

Report to	Cabinet	Item
	08 July 2020	
Report of	Chief finance officer (Section 151 Officer)	6
Subject	Finance and business planning process for 2021/22 and in year budget position	

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the in-year budget position, including the impacts of Covid-19 and mitigations.

To outline the financial background and planned corporate processes to set the council's priorities and budget for 2021/22.

Recommendation

To note the latest in-year budget positions and to endorse the approach and timetable for setting the 2021/22 budgets.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet all the corporate priorities.

Financial implications

These are outlined in the report.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Kendrick - resources

Contact officers

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Introduction

1. Norwich City Council continues to face substantial financial challenges. The sustained period of austerity has decreased the council's own budgets, putting huge financial pressures not just on council resources, but those of partners, local businesses, and residents, particularly the most vulnerable. The council also continues to manage the ongoing unprecedented risk and uncertainty over funding - with significant changes in future local government funding likely from 2021/22 onwards. Despite this the council has consistently approached the financial challenges in a sensible and planned way and has always sought to manage the council's finances responsibly. The city council has already made efficiency savings, including the generation of new income streams, of some £37.4m over the last ten years.
2. The financial challenges have been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic which 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 some additional funding, it is far from enough to plug the funding gap that has developed.
3. This paper will update Cabinet on the current in-year budget position and provide an overview of the actions being taken to offset the forecast over spend. Without significantly more funding from Government, it is inevitable that alongside these actions the council will need to draw on reserves during 2020-21 to balance its budget. This will leave the council's budget in a very precarious position, without significant reserves to absorb future in-year shocks – perhaps from a second wave of Covid. The council will need to build reserves back up over future years which will mean less money to fund local services. In the longer term, there will be a need to rebase our Medium Term Financial Plan in recognition of the impact of the pandemic and the council's strategic objectives.
4. It is within this context and financial uncertainty that the council must develop its approach to setting the 2021-22 budget. This paper sets out the strategy and process for developing the budget options. The budget decisions will need to balance delivering on the ambition and priorities of the council whilst ensuring the authority remains financially sustainable over the medium and long term.
5. The report also incorporates aspects of the council's Covid-19 blueprint for recovery report (Cabinet 10 June 2020) which set out areas of focus for how the organisation intends to operate going forward as well as the key themes of the wider recovery plan for the city. The recovery blueprint sets out the council's main priorities over the next 12-18 months and will be used to frame the council's approach to budget allocation, so that funding follows strategy.

Strategic Context

6. The Norwich 2040 City Vision sets out 5 themes towards which partners are working, for a city which is connected, creative, dynamic, fair and liveable. The Corporate Plan 2019-22 sets out how the council is working towards that vision through its priorities: people living well; great neighbourhoods, housing and environment; and inclusive economy.
7. Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact across the city which will be felt for years to come. It has affected those in the most deprived areas disproportionately.

People already in vulnerable jobs have been most at risk of job or income loss. The effect on retail, hospitality, culture and tourism, along with continued home working, poses significant questions around the future of the city centre. Hundreds of businesses have temporarily closed or paused trading and many others will have seen significant reduction in turnover with risks for their future viability.

8. The scale of these impacts remains unclear and will depend on the speed and success of the recovery. But Covid-19 reinforces the need to deliver the Norwich 2040 vision, in particular in creating a city which is connected, fair and liveable. The challenges in reaching that vision will have changed and, in some cases, become more acute, especially given financial constraints, but the vision remains relevant. Similarly, the overall priorities of the council: people live well; great neighbourhoods, housing and environment; and inclusive economy, are likely to continue to be relevant, but may require different emphasis and actions. The need to update the corporate plan will be considered in due course.
9. *Covid-19; A blueprint for recovery*, which was agreed at Cabinet in June, sets out the priority themes and actions that will frame the recovery and guide the council's work over the next 12 – 18 months. This includes how the organisation intends to operate going forward, how services may be delivered differently, and how the council will work in partnership with others to support the wider recovery of the city. The corporate priorities, and role the council plays in delivering these, will need to be balanced against the short and medium term financial constraints. The summary table of key themes and actions from the report can be found in Appendix 1.

Covid-19 Impact and Actions Being Taken

10. Whilst the focus of the paper is on addressing the budgetary challenges for 2021-22 and beyond, the unprecedented impact that Covid-19 is having on the council's financial position will have longer term impacts on the council's income and reserves. 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.
11. The scale of the in-year budget impact from Covid-19 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 would require in-year savings of c.£3.3m.
12. As well as the in-year budget impact for 2020/21 – it is inevitable 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. Initial assessments indicate that the combined financial impact across the next two years could reach as high as £14m across the council's revenue budgets and Housing Revenue Account.
13. The council will need to use a combination of in-year savings and its reserves to offset the budgetary impacts of Covid-19 in 20-21. Relying solely on council reserves would reduce the council's resilience going forward and put at risk its ability to make the up-front investment needed to drive forward longer term

efficiency plans (for example using the Invest-to-Save reserve to drive digital transformation).

14. There are a number of specific actions being taken by the council. Firstly, the council is undertaking an initial line by line review of revenue budgets to enable us to update the forecasts as part of the in-year monitoring. This work will be a continuous process throughout the year as the impacts of the pandemic become clearer.
15. The council has put in place a new senior management group tasked with identifying in year savings options. This group is made up of managers from across the council ensuring a collective ownership of the challenge. In addition, new recruitment is to be signed off by corporate leadership team in order to provide a corporate overview of resource allocation.
16. Alongside these revenue reviews the council will review capital budgets to identify programs that could or are being delayed. This, will in some instances, revolve around the inevitable delays in progressing projects as a result of the pandemic. For example, as a result of the lockdown it has not been feasible to carry out non-emergency repairs in council properties.
17. As a result of the line-by-line budget review, Directorates have identified potential in-year savings proposals across a range of areas. These include:
 - Reduced expenditure on events as a result of Covid-19 cancellations;
 - Holding vacant posts where the impacts on services can be adequately managed;
 - Reductions in non-essential spend in areas such as training, travel and other supplies and services;
 - Postponing planned maintenance into future years where the impacts can be managed in the short term;
 - Savings from a lower requirement for external borrowing in year.

Budget setting 2021-22

18. Looking beyond the immediate impacts of Covid-19, 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. The budget setting process for 2021-22 will be undertaken during what is likely to be the single biggest economic downturn in generations. The implications of this on council budgets are wide ranging including levels of inflation, business rates income, changes in ways of working as well as providing potential opportunities to deliver council services differently.

Government funding

19. MHCLG have confirmed a further one year delay in the proposed longer term local government financial reforms, including:

- 75% business rates retention with the aim of ensuring local authorities have more control over the money they raise and incentives to grow and reinvest in their local economies;
- introducing reforms to the business rates retention system to increase stability and certainty; and
- reviewing the funding formula that determines funding allocations through the annual local government finance settlement (Fairer Funding Review).

20. This provides a higher degree of certainty over the business rates income that the council will be able to keep in 2021-22 but does nothing to address the longer term uncertainty over funding from April 2022.

Commercialisation

21. In March 2020 the government commenced a consultation on the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) future funding terms. The consultation aims to work with local authorities and sector representatives to develop a targeted intervention to stop debt-for-yield activity while protecting the crucial work that local government does on service delivery, housing, and regeneration. The proposals, if implemented, would mean that the Public Works Loan Board would not be a source of lending to local authorities investing in commercial properties to generate income.

22. The council's 2020-21 capital budget contains £25m for asset investments (for either new properties or investment in the existing portfolio) with the aim of generating additional rental income. The council will await the outcome of the consultation before deciding whether to take forward any further investment in this or future years. This is likely to reduce the future options for generating purely commercial income to support the wider services deliver by the council, and needs to be factored into the budget process for 2021-22.

23. There is a budget trade-off between spending less on services and generating more income. In recent years the council has sort to strike a prudent approach in generating long term income streams (e.g. through commercial property investments, car parks and fees and charges) alongside driving cost efficiencies. The council will continue to keep under review its commercialisation programme and the types of assets invested in.

Council's current financial context

24. It is important to appreciate where the council gets its income from and what it spends money on. The charts below provides a breakdown of these key figures.

Chart 1: 2020/21 gross expenditure budget analysed by type of spend

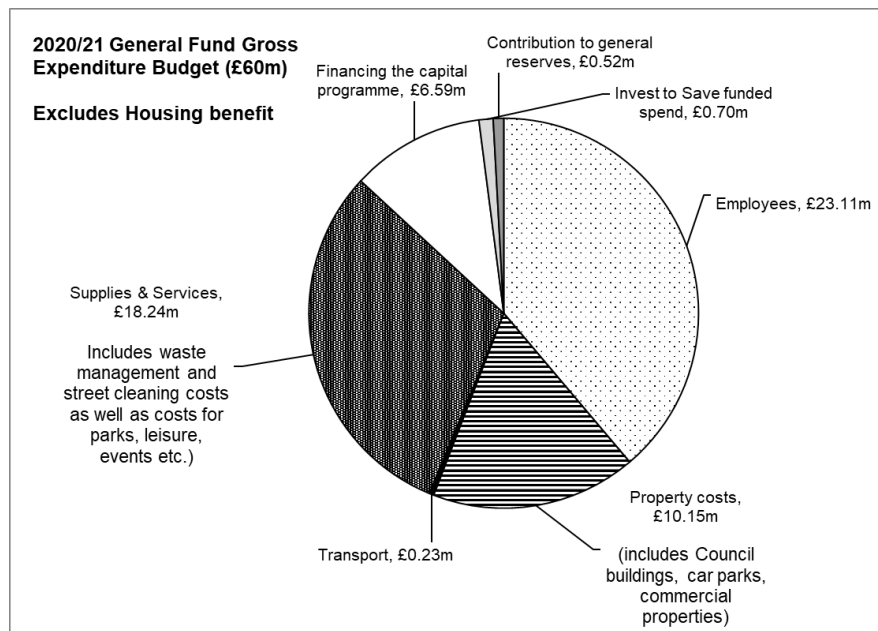
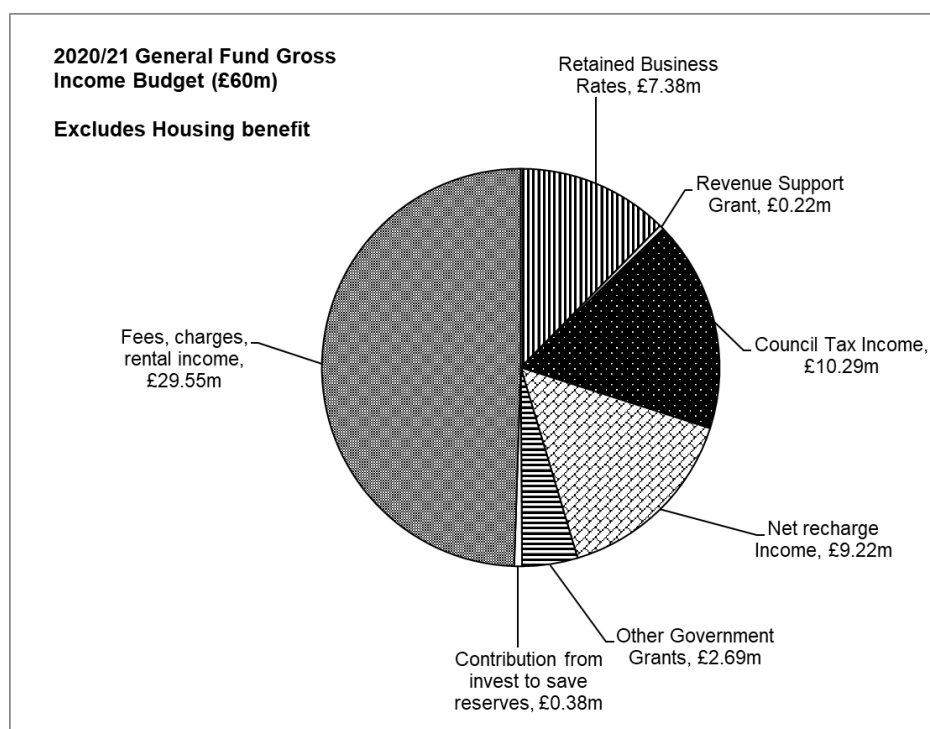


Chart 2: 2020/21 gross income budget analysed by type of income



Overall Approach

25. In order to assist the council in developing the budget we will update the Medium Term Financial Strategy – this provides a projection of the cost of delivering current council services over the next 5 years alongside income forecasts. This provides us with an estimated budget gap, from which the council will need to identify options that deliver savings or additional income to address this gap. It is important to start the process now to give the council sufficient time to properly develop the options and consult with members, partners, businesses and residents.

26. In developing these savings options there is a need to address the gap across the full four year period. This is vital in creating a strategic medium term approach to addressing the savings challenges and allows for the inclusion of projects that may have a longer lead in time or need up-front investment. For example, a new digital system may allow the council to make considerable savings over the 4 year period but may require some initial capital investment and a period of implementation.

Medium Term Financial Forecasts

27. To determine the scale of the financial challenge facing the council over the next five years, we model the council's budget over the period from 2020/21 to 2024/25. To do so, the council produces a medium term financial forecast of the level of expenditure and income in order to determine the gap between the two.
28. The MTFS model contains a number of key assumptions and variables including: council tax income (increase in the council tax base and the currently permitted annual 2% increase), business rates income, inflation on payroll, contracts and supplies and government grants. These were set out in more detail in the Budget Setting report to Council in February 2020.
29. The budget papers, approved by full Council in February 2020, showed £10m of gross savings were needed over the four year period from 2021/22. This gave a target for 2021-22 of £2.5m even before Covid-19. The plan in February was to smooth these savings requirements over the four year period by using reserves. However, it is now likely due to the pandemic, that the budget gap will widen as demand for council services increases alongside a slowing of income growth (e.g. from reduced use of car parks or reductions in income from rent). Furthermore, if, as expected, the council needs to use some reserves this year to offset the impact of Covid-19 on the 2020-21 budget, these reserves will no longer be available to make up any shortfalls in savings in the coming years.
30. The uncertainty over the impacts of Covid-19 on budget areas and reserve levels, combined with wider funding uncertainty, make it challenging at this stage to determine the council's future savings requirements with a high degree of confidence. It is clear that the original £2.5m gross savings target remains and initial scenario modelling suggests it would be prudent to identify an additional £0.5m of options to ensure the council has the flexibility to respond to the changing financial circumstances. As a clearer picture emerges about how key income streams are likely to be impacted in future years from the wider economic position (e.g. car parks, commercial rents, council tax, business rates) the MTFS and savings requirement will continue to be refined.
31. The other areas of focus will be minimising areas of budget growth. The MTFS assumes annual service area growth of £750k and if this can be reduced then pressure is reduced on the saving requirements. All growth items will require specific bids that will be challenged by finance and the leadership team, thereby ensuring there is a robust rationale and that all options to mitigate cost pressures have been explored.

Capital Programme

32. There are two main influences on the overall size of the general fund capital programme, namely:

- The level of capital resources available, and
 - The extent to which the revenue consequences of the programme, in terms of cost of borrowing or direct funding, can be accommodated within the revenue budget.
33. In the past, capital receipts have been the main funding source for the general fund capital programme. However, known receipts and intended sales continue to reduce, and no further receipts are currently identified from 2021/22.
34. The consequential impact of a reducing level of capital receipts is that the size of the capital budget funded from capital receipts and the general fund revenue budget continues to be constrained by a “cap” or “budget envelope”. This cap is an average of £1.8m per annum over the next five years, representing the amount that can be funded from known capital receipts and the planning assumptions contained within the MTFS revenue budget.
35. For capital projects that do not generate a new income stream, the budget process will therefore need to prioritise schemes to remain within the £1.8m annual envelope.

Budget Options

36. As the council takes decisions about how to achieve the required savings it will need to consider the balance not only between how savings are made – for instance, savings to workforce, suppliers and assets – but also the relative balance between spending reductions and increased income.
37. Below are examples of types of things the council could do either raise income or reduce expenditure. Given the scale of the challenge these provide a framework and areas of review as part of the budget setting process.
38. Income options could include:
- **Increasing fees and charges** – the council has a range of services that users pay for such as planning fees etc.
 - **Commercialising services** – the council needs to consider proportionality and risk when commercialising services.
 - **Increasing the Council Tax rate** – the council is able to increase council tax in line with referendum limits (currently 2%)
 - **Changing the Council Tax contribution rate for those eligible for Council Tax support**
 - **Growing the tax base** – by building more residential properties and encouraging more enterprise and commerce.
39. Expenditure options could include:
- **Increasing organisational efficiency** – Opportunities for the council to become more efficient without discernibly affecting the quality of services to residents (i.e. doing more – or the same – with less). This includes the service transformation and service delivery themes identified in the council’s Covid-19 blueprint for recovery report (Cabinet 10 June 2020).
 - **Reducing demand** – With less money and rising demand, both the council and the borough’s residents will need to behave differently. The council will need to

focus on enabling residents to help themselves and each other. Channel shift & behaviour change.

- **Service redesign** – Adopting a first principles approach to how the council fulfils a number of its statutory and non-statutory obligations has revealed opportunities to re-design services in a way that better targets support to those who used services and reduce cost, including through greater integration across council services.

Potential Areas of Focus

40. The council has identified several provisional themes that underpin savings targets. Additional areas that come out from the senior manager led reviews will be considered.

- **Asset Reviews** –Undertaking a comprehensive review of all of its non-HRA land and property assets to prioritise those that need investment, are not financially performing, or are surplus to service needs will enable the council to make best use of its assets. In line with the approach being taken to identifying savings, the asset review would best be carried out as close to the service as possible, as managers are best placed to understand the impact of assets on the delivery of service.
- **Digital & Customers** – 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.
- **Key contracts** – given the level of spend the council has with suppliers it will be necessary to review key contracts and service specifications in the context of the current financial situation. A second key stream of work is the insourcing of contracts for housing repairs, environmental services and property management.
- **New ways of working** – Covid-19 has forced the council to change how it operates and how it delivers services to residents. Building on the technological changes made to become a modern, flexible organisation. There may be 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. This will include a service by service review led by the senior management team to look at different delivery options and use of technology to unlock efficiencies.
- **Income collection** – streamlining a council wide approach to income debt collection.

Process & Timetable

41. Given the scale of changes and the limited timeframe in which to identify and deliver savings it is vital that there are clear processes and timetable. The key elements of the process will include:

- Director-led planning sessions with teams to consider: “big questions” around purpose, standard of delivery, demand management and future proofing, specific questions around contracts, fees and charges, capital strategy and performance data;
- Development of saving options (short and medium term);
- Initial prioritisation by CLT of ideas with fuller business cases where required;
- Development of business cases for options with input and challenge from key areas such as HR, finance, IT and Strategy;
- “Star chambers” to challenge directors on delivery in their areas; and
- Tight project management of agreed projects to ensure cashable savings.

42. Members will be involved throughout the process but some key provisional dates are:

- Draft budget options to cabinet – November 2020
- Public consultation – December 2020 – January 2021
- Budget Paper – February 2021

43. Measures which are taken forward will be subject to public consultation before a final decision is taken and implementation begins. The legal implications of each option will also be fully explored and Equalities Impact Assessments considered.

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

Report author to complete

Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	08/07/2020
Director / Head of service	Chief Finance Officer
Report subject:	Budget Setting Process 2021/22
Date assessed:	25/06/2020

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	The budget proposals will secure continuing value for money in the provision of services to council tax payers and other residents of the city, as well as the provision of works and services to council tenants.
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The budget process will cover a wide range of council activity and spend. As budget options are identified assessment will be made of the impact on residents and others with protected characteristics under The Equality Act.
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Waste minimisation & resource use	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainable procurement	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Impact			
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	At this stage there is no impact on risk management. Once proposals have been formulated, the overall impact on the council's risk profile will need to be considered.

Recommendations from impact assessment	
Positive	
None	
Negative	
None	
Neutral	
None	
Issues	
None	

APPENDIX 1:

Recovery themes and key actions summary

Theme	Key actions the council will take
1. Securing the council's finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 public 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 deliver 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.