

Committee Name: Cabinet

Committee Date: 13/10/2021

Report Title: COVID-19 recovery plan progress update

Portfolio:	Councillor Waters, Leader of the council
Report from:	Chief executive
Wards:	All Wards
OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

Purpose

To consider the progress of and the update to the council's COVID-19 recovery plan.

Recommendation:

To note the progress made in the delivery of the COVID-19 recovery plan and the main actions contained within it.

Policy Framework

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report meets all three corporate priorities.

This report addresses all strategic actions in the Corporate Plan.

Report Details

Introduction

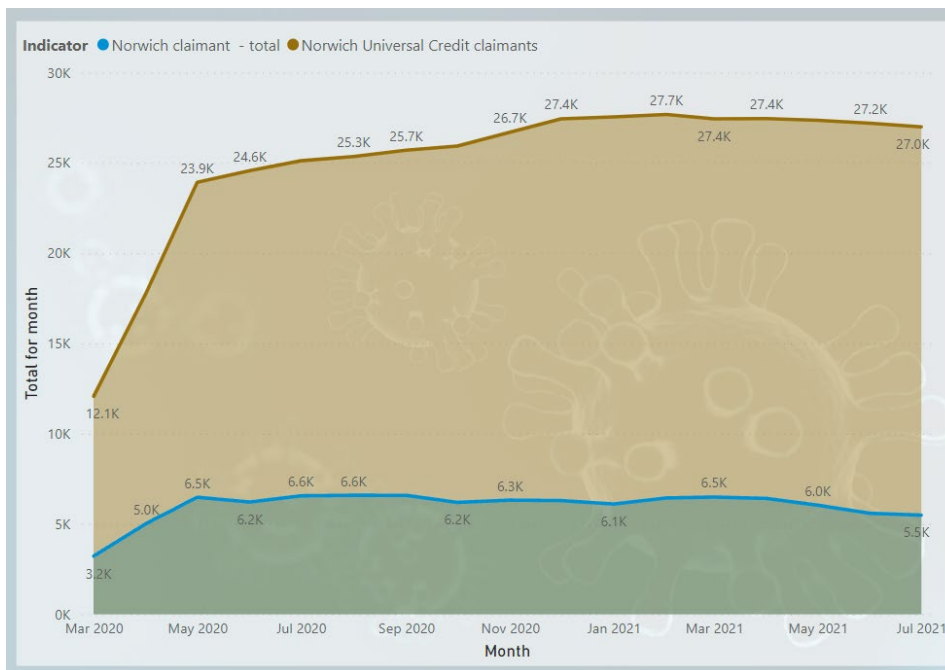
1. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has required a response at the global, national and local levels. In Norwich, as elsewhere across the United Kingdom, although restrictions have eased since the most recent lockdown, Covid continues to affect the lives of residents and businesses in the city.
2. In June 2020, Cabinet agreed the [Covid-19: A blueprint for recovery](#) which provided an overview of the council's initial response to the virus, and identified a number of priority themes and actions which would frame the council's – and the city's - recovery.
3. The city council was one of the first councils in the country to publish a comprehensive, forward looking recovery plan from Covid-19. It sets out a number of priority activities that the council feels are crucial to a sustainable recovery and the organisation will continue to track performance against the delivery of the plan and build on it as a 'living' document. Regular updates on progress will be reported to Cabinet.
4. As the recovery blueprint makes clear, the city's response to – and recovery from – the pandemic requires a partnership response. Since the document was developed and published, the [Norwich 2040 City Vision](#) partnership has been meeting regularly to steer the city through the challenges and opportunities ahead.
5. This report provides Cabinet with details of progress made against the plan since the last update in December 2020. It considers the impacts, successes and challenges faced so far or anticipated in the short to medium term.

Monitoring the impacts of COVID-19

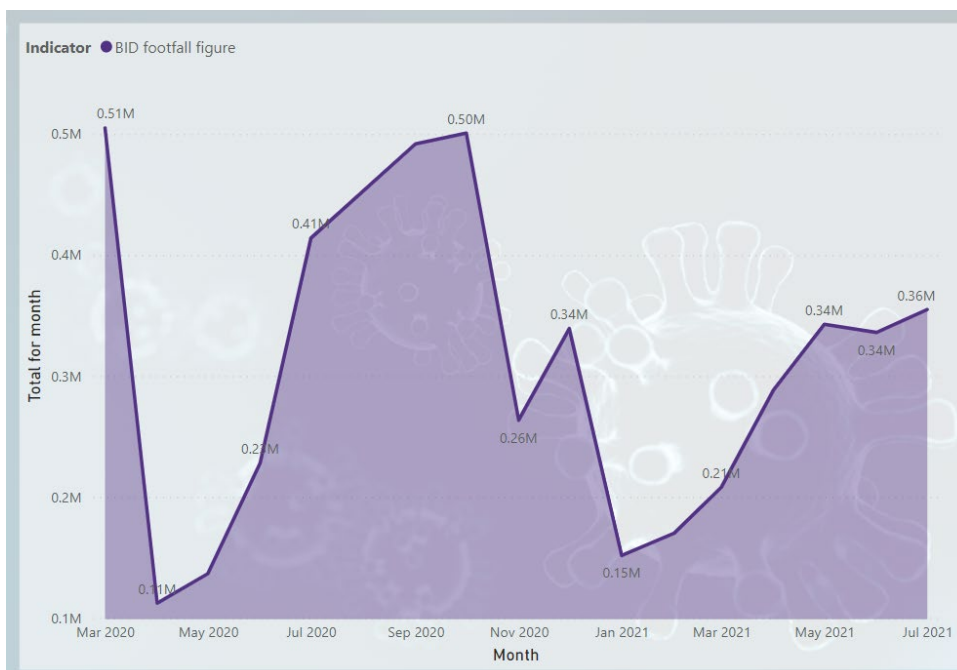
6. Since the last update to Cabinet, we have lived through a third lockdown from 6 January through to the first easing of restrictions on 12 April with all retail, personal care premises, gyms and outdoor hospitality reopening. This was followed by further easing of restrictions on 17 May with all remaining lockdown restrictions in England ending on 19 July.
7. In addition, the Delta variant started to increase in prevalence, and has continued to do so. Unsurprisingly, we have seen case rates rising most rapidly in younger, unvaccinated age groups and the data showed that by early July 42 per cent of recent cases in the city could be traced to education establishments.
8. We're continuing to track a range of data locally including case rates for various age groups, rates for different wards, and locations of specific outbreaks. We're also closely monitoring the local NHS data and working with NHS and CCG colleagues as part of a multi-agency response.
9. It remains the fact that the link between cases and hospital admissions has been severely disrupted by the vaccine and we're not seeing significant numbers flow through to the NHS. That said, given people remain exposed,

we continue to work hard to do what we can to reduce the risk. Vaccine take up is high overall across the county but the challenge is getting the remainder of people to come forward.

10. Inevitably, now that the night time economy has reopened, we are seeing an increase in cases linked to hospitality venues. Due to the different demographics of the city compared with other parts of the county, particularly our significantly younger population, the fact that we tend to live closer to each other and the density of hospitality venues – it's no surprise that case rates are higher in the city.
11. So, we are engaging with the night time economy and helping where we can to advise businesses on what they can do to prevent increasing cases. We're also continuing to work hard to encourage people to get tested and, most importantly, get vaccinated.
12. The council has developed a range of key metrics to help support officers, members and other stakeholders to understand the key impacts of Covid-19 on the people, place and economy of Norwich.
13. Norwich Covid-19 cases summary as of 1 October 2021:
 - a) Total number of C-19 cases in Norwich **13,339**
 - b) Total number of C-19 deaths in Norwich **235**
14. Norwich Community Response Hub summary as of 1 October 2021:
 - a) Total number of food parcels delivered **2,506**
 - b) Total number of prescriptions delivered **1,147** to June 21 (awaiting current figures from Voluntary Norfolk)
 - c) Total number of successful support calls **7,870**
15. Additionally, since February to 30 September 2021 through the Self isolation service - Enhanced track and trace:
 - a) 8,711 enhanced successful track and trace calls made
 - b) 1,459 enhanced successful track and trace visits made
 - c) 1,087 local contact trace service visit requests received from the NHS
16. The chart below shows how levels of benefit claims and universal credit claims have increased since the start of the pandemic in Norwich.



17. The chart below shows the levels of footfall in the city centre as captured by the Norwich Business Improvement District.



Keeping the city safe

18. The key local support services which have enabled the country to come out of lockdown safely – local contact tracing, community testing, rapid response to local outbreaks, financial support to those who are self-isolating, supporting vaccine uptake in hard to reach communities – have all been led and delivered by councils.

19. We continue to play a crucial role in the ongoing response to covid by helping to reduce case numbers, keep hospital admissions to a minimum, businesses to remain open safely, support residents, especially the vulnerable,

and continue with business as usual service delivery. Key projects and measures include:

- a) Working with Public Health to support the major covid outbreaks, for example at Ingram Micro – a telecommunications business in Norwich – where 190 staff tested positive back in early February.
- b) Supporting the NHS to roll out the Covid vaccine, with excellent progress being made.
- c) Setting up the city council's enhanced Covid contact tracing system in February, taking over responsibility from central government for contact tracing in the city. Our system continues to smash the performance levels of the central government system. So far, the team has contacted 6,574 people (4,629 of which were completed in July and August this year) with an 89.99 per cent success rate through to the end of August.
- d) Continuing to support people with food parcels, and a total of 371 food deliveries have been made up to the end of August to residents since we launched the enhanced system in February.
- e) Responding to 55 requests for table and chair licenses so that pubs and restaurants can have outdoor seating.
- f) Issuing 14,426 payments to Norwich businesses totalling just over £73m since the first lockdown in March 2020, meaning we have fully distributed our allotted fund by 30 July 2021 deadline. This means the council will receive nearly £1m of additional government funding for our Additional Restrictions Grant to support local businesses over the next year, which will aid the city's recovery.
- g) Covid support officers and Public protection officers helping to advise businesses on how to reopen safely, looking for problem areas such as pinch points in the streets and queue management for shops, plus Security trained wardens out and about to support the safe reopening of the night time economy.

Recovery themes and actions

20. It is important that the council not only focuses on how, as an organisation, it recovers and responds to challenges faced as a result of the pandemic but also the leading role it plays in the wider recovery of the city. The priority themes from the plan are helping to shape the council's approach to recovery. Each theme has a set of associated key actions, the progress of which is detailed in this section of the report.

Securing the council's finances

21. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to securing the council's finances. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Closely monitor and update budget impact analysis and regularly update CLT and Cabinet	Ongoing	Financial monitoring continues to be undertaken monthly with reports to CLT. The Q1 forecast position was reported to Cabinet in September.
Lobby government to ensure that Norwich City Council, and local government more widely, is fully compensated for the financial impacts of C19	Ongoing	<p>We continue to return the monthly financial monitoring forms to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to highlight the ongoing financial impacts of Covid-19 on expenditure, fee income and taxation receipts.</p> <p>Briefings to local MPs on the financial position.</p> <p>Engagement and lobbying Government ahead of the 27 October Spending Review has continued via chief officers and NCC councillors.</p>
Review the capital programme to ensure that the schemes still reflect the council's current priorities and that these are affordable in the new financial landscape	Ongoing	<p>Council approved the 2021-22 capital budgets which are affordable within the medium-term financial strategy and HRA business plan.</p> <p>Financial monitoring of the capital programme is completed monthly.</p>
Update the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, to understand the short to medium implications for savings requirements and use of reserves	Ongoing	The medium-term financial strategy was approved as part of the budget papers in February 2021. An updated position to be provided to the October 2021 Cabinet following a review of the key assumptions by the relevant service areas. This report forecasts the budget envelope which the council has to live within for 2022/23 and over the medium term, subject to further changes following the announcement of the Local Gov't Finance Settlement (expected December 2021).
Commence the process for setting the budget for 2021-22 and provide further detail to Cabinet in July on the approach and timeline	Complete	The business planning process is underway for setting the 2022/23 budget alongside an updated corporate plan. Draft budget proposals expected to be presented to Cabinet in November

		2021 ahead of public consultation before Budget Council in February 2022.
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22. The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the council's budget during the 2021/22 financial year and over the medium term. The impact of increased costs and reduced income is being felt and, although central government has provided additional funding, it is far from enough to plug the funding gap that has developed.

23. The government has advised local authorities that they will receive no more covid related grants after June 2021. However, the pandemic will continue to impact council funding over the medium to long term with:

- a) income received from car parking charges likely to remain below pre-pandemic levels
- b) loss of commercial income
- c) loss of council tax and business rates
- d) increased rent arrears.

24. The council is doing all it can to mitigate the wider impacts of the pandemic. However, over the longer term, it is hard to predict the full extent of economic recovery required and what measures will be needed to address the financial deficit.

Modernising the council; reimagining local services

25. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to modernising the council and reimagining local services. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Take forward an organisation wide review of service delivery, to look at reimagining how services are delivered in future	On target	An organisation-wide service review process was commenced in September 2020, building on the experiences of service change through the initial Covid 19 lockdown. A number of reviews are currently being taken forward, and the next set of proposals will be considered over the Autumn, alongside the 2022/23 budget setting process
Recast its service transformation plans in light of this service review, to be taken forward as part of the 2021/22 budget and business planning cycle	On target	The Future Shape Norwich transformation programme has been established and is underway. The service reviews noted above form a key plank of this programme and its design was informed by the lessons learnt from service changes through the initial

Action	Status	Comments
		Covid 19 lockdowns.
Develop a customer experience and digital strategy to set out the council's vision and approach to services.	Complete	Strategy approved by Cabinet on 9 June 2021
Use the principles of recovery engagement to recalibrate the compact between the council and residents, communities, businesses and other city stakeholders	On target	A number of workstreams are underway to deliver this action: the customer experience and digital strategy as above, the Citizen Participation blueprint and a number of project being delivered via the Community Enabling team (further detail in the Harnessing Social Capital section), the Future Shape Norwich programme, as above, which includes an emphasis on engagement with customers in service design and includes a number of cross-cutting service reviews to consider how we work most effectively with residents in the long term, and the City Vision work, in which the City Vision steering group has a new broader remit and membership, and where individual workstreams within the action plan have an emphasis on hearing "unheard voices" to inform their work, and in bids made to the "Community Renewal Fund" on a "100 day challenge".

26. In June, Cabinet approved our customer experience and digital strategy, subject to final public consultation. The new strategy represents a big step for the council, and puts convenience and inclusivity at the heart of all council services. Our new approach, framed by the strategy, will enable customers to access more services 24/7, track the progress of ongoing requests and provide feedback on the service they receive. But we recognise that not everyone can access services online, which is why we'll still offer telephone and face-to-face services to those who need them.

27. As well as being resident facing, the customer experience and digital strategy also focuses on how we'll use technology to the benefit of our workforce, building on progress made in rolling out new laptops to allow for agile working and looking at how our IT systems are better integrated to make things smoother for us and our customers.

28. Phase one of our new Northgate Housing System is due to go live this autumn which will see the launch of an online customer portal for repairs,

rents, tenancies, properties, allocations, housing advice, customer services, and choice-based lettings. Early in 2022 we expect customers to be able to fully manage their repairs, rent accounts and tenancies via the online portal. This is closely followed by the introduction of mobile working functionality for contractors, housing services employees with the final back-office efficiencies in relation to property purchase and service charges, support services and customer relationship management being implemented by summer 2022.

29. This will provide several benefits to customers and officers including:

Customer benefits	Officer benefits
Enables self-service where required	Increases speed and efficiency of task completion
Speeds up the end-to-end process for customers – increases efficiency and satisfaction with right first-time fix	Single system for all housing queries
Allows the most vulnerable customers to receive a tailored service	Enables focus to be directed to the most vulnerable customers
Customer led – allows customers to receive a service that fits in with their life-style	Enables agile working and doesn't require the need to be based permanently in a physical office environment

Supporting the most vulnerable

30. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to supporting the most vulnerable. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Work proactively with partners through the Pathways programme to develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness in the city	On target	We are working with Pathways Norwich and our statutory partners (including the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) as to what our strategy will look like over the next 3 years, considering the future funding options for homelessness services, including how our interventions develop towards a more preventative approach in the future.
Over the longer-term, work with Pathways, the county council and the voluntary and community sector to look at pathways out of poverty for the most vulnerable. This will look at training and skills	On target	A No Homeless in Norfolk Strategy was agreed in autumn 2020 by the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership. Stephen Evans, chief executive at Norwich City Council has taken over as chair of the partnership. The next step is to develop and agree a joint working

Action	Status	Comments
opportunities and measures to move people closer to the labour market and into employment		charter and action plan to guide a cross system approach to homelessness.
Work with domestic abuse support providers to signpost victims of domestic abuse to the support on offer and to work with front line teams within the council to train staff to spot signs of domestic abuse	On target	We sit on the new Norfolk Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and part of this work is looking at training/funding for all front line staff so that these services will have Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation in the future. DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. The accreditation framework includes 8 priority areas that considers an organisation's operations and delivers safe and effective interventions in domestic abuse. It builds in processes that help guide staff to adequately address the needs of survivors and hold abusers to account.
Hold virtual internal and engagement events to gather evidence and lessons from the council's long-term approach to reducing inequalities and crisis support	On target	These conversations remain ongoing in terms of systems and connections which may remain post pandemic to improve on previous work, as well as analysis of areas of BAU which could be enhanced from the learning.
Use these principles and lessons learnt to build on existing collaborative and asset-based approaches to tackling pre-existing and emerging financial and digital inclusion in the city, as part of tackling wider inequality	On target	Ongoing through continuing work on City Vision Covid-19 Recovery group work strands, community participation strategy, Reducing Inequalities Target Areas, projects being developed through the Good Economy Commission, financial inclusion projects, including new non-commercial debt policy.

31. Last September Cabinet approved a new policy on non-commercial debt which seeks to better recognise and work proactively with vulnerable people. There is a growing number of people – exacerbated by the pandemic – who find it very difficult to pay their rent and council tax. This policy helps to ensure there is a consistent approach in how we support people to manage their debt.

32. A small team spanning revenues and benefits, housing income, sundry income, parking services and the strategy and transformation team have been working together as one team to support the implementation of our new debt

policy – which provides the framework for our approach. The team has worked collaboratively with one goal in mind: to put residents at the heart of the work they are doing. This also includes the preparation and implementation of the government's debt respite scheme – or 'breathing space' scheme – that came into force on 4 May this year. Processes are being built that will work across service areas but will mirror one another so that customers will receive the same experience whoever they contact first – a 'one front door' approach.

33. Throughout the pandemic, addressing homelessness and supporting those who need our help in the city has been a high priority. Daily multi agency meetings led by the council looked to accommodate people as soon as they're identified as being at risk.
34. The scale of the challenge is intense and, since the end of November 2020, we have housed 94 people in our hub and hotel accommodation and since moved nearly half of them into more secure housing. In addition, over the winter months we had to respond to more than half a dozen cold weather events, with the team providing 49 people with a safe and warm place to stay.
35. Alongside providing places for rough sleepers in the city centre to stay at night, we continue to explore venues where they can access support during the day. Another key aspect of our support is to make sure our homeless clients are registered with GP practices so they can access healthcare. We're also working with our housing and health partners to vaccinate all homeless people in Norwich.
36. Domestic abuse presentations increased as a result of Covid and far outstrip the eastern region and England average. In real terms, the council sees an average of 70 approaches for housing/homelessness assistance on the grounds of domestic abuse every month.
37. Funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) has been awarded to local authorities to enhance their services to domestic abuse victims and we are using this to employ an administration assistant to the domestic abuse adviser who will collate data and statistics, provide clerical support and source refuge accommodation for clients. This will increase the capacity of the domestic abuse adviser to provide a personalised service to clients. Remaining Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding will provide a flexible fund for the domestic abuse adviser to spot purchase safe short-term accommodation for clients who are waiting for refuge accommodation.
38. In the medium term we are seeking to develop a supported, safe short-term accommodation 'hub' for domestic abuse victims to replicate the 'somewhere safe to stay hub' for rough sleepers.
39. As required by the Domestic Abuse Act, the County Council will develop a strategic, partnership-led approach to developing services for domestic abuse victims across the county.

Business and the local economy

40. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to business and the local economy. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
<p>Work with the Norwich BID, Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, police and county council to implement physical measures and signage in the city centre to support social distancing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>It is not proposed to remove any signage and additional signage may be provided for Norwich market. The physical changes in the city will remain - widening pavements and outside eating areas for premises without their own open space.</p> <p>With regard to Exchange Street, the recent removal of the pavement widening is due to the road works taking place in the vicinity of the Chapelfield roundabout. These works have necessitated the re-opening of Exchange Street to all traffic while they are ongoing, and as such it was not possible to safely maintain the use of the widened pavement areas with the traffic flow, so the areas have been temporarily removed.</p> <p>Further schemes are currently being developed by the council. Subject to the outcome of the Connecting the Norwich Lanes consultation (the feedback from which is currently being analysed) and committee approval, it is likely that the arrangements in Exchange Street will be reinstated from the start of December and those in St Benedicts Street will remain with some adjustments.</p> <p>The other scheme that we are working on that is likely to offer opportunities for pavement café / social distancing space is St Giles, which is part of the Towns Fund programme and Connecting the Lanes.</p>
<p>Use licensing powers to support businesses – particularly those in the hospitality sector – where appropriate to vary their use of outside space, whilst ensuring that people with disabilities can access pavements and move around the city safely</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>A streamlined licence application process for a table and chairs licence is in place and this has been well received by hospitality premises.</p> <p>The government are reviewing legislation to determine whether this should be allowed in future.</p>

Action	Status	Comments
Continue to identify opportunities to promote sustainable travel in the city centre – with a focus on walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable travel as appropriate	Ongoing	Since the start of the year we have worked with Norfolk County Council on the following strategies: Transport for Norwich Strategy, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, Norwich cycle map 4 th edition; secured Towns Fund money for public realm; consulted on Connecting the Norwich Lanes; built or are building schemes in Tombland and King Street; preparing to build schemes in St Stephens Street and the Train Station and Bus Station mobility hubs and we have developed a wayfinding project
Work with City Fibre and the county council to deliver full fibre broadband in Norwich	On target	Work is progressing well, main contractor is appointed and works in northwest Norwich commenced in early September
Where there is evidence of malpractice, assess whether action can be taken against employers who fail to provide a safe working environment	Ongoing	Enforcement action taken is proportionate following the giving of advice to the relevant employer.
Continue to deliver grants and wider support to businesses	Ongoing	Overall we have made 14,426 payments to Norwich businesses totaling just over £73m since the first lockdown in March 2020, meaning we have fully distributed our allotted fund by 30 July 2021 deadline. This means the council will receive nearly £1m of additional government for our Additional Restrictions Grant to support local businesses over the next year, which will aid the city's recovery.
Engage with business, representative groups and relevant public authorities, and monitor relevant data sources and emerging national and local analysis, to understand the challenges facing businesses and the wider economic impact of C19	Ongoing	This work is ongoing with a fast-changing picture as many of the government's C19 support measures for businesses such as furlough coming to an end in September. The picture is very varied across sectors. We are also working with partners and business intermediaries to identify new, real time data sources to give a detailed local picture of economic recovery.
Work in partnership to develop appropriate solutions to the challenges identified, including through council planning,	Ongoing	The council continues to work in partnership with Norwich BID, the constabulary and the county council to ensure C-19 safety in the city. Following

Action	Status	Comments
licensing and enforcement functions and by working with partners on issues including skills and pathways to work		<p>the easing of restrictions and associated legislation, we are moving to a more guidance and advice based role.</p> <p>Work is ongoing working with partners such as Norfolk County Council, open public estate, Norwich BID and Norwich to Cambridge Tech Corridor to promote economic growth, skills and job growth. Also as part of the Towns Deal projects, there are schemes to help upskilling of workforce to ensure we have the skills needed for the future.</p>
Establish the Good Economy Commission as the lead on the economy theme under the City Vision Steering board, to make recommendations across the City Vision partnership to support an inclusive recovery over the medium-term	On target	<p>The GEC has now established 8 themes, with work programmes being delivered across these, including around skills, digital inclusion, social enterprise, good jobs and anchor institutions. The GEC is also running an engagement programme to understand a range of perspectives on the local economy, including through use of an innovative future building game and a programme of seminars. More information on these themes and the work of the GEC is available on the GEC's website www.norwichgoodeconomy.com</p> <p>Learning from research, funded projects and engagement work is beginning to be collated to start the process of identifying recommendations for action to be included in the GEC's final report in June 2022.</p>
Consider how the council's role as an anchor institution can support an inclusive economy through the use of council assets, contractual, recruitment and procurement levers	Ongoing	<p>Work is underway to explore how the council can continue to embed social value through implementation of its new procurement strategy. Wider opportunities to ensure employment practices and assets maximise their benefit to the local economy are also being investigated and are key principles embedded in the Future Shape Norwich programme and the cross-cutting service reviews which form part of it. These issues were also discussed as part of a Good Economy Commission seminar around the role of anchor institutions in Norwich, which generated conversations with partner organisations about how good practice approaches</p>

Action	Status	Comments
		could be developed and shared.
Review the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-24 to identify any new actions required to respond to C19	On target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently working with key business networks and intermediaries to put out a series of questions to businesses about their feelings on the economic landscape as we emerge from lockdown and the government's various support measures such as furlough. • The annual Local Economic Assessment will be completed by mid-October. • Quantitative survey of businesses (engagement through business network organisations as above) will be completed by end of October • Following analysis of the responses we will test the validity of data in the economic assessment against analysis of survey responses by end of November. • This will then be used to inform the review of economic strategy – draft document by mid December with internal consultation – end of December. • Draft document incorporating internal feedback to Cabinet for comment/approval in January. • Final document published February 2022.
Develop and deliver a Town Investment Plan to get access to £25m funding for investment in the city	On target	All Towns' Fund projects will be entering delivery phase by September 2021 with the first of the projects - Digitech Factory at City College scheduled to be completed and open on 20 October 2021.
Engage in wider recovery plans with partners including the New Anglia Growth Hub and the Norfolk Resilience Forum	Ongoing	Ongoing close engagement with LEP and NRF to promote wider recovery and support to business.

41. The impact of lockdown on the city centre has been significant. The council's objective is to support the local economy whilst doing what it can to protect Norwich. Colleagues from across the organisation continue to work hard to support the local and regional response to Covid-19. The council is an important anchor institution for the city and the return of more people working

from the office, both for the council and other businesses, is important to support the local economic recovery.

42. Our environmental health team continue to work in partnership with the Norwich Business Improvement District, Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, police and local businesses to make sure the right adjustments are made so that people in the city can shop, eat and drink with confidence.
43. The current UK Living Wage is £10.50 per hour (outside of London) for those over 18, whereas the national minimum wage for those over 21 is £8.20 – this is a clear gap. There are many benefits of paying a Living Wage, including a reduction in staff turnover, an improvement in morale and productivity and beyond that, creating a ‘virtuous circle’ with higher pay spent locally in order to boost the local economy.
44. In Norwich, more than one in four employees earn less than £9 per hour. A total of 28 per cent of families in the city are categorised as deprived and 31 per cent of children as living in poverty – this shows how important it is for us to change this across the city and demonstrate how it can improve our residents’ lives.
45. We are focussing on encouraging employers in the city to sign up for the Living Wage. We are proud to have Living Wage accreditation from the national Living Wage Foundation and are committed to supporting other businesses to do the same. Living Wage Places is a recognition scheme from the Living Wage Foundation
46. In March 2021, the council together with other partners started the journey to make Norwich a Living Wage Place. Living wage places is about developing a place-based approach to increasing the number of people earning a real Living Wage. It encourages major private sector employers, small businesses, local councils, charities, and citizens to come together and help make the Living Wage the expected norm.
47. The Norwich Living Wage City Working Group is building a three year action plan detailing how we will encourage others to accredit as Living Wage employers. The planned launch date for our submission will be in May 2022, and although the aim is to target retail, hospitality and care as specific sectors, the action plan will detail the ‘who, when, and how’.
48. Although the group has chosen to target these industries, being sectors where low pay is prevalent, the group will also work with other employers outside of these sectors. The group is currently talking with Flagship Housing, Norwich University of the Arts, Norwich BID and Norwich City Football Club beginning living wage accreditation conversations.
49. This is an example of how our council doesn’t just deliver services directly, but can also be at the forefront of key issues and champion positive change within Norwich by influencing others. We’re committed to working with partner organisations and businesses to ensure that as many employers as possible commit to the Living Wage.

50. Planning has now also started for this year's Living Wage Week celebration which begins on 15 November and will include an evening of celebration at The Forum on 16 November.

Housing, regeneration and development

51. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to housing, regeneration and development. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Support people in private sector rented accommodation, including implementing a private renters charter and taking action against sub-standard accommodation	On target	We have employed a specialist tenancy relations advisor to provide landlords and tenants support and advice around tenancy related issues and, through preventative work, to reduce the number evictions in the private rented sector. We have improved the level of information available to both landlords and tenants about their respective responsibilities and rights through the development of specialist web pages on the council's website. The adviser has built strong relationships with landlords and letting agents, which has enabled us to improve access to private rented accommodation for clients in housing need.
Make progress on the Greater Norwich Local Plan to put in place a framework to guide development in the city and encourage it to be well designed and genuinely sustainable	On target	Submitted GNLP for public examination – expecting examination to take place Jan/Feb 2022
Ensure that infrastructure to support growth is delivered in a timely manner, with delivery of affordable housing maximised, and planning powers used effectively to ensure delivery of priorities	Ongoing	<p>The work on the East Norwich masterplan is area based, progressing well and is a key piece of work to ensure delivery of infrastructure to enable this strategic and largest redevelopment site in the region. Phase one of public engagement is now complete, and a concept masterplan will be prepared building on the feedback received during the initial 'listening and learning stage' – which will be subject to further public engagement.</p> <p>The housing development team is actively working with partners and the planning team on an ongoing basis to</p>

Action	Status	Comments
		ensure that we maximise affordable housing delivery via numerous mechanisms and via the private and public sector.
Make the most of its own land holdings and financial capability to maximise rates of housing delivery through exemplary homes that meet the needs of the people of Norwich, and develop a pipeline of sites that can be delivered over the medium to long-term	On target	The asset management strategy is progressing well and will form the basis for asset review and identification of a pipeline of sites and prioritisation of sites for housing development. In July, cabinet took a decision to dispose of the Norwich Airport Industrial Estate in conjunction with the County Council. Marketing agents are currently being procured and marketing is expected to take place over Winter 2021/22. This will deliver a significant capital receipt for the council whilst realising investment in the north of the City.
Through its wholly owned housing company, Norwich Regeneration Limited, build 74 new homes at the Rayne Park development in Bowthorpe	On target	This is on target and the 74 properties that are referred to as Section 2,3 and 4 are now successfully constructed, and the company is delighted to report it is on target to complete the final 5 sales of these 74 properties throughout October 2021
Take forward the redevelopment of the former council depot at Mile Cross as a council housing-led scheme, to deliver c200 new council homes	On target	This development is now in progress. There have been several walk-overs of the site with senior officers and key stakeholders to set the parameters to the strategic brief. Critical activities in Q3 of this financial year will focus on a clear definition of the engineering and remediation works that are required to maximise a developable area whilst removing all containments from the ground. In parallel to this the Architectural Team is defining a zero carbon approach and conducting a detailed research into the history of Mile Cross to hold a rounded debate with the delivery director on all constraints and opportunities of ensuring a community will thrive in this area of this city. A walk around took place in early September regarding the zero carbon

Action	Status	Comments
		approach and its definition to us, and more concrete discussions are emerging to form part of the detailed research into the history of Mile Cross, which in turn will influence and help the emerging design as well as, how we will base our approach in its delivery.
Begin the master planning process for the regeneration of East Norwich, which has the potential to deliver 4,000 new homes and create 6,000 new jobs	On target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The masterplan consultants were appointed in February 2021 and work commenced in March. A project manager was also appointed and started in March. • Good progress is being made to date including extensive stakeholder and public engagement, evidence gathering /analysis, and development of masterplan concept options. • The stage 1 masterplan is expected to be completed/signed off, and progression to Stage 2 authorised, by November 2021.

52. The construction sector was hit particularly hard by Covid, it was shut down completely for three months in the first lockdown and has faced ongoing challenges relating to the pandemic and from Brexit. Building more homes and regenerating dilapidated parts of the city is a vital aspect of our longer term recovery from Covid. Investing in the vital infrastructure of the city creates jobs and will keep Norwich an attractive place for people to live, work and visit.

53. The council's wholly-owned property company, Norwich Regeneration Ltd continues to build high quality, energy efficient homes for private sale and generates income for the council to reinvest. New homes have been built at Trinity Gardens in Rayne Park, Bowthorpe, continuing to attract high sales demand.

54. Overall, out of a total of 74 new homes being built across the two build phases since August 2020, the final eight properties are nearing sales completion. The fact that these high quality homes are attracting such attention is excellent news and the site is now shaping up to be a high quality new community for the city.

55. Norwich Regeneration Ltd are also set to deliver a further 24 high-quality, energy efficient homes in the next phase of the Three Score development, currently referred to as Phase 3. The company will build house types that take forward the sales intelligence that brought recent success.

56. The in-house housing delivery team will also be constructing 52 homes on the same parcel of land and these are to be retained as council owned social housing. The housing mix for these homes is in-line with housing need and supported by the housing options team.
57. It is pleasing also that the social housing development programme focused on building new council homes is progressing at pace. The planning strategy for the Threescore development in Bowthorpe (which will deliver more than 50 new council homes) is now submitted into planning and we await the determination of this application which is currently scheduled for 14th Oct.
58. The planning strategy and design process for the development at Argyle Street (14 new council homes) has now begun and builds on the house types from Threescore.
59. Finally, the development of new council homes at the former Mile Cross depot site (which should add more than 170 new homes to our housing stock) is progressing with a professional design consultancy recently being awarded the contract. Key activities in quarter 3 will be procurement of a specialist ground contractor to remediate the ground and conduct a thorough research into the history of Mile Cross such that the development enhances the existing community.
60. Making creative use of the open spaces we have in the city has been an important aspect of helping people and businesses through the pandemic. We all know about our great parks and how much people value them, but how we use the streets and other spaces in the city centre is critical too.
61. Last summer, we were asked by numerous businesses to help them establish outside space so they could continue trading while indoors was unavailable due to restrictions. We responded by working with the County Council to restrict traffic in St Benedicts Street and Exchange Street – allowing more space for pedestrians to socially distance and businesses to expand.
62. This work was underpinned by our commitment to develop plans for making the city centre an even better place for pedestrians and cyclists. Providing an environment where residents and visitors can enjoy the experience of being surrounded by great buildings, cultural activities and commerce is fundamental to the economic success of the city centre and its ability to compete with the convenience of online shopping.
63. Whilst we know that some people favour the ease of driving directly into the city, getting what they need, and driving away again, when it comes to city centre traffic management, there is also a large body of evidence to support the benefits of car-free inner city areas. By creating a better environment, free of cars, we create a destination where people are attracted to come, bring their families, dwell, spend more time and take part in a wider variety of activities beyond retail.
64. Online shopping will always beat bricks and mortar when it comes to convenience. The only way we counter this is to focus on improving the overall experience of a visit to the city. The projects that would start to make this vision a reality were sketched out in our City Centre Public Spaces Plan and

over the last few months a huge amount of work has been invested to develop these projects and to secure funding.

65. We have recently seen the area of Tombland transformed into a much more appealing space, a project to widen the footways on King Street is under construction and, this week, a declutter of redundant signs and other street furniture has begun.
66. Most significantly a public consultation has recently taken place to gather views on a programme of projects called “Connecting the Norwich Lanes”. The programme will further enliven this special area that hosts an array of vibrant independent businesses.
67. The production of East Norwich master plan is a major opportunity to shape the development of a new high quality urban quarter for Norwich, with the potential to deliver significant new housing and employment development and to act as a catalyst for the regeneration for both east Norwich and the wider city.
68. The masterplan is a high priority for the council and is also a key project within our Towns Deal programme. A new partnership, the East Norwich Partnership, has been established by the city council to drive forward the plan. This brings together public and private sector partners including Homes England, Network Rail, adjacent local authorities and landowners, and has secured government funding through the Towns Deal alongside other partners. The masterplan will be produced in two stages over the next 12 months.
69. In August Weston Homes confirmed that, following the Secretary of State’s refusal of planning permission for the redevelopment of Anglia Square last year, they have renegotiated new arrangements with the landowner of the site that will allow them to seek to develop a revised scheme. They intend to engage extensively with the local community and stakeholders over the autumn with a view to submitting a revised application next spring.
70. Securing the regeneration of Anglia Square remains a top priority for the city council so it’s encouraging that Weston Homes remain interested in developing the site and are seeking to engage with the community and interest groups at this stage of the process.
71. As we continue to respond to the day-to-day impacts of Covid and support the reopening of the city, our ambitious growth agenda continues to make progress at pace.

Arts, culture and heritage

72. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to arts, culture and heritage. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Work with the arts, heritage and culture sector to enable the city’s institutions and	Ongoing	The city’s arts, heritage and cultural institutions have reopened in line with current guidance including Norwich Arts

Action	Status	Comments
events to re-open in a safe way when it is appropriate to do so		Centre, National Centre for Writing, Playhouse, The Garage etc. The Theatre Royal will be reopening in September and Norwich Theatre have hosted the second Interlude festival in The Close. The Norfolk and Norwich Festival was able to go ahead in May with alterations to crowd management and programming, the Head Out Not Home programme ran over the summer.
Engage closely with the sector to understand the issues facing them and seek solutions together, including working with national arts and culture organisations as required	Ongoing	Ongoing engagement via New Anglia Cultural Board, Creative City Compact, Local Cultural Education Partnership.
At the appropriate time, work to deliver council run events, including to celebrate the hard work of the city over this period, in line with social distancing requirements	On hold	
Work with 2040 City Vision partners to develop a culture strategy for Norwich, which places the importance of arts, culture and heritage at the centre of the city's recovery	On target	Creative City Compact has engaged external consultant to work with partners and develop a 'manifesto' for culture in Norwich supported by in depth engagement and data. Manifesto is due to be launched in November 2021 to align with regional cultural strategy from New Anglia Cultural Board.

73. Arts, culture and heritage is critical to the fabric and character of Norwich and is one of the biggest things many of us have missed over the last eighteen months. Along with hospitality, the arts, culture and heritage sector has been hit hard by the pandemic and it's important that we support arts and culture institutions in the short term as we come out of lockdown and work collectively with the sector, as part of our Norwich 2040 City Vision partnership, to support growth in this area over the longer term, recognising that it is essential to the city's future and contributes to the general wellbeing of our residents.

74. One way of doing this is through Cultural Compacts, which are partnerships designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with a special emphasis on cross sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.

75. The Cultural Compact model was a recommendation from the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry and Norwich was part of the first cohort of cities to establish a compact. The objectives of compacts are:

- a) Increased connectivity and partnerships between the cultural sector and broader priorities, including recovery plans.
- b) To create a shared ambition and approach to support joint ventures.
- c) To leverage resources enabling cities and organisations to respond quickly to funding opportunities.
- d) A commitment from compact members to work in partnership and support sector recovery.

76. City council colleagues are part of the Norwich 2040 Creative City Compact Board, working to develop the compact, which will be part of a wider cultural strategy for the city.

Climate change and the green economy

77. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to climate change and the green economy. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Ensure that its Environment Strategy and Action Plan (with input from stakeholders) includes reference to opportunities emerging from the crisis and articulates environmental objectives during the recovery phase	Complete	Strategy published last year, and updated to reflect this.
Build on its strong track record of success to identify further opportunities for reducing carbon emissions across council assets and operations, which has seen a 60% reduction since 2007	Ongoing	For the year 2020/21, using the 2019 DEFRA conversion factors, Norwich City Council has made an additional 9% reduction in its carbon emissions taking the total reduction to 71.1% saving against its target of net zero carbon by 2030. Progress remains good on the delivery of Environmental Strategy action plan. Works are progressing to install renewables at City Hall and the new depot funded via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant. Work is progressing on the new energy efficient gas boiler retrofit. A new Carbon Management Plan is being developed and a report will go to Cabinet in the new year.

Action	Status	Comments
Undertake an 'opportunity audit' across the council's place-making activities to identify and prioritise specific opportunities to delivery quantifiable environmental benefits, to supplement the Environment Strategy	On target	<p>Work is underway to undertake a comprehensive analysis, across all service areas, of the Council's response to the climate and environmental emergency, to identify actions already taken, where further action may be required, and to consider how these actions could be taken forward. A report detailing the first phase of this work, achievements to date, is provided [at the same cabinet as this one/In October] and the fuller analysis will be provided early next year.</p> <p>In addition, the council was successful in bidding for £775,000 to retrofit a mixture of private and social housing. In the last 12 months the council has spent £385,000 via ECO funding on private sector retrofitting.</p> <p>Further opportunities have been identified. We has put in a 2.5 million bid to the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Fund.</p> <p>The council has put in 3 bids to the Community Renewal Fund. 1 project is solely council, 2 are in partnership. (Subjects include green hydrogen, Community energy and community gardens)</p>
Consider opportunities to further promote sustainable travel in the city, building on the already well-advanced measures already in place	Ongoing	The council has worked on options for refreshing its fleet in 2022/23. The council has responded to the County Council Transport Strategy. This includes a preference for a sustainable transport hierarchy. Further opportunities will be considered through the cross council analysis described above.
Work to ensure that future housing and regeneration schemes are subject to the highest possible environmental standards	Ongoing	Agreed as part of future housing plans

78. The council is continuing with its positive trend of environmental improvement. We have just started a new partnership with the Charge Collective project to install electric vehicle charging points across the city. There are over 50 public electric vehicle charging points in Norwich already but we need to go further.
79. Through this project, we are working with UK Power Networks to identify 45+ EV charging locations in Norwich's urban core. The locations have been selected to support citizens with no off-street parking provision, as homes with parking spaces can access charging more easily.
80. The idea of the project is that UK Power Networks will offer discounts to access the grid in these locations to encourage companies to invest in supplying charging services. It will be a model that could be scaled up across the country, and if successful a rollout would take place over 2021-23. Norwich is one of only three locations where this is being piloted, so it's an exciting chance for our council and city to be pioneering the expansion of electric vehicle use.
81. We have also successfully bid for nearly £1.5m of government funding to support our award winning carbon reduction programme. The new resource will further develop the council's successful approach to reducing its carbon emissions, which have already fallen by 71.1 per cent. Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, the council aims to be operationally carbon neutral by 2030.
82. We have been awarded £740,000 through the government's decarbonisation funding scheme to deliver renewable heating at City Hall, three major LED lighting retrofitting programmes at council car parks, and a large solar power system at our new environmental depot at Hurricane Way.
83. The council has also been awarded £716,000 from the government's Green Homes Grant fund to retrofit 80 homes in the city to make them more energy efficient.
84. Acknowledging the need to address not just climate change impacts but the wider agenda of sustainability, the council, along with a number of City Vision partners formed a Sustainability working group in March 2021. The executive director for the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of East Anglia is a key member of this group, providing members with world-leading expertise.
85. Since its formation the group has reviewed a number of delivery frameworks including the Place based Climate Action Network's (PCAN) model and are moving at pace to set up a newly independent Norwich Climate Commission which is due to launch in November 2022. The commission will:
- a) cover the geographical area of Norwich
 - b) be an independent advisory body set up to bring actors from the public, private and third sectors together to support, guide and track the impact of ambitious climate and sustainability actions across the city

- c) focus on the transition to net zero carbon emissions, with a particular focus on energy, housing, commercial buildings, public buildings, transport, land-use, flooding and nature - the focus on net zero carbon emissions will consider not only direct emissions from fuel and electricity use within the area (scope 1 and 2 emissions), but also the significance of goods and services imported into or exported from the area (scope 3 emissions)
- d) inform and work with other initiatives across the city rather than duplicating existing efforts
- e) work with other commissions including those in the Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN)
- f) be established for three years in the first instance, with a review of its contribution and value-added in year three to establish whether it should continue.

Harnessing social capital

86. The blueprint identified key actions in relation to harnessing social capital. The table below details progress against outstanding actions:

Action	Status	Comments
Develop a Community Participation Strategy which looks at how the council can work with communities across the city to enable them to realise the opportunities and respond to the challenges ahead	On target	Phase one (research) is complete with phase two (pilots) underway. Using the research, we have been able to gain external funding to pilot the learning to see what impact this can have and will be able to review this before phase three (wider implementation) in order to disseminate best practice throughout the council.
Work with residents to understand the level of support needed from the council without imposing unnecessary process and allowing communities to define their own local priorities and responses to local challenges	On target	This work is continuing. Many mutual aid groups have disbanded but often replaced by more general resident groups still wishing to link on non-covid issues. Work is gaining traction on simplifying internal permission to support us with green space maintenance and we have submitted a possible growth item into the budget (subject to approval) for a web tool which would help with engagement, as well as continuing to gain feedback from residents via various projects.
Adopt an asset-based community development approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in	On target	This is adapted into the Citizen Participation blueprint and how we enact these principles into engagement opportunities and

Action	Status	Comments
neighbourhoods, acknowledging that organic social capital building will vary by neighbourhood and adapt approaches accordingly		service development.
Develop communications strategies which both amplify inspiring stories and create two-way conversations to inform council decision making	On target	The Citizen Participation Strategy, (see above) is key here: the research undertaken so far provides high quality evidence about approaches to take in creating two-way conversations, and the pilots currently underway will provide further learning. Work is underway to develop communication strategies to share the work and successes of our communities, and these will be implemented over the coming months.

87. This report demonstrates that since the previous update to Cabinet, not only has the council continued to respond to the evolving needs of residents and businesses, but that, as an organisation, we've continued to deliver our stated priorities despite the challenges that the virus has presented.

88. The priorities and actions from the blueprint for recovery will form part of the council's next Corporate Plan due to be adopted in April 2022.

Consultation

89. Not applicable

Implications

Financial and Resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2019-22 and Budget.

90. Any proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources will be considered as part of the project management process for each specific project.

Legal

91. Not applicable

Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	Equality impact assessments are carried out on a project specific basis where appropriate
Health, Social and Economic Impact	There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the report.
Crime and Disorder	There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the report.
Children and Adults Safeguarding	There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the report.
Environmental Impact	There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the report.

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Include operational, financial, compliance, security, legal, political or reputational risks to the council	Risks are considered on a project specific basis.	

Other Options Considered

92. Not applicable

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

93. To note and comment on the progress made in the delivery of the COVID-19 recovery plan and the main actions contained within it.

Background papers:

- [Covid-19: A blueprint for recovery June 2020](#)
- [Covid-19: A blueprint for recovery December 2020 update](#)
- [Norwich 2040 City Vision](#)

Appendices: None

Contact Officer: Strategy officer

Name: Emma Smith

Telephone number: 01603 989575

Email address: emmasmith@norwich.gov.uk