Report to	Cabinet	**Item**
	10 June 2020	
Report of	Chief executive officer	5
Subject	Covid-19: The council's response and a blueprint for recovery	

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To seek cabinet endorsement of the framework and blueprint for the city council's approach to recovery of both the council and the city from the initial phase of Covid-19 crisis

Recommendation

To recommend that council approves the blueprint and action plan.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the all the corporate priorities

Financial implications

No quantified financial implications. Multiple impacts across council budgets.

Ward/s: All Wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Waters - Leader

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

NORWICH
City Council

Covid-19: A blueprint for recovery

June 2020

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1. Introduction from the Leader of the Council

1.1 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, it continues to affect the lives of every citizen in the city.

1.2 This report describes how the city council has responded to the crisis and redesigned its front-line services and priorities to meet the needs of a city in quarantine, in particular, its most vulnerable residents.

1.3 This is not just a story about a single institution. The report describes the wide network of partnerships across Norwich, stretching into the county, that have worked together to limit the impact of the virus and the many hundreds of volunteers that have given time freely to support fellow citizens in every community.

1.4 Elected city councillors - of all political groups - have played an active role in their wards, to support constituents and voluntary groups, as well as working with council officers to make the necessary decisions to protect residents and help them get through the pandemic.

1.5 It is, above all, about the determination of people - despite the difficulties and the strains - taking to heart the message about staying at home to contain the spread of the virus and save lives. It is one explanation of why Norwich has seen one of the lowest death rates in the UK.

1.6 We are all aware of the fact that Covid-19 has been suppressed: it hasn't gone away. This has shaped the thinking, outlined in the second half of the report, in carefully developing a blueprint for recovery and using the framework of 'Norwich 2040' to involve the widest range of residents, businesses, public institutions and voluntary and community groups in shaping a city response to a first wave impact of a virus that is likely to be a continued presence for some time.

1.7 The pandemic has been compared to other testing times in the 20th Century and our more recent history. The Second World War has been a particular reference point. When that conflict was over, there was no desire to go back to 1939. Too much had changed.

1.8 Instead, despite the financial costs of the war, the newly elected Labour government - in partnership with local government - built the welfare state, including a National Health Service; embarked on a massive house building programme; and committed to public ownership of key sectors of the economy and full employment. The result: an unprecedented growth in living standards.

1.9 For a different generation, the global financial crash of 2008/09 was a defining event of the first decade of the new century. The response in the UK to a crisis in the financial services and banking sector was a policy of retrenchment and a decade of 'austerity'. Local government's role was as a partner of central government but only in the sense that it took a disproportionate share of the cuts in public expenditure that has consequently weakened the capacity of councils and the fabric of local services they provide to their communities.

1.10 Will the government take the same path once the threat of Covid-19 has abated? The short answer is that it shouldn't. The first weeks of the pandemic have highlighted positives: social solidarity and an awareness of the lives of others; the recognition of the value of work carried out by millions of low paid workers in sectors like social care and cleaning.

1.11 There has also been a recognition by the government that it had a responsibility to support millions of workers during lockdown and make financial and other provision for vulnerable and low-income groups. Equally important has been a recognition of the vital role (despite suffering massive cuts since 2010) of local government as a key partner - alongside the NHS - in tackling the pandemic.

1.12 So, temporary measures and temporary partnerships or a new direction? At this moment, things are in the balance. Once the pandemic has faded as a public health emergency, is it to be back to basically the same old policies of austerity? Or will there be the momentum and public sentiment to drive the government to take seriously its responsibilities and invest for the long term in the well-being of all its citizens?

1.13 In reality, there is only one sensible course of action: follow the evidence. We have heard a good deal about scientific evidence over the past few weeks. In the case of Norwich, this report builds the evidential case, through actions already taken and plans for recovery, for strong local government with an ambition to make Norwich, after the pandemic, a better place for all its residents.

Cllr Alan Waters
Leader of Norwich City Council

2. Executive summary

Purpose

- This report represents a **blueprint for recovery** from Covid-19 (C19) for Norwich City Council and for the city of Norwich.
- It provides an overview of the council's initial **response** to the virus and the priority themes and actions which will frame the city's **recovery**.
- This recovery will be led through a **partnership approach**, utilising the **City Vision 2040** partnership to steer the city through the **challenges** and **opportunities** ahead.

The council's response to Covid-19

- Although the death rate in Norwich has been relatively low, the impact on the **local economy** and people's **way of life** has been significant.
- From an **organisational perspective**, the council has improved IT capabilities to enable more staff to **work from home**. This is likely to continue over the medium-term.
- The way many **council services** are delivered has also changed, with the majority of **customer contact** now provided **over the phone** and via the **council website**.
- The **Norwich Community Response Hub (NCR)** was set up to support the **most vulnerable** in the city. By the end of May, the NCR had made nearly **6,000 welfare calls**, delivered nearly **600 emergency food parcels** and made over **500 emergency medicine drops**.
- Council tax bills for those in financial hardship have **been reduced to zero** for the 2020/21 financial year, providing financial relief for over **4,000 residents** at risk of financial hardship.
- Accommodation continues to be available to **all rough sleepers in Norwich**, with **food and medicine** delivered directly to accommodation alongside access to **mental** and **physical health** assessments and support.
- By June, the council had paid out **£36.5m** in grants to over **2,800 businesses** and is continuing to reach out to eligible businesses. A **discretionary grants scheme** has also been set up.
- The city's network of **parks and green spaces** have been kept open for residents to take exercise during lockdown, whilst adhering to social distancing requirements.

A blueprint for recovery

- The following themes and actions provide a **blueprint for the recovery** of the council and the city:

1. **Securing the council's finances** – lobby government to fully compensate the council for the financial impacts of C19; review budgets to identify scope for in-year savings; reduce non-essential spending; begin the process to set the council's budget for 2021/22; refresh the council's medium-term financial strategy.
2. **Modernising the council; reimagining local services** – continue to allow staff to work from home where possible; reimagine how services are delivered and recast service transformation plans; develop an IT and technology strategy to determine how technology can improve services and drive efficiencies.
3. **Supporting the most vulnerable** – develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness; work with the Pathways programme and VCS to develop longer-term pathways out of poverty for the most deprived; continue to support victims of domestic abuse and DA charities.

4. **Business and the local economy** – implement signage and physical measures in the city centre to support social distancing; use licensing powers to support businesses to reopen safely; identify options to further promote sustainable travel, with a focus on walking and cycling; work with City Fibre to deliver a full fibre network across Norwich to improve digital connectivity; continue to deliver grants and wider support to businesses; review the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-24; develop and deliver a Town Investment Plan to get access to £25m of funding for investment in the city.
5. **Housing, regeneration and development** – restart council house repairs and maintenance programmes and clear the backlog; support people in the private rented sector, including taking action against rogue landlords; develop a pipeline of brownfield sites for redevelop, with a focus on providing new homes, particularly council homes; bring forward a plan to redevelop the former depot site at Mile Cross, which has the potential to create c200 new council homes; begin the master planning process to regenerate the area of East Norwich as the biggest regeneration opportunity in the East of England, with the potential to create 4,000 new homes and 6,000 new jobs.
6. **Arts, culture and heritage** – work with the arts, heritage and culture sector to enable the city's institutions and events to reopen in a safe way; engage closely with the sector to understand the issues it faces and seeks solutions together; work with City Vision partners to develop a culture strategy for Norwich.
7. **Climate change and the green economy** – publish the council's Environment Strategy and Action Plan; build on the council's strong track record of success to identify further opportunities to reduce carbon emissions across council operations; consider options to further promote sustainable travel; work to ensure that future housing and regeneration schemes are subject to the highest possible environmental standards.
8. **Harnessing social capital** – adopt an asset-based community development approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in neighbourhoods; use procurement powers and community grants to address gaps in need across the voluntary and community sector; develop communications strategies which create two-way conversations with communities to inform decision-making.

Measuring progress

- The use of **appropriate data** will be critical in identifying the key issues resulting from C19, developing the right **policy response** and **measuring the success** of recovery.
- In order to monitor progress, the council is developing a **dashboard of measures** to identify the impacts of C19 on the economy, people and communities. These will be tracked monthly to enable timely action.

Engaging with residents, businesses and community groups

- It is crucial to **consult and engage** with a range of partners, residents and businesses to ensure that future plans are comprehensive and that the city feels **connected to the recovery**.
- The **City Vision network** provides an opportunity to seek views from a wide range of groups, including businesses, faith groups, young people through the Youth Advisory Board, universities, community groups, VCSE, and advocacy organisations for particular groups.
- The council will also use the variety of **communications and media channels** it has available to consult and engage with residents and businesses, including the use of social media surveys; resident consultations; use of Citizen magazine; and use of Ward councillors to gather views.

3. The purpose of this report

3.1 This report represents a **blueprint for recovery** from Covid-19 (C19) for Norwich City Council and for the city of Norwich.

3.2 The report provides an overview of the council's initial **response** to the virus – which has been significant - and sets out the priority themes and actions which will frame **recovery**.

3.3 For the **city council**, the report sets out some areas of focus for how the organisation intends to operate going forward - as well as how services might be delivered differently - with the opportunity to **embed the flexibilities** which have developed as the council has adapted to C19.

3.4 The report also sets out the themes which will drive the **wider recovery plan for the city** and form the basis of how the council approaches recovery. Each theme includes key actions which the council will take to make progress, with the intention that the report is more than just a strategy document and instead takes the form of an initial **action plan for recovery**.

3.5 Some of these actions – such as those being taken forward in partnership with businesses to support the safe reopening of the city centre – are **short-term actions**.

3.6 Others, such as plans to build hundreds of new **councils houses** – including a new council housing development at the former Mile Cross depot site – and progressing major **regeneration programmes** to bring dilapidated parts of the city back to life, including the opportunity to create 4,000 new homes and 6,000 jobs in East Norwich – are **longer-term**.

3.7 Ultimately, the future prosperity of the city in the aftermath of C19 will depend on the council and its strategic partners continuing to take immediate actions to keep people safe whilst working towards a compelling **long-term vision for the future**.

3.8 The report emphasises the need for the city's recovery to be led through a **partnership approach**, utilising the strong **City Vision 2040** partnership as the key forum for steering the city through the challenges and opportunities ahead. The partnership brings together organisations from across the **public, private, educational, cultural** and **community sectors** and is well placed to oversee the city's recovery. A proposed governance structure is set out in **section 6**.

3.9 This recovery plan is intended to be a **live document**, which will continue to evolve. The actions set out here are not exhaustive and an important next step will be to build on this framework towards the development of a more extensive **recovery action plan**.

3.10 Some themes – such as the need to harness the social capital and community participation which has developed in response to the virus – are likely to require the creation of **individual strategies and action plans**.

3.11 It is essential that residents, businesses and community groups are **actively engaged** throughout the city's recovery and the report sets out emerging thinking on an **engagement strategy** to guide the council's approach.

4. Norwich City Council's response to Covid-19

4.1 The virus has had a devastating impact across the world and in the UK. By 26 May 2020, Norwich had recorded **220 confirmed cases** of C19 - a rate of 155.9 per 100,000 of population. By 15 May, published data shows **15 deaths in hospital** in Norwich. This figure is likely to increase.

4.2 These figures indicate a relatively low level of cases and deaths compared with other areas of the country, with the death rate in Norwich – in term of deaths per 100,000 of population – the **3rd lowest in the country** in terms of local authority area.

4.3 Although the death rate in Norwich has been relatively low – a testament to the exceptional work of the NHS, emergency services, the community sector, the behaviour of residents and the response of the council - the impact on the **economy** and people's **way of life** has been significant.

4.4 The virus has had a significant impact on the **council**, both in terms of how staff carry out their jobs (with, in some cases, staff redeployed into other roles to support the council's response) and how services to residents and businesses are delivered.

4.5 Whilst difficult, some of the changes made in response to the virus present **opportunities** for how the council operates and how services are accessed in the future. It is important that the council builds on this momentum and continues to adapt to **changing behaviours**.

4.6 A core principle of the council's approach has been to, at every stage, use the **scientific guidance and advice** to steer its response and to act quickly in the best interests of staff, residents and businesses.

4.7 Throughout, the council has actively engaged with the **Norfolk Resilience Forum** (NRF) as the statutory body for coordinating the regional response to crisis events. The Chief Executive of Norwich City Council is a member of the strategic group of the NRF - which steers the county-wide response - with other city council officers sitting on the NRF's tactical response group.

4.8 This renewed focus on **joined-up working** across different agencies creates opportunities for how services – particularly to the most vulnerable – are reimagined as part of the recovery.

The main strands of the council's response

4.9 This section provides an **overview** of the main strands of the council's response to C19.

Organisational change and service delivery

Changes to the way the council operates

4.10 From an **organisational perspective**, the council had to change rapidly as the impact of the virus increased. Improved IT capabilities to allow more staff to work from home were developed and rolled out quickly, which has enabled the majority of staff to **work from home** since March.

4.11 **Virtual council meetings** are being held in order to limit the risk of spreading the disease through close contact, although the organisation will revert to 'face to face' meetings in the council chamber and committee rooms when it is appropriate to do so.

4.12 Officers are working through measures to **make city hall safe** to allow staff to come back to the office, drawing on government guidance and best practice from elsewhere. Unions are being engaged through this process and a **risk assessment** will be carried out before the building is opened up to larger numbers of staff and councillors.

4.13 Initial assessments show that, by reconfiguring desk space within city hall to allow staff to sit 2m apart, around 250 council staff would be able to work from city hall on a daily basis. With a total workforce of c650, it is clear that **flexible working** and **working from home** for many staff will continue for the foreseeable future.

4.14 As explored in **section 5**, this new way of working has the potential to change the council's culture and make it a more modern organisation which supports a flexible approach to work/life balance for staff.

Changes to service delivery

4.15 The way many **council services** are delivered has changed in response to C19. The most notable changes have been to **customer contact services**, with the majority of services now provided over the phone and via the **council website**.

4.16 Compared to April 2019, data for April 2020 shows a **37% increase** in contact with the council made **online** rather than over the phone. This creates opportunities in how the council continues to make more services available online and more **accessible to users**.

4.17 Overall contact to the council across all channels **decreased considerably** during lockdown. The customer contact team saw a **62% decrease in calls** in April 2020 compared to April 2019, with the revenues and benefits team seeing a **50% decrease** over the same period, although demand is expected to pick up as lockdown eases.

4.18 An immediate decision was made - which came into place when lockdown measures were announced by government - to **close city hall as a public building** and move face to face customer contact to appointment only (and only in emergencies). During this time, facilities such as document scanners were maintained at city hall to allow people to **self-serve**.

4.19 The council's customer services have coped well during the response to C19 and this new way of working – with increased channel shift – creates **opportunities** for the council to reimagine services going forward. Emerging thinking is set out in **section 5**.

4.20 Through its response, the council has continued to meet its statutory requirements with regards to **homelessness** and the provision of emergency housing support. The Housing Options team has maintained a presence in city hall throughout to provide this service, with the virus leading to **increased numbers** of people requiring emergency accommodation. Further details on the council's housing response during C19 is provided below.

4.21 In terms of **service demand**, whilst some services inevitably became busier through the response phase – such as revenues and benefits – demand for other services such as parking, events and planning reduced (although parking and planning services are now being restored to support the city's recovery).

4.22 The council developed a process for **redeploying staff** from across the organisation into critical frontline services in order to improve resilience. Examples include planning officers being redeployed into the revenues and benefits team to support the distribution of business grants and officers from a range of services redeployed to work in the Norwich Community Response Hub.

Supporting the most vulnerable

4.23 At the core of the council's response was its work to quickly establish the **Norwich Community Response Hub (NCR)** – a multi-disciplinary team which was set up to support the **most vulnerable** in the city.

4.24 The NCR is a **new council service** which was set up over the course of a week. Its overall objectives are:

- to **make and maintain contact** with people on the government's 'shielded' list – and with others who have requested support locally – and **assess their needs**; and
- to signpost them to the relevant **support**, be it council services (those provided by the city council as well as social care support provided by the county council) or support within the community.

4.25 Through the NCR, the council set up an **emergency food distribution centre** at St Andrews Hall to provide **emergency food and medical supplies** to people in need and who are unable to call on friend and family support networks.

4.26 By the end of May, the NCR had made nearly **6,000 welfare calls** to vulnerable people across the city, with follow up calls made to those who need them. The team has been in contact with everyone in Norwich on the government's 'shielded' list – those with specific medical conditions which put them most at risk – and with everyone else who has been in contact directly with the council to request help.

4.27 The council has also used **locally held data** to reach out to those who might be vulnerable, including those requiring assisted bin collections or vulnerable council housing tenants.

4.28 The council's attempts to reach those who might require support have been comprehensive, with a **letter sent to all households** in Norwich – signed by the Council Leader and Chief Executive – dispatched in March. The letter included information about how to access the support on offer to both residents and businesses and details of an emergency phone number.

4.29 By the end of May, the NCR had delivered nearly **600 emergency food parcels** and over **500 emergency medicine drops**. The NCR continues to operate, although an **exit plan** is being developed to steadily transition people off of direct council support to community-based support.

4.30 The council took a decision early on in its response about how the **hardship fund** money provided by government should best be used to support the most vulnerable in the city.

4.31 Announced by the Leader of the Council on 31 March, the decision was taken to **reduce council tax bills to zero** for the 2020/21 financial year for anyone who is eligible for council tax support (applied to both working age adults and pensioners). This decision will provide significant financial relief for over **4,000 residents** who are at risk of financial hardship.

Homelessness and rough sleepers

4.32 In March, the government issued guidance to all local authorities, requiring them to urgently procure accommodation for **rough sleepers**. Norwich, like other cities and regions across the country, has seen an increase in the number of people requiring **emergency accommodation** during the pandemic.

4.33 This increase occurred for a variety of reasons, including informal housing arrangements – so called **'sofa surfing'** – coming to an end during lockdown. The increased demand placed significant pressure on the council's housing services.

4.34 In response, the council worked quickly to ensure that accommodation was – and continues to be - available to **all rough sleepers in Norwich** and procured 53 bedrooms split between 4 sites to allow separation of high-risk individuals. As the number of rough sleepers can change on a daily basis, additional accommodation is **continuing to be sourced** where it is required.

4.35 By the end of May, there were **42 clients** accommodated in emergency provision and no rough sleepers in Norwich who have not had an offer of accommodation. The **Pathways** partnership programme continues to provide **outreach support** to those who need it, drawing on a wide range of expertise. Regular street counts are also conducted.

4.36 Through Pathways, **food and medicine** is delivered directly to accommodation in order to avoid people seeking potentially unsafe food provision being provided on the streets as well as access to **mental and physical health assessments** and support.

Sheltered housing tenants

4.37 The council provides 922 self-contained units of **sheltered accommodation** to over 1,000 older tenants. Tenants are supported on a regular basis by sheltered support officers who work in partnership with NHS Norfolk, Norfolk County Council Community Services and the voluntary sector to provide varying levels of support depending on individual need.

4.38 The initial response included **weekly telephone calls** to all tenants and increased contact with those identified as vulnerable. Alternative measures were identified where telephone contact was not achieved, including carers/family/friends or other professional agencies making visits.

4.39 Good links with **voluntary organisations** such as 'Helping Hands' has ensured that the team have been supported in providing tenants with extra assistance. Duplication of welfare calls to those on the shielded list was avoided through contact with staff in the Community Response Hub.

Supporting businesses

4.40 The council has administered **grants to small businesses** who are eligible under the government's guidance (up to £25k per business with less than 50 staff in the hospitality sector).

4.41 By the end of May, the council had paid out **£36.5m** in grants to over **2,800 businesses** who are eligible and is continuing to proactively reach out to businesses who are believed to be eligible but who have yet to submit an application.

4.42 By mid-May, according to government data, the council's performance in distributing grants to businesses placed the authority **39th out of 314 councils nationally** who administer business grants. The city council was also the **highest performing council in Norfolk** based on the percentage of money paid out.

4.43 In addition, the council has worked with other councils in Norfolk to develop a framework for the delivery of a **discretionary business grants scheme** announced by the government in May. This discretionary scheme – worth just over **£2m** - is primarily designed to assist those businesses which fall outside the original criteria for grants.

4.44 This includes small businesses in **shared accommodation** and other flexible workspaces, regular **market traders** with fixed costs, **bed and breakfast** accommodation, and **charity properties** in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for small business rates relief.

4.45 Alongside paying out grants, the Revenues and Benefits team moved quickly to provide **business rates relief** and issue revised business rates bills to **1,400 businesses** in the city.

4.46 The council's procurement team has looked at other ways to support businesses during the crisis, including **paying suppliers promptly** in order to ease cash flow challenges for those organisations.

4.47 The council has also continued to consider requests for further support on a case by case basis. With regards to tenants of council commercial property, as part of the response a **3-month rent deferral** was offered to all tenants, with further requests considered where flexibility allowed.

Parks and open spaces

4.48 The council took the decision to **keep the city's network of parks and green spaces open** for residents to take exercise during lockdown, whilst adhering to social distancing requirements. For the most part, Norwich residents adhered to this advice and the parks team put in place a patrol schedule to help promote safe use, liaising with the police where concerns were identified.

4.49 The decision was taken to close **play and multi-use games areas** due to the inability to adhere to social distancing and issues around people touching equipment. There were a number of incidents where ties for plays area gates were cut and fencing for games areas was removed. Where this occurred, closures were reinstated with signage put in place to confirm the closure.

4.50 The council has continued to respond quickly to changing government guidance as lockdown restrictions are eased, with facilities such as **tennis courts** reopened in mid-May following a risk assessment.

4.51 **Allotments** have remained open throughout lockdown, as it was judged that social distancing could be observed, with water supplies at each site turned on to enable hand washing.

Environmental services

4.52 A similar approach was taken with Earlham and Rosary **cemeteries**. As well as active burial sites, both cemeteries provide a low-level recreational role for residents and the decision was taken that these would remain open on the basis that usage should remain low.

4.53 Recreational usage of cemeteries **continues to be monitored** and, following an increase of dog walking, signage was put in place to discourage this.

4.54 The positive working relationships that the council has with Norwich Norse Environmental (NNE) for **street cleaning, grounds maintenance and tree services** and with Biffa for **waste and recycling collection** have reaped benefits during the C19 response, with services continuing to operate effectively.

4.55 At an early stage, discussions were held with NNE to agree what works could be undertaken to ensure employees were protected and **key services carried out**. This proactive engagement has continued to ensure that priority services are provided and that others can be brought back safely when appropriate.

4.56 **Waste and recycling services** have continued during lockdown under increased pressure. The service benefitted from additional Biffa employees being transferred to the city council contract which meant that crews could complete their rounds more quickly. An initial suspension of new garden waste subscriptions was repealed as Biffa were able to deliver additional requests.

5. A blueprint for recovery: Priority themes & actions

5.1 The UK will be feeling the impacts of C19 for a long time and, as the country emerges from lockdown towards recovery, the government's overriding objective is to **avoid a second peak of the virus**. The city council shares this objective when it comes to the recovery of Norwich.

5.2 In practice, although certain aspects of the council's response such as the NCR will begin to scale back, it is likely that council will need to continue to provide an **ongoing response** to C19 for some time, particularly to the city's **most vulnerable residents**.

5.3 However, the council has now started to **focus on recovery** as the city begins to open up again. In doing so, it is important that the council not only focuses on how, as an organisation, it will recover and respond to the easing of restrictions but also the leading role it will play in the wider recovery of the city.

5.4 This section sets out the **priority themes** which will guide the council's approach as the organisation and the city transitions from response to recovery. These themes, together with a set of associated key actions, form a **blueprint for recovery**.

5.5 Some of the actions the council will take – working with strategic partners – are **short-term**, such as measures to support **social distancing** in the city. Others, such as **building new homes** and regenerating dilapidated parts of the city, will be **longer-term** programmes. Together, these actions form part of the city's initial recovery and longer-term prosperity.

5.6 Building on this, the intention is to work with local partners to develop a comprehensive **recovery action plan** as well as a suite of **data and indicators** to monitor progress (see **section 7**).

Test and trace programme

5.7 Norfolk is one of 11 test and trace **pilot areas** across the UK. Test and trace is the NHS system designed to control the **reproductive ('R') rate** of the virus by rapidly testing people who display C19 symptoms and tracing those who have been in close contact with anyone who tests positive.

5.8 The new programme is also likely grant additional powers for local authorities to impose **local lockdowns** if deemed necessary to deal with any emerging increase in C19 cases. The city council is continuing to work closely with Norfolk County Council to support the successful roll out of test and trace in the city as a crucial strand of the recovery.

The role of the city council in the recovery of Norwich

5.9 The city's recovery from C19 will be taken forward **incrementally**, through close **partnership working** across the public sector, with business representative groups, the voluntary and community sector, faith groups, mutual aid and neighbourhood groups, and with academic institutions.

5.10 The council has a vital role to play as a **convenor of partners**. This will require the council to use its position to bring the right people and organisations together to help develop a comprehensive approach to recovery, with an associated **action plan** which is jointly owned across the local partnership.

5.11 In terms of **governance and oversight** of the recovery, a proposed way forward – which would see the **City Vision 2040 partners** convened to steer the implementation of the recovery phase – is set out in **section 6**.

Recovery themes and key actions: Summary

Theme	Key actions the council will take
1. Securing the council's finances	• Closely monitor and update budget impact analysis and regularly update CLT and Cabinet. • Lobby government to ensure that Norwich City Council - and local government more widely - is fully compensated for the financial impacts of C19. • Conduct a corporate review of all 2020-21 revenue budgets to identify areas for immediately reducing in-year expenditure through additional controls on non-essential spend and recruitment. • 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. • Update the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, to understand the short to medium implications for savings requirements and use of reserves. • Commence the process for setting the budget for 2021/22 and provide further detail to Cabinet in July on the approach and timeline.
2. Modernising the council; reimagining local services	• Implement changes to the internal layout and other safety measures within city hall to support social distancing as more staff return to the office when it is appropriate to do so, with a risk assessment of the building carried out and unions engaged. • Continue to allow staff to work from home where possible, striking a balance between home and office-based working and allowing flexibility for staff. • Take forward an organisation wide review of service delivery, to look at reimagining how services are delivered in future. • 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. • Develop an IT and technology strategy, which looks at how technology can enable organisational and service transformation – unlocking efficiency savings and providing a better experience for service users. • Review the decisions that have been taken as part of the crisis response to stop, start or amend service delivery – and the experience of working in different ways – to consider lessons learned and apply them to services over the longer-term. • Use the principles of recovery engagement to recalibrate the compact between the council and residents, communities, businesses and other city stakeholders.
3. Supporting the most vulnerable	• Work proactively with partners through the Pathways programme to develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness in the city. • Over the longer-term, work with Pathways and the voluntary and community sector to look at pathways out of poverty for the most vulnerable. This will include training and skills opportunities and measures to move people closer to the labour market and into employment. • Work with domestic abuse support providers to signpost victims of DA to the support on offer and to work with front line teams within the council to train staff to spot signs of DA.

	• Hold virtual internal and engagement event(s) to gather evidence and lessons from the council's long-term approach to reducing inequalities and crisis support. • Use these principles and lessons learnt to build on existing collaborative and asset-based approach to tackling pre-existing and emerging financial and digital inclusion in the city, as part of tackling wider inequality.
4. Business and the local economy	• Work with the Norwich BID, Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, police and Norfolk County Council to review and implement physical measures and signage in the city centre to support social distancing. • Use its licensing powers to support businesses – particularly those in the hospitality sector – where appropriate to vary the use of outside space, whilst ensuring that people with disabilities can move around the city safely. • 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. • Work with City Fibre and the county council to deliver a full fibre broadband network in Norwich. • Where there is evidence of malpractice, assess whether action can be taken against employers who fail to provide a safe working environment. • Continue to deliver grants and wider support to businesses. • Engage with business, representative groups and relevant pubic authorities, and monitor relevant data sources and emerging national and local analysis, to understand the challenges facing businesses and the wider economic impact. • Work in partnership to develop appropriate solutions to the challenges identified, including through our planning, licensing and enforcement functions and by working with partners on issues including skills and pathways to work. • 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. • 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. • Review the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-24 to identify any new actions required to respond to C19. • Develop and deliver a Town Investment Plan to get access to £25m funding for investment in the city. • Engage in wider recovery plans with partners including the New Anglia Growth Hub and the Norfolk Resilience Forum.
5. Housing, regeneration and development	• Restart council house repairs and maintenance programmes and work with Norwich Norse Buildings to ensure the backlog is cleared. • Reintroduce services to let council homes and reintroduce housing options policies. • Support people in private sector rented accommodation, including implementing a private renters charter and taking action against sub-standard accommodation. • Prepare, submit and implement the Town Investment Plan to maximise up to £25m of investment in the regeneration of Norwich. • 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. • 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. • 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. • Through its wholly owned housing company, Norwich Regeneration Limited, build 74 new homes at the Rayne Park development in Bowthorpe.

	• Take forward the redevelopment of the former council depot at Mile Cross as a council housing-led scheme, to deliver c200 new council homes. • 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.
6. Arts, culture and heritage	• Work with the arts, heritage and culture sector to enable the city's institutions and events to re-open in a safe way when it is appropriate to do so. • 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. • 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. • Work with City Vision 2040 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.
7. Climate change and the green economy	• Ensure that the council's 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. • 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. • 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. • Consider opportunities to further promote sustainable travel in the city, building on the already well-advanced measures already in place. • Work to ensure that future housing and regeneration schemes are subject to the highest possible environmental standards.
8. Harnessing social capital	• 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. • 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. • Adopt an asset-based community development approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in neighbourhoods, acknowledging that organic social capital building will vary by neighbourhood and adapt approaches accordingly. • Remain part of national and global think tank groups to monitor and pilot new ideas and identify best practice. • Support the voluntary and community sector in adapting and use its procurement powers and grants based on gaps and need. • Develop communications strategies which both amplify inspiring stories and create two-way conversations to inform council decision making.

Theme 1: Securing the council's finances

Why it is important

5.12 The pandemic will have a **significant impact** on the council's budget during the 2020-21 financial year and over the medium-term. The impact of **increased costs** and **reduced income** has been felt across local government and, although Whitehall has provided additional funding, it is far from enough to plug the funding gap that has developed.

5.13 The council has coped well with a **decade of austerity** between 2010 and 2020, making £35.5m in savings and income during this period whilst avoiding significant service reductions.

5.14 However, the scale of the in-year budget impact from C19 is unprecedented and, although the council can call upon a proportion of its **reserves** to limit the impact, tough decisions will have to be made in year and in future years to get the council's finances back on a sustainable footing. If the council were to use c£3.8m of reserves to plug the forecast £7.2m budget gap in 2020/21, this will require in-year savings of **c£3.3m**.

5.15 As well as the in-year budget impact for 2020/21 – due to a combination of increased costs (e.g. housing the homeless, investment in IT to allow staff to work from home, food costs for vulnerable people, higher recycling costs) and lost income (e.g. from car parks, commercial rents, planning fees, licensing, event bookings) – over the **medium-term**, the financial impact could reach as high as **£14m** across the council's revenue budgets and Housing Revenue Account.

5.16 To date, the council has been awarded £1.5m in **additional funding** from government to deal with the crisis but this falls significantly short of the combined budget pressures the council is facing in terms of increased costs and lost income.

5.17 Although there is a degree of uncertainty at this stage, it is likely that there will be an impact on collection rates for **council tax, business rates, commercial rent** and rents from **council housing**. These factors contribute to the increased level of financial impact over the medium-term.

5.18 Whilst the council will continue to join with the wider local government sector to **lobby government** for more funding to limit the impact on local services – and wider reform of council financing over the longer-term – it needs to take decisions now in order to reduce the predicted over spend for 2020/21 and set a balanced budget for 2021/22. In that sense, the council's approach is to **argue for the best but plan for the worst**.

Impact on council costs

5.19 The council has incurred significant **additional costs** through its response to C19. This includes, but is not limited to, organising a community food hub, managing volunteers, administering business grants, as well as providing accommodation to rough sleepers.

5.20 Alongside front-line delivery, the council has also incurred additional expenditure **supporting its suppliers** and **enabling its workforce to work remotely**. Current estimates suggest the council will need to spend an additional £1.2m in 2020-21 against the planned budget.

Impact on council income

5.21 In response to significantly reduced funding from government over the past decade, the council – like every other local authority across the country – has had to **diversify its revenue streams** in order to pay for vital local services.

5.22 As a consequence, the council is reliant upon funding from a **range of income sources** including commercial rents, car parks, market stall rents and income from leisure facilities. These sources of income have been **significantly negatively impacted** by the pandemic.

5.23 Furthermore, these incomes streams are likely to continue to be impacted by any longer-term **downturn in the economy**. The cash flow and budgetary impact on the council will be significant, with initial estimates suggesting reductions of £7.6m from rents, fees and charges.

The impact on local taxation

5.24 The economic consequences of C19 will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the income the council collects from **council tax and business rates** – all of which pays for vital local services. This impact will be exacerbated if the current situation continues longer than expected.

5.25 Norwich is the economic centre of Norfolk and the vitality of the wider region is intrinsically linked to the city's financial health. The council will be key in driving the social and economic recovery from C19. In order to do this, and deliver vital services to local people, the council will continue to press government for **additional financial support** to cover the full C19 impact.

5.26 Additionally, the council will lobby for a package of measures to provide a **social fiscal stimulus** as well as an infrastructure one, with a focus on social inclusion as well as growing the local economy.

Medium-term financial impact

5.27 Looking beyond the immediate impacts of C19, the financial environment for local government remains extremely challenging for the foreseeable future. There is a legal requirement for all councils to **set a balanced budget** each year.

5.28 There continues to be **growing gap** between funding and service pressures, driven by demographic change, unfunded burdens and limited opportunities to raise income locally through council tax referendum restrictions. This places increasing pressure on council services.

5.29 The current system of local government funding needs **fundamental reform** to ensure that councils remain financially sustainable. This is no longer about austerity – it is about providing **appropriate funding to deliver local services**. Without more funding from government in the short-term and changes in the longer-term to how councils are funded, local services will suffer.

5.30 The underlying assumptions which formed the basis of the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) have been fundamentally altered by the impact of C19. This will require

the council to **review the assumptions and reserve levels** within the MTFS. These changes will be considered as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process.

Key actions

The council will:

- Closely monitor and update budget impact analysis and regularly update CLT and Cabinet.
- Lobby government to ensure that Norwich City Council - and local government more widely - is fully compensated for the financial impacts of C19.
- Conduct a corporate review of all 2020-21 revenue budgets to identify areas for immediately reducing in-year expenditure through additional controls on non-essential spend and recruitment.
- 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.
- Update the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, to understand the short to medium implications for savings requirements and use of reserves.
- Commence the process for setting the budget for 2021/22 and provide further detail to Cabinet in July on the approach and timeline.

Theme 2: Modernising the council; reimagining local services

Why it is important

Towards a new way of working

5.31 C19 has forced the council to change **how it operates** and **how it delivers services** to residents. Whilst some of this change has been hard, the organisation now has the capability to work and deliver differently – to build on the technological changes made to become a **modern, flexible organisation** with the potential to change its culture and improve **staff wellbeing**.

5.32 The council is continuing to look at options for **improving its IT functionality** and is piloting the roll-out of Microsoft Teams as an alternative to Zoom for virtual interaction. New **telephony systems** will also enable customer services and revenues and benefits teams to work more flexibly and improve services to residents.

5.33 As we look to the future, there are opportunities to **join up across teams** in a more proactive way, with staff working towards clear outcomes rather than through specified processes, and empowering staff to achieve their objectives through greater **trust and flexibility**.

5.34 Although there is a desire to **reopen city hall** as an office, a public building, and a focal point for the city, it is important that the council builds upon the flexibilities it has developed. With changes to the internal layout of city hall - which are necessary to support social distancing - the building will not be able to accommodate all staff at the same time. This means that staff will need to **continue to work flexibly**.

5.35 As well as benefits to staff, increased flexibility and home working has the potential to **create efficiencies** and generate opportunities in terms of utilising space within city hall, which might include **co-location** with other parts of the public sector such as Job Centre Plus, or the creation of spaces for businesses.

5.36 There is an opportunity to build on the positive changes made in order to modernise and **change the culture** of the organisation, with staff retaining the ability to work in a way which better suits their personal circumstances and managers encouraged to manage according to a model based on outputs rather than whether someone is in the office or not.

5.37 Increased productivity stems from having an **empowered workforce** which is trusted to deliver, with the ability to work flexibly to enable a positive work/life balance. Just because someone is present in an office does not necessarily mean they are productive.

5.38 In that sense, the C19 pandemic is likely to lead to a **paradigm shift** in how office-based organisations operate. It is vital that the council grasps these opportunities in the best interests of staff and unlocks the potential efficiencies they can create.

Reimagining local services

5.39 The period during lockdown has demonstrated that the council can deliver **change at pace** and it is important to **continue that momentum**. Through necessity, the council adapted how services are delivered, with the increased use of technology and **channel shift** away from face to face to online support. Whilst it is important to guard against digital exclusion, there is an opportunity to embed the learning from the council's response to **reimagine how services are delivered**.

5.40 The work of the NCR has demonstrated how effective the council's support to vulnerable people can be when it is **joined up**, as well as the role communities can play in **shaping and supporting their own neighbourhoods**. There is an opportunity to **learn lessons** from these experiences and apply it to how the council works with vulnerable people and communities through the recovery and in how council services are re-shaped.

5.41 Building on the changes made to council operations and service delivery, the council will **refocus its transformation programme**, with each part of the organisation tasked with looking at how services can be **delivered differently** in order to improve user experiences and create efficiencies. In doing so, the council will look at how technology can be used to deliver more accessible services and involve service users as it does so.

Key actions

The council will:

- Implement changes to the internal layout and other safety measures within city hall to support social distancing as more staff return to the office when it is appropriate to do so, with a risk assessment of the building carried out and unions engaged.
- Continue to allow staff to work from home where possible, striking a balance between home and office-based working and allowing flexibility for staff.
- Take forward an organisation wide review of service delivery, to look at reimagining how services are delivered in future.
- 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.
- Develop an IT and technology strategy, which considers how technology can enable organisational and service transformation – unlocking efficiency savings and providing a better experience for service users.
- Review the decisions that have been taken as part of the crisis response to stop, start or amend service delivery – and the experience of working in different ways – to consider lessons learned and apply them to service areas over the longer-term.
- Use the principles of recovery engagement to recalibrate the compact between the council and residents, communities, businesses and other city stakeholders.

Theme 3: Supporting the most vulnerable

Why it is important

5.42 The council's approach to **reducing socio-economic, health and other inequalities** in the city over recent years was set out in a March 2020 report to Cabinet. Emerging analysis of the health and economic impact of C19 suggests that these inequalities are being **exacerbated**.

5.43 The pandemic has left many households reliant on state support such as **Universal Credit**. Many of these household were just about 'getting by' before the pandemic, with the impacts of C19 is likely to have made the situation worse.

5.44 The work of the council in responding to the crisis, including establishing the NCR to support shielded and other vulnerable residents, additional council tax relief and other financial assistance, means that the authority is currently providing a level of **direct support** to many residents that exceeds usual provision.

5.45 This level of support will, over time, be **reduced**, as the council move out of crisis response. This will require a **collaborative approach** with others, both statutory partners who have specific duties around vulnerable cohorts (particularly DWP, the county council and the health sector), and with a wide range of voluntary and community sector agencies who provide services and have trusted relationships with residents.

5.46 Key groups will be **social welfare advice providers** (such as the agencies funded as the Financial Inclusion Consortium and wider NCAN), advocacy organisations for groups such as refugees and asylum seekers (NASREF), people with disabilities (Equal Lives, Norwich Access Group), and those with sensory impairments (NNAB) amongst others.

5.47 The relationship with these groups will need to be **multi-faceted**, not simply a relationship based on grant-funding or contractual arrangements - or as a conduit for communications - but based on **two-way dialogue**, to understand the issues that they and their service users are facing, as well as learning lessons about where council policy and practice is hindering positive outcomes.

5.48 In addition, there is likely to be a long-term need to maintain **holistic support** for some residents who face particular disadvantage. The council has existing good practice around this, for example through the work of the Specialist Support Team as well as multi-agency approaches such as the Early Help Hub and Reducing Inequalities Target Area networks.

5.49 Although there will continue to be structural drivers of inequality, the council's approach will be focused on developing **local resilience to future shocks**. This will require a strategic approach with appropriate internal and external governance in order to be successful.

A sustainable solution to homelessness and rough sleeping

5.50 As set out in section 4, the council has responded well to increased demand for **emergency accommodation** and has offered support to all rough sleepers. However, providing emergency accommodation alone is not a satisfactory solution. The key to maintaining capacity and ensuring

positive outcomes for vulnerable people is to ensure an onward route into the **formal hostel system** and appropriate **wrap-around support**.

5.51 As part of its response, the council has been allocating **vacant properties** from its housing stock through 'direct lets' to those clients who have been identified as ready to move-on from hostels and live independently. This allows the hostels to allocate a bed-space to a rough sleeper nominated from our emergency accommodation and also ensures there is **capacity to accommodate new rough sleepers** that arrive in the city.

5.52 Through the recovery, the council will continue to work proactively with partners through the **Pathways programme** to develop a **sustainable approach** to homelessness. As part of this, the city council will also work with Norfolk County Council to ensure that appropriate **'wrap-around' support services** are in place in the short-term such as drugs and alcohol treatment, medication, physical and mental health support.

5.53 Over the longer-term, the council's approach will be to work with Pathways, the county council and the voluntary and community sector to look at **pathways out of poverty** for the most vulnerable in the city. This will look at access to **training** and **skills opportunities** and measures to move people closer to the labour market and into **employment**.

Supporting the victims of domestic abuse

5.54 With more people being at home during the lockdown, there has been an increase in cases of **domestic abuse** across the country and in Norfolk. As we move towards recovery, the council will continue to work with city and county-wide domestic abuse support organisations to sign post people to the help on offer.

5.55 Through the county-wide DA practitioners group, work is also being taken forward to work with support organisations to identify **gaps in provision** and ensure that adequate 'wrap-around' services are in place for victims of DA.

5.56 Locally, the city council is taking forward work across **front line teams** such as customer services to train staff to spot signs of DA, to proactively ask people if they are suffering and to encourage people who are at risk to seek help.

Key actions

The council will:

- Work proactively with partners through the Pathways programme to develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness in the city.
- 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 opportunities and measures to move people closer to the labour market and into employment.
- Work with domestic abuse support providers to signpost victims of DA to the support on offer and to work with front line teams within the council to train staff to spot signs of DA.

- Hold virtual internal and engagement events to gather evidence and lessons from the council's long-term approach to reducing inequalities and crisis support.
- 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.

Theme 4: Business and the local economy

Why it is important

5.57 The council will work closely with businesses across all sectors and support them to **open up again**, in a measured way.

5.58 The impact of lockdown on the **city centre** has been significant. Data from the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) shows that footfall in the city centre during w/c 11 May 2020 was **50,000 compared to 330,000** for the same week in 2019.

5.59 The council's objective is to support the local economy whilst doing what it can to **protect residents and visitors** from the virus and to **avoid a second peak**. In that sense, there will be a gradual reopening of businesses in the city as confidence returns.

Measures to support social distancing

5.60 The council has worked closed with the BID, Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, police and Norfolk County Council to develop a range of measures to support **social distancing** in the city as shops and amenities begin to reopen.

5.61 Whilst it should be recognised that council powers – and those of the police – to enforce against people not adhering to social distancing are limited, there are things that can be done to **influence behaviour**. In practice, success will require people coming into the city to continue to behave **responsibly** and adhere to the guidance.

5.62 Council environmental protection officers – working with the BID and the police – carried out a review of **'pinch points'** in the city centre, and have worked with the county council to put in place **signage** and **physical measures** to support social distancing.

5.63 Proposals have also been developed to **close some roads** in order to help a smoother flow of pedestrian and vehicle traffic and the city council is working with the county council on implementation.

5.64 Going forward, the council, police, and BID will continue to work together to **review measures** to support social distancing and take further action where necessary.

Licensing powers

5.65 Cafes, bars and restaurants will be looking at different ways they can open up and provide their services to support social distancing. This is likely to include more requests to utilise **space outside premises** for additional seating or to erect temporary structures to allow for take away services.

5.66 The council – through its licensing powers - will work with the hospitality sector to assess such requests and take a pragmatic view in order to support outlets to **vary their business models** where possible. This will require close liaison with the county council to deliver.

5.67 In doing so, the council will need to strike a balance between supporting such requests and the need to ensure that people – particularly those with disabilities – can continue to **move safely around the city** and that access is not blocked.

Sustainable travel and transportation

5.68 Norwich already has in place significant measures to promote and support **sustainable, active travel** including walking and cycling. This includes a significant number of **cycle lanes** and **pedestrianised streets** within the city centre. The council will continue to promote the benefits and opportunities of sustainable travel as the city moves to recovery.

5.69 Through its work with businesses and the county council, the city council will continue to look at **opportunities to promote cycling and walking** in the city, in anticipation of people being reticent about returning to public transport (with the government actively encouraging people to avoid it). This will include looking at opportunities for further cycle and pedestrianised routes.

5.70 In addition, the council has been proactive in introducing other opportunities to promote sustainable travel in the city centre including the introduction of the **Beryl bike hire scheme** in February 2020. The council will look at the benefits of introducing **other forms of sustainable travel** – such as electric scooters - where appropriate in order to diversify transport options.

Car parks

5.71 Whilst the council will continue to promote various forms of transport to access the city – particularly walking and cycling – visitors and those who work in the city will still need to **access car parks**, particularly if usage of public transport reduces.

5.72 During the response phase, the council took the decision to **close most of the city centre car parks** to the public and make them available to only key workers. As the city begins to reopen, the council will take an **agile approach** to ensure that car parks can reopen in response to rising demand, whilst implementing measures to promote social distancing in car parks.

Enforcement against businesses which fail to protect staff

5.73 The council – through its environmental protection team – has a role to play in helping to ensure that businesses in the city put in place measures to **protect staff** as they reopen.

5.74 Although capacity in this area is under pressure, the council will use its powers to advise employees of their **right to work in a safe environment** and – where employers are in breach of regulations or where there is evidence of malpractice – can instigate **enforcement measures**.

Funding to businesses

5.75 The council has delivered significant support to business via **grants and business rates relief** and in the way it has worked with **suppliers** and **business tenants**. This close liaison will continue through the recovery phase.

5.76 The council will also allocate a further £2m in **discretionary grants** to businesses in need of financial support, on top of the £36.5m already paid out.

Broadband and digital connectivity

5.77 With more businesses and individuals **working remotely** during lockdown – and with this trend likely to continue over the longer-term – it is essential that action is taken to continue to **improve broadband speeds** and the level of **digital connectivity** across the city.

5.78 The council is working with City Fibre to deliver a **full fibre broadband network in Norwich**. Planned investment will total c£50m and will cover 97,000 commercial and residential properties over a 2.5 year build period, due to commence at the end of 2020. It is intended that the first homes and buildings will go live with full fibre in June 2021.

5.79 A full fibre network in Norwich will provide a significant boost to the local economy. In addition to the direct benefits to the business community and residents, the infrastructure will support **future-proofing** by removing **barriers to home working** and enabling adoption of technologies to support digital inclusion, advanced health and social care and energy efficiency.

Social inclusion

5.80 Evidence suggests that those in deprived areas and in low skilled, low wage or unstable work have been **disproportionately affected** by C19. Barriers to employability, low social inclusion and the quality of jobs have been identified as issues that need to be tackled to deliver an inclusive economy. C19 is likely to have adversely impacted these, already deep-seated, challenges.

5.81 The response to these issues will need to adapt over time, from the current focus on providing grants and business rates relief, to the next phase of enabling businesses to re-open in a safe way and then, over the medium term, to consider how the local economy can adapt and create an **inclusive economy** where the benefits of economic activity are shared by all.

5.82 Existing relationships with businesses and organisations including the BID, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, and New Anglia Growth Hub will be critical in helping us understand the issues and in supporting businesses through the **phases of the recovery**.

5.83 Analysis of the local economy going into C19 produced via the **Norwich Good Economy Commission**, and of its wider strengths and challenges, will also be useful. This will need to be supplemented by engagement with businesses of all types to gain as rich a picture as possible of the impacts of C19, and by the available. Plans for the data to be used to support this work are set out in **section 7**.

5.84 An effective response to the challenges identified will require partnership working, and it is proposed that the economy should be one of the key themes for the **City Vision Steering Board** with work on this theme led by the **Norwich Good Economy Commission**.

5.85 The Norwich Good Economy Commission is an **independent panel of stakeholders** which was jointly established in partnership by the city council and the University of East Anglia before C19. It aims is to initiate **action-based research** to provide insight around the Norwich economy and to frame recommendations for how it can become more **inclusive and sustainable**.

5.86 As an **anchor institution**, the council's decisions around employment, contractual and procurement activity can play an important role in supporting an inclusive local economy, alongside business facing services such as planning, regulation and enforcement. The work of the Good Economy Commission will help to develop this thinking further.

Developing a Town Investment Plan for Norwich

5.87 Work on developing a **Town Investment Plan** for the city - as part of the government's Towns Fund programme - is continuing. Through the programme the council, working alongside local partners, has an opportunity to access £25m in additional resources to support growth in the city. The council is awaiting guidance from government but it is expected that alignment to C19 recovery will be required and the council will ensure join up where appropriate.

Key actions

The council will:

- 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.
- Use its 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.
- 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.
- Work with City Fibre and the county council to deliver full fibre broadband in Norwich.
- Where there is evidence of malpractice, assess whether action can be taken against employers who fail to provide a safe working environment.
- Continue to deliver grants and wider support to businesses.
- Engage with business, representative groups and relevant pubic 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.
- Work in partnership to develop appropriate solutions to the challenges identified, including through council planning, licensing and enforcement functions and by working with partners on issues including skills and pathways to work.
- 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.
- 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.
- Review the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-24 to identify any new actions required to respond to C19.

- Develop and deliver a Town Investment Plan to get access to £25m funding for investment in the city.
- Engage in wider recovery plans with partners including the New Anglia Growth Hub and the Norfolk Resilience Forum.

Theme 5: Housing, regeneration and development

Why it is important

Social housing – tenancy management and maintenance of council homes

5.88 The impact of the pandemic has meant that the council has had to scale back some of its activities in relation to **social tenants and council housing**, including repairs, maintenance and supporting people to move into council properties. The council is now taking a proactive approach with Norwich Norse Buildings to **restart repairs and maintenance programmes** in the context of social distancing.

5.89 Alongside restrictions placed on the wider housing market during lockdown, the council's process for **void turn arounds** in council properties and allocating properties to families has also been impacted. As part of the move to recovery, the council will reintroduce its services to **let council homes** and reintroduce its **housing options policies**.

Supporting people in the private rented sector

5.90 People living in the **private rented sector** have been hit hard by the pandemic, particularly those who have been left unemployed or in financial hardship. Although the council's direct powers to intervene are limited, there are things that can be done to **support private tenants**.

5.91 In March, Cabinet agreed a range of measures to support those in private rented accommodation. This included making tenants more aware of their **legal rights**, enforcing against **sub-standard accommodation** and developing a **Private Renters Charter**. As part of its recovery plan, the council will deliver against these measures and identify other areas where it can support those in the private rented sector.

Regeneration and development

5.92 Delivering against the council's **regeneration and development objectives** will be a vital part of the city's longer-term recovery. Development and regeneration will not only be necessary to provide the **homes and jobs** that are needed but the recovery of the construction sector will also provide important **employment opportunities**.

5.93 The city is well placed strategically to attract investment. Norwich has seen significant housing growth in and around the city in recent years. The city centre (up to the lockdown) has remained vibrant, with **stable footfall** which bucked national trends. Low vacancy rates and some change of use away from traditional retail towards leisure-based activities has also increasing dwell time in the city centre.

5.94 External linkages are improving due to investment in the **strategic road and rail network** and considerable investment has been secured in the transport network of the city which is increasing the proportion of trips made by **sustainable modes**.

5.95 The council works co-operatively with partners across the region and beyond to address challenges and promote the city. The city council is a member of both the **Fast Growth Cities** and **Key Cities networks**, participates in the **Cambridge to Norwich Tech Corridor** and has long established joint planning arrangements in place with neighbouring authorities.

5.96 The **City Deal** and **Greater Norwich Growth Board** give increased access to funds to support infrastructure delivery. The timing of the production of the **Greater Norwich Local Plan** and submission of the **Town Investment Plan** both give an opportunity to refresh plans to ensure they are up to date and so that the council can maximise investment in the city and is well placed to take advantage of any government infrastructure funding that may become available.

5.97 There are a number of **brownfield sites** in the city which have been vacant or underused for many years, the largest of which are **Anglia Square** and the identified development sites in **East Norwich**. Ensuring the high-quality redevelopment of these sites and other sites will be an important part of attracting investment and driving regeneration in the city.

5.98 The planned redevelopment of the former council depot site at **Mile Cross** in the north of the city has the potential to create up to **200 new homes**, most of which are likely to be **council homes**. As well as creating much needed new council homes, the development of the Mile Cross site has the potential to create new jobs in the construction industry and more widely.

5.99 The regeneration of the former Carrow Works and surrounding brownfield site at **East Norwich** has the potential to be the biggest development opportunity in the East of England. The council will bring forward plans to create the 'East Norwich Partnership' – a new public-private sector group to steer preparation of a master plan to deliver up to **4,000 new homes** and **6,000 new jobs**.

5.100 As the council progresses with an ambitious programme of housing and regeneration, it will look to pilot – where appropriate – new, innovative construction methods such as **modular housing**.

Key actions

The council will:

- Restart council house repairs and maintenance programmes and work with Norwich Norse Buildings to ensure the backlog is cleared.
- Reintroduce its services to let council homes and reintroduce its housing options policies.
- Support people in private sector rented accommodation, including implementing a private renters charter and taking action against sub-standard accommodation.
- Prepare, submit and implement the Town Investment Plan to maximise up to £25m of investment in the regeneration of Norwich.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- Through its wholly owned housing company, Norwich Regeneration Limited, build 74 new homes at the Rayne Park development in Bowthorpe.
- Take forward the redevelopment of the former council depot at Mile Cross as a council housing-led scheme, to deliver c200 new council homes.
- 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.

Theme 6: Arts, culture and heritage

Why it is important

5.101 Norwich is a vibrant, young and creative city, with a thriving **arts and culture scene** and a city centre that carefully mixes the old and new. As a place that puts culture at the **heart of everything it does**, people in Norwich understand its power and take pride in living in a city that boasts more arts and culture than cities twice the size.

5.102 Arts, culture and heritage are central to the city's vision for the future. The sector **creates jobs** and is fundamental to the **wellbeing of residents**, to the city's **attractiveness** as a place to invest or visit, and to the creation of an innovative and vibrant city that **drives growth** across the region.

5.103 The sector has been greatly affected by C19 with the closure of businesses, charities and organisations during the lockdown and the **cancellation of marquee events**. Those organisations supported by grant funding may be less affected than others but all will feel the impact of continued restrictions and social distancing requirements into the future.

5.104 The city also has a high proportion of **independent artists** and **creative practitioners** who make an important contribution to the cultural and community life of Norwich. Many of these individuals will be **self-employed** and the impact on C19 on these groups – and the subsequent gaps this might leave in the city's cultural ecology – will take some time to be realised.

5.105 The sector will be integral to the **recovery of the city**, not only for its economic impact, but as the opportunity to enjoy some arts and culture, albeit in a socially distant way, will be an important marker for many of a return to an element of **normality**. It will also provide an opportunity to **celebrate** the public sector, volunteers and all those in the city who have worked so hard to protect people from the virus.

5.106 It is likely that it will be some time before **major events** can re-start, but, by working with partners across the sector to adapt to the new requirements around social distancing, our aim must be for arts and culture to be available to all, safely, as soon as possible.

Key actions

The council will:

- Work with the arts, heritage and culture sector to enable the city's institutions and events to re-open in a safe way when it is appropriate to do so.
- 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.
- 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.
- Work with City Vision 2040 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.

Theme 7: Climate change and the green economy

Why it is important

5.107 Commentators have noted that the pandemic is both a prefiguring of the **existential threat** posed by climate change and also an opportunity to **accelerate our collective response** to that threat.

5.108 The council has a strong track record of **reducing its own carbon emissions** and of supporting residents to reduce theirs, with a **60% reduction in emissions** across council operations since 2007.

5.109 As the council and the city looks towards recovery, there is an opportunity to build on these existing approaches through the council's new **Environmental Strategy and Action Plan** and by incorporating opportunities to support and extend the behavioural change that the pandemic has initiated, such as decreased road traffic.

5.110 The council also has the opportunity to use its ongoing **place-making activity** and other investment to support recovery to drive growth in the local **green economy**. This could be taken forward by, for example, encouraging and supporting sustainable travel infrastructure and enhancing biodiversity of council estates, parks and open spaces. This could also include identifying further opportunities to **reduce waste** and **enhance the circular economy** locally.

5.111 One significant opportunity is to deploy the council's investment in **house building** and **maintenance** in ways that will stimulate the local green economy, for example incentivising the development of a local supply of labour in construction and manual trades that will both help in decarbonising the economy and produce local economic multipliers. As part of its plans, the council will also explore opportunities for **solar panels on council assets**.

Key actions

The council will:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Consider opportunities to further promote sustainable travel in the city, building on the already well-advanced measures already in place.
- Work to ensure that future housing and regeneration schemes are subject to the highest possible environmental standards.

Theme 8: Harnessing social capital

Why it is important

5.112 Through the current crisis, the role of **neighbours** and **hyper-local community support** has become vital both in terms of providing support to the vulnerable and as a way to **engage residents in their community** and make them feel safe and connected. This is critical to the council's **2040 Vision** aspirations.

5.113 Residents need to have trust in their local community and the council has an important role to play – which it must step up to – in trusting communities to **lead the response** to challenges in their neighbourhoods.

5.114 In the aftermath of the C19 crisis, the council, in its community enabling role, will need to avoid bureaucracy in order to **allow communities to grow** and work in a more organic way. If the council does not change the way it engages communities at the **grassroots level**, there is a risk that the interventions it makes could be counter-productive in terms of negating the growing **community spirit** and neighbourliness that has developed in response to C19.

5.115 By enabling **resident-led solutions to local challenges**, such initiatives inspire others. The way in which the council adapts and develops its communication mechanisms with communities will be key in creating a positive narrative where **community participation** and **building of social capital** is the norm.

5.116 Outside grassroots development, it must be acknowledged that the impact of C19 on the **voluntary and community sector** will be severe and long lasting. The council will need to support the sector to identify the **gaps in services** left by the collapse of key agencies such as OPEN and support the development of existing groups into those gaps or new charities.

5.117 It will be vital for the council to look to its own role in supporting the sector through its **grants programme** but also through its **procurement processes** in order to ensure that they accessible to the voluntary and community sector and promote social value and local purchasing.

5.118 The number of **volunteering** across Norfolk and in Norwich to support the most vulnerable has been a highlight of the response phase and it will be important to harness this social capital and identify how people can volunteer to support the city's recovery.

Key actions

The council will:

- 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.
- 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.

- Adopt an asset-based community development approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in neighbourhoods, acknowledging that organic social capital building will vary by neighbourhood and adapt approaches accordingly.
- Remain part of national and global think tank groups to monitor and pilot new ideas and identify best practice.
- Support the voluntary and community sector in adapting and use its procurement powers and grants based on gaps and need.
- Develop communications strategies which both amplify inspiring stories and create two-way conversations to inform council decision making.

6. Governance and oversight of the city's recovery

6.1 The impact of C19 requires a **comprehensive response** beyond the remit of the council alone. In the context of a partnership approach to the city's recovery, the council has a key role as a **civic leader** to convene stakeholders and articulate a **shared ambition** for the city.

6.2 Work over the last two years on the **Norwich 2040 City Vision** has enhanced the council's network of partners, with the development of a **shared vision** providing a strong platform on which to build the **recovery**.

6.3 A meeting of a group of Vision Partners was held on 26 May to discuss the impact of C19 and **priorities for the future**. This group represented a range of stakeholders, sectors and key organisations in the city. The consensus was that the themes of the Norwich 2040 vision remain appropriate to **frame discussion and planning for the recovery period**, and to shape collaborative approaches across the city.

6.4 The crisis has both clarified and exacerbated some **pre-existing challenges**, whilst generating **new ones** as well as **opportunities**. Emerging themes discussed with City Vision partners included:

- Ensuring that the public health risks are managed as a pre-condition for recovery, as well as ensuring public confidence in the safety of the city.
- The rapid and possibly permanent change to city footfall due to mass home-working, absence of cultural and other leisure activities, and the digitalisation of retail and socialising.
- The exacerbation of the digital divide and other inequalities during and after the crisis, and the need to address these in recovery.
- The need to engage widely with diverse groups and stakeholders across the city and the opportunity that technology can bring if deployed correctly.
- The role that culture can play in engagement and recovery, despite attendance and participation in mass events being remote currently.
- The need to ensure sustainable transport into the city as well as within city boundaries.
- The use of existing assets such as the 'City of Stories' brand, and the reach of the key organisations in the city, as well as the opportunity to build on strong local sectors, such as the digital sector.

6.5 A group of **City Vision partners** will be convened to help shape this **recovery plan for the city**. The group will be informed by the aims of the City Vision itself and up to date community and business engagement and data. The group's role would be to:

- Confirm or amend the City Vision.
- Identify the major challenges or areas of weakness facing the city in meeting that vision, including standing challenges and those arising from C19.
- Identify emerging issues or opportunities in achieving the vision that would benefit from a collaborative approach.

- Work together, and with other partners across the city, to make recommendations for solutions to those challenges.

6.6 Fuller **terms of reference** will be developed and membership selected to be representative of the breadth of interest and expertise within the City Vision network and the wider city.

6.7 It is envisaged that **several themes** will be identified by the Board for focus and that these could be managed in various ways – there should not be a one-size fits all approach. Initial areas of focus are as follows, although these will evolve with the wider context:

- **Economy:** where it is recommended that the Good Economy Commission (GEC) acts as a key forum for this theme. The GEC was developed as a response to the City Vision with the aim to establish an independent but shared understanding of the Norwich economy and how residents participate in and benefit from it, share insight and make recommendations that ensure that the benefits of Norwich's economy are shared by all.

- **Community resilience:** working with those communities most effected by C19 to support and rebuild. The Reducing Inequalities Target Area approach may be relevant here and the networks and tools already set up to support that approach could be used.

- **Supporting vulnerable people**, including rough sleepers and those suffering from domestic abuse.

- **The future of the city centre:** to consider the future of retail and actions that can be taken to safeguard the city centre.

- **Engagement and communication:** to undertake appropriate engagement with residents, communities and businesses to inform thinking on the response to C19.

6.8 This City Vision group will not replace internal governance procedures in each of the City Vision partner organisations and, as such, the group would have the power to **make recommendations** only. Consequently, any impacts for the city council would be subject to normal internal policy development and decision making through Cabinet and Council.

6.9 The council's **People, Inclusion and Neighbourhoods Board** has already held a session on the response to C19 and other Boards and groups may do so as appropriate. Officer level oversight will continue through CLT, with the flexibility for additional officer groups to be formed as necessary.

Key actions

The council will:

- Confirm membership and Terms of Reference of City Vision Group and establish a secretariat to support it.
- Use the council's blueprint for recovery to inform first meeting.

7. Monitoring the progress of recovery: Key data and indicators

Why it is important

7.1 As always, the use of **appropriate data** will be critical in identifying the key issues resulting from C19, developing the right **policy response** and **measuring the success** of recovery.

7.2 In order to monitor progress, the council is developing a **dashboard of measures** to identify the impacts of C19 on the economy, people and communities. The aim is that these should be tracked monthly to enable timely action.

7.3 Consequently, some official sources of data are unlikely to be of use given time lags in their production, but the council is considering using the **following sources** to measure impact:

- **Impact of hardship on residents:** e.g. local claimant count unemployment, housing benefit claimants, levels of debt owed to council (rent arrears, council tax), homelessness applications, food bank referrals.

- **Impacts on businesses:** e.g. business occupancy data, business closures or redundancies, BID footfall data, vacancies/arrears in our commercial premises (including the market), supplier issues.

- **Ongoing implementation of support/interventions:** e.g. business rates pay-outs, council tax benefit claimants, rough sleepers housed, people supported through community hub, Specialist Support team cases/NCAN referrals, New Anglia Growth hub info on businesses supported or seeking support.

- **Implementation of any new interventions as they are introduced:** e.g. possible use of work experience/apprenticeships/procurement/asset levers to support economic recovery.

- **Community capital and recovery:** e.g. local area survey resident views on feelings of and trust in community, volunteer numbers or hours, LuMi users, community organisations supported.

7.4 To identify the most appropriate sources of data, the council will engage **local and regional partners** such as the Good Economy Commission, BID and Financial Inclusion Consortium. Engagement with business, residents and communities to understand their experiences will also be important.

7.5 More broadly, within the council's existing performance framework, there will be a review of the **key performance indicators** for 2020/21 to remove those which are no longer relevant and introduce new indicators which will support our understanding of the impact of C19.

7.6 Continuing work on **outcome indicators** (rather than output indicators in the performance framework which measure what we can more directly control) will allow an update to the regular

State of Norwich report to show wider knock on impacts from C19, for example in terms of numbers of people cycling, air quality and CO2 emissions from our operations.

Key actions

The council will:

- Develop a monthly dashboard to inform and measure impact of internal work on C19 response and update KPIs for 2020/21.
- Work with partners to develop appropriate data products for City Vision Steering Board.

8. Engaging with residents, businesses and community groups

8.1 As the council and the city moves towards recovery, it will be important to **consult and engage** with a broad range of partners, residents and businesses to ensure that the council's plans are comprehensive and that the city feels connected to the recovery.

8.2 The data shows that, for example, people in more deprived wards have been affected much more significantly, and that people in low skilled, low paid or zero hours work are much more likely to have suffered reduced income or job loss. The plans that the council develops towards recovery need, therefore, to be **rooted in the experiences** of the city's residents and businesses.

8.3 The **City Vision network** provides an opportunity to seek views from a wide range of groups, including businesses, faith groups, young people (through the Youth Advisory Board), universities, community groups, VCS, and advocacy organisations for particular groups within the city.

8.4 Whilst many of them are represented within the City Vision Network, more **specific sector** or **community group specific engagement** will also be required, including with:

- Business groups such as the BID, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, Market Traders Association, Financial Industry Group and tech groups such as Hot Source.
- Social welfare advice providers such as those funded under Financial Inclusion Consortium and wider Norfolk Community Advice Network.
- Advocacy organisations for groups such as refugees and asylum seekers (Norwich Asylum Seekers and Refugees Forum), people with disabilities (Equal Lives, Norwich Access Group), and those with sensory impairments (Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind).
- Hyper local community groups to understand views within our communities, in particular, the most deprived communities through the Reducing Inequalities Area Steering group.
- Arts and culture institutions.

8.5 In addition, the council will also use the variety of **communications and media channels** it has available to consult and engage with residents and businesses, including the use of:

- Social media surveys with residents
- Resident consultations
- Use of Citizen magazine
- Use of Ward councillors to gather views

9. Next steps

9.1 The recovery of the council from the impacts of C19 and that of the city itself will take **considerable time**, which will mean that this recovery blueprint will need to **continue to evolve** as progress is made and new information becomes available.

9.2 This recovery blueprint stands alongside the Corporate Plan as the council's key **strategic level document** which will guide the future of the council and the city.

9.3 In terms of the **immediate next steps**, the council will:

- Continue to work as part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum and with other Norfolk councils to ensure that recovery plans are joined up across the wider county.
- Work with other local partners such as the BID and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to ensure that the council's recovery blueprint is consistent with their own recovery proposals and that each report compliments the other.
- Convene further meetings of the City 2040 Vision Group to act as the Steering Board for city's recovery.
- Convene meetings of the Good Economy Commission and other groups required to take forward the priorities set out in this blueprint.
- Under guidance from the Steering Board, develop a more detailed action plan for C19 recovery to sit alongside this framework document.
- Update Cabinet on a quarterly basis on progress made against this recovery plan and other issues impacting the city which are directly related to C19.

Appendix: The impact of Covid-19 on Norwich

A1. The local impact of C19 continues to emerge and can be seen in data and analysis from a range of sources. Some key data that either show recorded or modelled impact are laid out here.

Cases and deaths

A2. As at 26 May 2020, Norwich had had 220 confirmed cases of C19, which is a rate of 155.9 per 100,000 of population. Published data from 15 May shows 15 deaths in hospital in Norwich. This figure is likely to continue to rise.

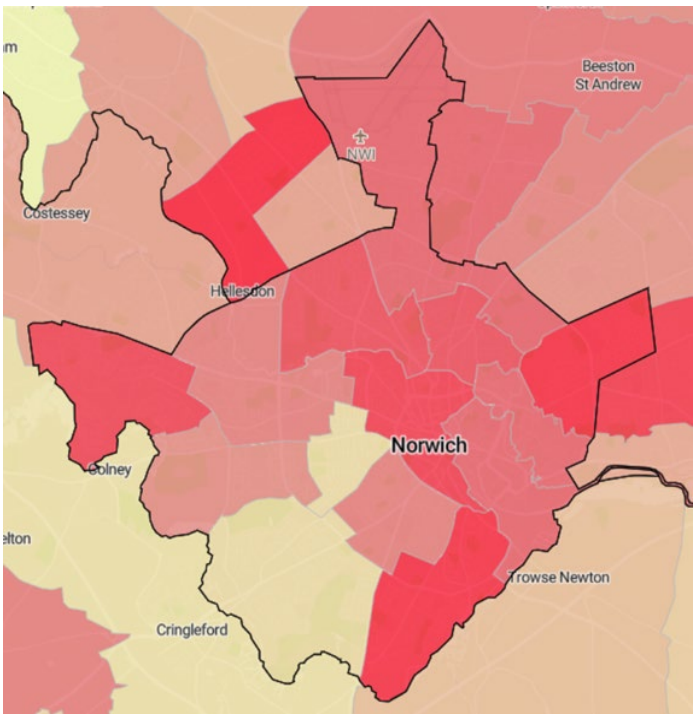
A3. These two figures indicate a relatively low level of cases and deaths compared with other areas of the country, with the death rate in Norwich – in term of deaths per 100,000 of population – the 3rd lowest in the country in terms of local authority area.

Vulnerability

A4. The following map is based on the Red Cross C19 vulnerability index and was produced by the insight team at Active Norfolk and shows the distribution of vulnerability to the impact of C19.

A5. It combines multiple sources of (mostly) open data around clinical, social and financial vulnerability to identify vulnerable areas and groups within Local Authorities and neighbourhoods (wards), with darker colours showing higher levels of vulnerability.

A6. The map shows an unequal distribution of impact across different areas of the city, much of which aligns to pre-crisis levels of inequality, whether that be socio-economic, or due to characteristics such as ethnicity or disability.



Impact on workers

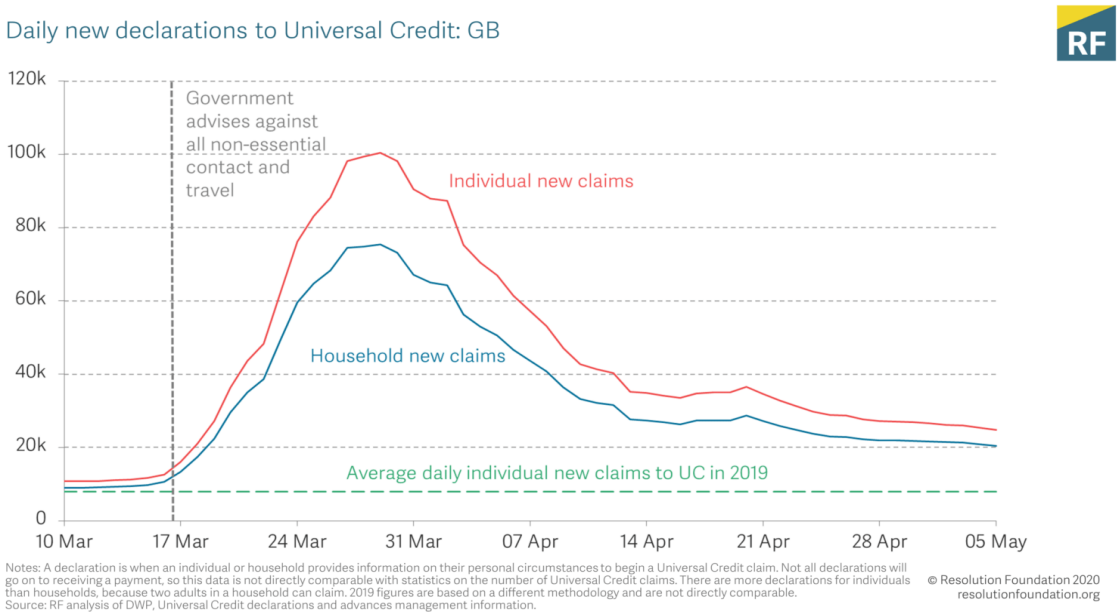
A7. The impact of C19 on workers varies by sector. According to ONS data, 37.8% of the employed population of Norwich are deemed key workers (higher than the UK average of 33%). Keyworkers may face higher risk of exposure to C19, but lower rates of furloughing or unemployment.

A8. Sectors such as retail and hospitality, however, have seen higher levels of unemployment, furloughing or reductions in hours or pay. Several sources (including McKinsey, the Centre for Cities and the RSA) have published data showing that Norwich has a high proportion of vulnerable jobs, with around a quarter of jobs 'at risk'.

A9. In other sectors, many workers have been able to adjust to homeworking, with the Centre for Cities estimating in March that around a third of workers in Norwich could work from home.

A10. The overall picture in the UK is one of precarious household incomes, with the Centre for Labour and Social Studies estimating that almost a quarter of UK workers are just one pay cheque away from being unable to pay their mortgage or rent and 60% are less than three months away. There is no reason to suspect that it is any different in Norwich.

A11. Claims to Universal Credit across the country since the outbreak of the pandemic are shown below. Whilst local data is not currently available, there has clearly been a similarly significant increase in Norwich, as reflected in an increase in the overall claimant count (the proportion of residents claiming unemployment benefits) in Norwich of 1.8% between March and April 2020.



A12. Survey data from the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce shows that amongst the employers who responded, their employees were affected thus:

- 29% still working in business premises
- 25% working from home

- 34% furloughed
- 1% redundant
- 11% had zero hours/contracted workers terminated

Economic impact

A13. The Centre for Progressive Policy has estimated that the impact of C19 on economic output, measured by Gross Value Added (GVA) of each local authority. It shows a decrease in GVA in Norwich of 41% in the second quarter of 2020, making it the 67th worst hit in the country.

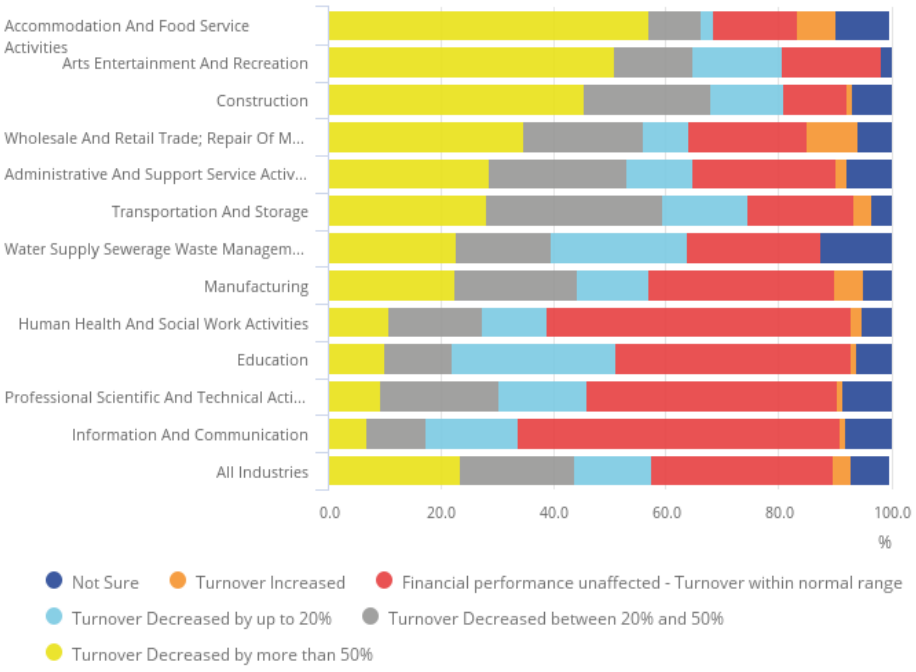
A14. This analysis suggests that the city of Norwich is in a category of areas that 'will not recover their expected level of output based on the pre-crisis trend after five years.'

Business impact

A15. The ONS UK business survey shows the following impact on turnover of different business sectors across the UK:

Figure 5: 58% of all businesses continuing to trade reported their turnover had decreased

Effect on turnover, businesses continuing to trade, broken down by industry, UK, 6 April to 19 April 2020

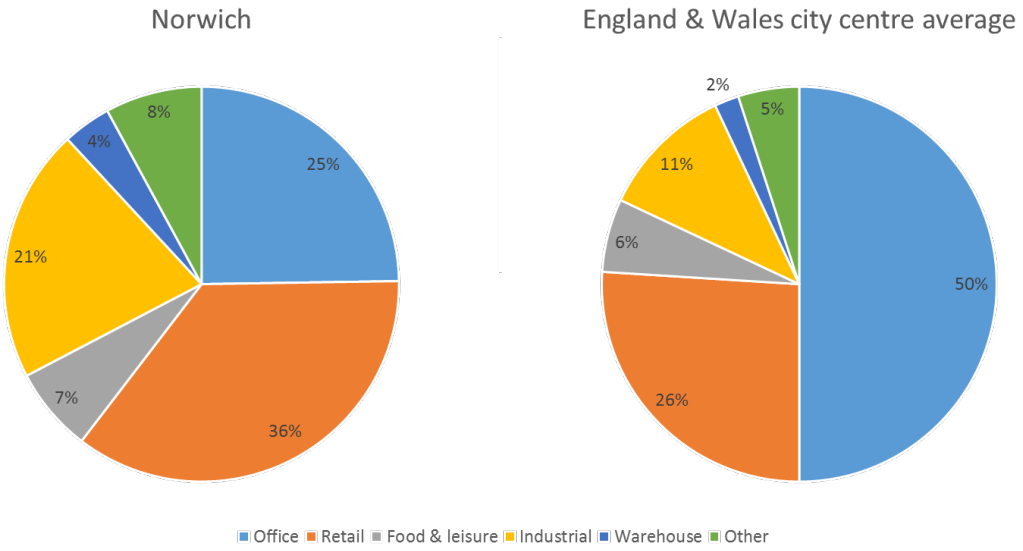


Source: Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK

A16. This mirrors the pattern of business suspensions, with around 80% of businesses in the accommodation and food service and the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors having temporarily closed or paused trading.

A17. If we make the large assumption that the same pattern applies to the 420 and 355 Norwich businesses in those sectors respectively (as of 2019), this would mean that in those sectors alone, around 620 Norwich businesses would have temporarily closed or paused trading, with most of the rest having seen significant reduction in turnover.

A18. As can be seen by the data below from the Centre for Cities, the city centre has a relatively high proportion of retail space. With a move to online retail and more home-working, we have seen a rapid reduction in city centre footfall due to shopping and office working, which may recover slightly in the medium-term, though may take years to return to pre-crisis levels.



A19. The Norfolk Chamber of Commerce survey shows that whilst three-quarters of respondents anticipated re-opening their premises within 2 weeks of the survey (which closed on 17 May 2020), there were significant challenges in returning to 'normal' working conditions:

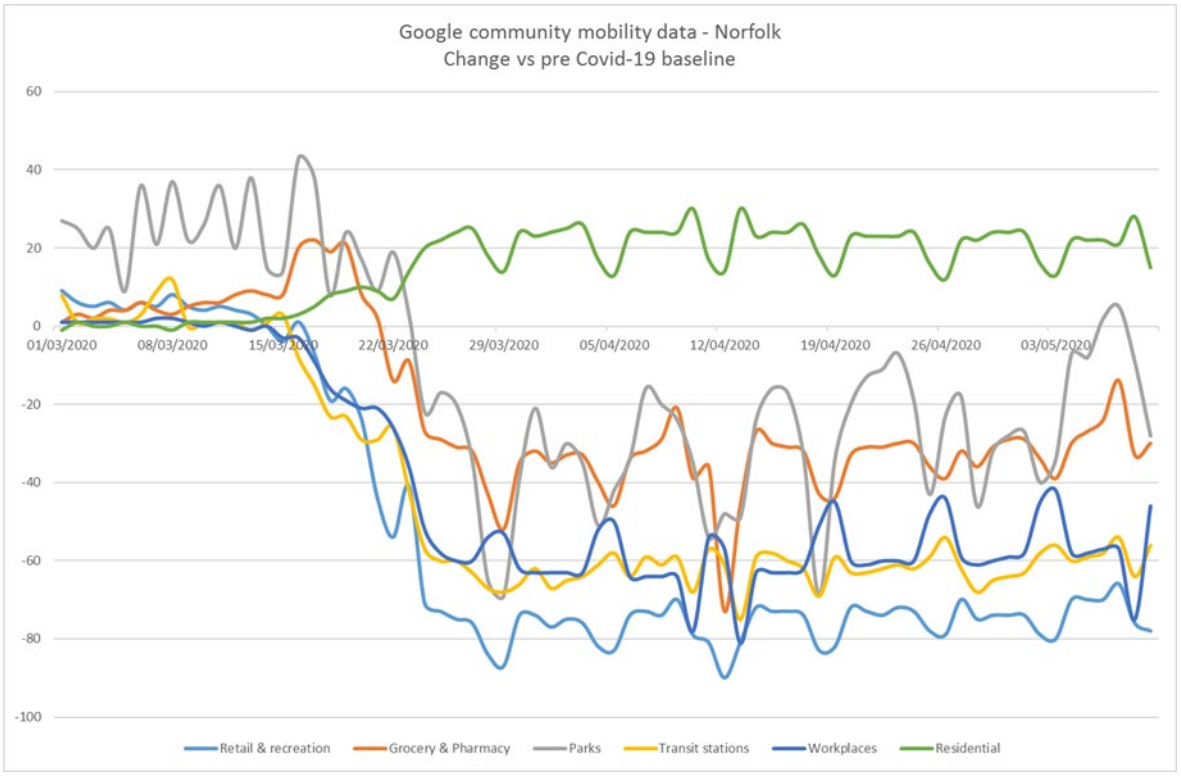
- 34% concerned about implementing social distancing
- 32% concerned about lack of business demand
- 7% concerned about sufficient cash flow
- 5% concerned about bringing their staff back into work

Social impacts

A20. Although not available at a Norwich level, data from ONS shows at the beginning of May 2020, 75% of those surveyed were worried to some degree about the impact of the C19, which is falling from higher levels in March and April. The data also shows that 42% of adults reported that their wellbeing is being affected by the virus, with 33% reporting high levels of anxiety.

A21. Mobility and travel has reduced considerably during the period of lockdown. The following Google data shows that movement around transport hubs, workplaces retail and recreation destinations has decreased significantly in Norfolk since mid-March, whilst movement around residential areas has increased.

A22. This implies that residents have been remaining closer to their homes and neighbourhoods, although this may start to reverse with the easing of restrictions.



Integrated impact assessment

NORWICH City Council

Report author to complete	
Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	10 June 2020
Director / Head of service	Chief executive officer
Report subject:	Covid-19: The council's response and a blueprint for recovery
Date assessed:	28 May 2020

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Comments**
Finance (value for money)	☒	☐	☐	
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	☒	☐	☐	
ICT services	☒	☐	☐	
Economic development	☒	☐	☐	
Financial inclusion	☒	☐	☐	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Comments**
Safeguarding children and adults	☒	☐	☐	
S17 crime and disorder act 1998	☒	☐	☐	
Human Rights Act 1998	☒	☐	☐	
Health and well being	☒	☐	☐	

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Comments**
Relations between groups (cohesion)	☒	☐	☐	
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	☒	☐	☐	
Advancing equality of opportunity	☒	☐	☐	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Comments**
Transportation	☒	☐	☐	
Natural and built environment	☒	☐	☐	
Waste minimisation & resource use	☒	☐	☐	
Pollution	☒	☐	☐	
Sustainable procurement	☒	☐	☐	
Energy and climate change	☒	☐	☐	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	**Neutral**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Comments**
Risk management	☒	☐	☐	

Recommendations from impact assessment
Positive
Negative
Neutral
The elements are marked neutral above as this report covers the full range of activity of the council and it is impossible to identify the full range of impacts, therefore impact assessments should be completed for individual projects and decisions that follow from this document.
Issues