

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 13 June 2022

Report author: Donna Nolan – Managing Director

Title: Council Plan – 2022-2026 / Delivery Plan – 2022-24

Nature of Report: For approval

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Watford Borough Council is an ambitious and forward looking local authority. Over the last two years, its Council Plan, and associated Delivery Plan, have set the strategic direction for the organisation, linking the council’s ambitions to our commitments to our residents, community, businesses, visitors and workforce.
- 1.2 With the start of a new Mayoral term to 2026, the council has taken the opportunity to review and refresh the Council Plan, building on the successful delivery of the programme of work set in the Delivery Plan 2020-22 and reflecting the new opportunities and challenges identified for the organisation and the town to 2026.
- 1.3 The Council Plan 2022-26 and the Delivery Plan 2022-24, therefore, are presented to Cabinet for approval and recommendation to Council on 19 July as the foundation for the council’s strategic framework and its focus of delivery over the next two years.
- 1.4 The plans are supported by other key parts of this framework:
 - Our budget, which reflects the alignment of resource to delivery of the commitments contained within the Council Plan, ensuring our limited resources are directed to areas most important to our residents, community, businesses and staff.
 - Our Organisational Development Strategy, which shapes how we support our staff and the operations of the organisation.
- 1.5 The successful delivery of the Council Plan 2022-26 is critical to the council’s success and to making sure we harness our resources to focus on what is important to the town and our residents. The report proposes regular monitoring of the Plan and Delivery Plan, with quarterly reports to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an annual report to our community on our progress and achievements.

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)
Failure to agree the Council Plan and Delivery Plan	<p>Potential for the council to be deflected from what is important to the town and residents. Lack of clear direction for the organisation and staff and failure to set clear expectations for delivery. Lack of clarity for residents, our community and partners on the council's future direction, ambitions and priority areas of work.</p>	<p>A plan based on intelligence and understanding of the town and what matters to residents.</p> <p>Clear timetable and sign off processes.</p>	Treat	<p>4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4</p>
Failure to identify key themes and commitments in the Council Plan and associated Delivery Plan actions / areas of work	<p>Failure to respond to what is important to the town and residents and to focus on less important areas of work.</p> <p>Lack of clarity on priorities.</p> <p>Resources not allocated to the right areas that deliver our</p>	<p>A plan based on intelligence and understanding of the town and what matters to residents.</p> <p>Clear timetable and sign off processes</p>	Treat	<p>4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4</p>

	<p>ambitions and what is important.</p> <p>Potential for the Council to be deflected by non-priority areas.</p> <p>The plans fail to drive the Council forward.</p>			
Failure to link the Council Plan and Delivery Plan to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and financial planning effectively.	Risk of insufficient financial resourcing for areas of work identified.	Early engagement and discussions so the links are established and agreed.	Treat	4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4
Failure to identify the staff resources needed to deliver the plans	Risk of insufficient staff resource or lack of skills / experience in key areas.	Ensuring the council's OD Strategy clearly links and supports delivery.		4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4
Failure to identify dependencies between areas of work effectively	Risk to delivery / slippage	Early understanding across the organisation of where work requires support from a number of teams to allow	Treat	3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6

		this to be built into service business plans.		
Slippage on delivery	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. Robust project and programme management.	Treat	4 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 4

3.0 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 3.1 Recommend to Council the approval of the Council Plan 2022-2026, at Appendix 1 to this report
- 3.2 Recommend to Council the approval of the Delivery Plan 2022-2024, at Appendix 2 to this report
- 3.3 Recommend to Council that the Managing Director be authorised to make minor amendments to the Council Plan 2022-2026 and the Delivery Plan 2022-2024 in consultation with the Elected Mayor.
- 3.4 Note that progress on delivering the Council Plan 2022-2026 will be reported on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with an annual report to the community of Watford being published.
- 3.5 Note that the aspirations and outstanding activities of the council's Renewal Plan 2020, which was aligned to the previous Council Plan are now incorporated into the refreshed Council Plan and Delivery Plan, noting the council's achievements in delivering a range of renewal activities across our community, economy and businesses, the organisation and our own financial resilience.

Further information:

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Report approved by: Donna Nolan

4.0 Detailed proposal and focus

- 4.1 The council's current Council Plan 2020-24 was developed during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic and acknowledged the significant challenges the council faced at that time, whilst also reflecting the council's drive to maintain its momentum to deliver more for its residents and the town. The associated Delivery Plan 2020-22, set out a significant programme of work, linking to the council's COVID-19 Road to Renewal Plan 2020, both of which have been monitored throughout the last two years to make sure the council maintains a robust focus on achieving what it set out to do.
- 4.2 As the town and our community emerge from the immediate impact of the pandemic, and with a new four year Mayoral term, we have reviewed our Council Plan so it reflects how we will steer the town and the organisation through current emerging opportunities and challenges, building a successful, resilient future for Watford.
- 4.3 The refreshed Council Plan, which covers the period 2022–2026, is designed to be strategic, high level and outward-facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments. It describes to the workforce, our community and our partners how we see the council and the town progressing by resetting our strategic themes, commitments and areas of activity.

4.4 The New Council Plan – Overview

- 4.5 Within the Council Plan 2022-26, we present our four strategic themes and the commitments that outline the high level actions that will deliver them successfully. The Plan provides a key element of the council's 'golden thread' or organisational alignment, setting the overarching strategic basis for all other council strategies and policies, including the budget and Organisational Development (OD) Strategy, connecting them to our overall aspirations and priority activities.
- 4.6 The Plan has been developed to provide the council with an opportunity to further demonstrate its role as a leader of place, and show its strategic and operational excellence.
- 4.7 By resetting our strategic commitments, the new Plan will guide us over the next four years through this renewed strategic focus. It will mean that we can ensure our limited resources are directed to those areas most important to our

community, businesses and staff.

4.8 The Plan is underpinned by a range of information, intelligence and data including the Elected Mayor's manifesto pledges and feedback following engagement with internal and external stakeholders. It demonstrates how the council is responding to issues of national importance, such as climate change and the cost of living crisis as well as those that reflect what matters to Watford, protecting and promoting what makes Watford special and what we know our residents value.

4.9 The Plan has been developed to demonstrate two key objectives:

- What we are trying to achieve - our themes
- What we are going to focus on over the next four years - our commitments

4.10 The proposed themes for 2022-26 are:

- A council working for our community and serving our residents
- A greener, brighter future
- An inspiring, thriving and creative town
- A diverse, happy and healthy town

The theme 'a greener, brighter future' represents a new area for this Council Plan, indicating our focus on tackling climate change, the ambition for the council to achieve net carbon zero by 2030 and the significance of providing greener, more sustainable options and choices for our residents and businesses.

4.11 The bold design of the previous plan has been continued for the refreshed Plan, signifying it is an outward facing document for our community, conveying a clear statement of the council's intentions. The design is built on the council's corporate identity (the 'bold' shield). Elements from the shield have been woven through the design including the hart of Hertfordshire, the shells from the Earl of Clarendon's coat of arms and the colour blue to represent the 'ford' in Watford .

4.12 Delivering the Council Plan – Delivery Plan

4.13 The Delivery Plan at Appendix 2 sets out in greater detail how the council will focus on activities that will bring the Council Plan to life, making sure we deliver

what we said we would over the next two years.

4.14 Keeping focused on delivery

- 4.15 Under each theme and commitment, we set out our key priority areas of actions, which we are committed to achieving by 2024. Every activity will be assigned to a lead officer and aligned to a Portfolio Holder to enable regular updates on progress. In addition, the Delivery Plan will be monitored and a report on progress will be presented to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee quarterly, and, annually, we will prepare a report for residents, businesses and partners
- 4.16 The scope of the work covered in the Delivery Plan and the successful delivery of the council's Renewal Plan 2020, which was developed as a direct response to the pandemic in 2020, means we have incorporated the next phase of renewal into the 2022-24 plan, ensuring it is mainstreamed across all our service areas. We have maintained a steadfast focus on helping our community, businesses and staff, building on the support we gave during the pandemic and we have used this experience to inform and shape the activities we have identified for delivery in 2022-24.
- 4.17 As the Council Plan and Delivery Plan have been developed, they have been shared with staff from Management Team and our Staff Ambassadors Group and Agile Pathfinders. Feedback and comments have been incorporated into the final plans.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 Whilst the council's budget underpins the whole of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, the importance is recognised under the theme 'A council working for our community and serving our residents' with the related commitment: 'Focus and challenge how we manage our budget so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford'.
- 5.1.2 By setting out our commitments and associated activity areas, we have linked our budgets to the delivery of the council's priorities.
- 5.1.3 For 2022/23 the targets set out in the Council Plan are within budget and reflected in the later years of the MTFs. Moving forward The Council Plan and Delivery Plan will form the focus of our budget strategy for the years covered by the Plan. Some targets will require budget commitment from our partners in order to be fully achieved.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the Council Plan is one of the policy framework documents listed in the constitution that has to be approved by Council. The Plan will be presented to Council on 19 July.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

- 5.3.1 The Council Plan is informed by the Watford context, including an understanding of the demographic make-up of the borough's community and feedback from local people on the issues that are important to them. An overall equality impact analysis has been undertaken on the Council Plan (Appendix 3) and impact analyses will be undertaken on specific projects/programmes where relevant.

The equality impact analysis takes into account that under s149 (1) of the Equality Act the Council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to:

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

The EIA will be reviewed and updated during the life of the Plan, particularly when data and information from Census 2021 is received

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

5.4 **Staffing**

- 5.4.1 The Council Plan sets the council's strategic direction, and is, therefore, a key document for our 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 plans and individual staff objectives and outcomes.

5.4.2 The council recognises the importance of the workforce in the delivery of the Council Plan and has identified a range of activities to support the recruitment and retention of staff as well as their development and wellbeing. The commitment, ‘Lead by example, securing our reputation as a forward thinking, caring and inspiring organisation where staff can thrive and achieve their best for our residents and businesses’ sets out how we will continue to demonstrate how we value our staff and invest in their future.

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 diverse, happy and healthy town’, is underpinned by our commitment ‘Promote our welcoming and respectful town’. A range of activities support the delivery of the commitment, including the council’s pledge to become a White Ribbon organisation, tackle violence against women and girls and reduce the impact of enviro crime.

5.6 **Sustainability**

5.6.1 The council’s commitment to sustainability, achieving net carbon zero by 2030, improving biodiversity and providing more options for people in the town to choose greener options is recognised in the theme ‘A greener, brighter future’, with four commitments to support the achievement of this theme. These range from pushing forward with delivering greener ways to travel in Watford to promoting Watford’s transition to a low-carbon economy and a keen focus on biodiversity.

Appendices

Appendix 1:	Watford Borough Council: Council Plan 2022-26
Appendix 2:	Watford Borough Council: Delivery Plan 2022-24
Appendix 3:	Watford Borough Council: Council Plan 2022- 26 – Equality Impact Analysis

Background papers

Watford Borough Council: Council Plan 2020-24, Delivery Plan 2020-22.