



Housing & Growth Committee

13 September 2021

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	Luke Ward, Assistant Director Development and Economy, Luke.ward@barnet.gov.uk Susan Curran, Head of Housing and Regeneration, susan.curran@barnet.gov.uk Jamie Robinson, Head of Economic Development, Jamie.robinson@barnet.gov.uk Elliot Sweetman, Group Director, Operations & Property, The Barnet Group, Elliott.sweetman@barnethomes.org

Summary

Housing and Growth Committee is the lead committee for the Thriving theme of the Barnet Plan, approved by Policy and Resources Committee in February 2021, and the council's COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

This report provides an update to Committee on progress across a number of Recovery workstreams including housing supply, skills and employment, business support, town centres, digital access and homelessness.

Officers Recommendations

1. That the Committee notes the report.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

Background Context

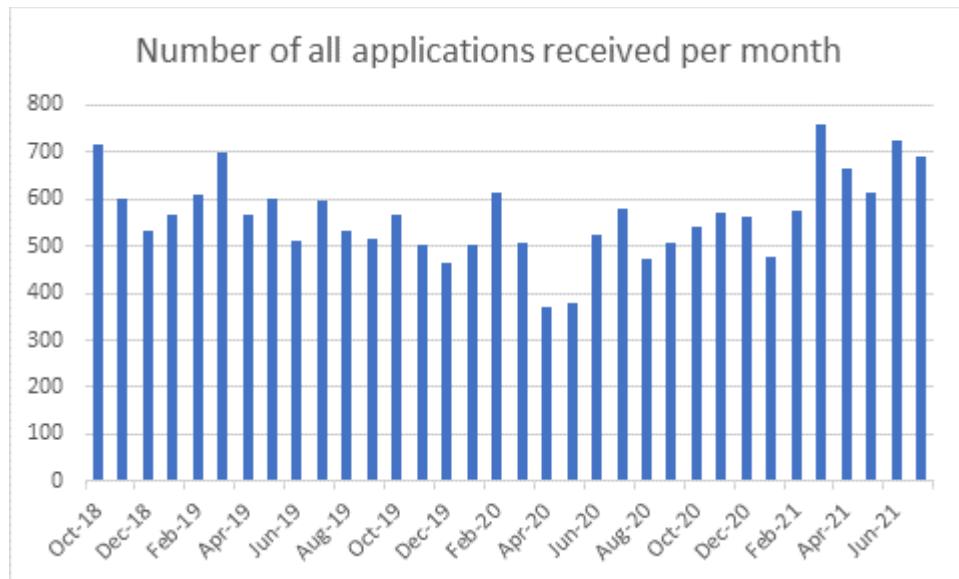
- 1.1 The Barnet Plan was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 8 February 2021 and sets out the council's vision and strategy for the next four years, including the delivery of the Growth Strategy that was agreed by Housing & Growth Committee in January 2020. The council and its partners will focus on four priorities to realise the vision:
- Clean, safe and well run: a place where our streets are clean and antisocial behaviour is dealt with so residents feel safe. Providing good quality, customer friendly services in all that we do;
 - Family Friendly: creating a Family Friendly Barnet, enabling opportunities for our children and young people to achieve their best;
 - Healthy: a place with fantastic facilities for all ages, enabling people to live happy and healthy lives;
 - Thriving: a place fit for the future, where all residents, businesses and visitors benefit from improved sustainable infrastructure & opportunity.
- 1.2 The approach set out in this report recognises the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented economic challenges for residents, businesses and town centres in Barnet.
- 1.3 The council's recovery programme is split into five workstreams, based on the cross-cutting themes of the Barnet Plan. This report provides an update to Housing and Growth Committee on the Thriving workstream, which focuses on:
- Supporting residents to improve their skills and get good jobs in the post-COVID economy;
 - Enabling town centres and our regeneration areas to thrive, and create an environment in which businesses can succeed, by implementing our growth strategy;
 - Accelerating the borough-wide roll out of high-quality digital connectivity;
 - Supporting homelessness reduction.
- 1.4 The report also provides an update on homelessness reduction, a commitment to which is a core part of both the Healthy and Thriving workstreams of the Barnet Plan, and is an important part of the council's overall response to the impacts of the pandemic.

Barnet's Housing Market

- 1.5 The housing market continues to perform strongly at a national level, with particularly high growth in North West England and Wales. In London prices continue to show resilience across a number of indicators.
- 1.6 Between June and July, house prices grew by 0.4%, reversing a small decline between May and June to give broadly flat growth over the last quarter. The annual rate of growth nationally in July was 7.6% according to the Halifax House Price Index, representing a slight slowdown since the last report to the committee. In London the rate was lower at 5.2%, with outer London boroughs seeing slightly higher growth. In Barnet the market has also remained resilient, with the majority of homes achieving asking price.

- 1.7 The winding up of the Stamp Duty break has not translated into an immediate fall in prices, with emerging analysis suggesting that low interest rates, higher savings rates and changing housing preferences have been a more significant determinant of house price changes than the Stamp Duty holiday.
- 1.8 In terms of Barnet's planning system, this picture of market resilience is reinforced by figure 1 below, which shows the volume of applications received by the council up to June 2021, which is higher than the equivalent month in the year before the pandemic.

Figure 1.



Skills and Jobs

- 1.9 The pandemic has had far reaching impacts on Barnet's residents and employers, and as the country emerges from government restrictions, the council's Economic Development team is taking action to promote economic recovery and limit the long-term impacts of the pandemic.
- 1.10 As of July 2021, there were 16,220 Barnet residents (6.3% of the working age population) claiming Job Seekers' Allowance, down from a peak of 19,030 in February 2021, or 7.4% of the working age population. While this shows that unemployment is reducing, the numbers are still far greater than those seen prior to the pandemic (e.g. there were 6,455 claimants in February 2020, 2.5% of the working population).
- 1.11 Furthermore, there were 17,900 'furloughed employments' as of July 2021 compared to 61,000 up to July 2020. As the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) ends this month, the council is keen to ensure that Barnet residents are supported to minimise the risk of long-term unemployment.
- 1.12 The council recognises the importance of seizing opportunities in growth sectors as part of economic recovery, a point emphasised in both the Growth Strategy 2020-30 and Work, Skills and Productivity Action Plan. Nationally and locally there has been a fall in unemployment and an increase in job vacancies, and there are many opportunities in growing sectors such as health, social care, construction, creative sectors and the "green"

economy. Working with our partners to maximise these opportunities in a joined-up way will ensure we get the best outcomes for Barnet residents.

- 1.13 Between April and July 2021, council-funded employment programmes successfully supported 272 residents into work. This includes the BOOST Project, Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) projects (Care Leavers, Routes into Construction, Supported Internships and Risk of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)) and SHAW Trust's delivery of the Work and Health Programme, but does not include other programmes such as those delivered by the DWP. This activity delivers directly on the council's commitment to support young people and those furthest from the labour market.
- 1.14 The council has been successful in securing £255,000 worth of funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government for provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training. Officers are working with Barnet and Southgate College to deliver a programme that will benefit Barnet residents and businesses.
- 1.15 The council is committed to delivering the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart programme locally to help young people who are claiming universal credit gain valuable work experience. So far, 94 roles have been approved with a target of 200 placements for the council.
- 1.16 An estate-based hub offering a range of support services to enhance employability and provide access to jobs has been launched in Grahame Park. Hubs in Dollis Valley and West Hendon are due to open in September.
- 1.17 With the end of the CJRS imminent, as well as a reduction in government business support programmes, employment and skills priorities going into the Autumn include:
 - Reviewing and refreshing the Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Delivering Skills, Employment and Training Through S106' to ensure that it maximises the resources to deliver employment and skills programmes.
 - Scoping and reviewing opportunities for securing new sources of external funding, including the Mayor's Academy Hubs.
 - Working with partners to develop new approaches for high-growth sectors focusing on health and social care, green skills, construction trades and creative industries.
 - Expanding existing employment programmes to increase the scale and pace of support for Barnet residents.
 - Maximising training and employment outcomes on development sites, particularly but not only, at Brent Cross Town.
- 1.18 The Work, Skills and Productivity Action Plan that was approved by Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2021 contains a detailed delivery programme, and is due to report back on progress twice per year. The first such report will return to the Committee meeting scheduled for 16 November 2021.

Business Support

- 1.19 The council has paid out over £78M across 13 grant schemes since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak¹. Officers continue to work with business support organisations, through

¹ Up to June 2021.

networks and directly with Barnet companies to promote grant opportunities and ensure that as many businesses as possible benefit from the assistance.

- 1.20 In partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and others, officers delivered a series of webinars to enable businesses to access professional and technical support as they start to recover from the pandemic. The first of these was focused on the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Sector and the second on financial planning for SMEs.
- 1.21 Officers have also initiated an engagement project focused on Barnet's large employers (250+ employees) to better understand their needs and to promote employment initiatives. This will be formally launched in the Autumn.
- 1.22 The council continues to explore opportunities to deliver flexible workspace across the borough through its relationships with operators and developers/landlords. Potential sites have been identified in Cricklewood, Brent Cross Town and Chipping Barnet. Officers are also developing a broader approach to inward investment that will help businesses – particularly those in growing sectors – to access space across the commercial property market and in town centres.
- 1.23 Finally, the council continues to promote advice and guidance for businesses through the monthly Barnet Business Buzz bulletin and other channels, as well as through on-going partnerships with organisations such as the FSB, North London Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, Barnet and Southgate College and Middlesex University.

Town Centres

- 1.24 Officers have been assessing the health of Barnet's high streets as they start to emerge from the pandemic through analysis of commercial vacancy rates (as recorded on the Business Rates register). The data suggests that while there are clear differences between the borough's seven main town centres, for the time being, Barnet's high streets are holding out against further decline. In some cases, they are actually fairing better than before the pandemic – as measured by vacancy rates alone.
- 1.25 Over the two years to August 2021, the total number of commercial properties in Barnet reduced by 411 units from 8,956 to 8,545. Across the same period, the number of vacant commercial properties went from 1,203 to 734. The borough-wide vacancy rate therefore went from 13% in August 2019, to 12% in February 2020 (immediately prior to the first national lockdown), to 9% in August 2021. So vacancy rates have in fact improved over the period. By comparison, Greater London recorded an 11% vacancy rate in the second quarter of 2021 (according to a report of the British Retail Consortium and Local Data Company).
- 1.26 As noted, there is variation in commercial vacancy rates across town centres although Golders Green is the only main town centre in which the rate has increased over the two-year period.
- 1.27 While the overall picture is perhaps more encouraging than anticipated, it is reflective of Barnet's strong culture of business start-ups. It should also be noted, however, that as government assistance, such as Business Rates relief and the ban on commercial evictions, come to an end, many businesses will likely face additional financial pressures. Vacancy rates are also a point-in-time measurement and do not reflect the length of time

that properties have been vacant nor the turnover of tenants. They also do not speak to the diversity or quality of the offer in Barnet's town centres. Officers are undertaking further analysis and will report on these issues in future.

- 1.28 In terms of activities to support town centres, the Economic Development team is working closely with colleagues across a range of services to progress town centre recovery plans, as well as engaging directly with businesses, Town Teams and other stakeholders. Key recovery updates in Barnet's main town centres and West Hendon Broadway include:
- 1.29 *Burnt Oak*: Activities underway in this town centre are covered in more detail in agenda item 9 [Town Centres Capital Programme Update].
- 1.30 *Chipping Barnet*: Following adoption of the Chipping Barnet Community Plan at June 2021 Housing and Growth Committee, officers have been progressing feasibility studies for the five priority projects identified. Business cases will be brought back to Committee as required in due course. Council officers have also been supporting the Chipping Barnet Town Team with project development following a successful bid to the GLA High Streets Challenge Fund.
- 1.31 *Cricklewood*: Discussions are on-going with Network Rail regarding the former Railway House site at Cricklewood Station and its potential use as a community/workspace. Officers are planning for the ground floor activation of the site at 164-168 Cricklewood Broadway, which is being re-developed as a result of Brent Cross Town highways works. Unfortunately, the Discover Barnet Presents event planned for Cricklewood Broadway could not go ahead due to highways works in the town centre. Officers are working with the local Business Association to plan an alternative celebration event at a later date.
- 1.32 *Edgware*: Planning is on-going with the new Edgware Partnership Board, established with Ballymore, Transport for London and local business stakeholders to drive town centre revitalisation in advance of the Ballymore/TfL development. The programme includes new branding and identity development, a town centre website including a local business directory, a cultural masterplan and a public realm design study. The Partnership Board has engaged with local ward members, the Edgware Town Team and other local businesses to ensure that they are involved in the emerging plans. A Community Carnival was held in late August in partnership with Ballymore. This was well received by high street businesses and saw over 5,000 people in attendance.
- 1.33 *Finchley Central*: Activities underway in this town centre are covered in more detail in agenda item 9 [Town Centres Capital Programme Update].
- 1.34 *Golders Green*: Activities underway in this town centre are covered in more detail in agenda item 9 [Town Centres Capital Programme Update].
- 1.35 *North Finchley*: Activities underway in this town centre are covered in more detail in agenda item 10 [North Finchley Site Assembly Agreement and Land Agreement].
- 1.36 *West Hendon Broadway*: Planning is underway to deliver improvements to local shopfronts and areas of the public realm, including new planters and seating. A wider package of Business Support is also being commissioned. Officers are working with colleagues at Barratt London to ensure that the Highways investment being planned as part of the West Hendon Estate renewal also maximises the benefits to the town centre public realm. For

example, an early opportunity has been identified to improve tree planting on the Broadway. Planning Permission was granted to erect a new mural on a derelict building on the Broadway to reduce blight although the property owner subsequently commenced activity to improve the unit. As part of the Discover Barnet Presents programme, a summer event was delivered with local partners to support the re-opening of the high street.

- 1.37 In addition to the above activities focused on Barnet's seven main town centres and West Hendon Broadway, officers have been leading other interventions across town centres in support of COVID-19 economic recovery.
- 1.38 *Temporary Steetspace Fund:* In line with government guidance, over the past year a cross-departmental team of council officers has supported businesses to trade from the public realm through a combination of extended pavement licencing and on-street parklets to enable outdoor eating and drinking in town centres. These activities have enabled the hospitality and leisure sector to continue to trade while managing social distancing.
- 1.39 The Temporary Steetspace Fund resulted in a total of 20 parklet installations across town centres (following relocation and removal where they were not appropriate or being fully utilised). As part of the programme, officers are now conducting an evaluation of the Fund and have been surveying businesses and collecting data on parklet use. The full evaluation findings will be made available to ward members upon completion but key headlines are:
 - Almost all businesses surveyed agreed that the Temporary Steetspace Fund has been beneficial to their business
 - All of those surveyed wanted to continue to use the parklets to support their business in future and most would be prepared to pay to do so
 - Benefits to businesses include increased capacity for attracting and serving customers, providing a place for people who are 'COVID conscious' and do not want to go inside the premises and promoting new types of alfresco dining
 - Benefits to the wider high street include adding more character, giving the impression of fresher air due to the planting and providing extra cycle parking
- 1.40 Crucially, feedback suggests that the parklets have had no perceptible impact on the overall usage of parking spaces in town centres. This assessment is supported by analysis of parking data and feedback from relevant officers.
- 1.41 The Government has now extended the temporary trading measures to the end of September 2022 to facilitate ongoing economic recovery. As such, council officers are developing plans to extend the Temporary Steetspace Fund and will present these to the relevant Committees in due course, as required. Any proposals will build on findings from the evaluation as well as feedback from officers and ward members. We will also ensure that officers continue to monitor impacts on the wider town centre. Where any Temporary Steetspace Fund parklets are shown to be under-utilised or causing harm to the wider town centre, action will be taken.
- 1.42 *Town Centre Shop Windows Competition:* To celebrate the re-opening of Barnet's high streets, the council launched a Shop Window Competition as part of the Discover Barnet campaign. This was intended to encourage independent businesses across town centres to refresh their window displays and provided them with an opportunity to access funding to make further improvements. The competition closed in mid-August and officers are

currently assessing entries before making recommendations to the borough's Small Business Champion.

- 1.43 *Town Centre Heroes Exhibition:* In July, the council launched a Town Centre Heroes Exhibition in the borough's seven main town centres. This initiative aims to celebrate people who have dedicated themselves to making a difference to their community over the past year. We received over 60 nominations and are now undertaking interviews, producing exhibition materials and securing prominent locations in town centres to host the exhibition. This will be promoted through social media, local community networks and other channels. The exhibition will also available online to ensure that those who are less able to visit in person can access the content.

Digital access and inclusion

- 1.44 Work with gigabit broadband operators has continued, and in June the wayleave framework unlocked a new partnership with Hyperoptic Limited, with other operators due to sign up to the framework in September. Surveying of council housing stock for installation continues. The timing of proposed investments to install fibre networks is from 2022 onwards, and details of the respective programmes will be published when this is agreed later in the Autumn.
- 1.45 The three-year rollout programme with Community Fibre to deliver fibre broadband to almost 14,000 council properties (subject to technical surveys) has proceeded at pace, with over 1,500 properties connected to gigabit speed broadband services since February, and a further 300 properties seeing installation commence over the Summer. We expect to reach over 2,000 homes by October. In addition, a new Single Dwelling Unit (SDU) investment programme to install fibre to non-Barnet Homes residential streets has begun in Burnt Oak and Hale Wards, which will see up to 10,500 homes connected to gigabit speed broadband by the end of 2021/22.
- 1.46 Work continues with further interested network operators to ensure that their plans will bring forward investment in fibre broadband services across the borough in a timely manner. Officers will ensure that these remain in line with the principles for investment agreed by elected members in September 2020. All the relevant operators have 'code rights' that give them permission to install new ducting in the public highway. As far as possible, the council will seek to shape their activities to minimise disturbance from any such works.
- 1.47 Since April 2021 the council has been working with partners in the West London Alliance to map the potential for council-owned assets to align with the demands of industry for small cells investment. In parallel, work has begun on a collective legal framework and valuation process to minimise the barriers for industry to invest in 5G network development.

Supporting Homeless Reduction

- 1.48 *Rough Sleepers:* Barnet Homes has successfully moved 94 single homeless people into the private rented sector since the government's "Everyone In" directive began last March. Homeless Action in Barnet will be supporting a new 43-unit block in the borough opening at the end of August, which will be used to accommodate many of the 86 rough sleepers still currently residing in temporary accommodation.

- 1.49 While the easing of lockdown measures continues, the pandemic is still considered to be ongoing and the council will continue to provide temporary accommodation to vulnerable rough sleepers who do not have recourse to public funds via the COVID-19 support grant received from government. Barnet Homes staff are working closely with Public Health colleagues to ensure that the approach to rough sleepers in the borough is appropriate and fully aligned with the public health situation as it transpires over the coming year. Phase 3 planning is now starting to look at booster vaccinations for vulnerable rough sleepers across the region.
- 1.50 Historically, Together in Barnet would provide accommodation for rough sleepers without recourse to public funds, however they are currently unable to provide night shelters due to the restrictions on shared sleeping arrangements. They have, however, submitted another bid to the government's Winter Transformation Fund to pay for 16 hotel rooms to be available from October this year.
- 1.51 *Tenants in the Private Rented Accommodation:* At this point it is very difficult to gauge the extent to which tenants in the private rented sector in Barnet have accrued rent arrears over the course of the pandemic. Data on court possession claims issued by private sector landlords in Barnet² show that 97 claims were issued in Quarter 1 2020 compared to 44 in Quarter 1 2021 and so far in Quarter 2, 28 claims have been issued. Barnet Homes is closely monitoring demand and currently, while applications are relatively high, most admissions into temporary accommodation are single-person households.
- 1.52 Barnet Homes has developed contingency plans to increase homelessness prevention activities as and when required and a contingency budget is being held by the council for this purpose. The additional resources will support staff to manage the homeless application process focusing on prevention and relief duties and personalised housing plans. The budget will also provide for an increased homeless prevention fund to help resolve arrears and help families remain in their tenancies or support them into new accommodation that avoids temporary accommodation placements.
- 1.53 To reduce the numbers of people becoming homeless Barnet Homes provides a tenancy sustainment service and the BOOST project delivers employment and benefit support services to households facing difficulties. Barnet Homes has specialist advisers who work with private rented tenants and landlords and will be promoting the government's new mediation service³ to try and prevent cases progressing to court hearings. BOOST provides free and accessible support for any Barnet resident across three key themes – Employment, Financials and Wellbeing. The team comprises staff from Barnet Homes, Barnet Council BELs, Discretionary Housing Payments and Future Path and, historically, has operated from outreach venues in the heart of communities – Burnt Oak, Cricklewood, Friern Barnet as well as job clubs at Probation and sessions with Care Leavers. To ensure that services have been accessible during lockdown, BOOST created a website, set up a dedicated call centre, started a webinar and online training programme and expanded their social media presence.
- 1.54 *Barnet Households in Temporary Accommodation:* Households in temporary accommodation (TA) are reducing as more rough sleepers are settled into the private

² [Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics: data visualisation tool \(mojanalytics.xyz\)](https://mojanalytics.xyz/)

³ [Rental Mediation Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rental-mediation-service)

rented sector and households are moved into new-build social housing units. At the end of July there were 2,285 households in TA compared to 2,654 at the end of June 2020 when “Everyone in” meant large increases in admissions. There are 189 households in TA whose housing cases have been formally cancelled. These are cases where a negative decision has been issued or those that have refused offers of suitable accommodation. Barnet Homes staff are reviewing each case, ensuring that offers of accommodation have been made and any risks are assessed to ensure that any complex issues or vulnerabilities are carefully considered. Barnet Homes and the council do not want to see vulnerable people at risk of being street homeless and therefore the approach to issuing notices on any households will be agreed in consultation with the council and Public Health.

- 1.55 *Barnet Homes/Council Tenants:* No council tenants have been evicted since the beginning of the pandemic and Barnet Homes always seeks to engage as early as possible with tenants experiencing financial hardship to ensure that they are properly supported to address any arrears which may be accruing. There are a variety of support arrangements in place aimed at benefit maximisation, agreeing sustainable payment plans, employment, training and education options, as well as referrals to other agencies for appropriate support.
- 1.56 Even prior to the pandemic, Barnet Homes only evicted a very small number of tenants each year for non-payment of rent and exhaustive action is always taken to engage with and support residents to sustain their tenancies wherever possible.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 As noted, the council is taking a comprehensive, cross-service approach to COVID-19 recovery, aligned to the Barnet Plan. 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, the Housing Strategy 2019-24 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 economic recovery throughout the COVID-19 emergency. This would, however, see the failure of many more Barnet companies, leading to deeper and longer-lasting social and economic impacts within the borough than would otherwise be the case. It would also likely have a negative impact on council revenue streams through Business Rates.
- 3.2 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 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 Officers will assess the impact of projects throughout project delivery.
- 4.3 Following Committee, officers will continue to maintain regular communication with relevant stakeholder groups – notably businesses, Members and residents – in accordance with the various programmes of work.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1 The council's response to COVID-19 and its impacts on employees and businesses directly support objectives in the Barnet Plan, particularly the 'Thriving' workstream, as well as objectives set out in the Growth Strategy 2020-30 and the Long-Term Transport Strategy.

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

- 5.2 Where there are financial implications or decisions associated with recovery activities, these will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, as will any funding decisions associated with projects outlined in the Growth Strategy annual report and future employment and skills activities.
- 5.3 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 any 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.
- 5.4 Post Brexit, the State Aid rules have been replaced by the Subsidy Control Rules 2021. The Procurement of public works and services contracts over the relevant financial thresholds must still observe the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and Subsidy Control Rules 2021 where applicable. There is a new process for advertising the tender in the Contracts Finder. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires the Council to consider whether it can achieve an improvement to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area as part of the procurement of these services. If so, the social value objectives identified must be written into the procurement process. All of this must be achieved with regard to value for money and in a way that is compliant with existing public procurement law. "Social value" objectives can include the creation of employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities for local people, trading opportunities for local businesses and the third sector through contract delivery.

Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.5 The council's Constitution, Article 7.5 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.

Insight

- 5.6 In recent months, the council has significantly improved the way in which it uses data, insight and analysis to drive decision making and service delivery. A new cross-cutting data insight team has been established which is now working closely with Growth colleagues as well as others across the organisation. This report draws on various analyses undertaken by the Insight Team.

Social Value

- 5.7 The council must take into account the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to consider how what is to be procured might improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area and how it might act to secure such improvement in conducting procurement. Social value is a core part of the Recovery Framework and will be maximised throughout.

Risk Management

- 5.8 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 relating to economic recovery.
- 5.9 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

- 5.10 The Equality 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.
- 5.11 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

- 5.12 The Barnet Plan, the council's Recovery Framework and the Growth Strategy are intended to benefit all communities and groups who live, work and visit the borough, including those with protected characteristics.
- 5.13 An Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment was undertaken on the Growth Strategy, and the outcomes of these were summarised in the report to Housing and Growth Committee of January 2020 seeking approval of the Strategy.
- 5.14 Where individual decisions are required in relation to the recovery programme or Growth Strategy Delivery Plan, 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) on a case-by-case basis to fully appraise the impacts associated with any proposed course of action.

Corporate Parenting

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

Consultation and Engagement

- 5.16 Officers are clear that the Recovery Framework and Corporate Plan cannot be delivered in isolation if they are going to be fully responsive and effective in enabling the borough to emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. Consultation with other levels of government, partners, service users and the wider community is critical to ensuring that our recovery activities are focused on the end user.
- 5.17 Meaningful stakeholder engagement remains a key part of project development. Consultation and engagement plans will be prepared for all new housing, regeneration and development projects where required. Any new schemes brought forward will be subject to consultation where legally required or where the council considers it appropriate.

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/COVID19%20Recovery%20Planning.pdf>
- 6.3 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>

- 6.4 Housing and Growth Committee, 27 January 2020: Growth Strategy
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s52934/Growth%20Strategy.pdf>
- 6.5 Housing and Growth Committee, 14 September 2020, item 12: COVID-19: Recovery Plan – Thriving
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=696&MId=10226&Ver=4>
- 6.6 Housing and Growth Committee, 25 November 2020, item 17: COVID-19: Recovery Plan – Thriving
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=696&MId=10227&Ver=4>
- 6.7 Housing and Growth Committee, 25 January 2021, item 9: COVID-19 Recovery Plan,
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=696&MId=10228&Ver=4>
- 6.8 Housing and Growth Committee, 14 June 2021, item 7, COVID-19: Recovery Plan – Thriving
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s65201/COVID-19%20Recovery%20Plan%20Thriving.pdf>