

<p><u>MEETING</u></p> <p>HOUSING AND GROWTH COMMITTEE</p>
<p><u>DATE AND TIME</u></p> <p>MONDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2020</p> <p>AT 7.00 PM</p>
<p><u>VENUE</u></p> <p>VIRTUAL TEAMS MEETING</p> <p>LINK TO VIRTUAL MEETING https://bit.ly/3jgNj0D</p>

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
1.	RECOVERY PLAN	3 - 16

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Please note that this will be held as a virtual meeting. An audio and video live stream of the meeting can be accessed using the link below:

<https://bit.ly/3jgNj0D>

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Housing & Growth Committee

14 September 2020

Title	COVID-19: Recovery Plan – Thriving
Report of	Chairman of Housing and Growth Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	Yes
Key	Yes
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Cath Shaw, Deputy Chief Executive Jamie Robinson, Head of Business, Employment & Skills Elliot Sweetman, Group Director, Operations & Property, The Barnet Group

Summary

Housing and Growth Committee is the lead committee for the Thriving workstream of the council's Recovery Plan. This report provides an update to Committee on progress across a number of core themes under the workstream: Town Centres; Employment and Skills; and Homelessness.

Officers Recommendations

1. That the Committee note the report, including the proposed expenditure of approved funds on support measures for town centres, as summarised in paragraph 5.2.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

Background context

- 1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic provides an extremely challenging situation for Barnet, its residents and the wider borough. The pandemic itself has been responsible for over 300,000 cases and 40,000 deaths nationally, while the lockdown that was required to save lives has led to challenges relating to the economy, education and mental health.
- 1.2 In response, the council had to focus on critical services, including a number of new services to directly respond to the needs of residents and businesses. As lockdown restrictions eased, the council then moved to focusing on recovery, initially around a framework of deciding which services to restore in their previous form, which to retain from the lockdown and which to re-invent by bringing back in a new way. A programme of recovery planning has been set up to co-ordinate this process and deal with the challenges that recovery will bring for the council, the borough and its residents. The programme is split into five workstreams which are based around the cross-cutting themes of our emerging Corporate Plan. Each theme has at least one sponsor from the Council's Management Team and at least one workstream lead, a senior officer responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the workstream. The themes are:
 1. Thriving
 2. Family Friendly
 3. Healthy
 4. Clean, Safe and Well Run
 5. Prevention
- 1.3 Promoting equalities and diversity are important aspects of each of these themes.
- 1.4 Housing and Growth Committee is the lead committee for the Thriving workstream, due to the focus on: Housing and Development; Businesses and Town Centres; Employment and Skills; Infrastructure; and Climate Change. Housing and Growth Committee will also contribute to the Healthy workstream as a result of the priorities around poverty reduction and homelessness reduction.
- 1.5 There will also be a focus on equalities within each workstream. This will look at inequalities across the council, its services and its communities. Each workstream will outline its approach to equalities, seeking to identify and address any impacts on equality groups.
- 1.6 This report provides an update to Housing and Growth Committee on the themes of Town Centres and Employment and Skills, both central to the Thriving workstream. It also includes an update on support to homelessness reduction which, as above, is a cross-cutting area.
- 1.7 Other aspects of Recovery Planning will be reported on at future Committee meetings.

Town Centres

- 1.8 Prior to Covid-19, Barnet's town centres already faced a number of challenges. These included changes in the retail sector and consumer habits, a lack of diversity in the local

offer, increasing numbers of vacant units, fragmented ownership and traffic-dominated environments. Covid-19, and the associated lockdown, has undoubtedly caused an acceleration of this decline but we have also seen new patterns and opportunities emerge. These include people commuting less and living and working more locally.

1.9 In response to the increased pressure, officers are taking a cross-cutting approach to support Barnet's town centres. In the short-term, this work is being overseen by a newly-established Town Centres Project Board. To date, the Board has overseen the following workstreams and activities:

- **Town Centre Operations** – This workstream is currently focused on supporting social distancing on the high street in accordance with government public health guidance to ensure that town centres remain safe to visit.

Many town centres have areas of high pedestrian congestion caused either by limited footway size or queues outside of businesses. Where this is the case, pavements and parking spaces have been temporarily re-allocated for pedestrian use. Where required, temporary posts/cones or barriers have been installed.

In addition, officers from across service areas have developed a temporary Covid-19 street trading strategy to assist local traders to recover from the strain caused by the pandemic while managing social distancing. Since launching, the council has seen a 25% increase in applications for street trading.

- **Cycling in Town Centres** – In post-Covid London, public transport will run at a reduced capacity in comparison to pre-crisis levels, meaning millions of daily journeys will need to be made in other ways. In response, the government announced a Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy that commits to doubling the number of trips made by bicycle by 2025.

To support this, the Town Centres Project Board is overseeing the creation of a temporary, light segregated cycle lane along the A1000. As one of the main north-south routes through the borough, the A1000 links the town centres of Chipping Barnet, North Finchley and East Finchley. This work is intended to provide an easily installed cycling route allowing residents to access a number of important local centres and transport hubs (including tube stations). It will comprise a combination of signing, reduced speed limits and partial light segregation in both north and southbound directions.

This scheme has been successful in securing funding from the Department for Transport and Transport for London for the implementation of Phase 1. This phase will extend around 3.2 km from the boundary with LB Haringey, to just south of North Finchley Town Centre. Updates on progress and engagement have taken place with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee, Ward Councillors and the Council's Management Team. Phase 1 works are currently planned to commence in late September.

Consequent to this, it will be necessary to temporarily remove a small number of parking bays, utilising experimental traffic orders. These comprise solely areas of pay and display parking or unrestricted parking. At all times, we will ensure that access to private properties and businesses remains unaffected. Cycle and motor

vehicle volumes will be assessed before work starts and once the temporary cycle lane is in place.

- **Liveable Neighbourhoods and Schools** – This workstream is primarily focused on supporting social distancing requirements outside Barnet schools and working with Education colleagues to ensure that children can return safely.
- **Communications** – This workstream ensures that there is a joined up approach to communication with key stakeholders. A priority to date has been regular communication with high street businesses to inform them of relevant public health messaging, upcoming changes in their town centres and to signpost them towards funding and grants available to support businesses.

The council has also launched a ‘Shop Safely, Shop Local’ campaign to encourage the public to support local town centres while observing social distancing and other Covid-secure measures. The campaign showcases an independent business from each of Barnet’s seven main town centres and appears on the council’s engagement website and advertising hoardings across the borough.

A Town Centre Volunteer Programme has also been established to enable the council to increase its visibility in town centres and to more effectively communicate locally. Volunteers are supporting businesses and members of the public to access information relating to current Covid-19 rules and regulations, share any council and/or central government literature, and direct them to the correct council service to assist with queries. There are currently 14 volunteers who have received training and are conducting duties alongside enforcement officers.

- **Funding and grants** – In order to deliver the programme of the Town Centres Project Board, officers have, where possible, used existing resources. However, given the significant increase in activity, it has been necessary to seek additional financial support from government. To date, officers have submitted bids totalling approximately £12.1M to the Department of Transport, Transport for London and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It is disappointing that the borough has only been awarded £0.79M of this funding so far, although the council is still awaiting a decision on one bid for £1.3M. This shortfall will undoubtedly impact the pace and extent to which the council is able to respond to the crisis in town centres.

It is important to note that current – and likely future – funding from government to support Covid-19 recovery is generally focused on ‘shovel ready’ projects, i.e. those that are fully scoped and can be delivered within a relatively short space of time. Notwithstanding previous setbacks, it remains critical that the Town Centres Project Board continue to develop and scope works in accordance with council strategy to ensure that we remain in position to access funding.

- 1.10 Alongside the above, officers have scoped additional projects to support recovery and deliver longer-term strategic objectives, most notably those set out in the Growth Strategy 2020-30 and the Draft Long-Term Transport Strategy. Below are further measures that will be brought forward within the next three months.

- **Pilot New Markets** – Markets are an excellent way to encourage footfall and increase time spent in town centres as well as supporting entrepreneurship. One part of the council's response to Covid-19 is to support low-risk paths for micro businesses and aspiring traders. As such, the council will support new markets at sites in Finchley Central, Golders Green and North Finchley. In all three cases, markets support the goals set out in previously-adopted Town Centre Strategies and/or Strategic Planning Documents. In the case of Finchley Central, the pilot market will directly inform the design of the wider Finchley Square project.

Consequent to this, the council will widen the pedestrian space to host the markets safely, while creating additional space for the community. Temporary seating will be provided and (in two of the three locations) new temporary art/play space will help to encourage families to use these spaces when the markets are not in operation.

To create the space required, the council will undertake temporary traffic orders to close portions of the highway and implement limited parking suspensions. With all proposed sites, the council's Parking and Highways teams have ensured that the impact on vehicular movement will be minimised and that disabled parking provision remains or, where necessary, is relocated nearby. The council will monitor the effect on the highways throughout the project.

The council undertook a competitive tender process to secure a qualified and experienced market operator. The pilot markets will last for six months with a review undertaken in the third month to assess future viability. The first market is expected to launch in Finchley Central in early October 2020.

Alongside the markets, the operator will be delivering free Market Trading Incubator Workshops to support local residents considering a move into market trading.

The council is using £50,000 from the Town Centres Capital Fund to support the delivery of the three pilot markets and associated works.

- **Temporary Streetspace Fund** – As noted, Barnet businesses face spatial pressures and therefore viability concerns as they seek to accommodate social distancing requirements. These are particularly pressing in the hospitality sector, where businesses are expected to operate at about 30-50% less capacity within their premises.

In response, the council has established a Temporary Streetspace Fund utilising £200,000 of Town Centres Capital Funds. The fund will support eligible applicants to implement temporary measures within the public realm and/or highway, enabling them to access and activate a designated outdoor space, by installing temporary barriers and parklets to create a safe, attractive and enclosed space.

The fund is now live and applications can be submitted via the council's website. We expect that this initial fund will enable us to deliver approximately 25 interventions. Officers will monitor the impact this funding has for the businesses. The fund will be prioritised for bars, cafés and restaurants with a license offered to these until September 2021. If other businesses apply they will be entitled to access a temporary license for a three-month period. Following the expiry of the licence,

businesses will be able to apply for a renewal. Installation of the parklets is expected from mid-September onwards.

- **Potential additional cycle lanes** – As noted, the council has secured resources to deliver the first phase of a new temporary light cycle lane along the A1000 going north from East Finchley. Once installed, officers will assess the initial impact of the cycle lane and will determine whether recommendations should be made to extend this further, in line with the Draft Long-Term Transport Strategy.

Skills and Jobs

- 1.11 Responding to the unprecedented skills and employment impacts of Covid-19 is a high priority. We know that many individuals and households have had their working lives disrupted by the pandemic. In Barnet our most exposed sectors are retail, hospitality and entertainment, although most sectors (and professions within those sectors) will experience impacts.
- 1.12 It is clear that different groups in the borough are feeling the impacts of the pandemic differently. For example, younger people and those with lower levels of qualifications are more likely to work in the sectors that have been the most impacted. These groups are also more likely to live in certain geographical locations.
- 1.13 A key feature of the jobs and employment impacts of Covid-19 will be the significant number of individuals losing their jobs who have never before been out of work and would not normally expect to be unemployed. These individuals may need assistance accessing and navigating the support and guidance available to them. As of June, 48,500 Barnet residents had participated in the government's Furlough scheme, and nationally there is evidence to suggest that a high proportion of these will not return to work when the scheme ends, currently expected to happen on 31 October 2020. It should be noted that some other countries have extended their national furlough schemes.
- 1.14 Barnet has the fourth highest number of people on furlough in London, although this is partly a reflection of our larger population. West London Alliance-commissioned research has estimated that the borough will see a possible level of 10% unemployment, with a 9% shrinkage in the local economy. The Shaw Trust has estimated that the region is seeing only 50% of the vacancies that would normally be expected at this time. The Learning and Work Institute has estimated that across London one-in-three workers are in low paid jobs shut down by the pandemic.
- 1.15 A proportion of those who lose their jobs will also experience wider challenges in relation to mental health, or financial hardship resulting in them building up debt or losing their home. Such outcomes are, of course, unhealthy for individuals and households, but will also have an impact on council resources as demand for social care, health and housing services increases. As part of the council's response, officers are developing a package of prevention-focused support and guidance that addresses these predictable consequences.
- 1.16 Officers are developing an approach to the skills response that:
- Brings together the range of employment and skills provision that already exists in the borough, such as BOOST and the DWP's Work and Health Programme,

together in a coordinated and easier-to-access way so that job seekers and those who have lost employment as a result of Covid-19 are able to find support as easily as possible.

- Identifies where there are gaps in provision, e.g. in relation to signposting individuals who may have lost their jobs for the first time and are not eligible for existing programmes, or making it easier to access money guidance services that reduce the chances of households going in to financial hardship.
- Works with our wider partners including major employers such as the NHS, colleges and training providers, and the West London Alliance to align our response, coordinate messaging, and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Analyses data and intelligence to understand and identify the groups most impacted by the pandemic so that the response can be targeted and will be relevant to the circumstances they face.

Supporting homelessness reduction

1.17 As noted above, a commitment to homelessness reduction is a core part of both the Healthy and Thriving workstreams of the council's Recovery Plan. Officers are focused on ensuring that the needs of the borough's rough sleepers are assessed and that ongoing housing solutions can be found to meet these. There are a number of strands to this work, as follows.

- **Rough sleepers** – Barnet currently accommodates 148 rough sleepers; 10 of whom are in commercial hotels, 49 in self-contained (student type) accommodation and 89 in private sector studio units.

All are being individually assessed and their health and support needs captured. As would be expected, in some cases there are challenges with engagement which makes planning their next steps more difficult, however Barnet Homes, the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS, Public Health, Adult Social Care and Homeless Action in Barnet are working together to complete a needs assessment to inform the accommodation and support needs of Barnet's rough sleeper cohort. A mixture of accommodation options will be required including private rented accommodation with both 'floating' support and more intensive wrap around support, together with a limited amount of high support accommodation for those with complex needs.

The government wrote to councils on 25 June 2020 giving a clear instruction that local authorities should do what they can to prevent a return to the streets. The government has made £105M of funding available to support this aim. In addition, £167M of capital funding is also being made available to support rough sleepers moving out of emergency accommodation, with £67M of this pot being allocated to London and administered by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Both funds need to be spent this financial year.

- **Supporting those who do not qualify for public assistance** – Assistance is already being provided to help European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who do not qualify for public assistance to seek settled status via the Citizens Advice Bureau which is currently being funded by the council. In addition, Homeless Action Barnet (HAB) is helping those who are eligible for settled status with their applications and with getting supporting documentation. Barnet Homes also has funding from MHCLG to help with employment support which will enable some

rough sleepers to get into work and then become eligible for further support. Non-EEA nationals who are eligible for Legal Aid are being referred to immigration solicitors for advice and support. The North London Housing Partnership which comprises Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Islington, Camden and Westminster councils, is also applying to the £105M transition fund to purchase immigration legal advice and support for those not eligible for Legal Aid.

EU rough sleepers who were already known to services have been advised to apply for settled status for some time and those new cases who are eligible are being helped, as outlined above.

- **Preventing a return to homelessness** – Officers are focused on securing accommodation to ensure that none of Barnet’s rough sleepers are made homeless again. Positively, Barnet Homes has not had to rely heavily on commercial hotels to accommodate rough sleepers during the pandemic. This means that all current accommodation can be extended, some on longer-term arrangements. The strategy being employed is to move away from commercial hotels to longer-term temporary accommodation placements and studios in the private rented sector (PRS).
- **Planning beyond current funding arrangements** – Barnet Homes is working to reconfigure its existing MHCLG funding to provide more floating support roles which are needed immediately. Resources have already been increased and the bids for both the transitional and capital funds also include additional floating support roles. In addition, HAB and Together in Barnet (TIB) are providing support to deliver food and ensure the wellbeing and safeguarding.
- **The role of night shelters during Covid-19 restrictions** – The council recognises that night shelters play an important role to rough sleepers, not just providing a roof but also support and food. TIB has been a successful collaboration across faith groups in the borough, providing support to up to 17 people a night. However, guidance from Government has meant that night shelters have had to close due to Covid-19. There is no current guidance on how night shelters may operate in the future and the clear instruction from MHCLG is to find accommodation where rough sleepers can self-isolate. This therefore means accommodation that is in a self-contained setting and not shared or dormitory style. If restrictions are lifted and clear guidance on managing night shelters in a safe way is provided then Barnet Homes will work with TIB and HAB to ensure that those who would benefit most from night shelter provision are supported.
- **Anticipating future increases in homelessness** – The Government announced on 21 August that the stay on evictions would be extended until 20 September 2020, together with six-month notice periods from landlords to end tenancies. It is difficult to gauge the future impact of the pandemic on homelessness and whether landlords will take immediate steps to commence eviction proceedings. Landlords deciding to evict tenants not only face long delays due to the back log of cases already in the court system, but also the costs of eviction proceedings and the associated reletting process. There is likely to be an impact from new administration and regulation for both courts and landlords and the likely errors and delays these will cause, as well as the added complications of remote hearings all add to the uncertainty. In these circumstances and with no indication of the courts increasing

capacity to hold more hearings, there is unlikely to be a significant increase in evictions from the courts post-20 September.

Barnet Homes provides a tenancy sustainment service as well as the BOOST project, which delivers employment and benefit support services to help households facing difficulties. These interventions will help to reduce homelessness demand. Barnet Homes has specialised officers working with tenants in the PRS and landlords to support them with any concerns or issues they may face. Early intervention is key to preventing homelessness and Barnet Homes will be working with partners to ensure that information is available and accessible and that there are clear pathways for residents that need support.

As noted above, the end of the Furlough scheme will likely lead to further job losses in the borough, with a possible longer-term impact on numbers of homeless individuals. Barnet Homes is working closely with the council's Business, Employment and Skills Team to ensure that the BOOST offer is tailored to meet the cohorts with greatest need. BOOST offers engagement and advice including triage and referrals to partners, youth employment and careers, mental health support, welfare benefits advice and access to Discretionary Housing Payments. The wide range of partners linked to BOOST allows for expanded services and increased capacity, for example, clients can be referred to Twining if they have more serious mental health needs and support to sustain work. These partners include, CAB, Work and Health Programme, Twining Enterprise, Change Grow Live Barnet, Volunteer Barnet, Debt Free London and National Careers Service.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 As noted, the council is taking a comprehensive, cross-service approach to Covid-19 recovery. All measures and interventions set out above directly support the borough's Recovery Plan, as approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 17 June 2020.
- 2.2 Additionally, all measures outlined in this report align with council strategy and priorities, for example, as set out in the Corporate Plan, Growth Strategy 2020-30, the Long-Term Transport Strategy (recommended for adoption at Environment Committee September 2020) and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The council could opt not to support town centre businesses throughout the Covid-19 emergency. This would, however, see the failure of many more Barnet companies, leading to deeper social and economic impacts within the borough. It would also likely have a negative impact on council revenues in the long-term through Business Rates and other revenue streams.
- 3.2 The council could opt not to intervene in the improvement of town centres at all. However, this would be a missed opportunity to help support our town centres to become thriving, healthy and vibrant places.
- 3.3 The council could opt to do nothing to encourage uptake of active modes of travel. However, this will lead to ongoing challenges in ensuring social distancing, as well as wider

consequences of increased congestion, worsened air quality, increased accidents and poor public health.

- 3.4 The council could opt not to support those facing or experiencing unemployment or homelessness. However, as noted, this would lead to long-term consequences and impacts on households, mental health and demand for public sector services.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Following Committee, officers will continue to support economic recovery as part of the council-wide Recovery Framework. Any individual decisions and actions will be taken by Housing and Growth Committee, the Chairman and Senior Officer in line with the relevant scheme of delegation.
- 4.2 In town centres, officers will continue to develop and deliver initiatives set out in the report, drawing on approved resources within the Town Centres Capital Fund and other funds such as Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy where possible. As part of this, officers will continue to scope the future pipeline of projects to ensure that we are in a more favourable position to access external grant funding.
- 4.3 Officers will assess the impact of projects throughout project delivery. Evaluation of proposed interventions will be used to inform the future vision for town centres which addresses the long-term issues and trends in line with the Growth Strategy. Measurement and evaluation activities will also inform proposals for on-going delivery of short-term projects. Should they prove successful, the Town Centre Project Board will look to secure additional permissions and funding to support trials on a more permanent basis.
- 4.4 Following Committee, officers will continue to maintain regular communication with relevant stakeholder groups – notably businesses, Members and residents – in accordance with the programme of work.
- 4.5 As above, officers will continue to work with key partners in the borough and beyond to bring forward plans to address unemployment and homelessness.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1 The Recovery Framework will directly shape the borough's emerging Corporate Plan.
- 5.2 The council's response to Covid-19 and its impacts on businesses directly support objectives in the Corporate Plan 2024, particularly "Supporting local businesses to thrive", as well as objectives set out in the Growth Strategy 2020-30 and the forthcoming Long-Term Transport Strategy.
- 5.3 Proposals outlined here also support adopted council policy and strategies for individual town centres. Finchley Central, Golders Green and North Finchley Town Centres are among Barnet's seven main town centres, as set out in the Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy. All three have Town Centre Spatial Planning Guidance and/or adopted Town Centre Strategies that identify the locations proposed as key opportunities for market

trading. These strategies and plans have been developed in consultation with residents, traders, and other key stakeholder and community groups in town centres.

Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.1 The adoption of the recommendations in respect of the proposals will result in no additional staffing resource, as this will be covered within the existing resource of the teams identified.
- 5.2 Costs outlined above for town centre enhancements to support Covid-19 recovery will be funded from approved Town Centre Capital Funds of £4.974M (four-year budget from 2020/21 to 2023/24). At present, the committed costs comprise: £200,000 for the Temporary Streetspace Fund; and £50,000 to Pilot New Markets. Costs of over £600,000 have previously been approved for town centre projects in Finchley Central and West Hendon Broadway and plans are being developed for expenditure of the remaining Town Centre Capital Funds.
- 5.3 The council will procure service contractor(s) in accordance with Barnet's Procurement Procedures, its Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to support the delivery of all associated capital works identified in this report.
- 5.4 There are no anticipated implications in IT or sustainability in relation to any of the proposals included here.
- 5.5 Officers will continue to ensure the costs of Covid-19, including those specifically relating to business support, are forecast on a robust basis. We will also continue to engage with MHCLG proactively and will keep Councillors abreast of the emerging financial picture.
- 5.6 In order to regain the momentum in being a high performing organisation, financial stability must be achieved through the recovery planning process. This includes minimising the call on reserves and setting a balanced budget from 2021/22 onwards. This budget must deliver the required strategy in relation to reserves required to withstand future economic shocks.
- 5.7 Where there are financial implications or decisions associated with recovery activities, these will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The delivery of recovery actions in support of business will be undertaken within the existing capacity and resources of the council.

Social Value

- 5.8 The council must take into account the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to try to maximise the social and local economic value it derives from its procurement spend. Social value is a core part of the Recovery Framework and will be maximised throughout.

Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.9 The council's Constitution, Article 7 Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, sets out the functions of the Housing and Growth Committee:

- Responsibility for housing matters including strategy, homelessness, social housing and housing grants, commissioning of environmental health functions for private sector housing, regeneration strategy and oversee major regeneration schemes, asset management, employment strategy, business support and engagement.
- To receive reports on relevant performance information and risk on the services, under the remit of the Committee.

5.10 Any procurement activity will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as applicable. If the Council chooses to use an existing Framework Agreement to appoint a contractor to deliver the services, it must comply with the requirements of the Framework Agreement. In accordance with Rule 5.4 of the Contract Procedure Rules, before entering into a call-off contract under a Framework Agreement due diligence checks must be carried out to demonstrate that the Council can lawfully access the Framework Agreement and that it is fit for purpose and provides value for money.

Risk Management

5.11 The council has an established approach to risk management, which is set out in the Risk Management Framework. Strategic and operational risks have been reviewed in light of our response to Covid-19 and priorities for recovery and emerging Corporate Plan. The corporate risk register is reported quarterly to Policy and Resources Committee. Managing risk is an essential part of programme management and decision-making.

5.12 The council has an established approach to risk management, which is set out in the Risk Management Framework. Strategic and operational risks are being reviewed in light of our response to Covid-19 and priorities for recovery and the new Corporate Plan. Managing risk will be an essential part of programme management and will be used to inform key decisions.

5.13 There is a risk that there will be resistance from the community with regards to some proposals in town centres. All work identified in this report builds directly on priorities already identified through strategies that have been consulted on and the Council has allowed for ongoing community and stakeholder engagement throughout the delivery of these projects.

Equalities and Diversity

5.14 The Equalities and Diversity Act, 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act, 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups; and
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.15 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

- 5.16 The council's Recovery Framework is intended to benefit all communities and groups who live, work and visit the borough, including those with protected characteristics. Where individual decisions are required in relation to the recovery programme, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure no group is disadvantaged or left behind. As required, officers will undertake Equalities Impact Assessments (EQIA) and review them in order to fully appraise the impacts associated with any proposed course of action.

Corporate Parenting

- 5.17 In line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in all decision-making. These will be considered as specific plans for recovery are further developed.

Consultation and Engagement

- 5.18 Officers are clear that the Recovery Framework cannot be developed in isolation if it is going to be fully responsive and effective in enabling the borough to emerge stronger from the Covid-19 pandemic. Consultation with partners, service users and the wider community is critical to ensuring that our recovery activities are focused on the end user.
- 5.19 To date, extensive community consultation has been undertaken in the development of the Golders Green Town Centre Strategy, Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy and the North Finchley Strategic Planning Document. Development of these strategies identified strong community support for initiatives such as establishing new markets and increasing access to public space. For all projects, there will be ongoing opportunities for residents to provide feedback. Furthermore, the council will work with the appointed market operator to ensure it remains relevant and the offer meets the need of the local community.
- 5.20 Prior to establishing the Town Centre Streetspace Fund, officers engaged with local businesses to gauge interest in the proposal. The council will continue to engage with businesses to support them to get the most out of the space provided and assess the impact of the scheme.
- 5.21 More broadly, business support activities have been developed with partners at the Federation of Small Businesses, North London Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and Town Teams. Such consultation is critical to ensuring that our business support activities are focused on the needs of end users.
- 5.22 External stakeholders will be critical to future recovery efforts and we continue to work with these partners as well as others to develop a collective approach.
- 5.23 Council officers have also worked closely with colleagues at the West London Alliance, which is coordinating a number of recovery activities focused on economic recovery. Workstreams include Town Centres, Housing and Infrastructure, Employment and Skills, Growth Sectors, Microbusinesses and the Self-Employed and Low Carbon Economy.

Insight

- 5.24 There is an opportunity in the recovery phase to significantly improve the way in which we use data, insight and analysis to drive decision making and service delivery.

5.25 Officers are currently in the process of establishing a cross-service insight approach that will enable this to happen. At present we are mapping council-wide insight requirements and questions of each service in order to structure further insight and data analysis.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Urgency Committee, 27 April 2020: Approval of Emergency Decisions and Delegation to Chief Officers

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s58641/Urgency%20Committee%20-%20Emergency%20Decisions%20Final.pdf>

6.2 Policy & Resources Committee, 17 June 2020: Covid-19 Recovery Planning

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s58985/Covid-19%20Recovery%20Planning.pdf>

6.2 Council Budget 2018/19 Financial Forward Plan and Capital Programme, Appendix E2 Capital Programme by Delivery Unit:

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s45350/Appendix%20E2%20-%20Capital%20Programme%20by%20Delivery%20Unit.pdf>

6.3 Town Centres in Barnet (approved at Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee, March 2015):

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s21967/Town%20Centres%20in%20Barnet.pdf>

6.4 Town Centre Capital projects and update on Finchley Central Housing Infrastructure Fund project (approved at Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee September 2018):

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=696&MId=9764&Ver=4>

6.5 Growth Strategy (Housing and Growth Committee, 27 January 2020):

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s52934/Growth%20Strategy.pdf>

6.6 Golders Green Town Centre Strategy (Housing and Growth Committee, 27 January 2020):

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s57507/Golders%20Green%20Town%20Centre%20Strategy%20and%20update%20on%20Finchley%20Central%20Housing%20Infrastructure%20Fund.pdf>

6.7 Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy (Housing and Growth Committee):

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43517/Appendix%202%20%20Finchley%20Central%20Town%20Centre%20Strategy.pdf>

6.8 Temporary Strategy for Street Trade Licensing and Town Centre Streetspace Fund, Delegated Powers Report:

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7503>