remains a high performing, innovative and agile organisation	Regular, robust and accurate reports for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny that is owned across service areas  Linking delivery to staff and team objectives	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Slippage on delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy	Failure to deliver our commitments to staff potentially resulting in failure to deliver our Council Plan.  Potential impact on staff's health and wellbeing.	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny  Robust project and programme management.  Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

Loss of skilled staff / difficulties in recruiting if Organisational Development Strategy is not delivered and the council is not perceived as a place where staff can develop and grow	Impact on delivery, potential cost implication if needed to recruit on short-term basis to fill posts	Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny  Robust project and programme management.  Regular checking in with staff through 1:1s, team meetings, surveys, Staff Ambassador Group  Build into recruitment literature	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Our Road to Renewal Plan is adopted but cannot be delivered	Town and council do not deliver the renewal as effectively as they could. Perceived lack of leadership and support	A significant appraisal of resourcing requirements has been undertaken in relation to the activities identified within the Road to Renewal Plan. This will be aligned to the corporate budget position prior to approval. A robust governance and reporting structure has also been established to ensure ongoing momentum and appropriate levels of scrutiny	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6
Our Road to Renewal Plan does not allow for an agile response to the changing external environment	Council's support for renewal is not as effective as it could be	There may be need to accelerate, amend or stop the plans in the Renewal Plan in light of the fast changing external environment. The governance structure in place allows for a formal change control process so that decisions to deviate from the Road to Renewal Plan are not made in isolation and with full overview of the Renewal Co-ordination Board. The plan will be refreshed at appropriate times.	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

### **3.0 Recommendations**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny are 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)
  - the Road to Renewal Plan (Appendix C)
- 3.2 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 the last period. The focus on delivery within the life of the plans remains a corporate commitment.

#### **Further information**

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

Liam Hornsby, Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office  
[liam.hornsby@watford.gov.uk](mailto:liam.hornsby@watford.gov.uk) Tel: 01923 278094

**Report approved by:** Donna Nolan, Managing Director

### **4.0 Detailed proposal**

#### **4.1 A refreshed strategic framework**

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

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

This report presents a progress update of the plans outlined in 4.4 and in associated Appendices (A, B and C).

4.5 A significant amount of progress has been achieved across all delivery areas. The direction set by the strategic framework has ensured services have clarity on where they need to concentrate, focus their energies and support 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. 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, third and Omicron waves 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 the last period.

#### 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 fifth update, covering quarters two and three of the 2021/22 year, is at Appendix A. This identifies all the Delivery Plan commitments, the project delivering the activity and progress made during the last period. 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 past 6 months of the Delivery Plan. Highlights include:

<b>A council that serves its residents</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>150 devices are now available through 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.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All services have completed their Reconnecting Bubbles and developed Agile Charters which will pave the way for a more agile way of working when a return to the office is permitted. The Agile Charters, developed collaboratively, set out the expectations for staff and detail how our agile principles will be embedded as we develop our collaborative working space for the future.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of the council's ICT strategy (2022 to 2027) is underway with delivery of the document expected in early 2022. This will build upon the huge progress made over the period of the last strategy which saw the completion of the core infrastructure programme, the roll out of laptops for all staff and the introduction of the highly successful unified communications platform which has allowed all staff to continue working throughout Covid-19 with minimal impact on services.</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully connected our Business Intelligence platform to a Customer Service Centre data source to enable real time reporting, including in relation to call data, allowing us to continue providing high quality services to our residents.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council's investment portfolio continues to provide positive returns to the organisation, allowing for ongoing investment in services and projects for the town and helping to mitigate the impact of Covid-19</li> </ul>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>A thriving, diverse and creative town</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£3.7m awarded to the council to assist in the decarbonisation of the Town Hall and Colosseum, contributing to the council's target of achieving a greener</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>



organisation. Initial discovery work has now commenced on-site with completion expected by June 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market successfully refurbished within budget and new 'Market Lates' event launched 3 September to bring food, music and entertainment and promote the market as a place to shop, eat, drink and be entertained. Further 'Market Late' events have been held at Halloween and Christmas, showcasing the diverse range of retail and food offers available at the market.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation undertaken on our Sustainable Transport Strategy (Transforming Travel in Watford) with significant levels of really positive engagement which will help to shape the final draft of the Strategy and ensure that Watford remains a sustainable place to live, work and recreate.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our 'Shop Local' campaign has continued to attract more people back to our town centre after successive Covid-19 lockdowns. A popular Christmas light turn on and extended Christmas light displays in the High Street, Clarendon Road and other parts of the town centre proved extremely popular.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main contractor appointed to Watford Business Park which will see more quality commercial and industrial space created in the town, attracting new businesses and providing local employment opportunities.</li> </ul>	<b>Initial works complete</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Plan submitted to Planning Inspectorate. Examination by the Inspector is scheduled for across a three week period in January / February 2022 (now virtual as a result of Covid-19) and will ensure that the town is developed in a sustainable way over the next 30 years</li> </ul>	<b>Phase 1 complete</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A designated Sustainability Officer is now in place and provides resource to both deliver the existing Sustainability Strategy, and look forward to what is required in the future. A baseline study project, with associated energy auditing provision, is being commissioned which will form the basis of our ambition to reach net carbon zero by 2030.</li> </ul>	<b>Initial work underway</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young Entrepreneurs programme launched to support young people seeking to set up a business, in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire. The programme attracts 18 to 30</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>

<p>year olds, who due to COVID-19 have been particularly vulnerable to being made redundant, face challenges entering the labour market for the first time, or do not meet the criteria for other business support programmes due to their age profile. The programme is already providing young people with practical business knowledge, advice and support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new project has been commissioned to encourage businesses in the Borough to address climate change and their emissions. This is being run by Sustainability X and forms part of the council's collaborative approach to ensuring that the town reaches net carbon zero by 2030.</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<b>A happy and healthy town</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A record 17 green flags awarded to parks and green spaces across Watford, meaning that the town has more green flags than any other Hertfordshire district for the sixth year in a row</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Homelessness Pathway launched to bring together all the separate temporary accommodation providers into a multi-agency 'team' and work collaboratively to provide a holistic view of Watford's approach to accommodating and supporting single homeless people and the end-to-end journey they take.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second donation tap point installed at Central Leisure Centre in the Town Centre to actively promote public donations to combat begging and rough sleeping.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and activities for those living with dementia and their families have continued over the last period, including the Golden Memories reminiscence programme at Watford Football Club, Trishaw rides at Watford Cycle Hub and the Forget Me Not restaurant at West Herts College.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans underway to celebrate Watford's centenary year, providing an opportunity to bring the town together and celebrate the response to Covid-19.</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In recognition of Watford's rich and diverse history, the development of a new town centre heritage trail, to attract more people to our town centre, is underway. This will be</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>

launched in March 2022 with a fuller trail introduced alongside additional wayfinding and public art works later in 2022.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watford Museum and Golden Memories have been awarded the Well-being Award from Hertfordshire Museums for delivering golden boxes (memorabilia / reminiscence booklet and support pack) to people living with dementia during the pandemic.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>

#### 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 fifth update on the Organisational Development Strategy, covering Quarters two and three of the 2021/22 financial year, is at Appendix B. It should be noted that the delivery of a number of items have been reviewed. These predominantly relate to work dependent on the internal work to values and behaviours 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, an Executive Group Head Assistant has now been assigned to this work and engagement across the organisation is shortly due to commence which will help to ensure that our values and behaviours have buy-in from across the council and are embedded. Similarly, initiatives which required face to face interaction have been unable to progress due to government restrictions and our internal risk assessments, designed to keep staff safe. These activities will be reviewed when the risk assessments change.

#### 4.13 **Overview / highlights**

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Watford Health and You programme has been shortlisted for an award from the (RSPH) Royal Society for Public Health.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A successful bid for a government grant, via Hertfordshire County Council, of £18,000, to help prevent Workplace Burnout, has been completed.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathfinder group now set up who have worked with teams to agree how Agile Charter will be developed. Initial training for Pathfinders completed.</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The office environment is being re-designed and it is anticipated that employees will be returning to this in late Spring 2022, subject to evolving Covid-19 guidelines</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New supplier of Management Development programmes identified to roll out a new training programme for managers across the organisation</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A further Head of Service has taken on the role of Executive Group Head Assistant, supporting the roll out of new values and behaviours to align with our new agile way of working</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further Kickstarters employed through the Chamber of Commerce, bringing the total number of Kickstarters across</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>

the organisation to four, working in Human Resources, Communications and the Enterprise Programme Management Office	
---	--

#### 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 took place in the Autumn of 2021 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. This refreshed plan was approved by Cabinet in October 2021 and this reporting cycle is the first since the new plan was adopted.

#### 4.15 **Tracking progress on the Road to Renewal Plan**

4.15.1 In July 2020, the recommendation to report on progress on the Road to Renewal Plan on a quarterly basis was approved by Cabinet, aligning progress reporting with the delivery plans for the Council Plan.

4.15.2 The fifth update on the Road to Renewal Plan, covering quarters two and three of the 2021/22 financial year, is at Appendix C.

#### 4.16 **Overview / highlights**

4.16.1 Since the refreshed Road to Renewal plan was approved by Cabinet in October 2021, the council have initiated and made good progress with a number of areas of work. Highlights include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Unsung Heroes’ awards were successfully launched through 2021 to highlight the many people, organisations and charities in the town who quietly go about transforming people’s lives all year round and make an incredible contribution to our communities during the pandemic and beyond.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Completed</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16<sup>th</sup> Audentior awards launched on 30 September 2021 with nominations now closed and the awards planned for 4 March 2022.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In December 2021 the Covid-19 vaccination programme reached its 1st anniversary with 28,262 Watford residents vaccinated with a booster jab (data from 09 December 21). We are vaccinating a wider range of people in more venues than ever before.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional £150k has been secured through a Health Protection Board bid for the Covid Community Grant fund with eligibility extended to PTA’s and grant applications increased from £5k to £7.5k. Recent and planned fundraising activities will seek to continue to increase the value of this fund.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Initial activity completed</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBC are fully engaged with a cross county group, “Staying Connected” responsible for sourcing recycled digital devices into the scheme as well as providing digital training for residents through our partnership with W3RT. A soft launch of the Digital Isolation scheme was completed during July 2021.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Entrepreneurs programme launched to support young people seeking to set up a business, in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire. The programme attracts 18 to 30 year olds, who due to Covid-19 have been particularly vulnerable to being made redundant, face challenges entering the labour market for the first time, or do not meet the criteria for other business support programmes due to their age profile. The programme is already providing young people with practical business knowledge, advice and support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watford Charity Support Grants of up to £5,000 awarded to registered charities and Community Interest Companies based in Watford who have been severely impacted by Covid-19, to help them resume, develop or innovate their business operations - 16 charities have shared a total of £61,508 to date</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watford Business Growth Grant launched to provide grants of up to £10,000, expert advice and support to local businesses of between 5 and 20 employees impacted by Covid - 18 businesses have been awarded a total of £103,000 to date</li> </ul>	<b>Commenced</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second successful 'Generation Watford' careers fair held 9 November 2021 to continue the specific focus on employment and skills, supporting our residents to play a full role in the town's, region's and UK's economic revival</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return of multiple public events including fireworks, Remembrance and Christmas lights switch-on events</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing use of Amenities area as a vaccination centre to improve the provision of Covid vaccine to the people of Watford</li> </ul>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digitisation of Waste and Recycling processes now live</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Watford Health &amp; You newsletter published with focus on 'making it safer for women and girls'</li> </ul>	<b>Completed</b>

## 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 EP MO and Finance and is reported regularly to the

council's Renewal Coordination Board, which comprises the Managing Director and other senior officers.

As at 12 January 2022, there was £500k 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. Further commitments made include the outdoor theatre in Cassiobury Park, the night market, the council's centenary celebration and works at Watford Junction.

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 deliver the very best service for residents.



## 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 January 2022
- Appendix B – Organisational Development Strategy 2020-24 progress update January 2022
- Appendix C – Road to Renewal Plan progress update January 2022