



Public Document Pack

North Devon Council
Brynsworthy Environment Centre
Barnstaple
North Devon EX31 3NP

K. Miles
Chief Executive.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee will be held as a Virtual – Online meeting on **MONDAY, 3RD AUGUST, 2020 at 10.00 am.**

Members of the Strategy and Resources Councillor Worden (Chair)
Committee

Councillors Barker, Lane, Leaver, Lofthouse, Patrinos, Pearson, Prowse, L. Spear, Wilkinson and Yabsley

AGENDA

8. North Devon Launchpad 2030 - Covid 19 Recovery Strategy (Pages 5 - 58)
Report by Head of Place (attached).

If you have any enquiries about this agenda, please contact Corporate and Community Services, telephone 01271 388253

24.07.20



North Devon Council protocol on recording/filming at Council meetings

The Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making. Recording is permitted at Council meetings that are open to the public. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be recorded. The Chairman of the meeting will make sure any request not to be recorded is respected.

The rules that the Council will apply are:

1. The recording must be overt (clearly visible to anyone at the meeting) and must not disrupt proceedings. The Council will put signs up at any meeting where we know recording is taking place and a reminder will be issued at the commencement of virtual meetings.
2. The Chairman of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.
3. We will ask for recording to stop if the meeting goes into 'part B' where the public is excluded for confidentiality reasons. In such a case, the person filming should leave the room ensuring all recording equipment is switched off. In a virtual meeting the public will be excluded from the meeting while in Part B.
4. Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. We ensure that agendas for, and signage at, Council meetings make it clear that recording can take place – anyone not wishing to be recorded must advise the Chairman at the earliest opportunity. Public contributions to virtual meetings will be recorded, unless, at the Chair's discretion, recording is deemed inappropriate in accordance with point 2 above.
5. The recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view.

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Open

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Date: 3 August 2020
TOPIC: NORTH DEVON LAUNCHPAD 2030 – COVID-19 RECOVERY STRATEGY
REPORT BY: HEAD OF PLACE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring forward an approach to recovery from the COVID-19 (C19) pandemic to guide the work of Council, both within the organisation but also for wider North Devon.
- 1.2 As part of our approach to recovery, it will be necessary to take a strategic look at how the impact of the pandemic may change life on an ongoing basis for our residents, businesses and the Council as an organisation. Whilst further outbreaks may occur it is now time to consider how we maintain resilience of critical services and plan for longer term recovery.
- 1.4 It is likely that a new “normal” will need to be established. It will take time to resume service delivery; some services may be reduced for some time to come, the focus of services may change and some may not return. The way we do things will change with a move to more on-line transactions for our customers and more homeworking for our employees.
- 1.5 There is still much uncertainty about the pandemic, even now that lockdown has been eased. Government guidance is arriving on a regular basis and is being fed into our response and recovery planning. In the meantime, we have begun to formulate a local approach to recovery. This work is in its early stages and the timeline and resources needed will be developed as Council officers’ further detail the work and gain a better understanding as more evidence emerges.
- 1.6 Critical to this work is the wellbeing of our communities and the recovery of our economy. An environment policy is under development by the Council and at every level there is commitment to a ‘green’ recovery. As well as presenting enormous challenges C19 has prompted a relook at what is important. The Council and its partners are taking the approach that there is also opportunity to build back better, aiming for North Devon to be stronger, fairer and greener.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Strategy and Resources Committee:

- 1) Note the activity undertaken so far by the Council and its partners to respond to the impacts of COVID-19.
- 2) Approve the draft 2030 Vision and its use for consultation
- 3) Approve the COVID-19 Recovery Framework.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Effective planning will be essential to aiding the recovery of the district and the Council over the coming months and years.

3.2 The lockdown has changed the way the Council, residents and businesses are operating and this needs to be considered in planning for the future. The Council's priorities and plans made before the pandemic will need to be reviewed in light of these changes and the impact that C19 has had on the district.

4 REPORT

4.1 C19 has had a devastating impact on our community, the local economy and the Council. Planning for recovery, both short and longer term, will be key as we move forward. It is proposed that 'Supporting Recovery' will become the overarching priority for the Council in its service delivery and in its work with partners and community.

4.2 This report presents a framework for recovery from C19, defined by a number of priority themes and actions. These actions will be subject to change as further evidence of the impact of C19 comes forward. We are determined that recovery responds to the desire of many that we build back better than before, therefore we are proposing that the our work is guided by an aspiration vision for the future.

4.3 2030 Vision

Northern Devon in 2030 remains a highly desirable place where people are able to live well, work productively, move freely and benefit from excellent education, health, leisure and cultural facilities in harmony with nature and our world-class environment.

To achieve this our ambitions are:

- A sustainable, inclusive economy
- A net zero carbon society, biodiversity gain and environmental improvement
- The health and wellbeing of our communities

4.4 Themes and Actions

The following themes and actions are proposed to provide a framework for the recovery of the Council and the district:

1. **Improving overall population health and wellbeing and supporting the most vulnerable** – develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness;

work with partners to develop longer-term pathways out of poverty for the most deprived; gather evidence and lessons on long term approaches to reducing inequalities and crisis support.

2. Council services:

1. Critical service resilience - Ensure that critical services are resilient and continue to operate effectively

2. Modernise the Council - maximize the reach of new arrangements which replace pre-COVID-19 systems

3. Reimage local services - transform the Council - reimagine how services are delivered and recast service transformation plans; develop an IT, technology and engagement strategy to improve services and drive efficiencies.

3 Secure the Council's finances – lobby government to fully compensate the Council for the financial impacts of C19; review budgets to identify scope for in-year savings; reduce non-essential spending; begin the process to set the Council's budget for 2021/22; refresh the Council's medium-term financial strategy.

4 Support the local economy, businesses and infrastructure of the District to a position of stability and functionality in a constructive manner whilst seeking to support access to all opportunities for assistance and growth.

5 Housing, regeneration and development – Create a housing strategy; support people in private sector rented accommodation; create Town Plans; encourage good design and genuinely sustainable development; 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.

6 Climate change and the green economy – embed in the recovery work – publish the Council's Environmental Policy, Strategy and Action Plan; identify opportunities to reduce carbon emissions across Council operations; consider options to further promote sustainable travel; work to ensure that future housing and regeneration schemes are subject to the highest possible environmental standards.

7 Communities and social capital - ensure that affected communities are fully involved in the recovery process. Harness social capital – adopt an approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making neighbourhoods; communications strategies which create two-way conversations with communities to inform decision-making.

4.5 Governance Structure

4.6 It is proposed that working groups should be set up for each of the themes, led by a member of the senior management team, working with lead members.

- 4.7 The Chief Executive will be the Senior Responsible Officer for the programme. Senior management team (SMT) will maintain oversight of the working groups and function as the Board for the programme. It is anticipated that there will be some overlap between the themes and this will be co-ordinated by SMT. Lead officers will be responsible for providing regular updates and reports to SMT and facilitating discussions to shape work programmes. SMT will review existing Council corporate priorities and identify proposals and options as part of the recovery phase.
- 4.8 Strategy and Resources Committee will be briefed on the plans and progress being made by the work streams. Key decisions, including those arrived at through partnership working will be referred to Strategy and Resources Committee in line with normal working protocols.
- 4.9 It is proposed that the Policy Development Committee will take the lead on scrutiny of the Council's response and recovery plans. In order to engage more widely with scrutiny the Chairs of the other Committees could be invited to attend the Policy Development Committee meetings.

4.10 Devon and the Heart of the South West Recovery

- 4.11 In addition to our own local plans for recovery we are working within the context of the plans for recovery for Devon, led by DCC and for Devon and Somerset, led by the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership and the HotSW Joint Committee. The business and economy recovery work for Devon is most advanced and the recovery prospectus is included as Appendix 2 to this report. Council officers and representatives from North Devon partners such as Petroc have played key roles in the Devon work, participating in the steering and theme task groups.
- 4.12 The HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership has produced a recovery plan and this is included as Appendix 3 to this report.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There will be significant resource implications resulting from delivery of the recovery strategy in terms of officer time, capital and revenue expenditure, however, there is no specific implications in respect of this report at this time. The overall action plan and individual work streams will be subject to a further report to Strategy and Resources Committee.

6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be completed where necessary as part of the recovery planning process.

7 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Article or Appendix and paragraph	Referred or delegated power?	Key decision?
Article 7.12	Appendix 4, para 17	Yes

8 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- NDC Corporate Plan
- North Devon Launchpad 2030
- Team Devon COVID-19 Economy and Business Recovery Prospectus
- HotSW LEP - Covid-19 Route Map to Recovery
- Government websites and other information on Covid-19

Appendix 1 - North Devon Launchpad 2030

Appendix 2 - Team Devon COVID-19 Economy and Business Recovery
Prospectus

Appendix 3 – HotSW LEP - Covid-19 Route Map to Recovery

The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

10 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

- 10.1 The author confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers.

Lead Members:	Leader
Author:	Michael Tichford
Date:	22 July 2020
Reference:	

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North Devon Launchpad 2030

Stronger, Fairer, Greener

Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

July 2020

Title of Document:	Covid-19 Recovery Strategy
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Author	Michael Tichford
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Revision History

Revision Date	Version No.	Summary of Change	Changes	Authorised by	Date
26.06.2020	v0.1	New document including vision	MT		
27.06.2020	v0.2	Minor amends	MT		
30.06.2020	v0.3	Recovery activity to date deleted. Full vision moved upfront	MT		
06.07.2020	v0.4	KM revisions and amended recovery activity added back.	MT		
10.07.2020	v0.5 – 0.6	Minor updates and restructuring and amends from SMT	MT		
27.07.2020	V1.0a	Governance changed	MT	SMT	27.07.20

Distribution

Version No.	Date	Name	Dept.	Organisation
v0.1	26.06.20	CEO		NDC
v0.1	26.06.20	ED Team	Place	NDC
v0.2	29.06.20	SMT		NDC
v0.3	30.06.20	SMT/ED		NDC
v0.5	10.07.20	Leader / Deputy Leader SMT ED BT/SH		NDC
v1.0	27.07.20	S&C Comm Agenda		NDC

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1. Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has created a set of circumstances unlike anything seen in this country in recent times. The impact across all aspects of life has been significant, changing the way services can be delivered, testing health systems and putting the global economy on hold. As we begin thinking about the future, we do so with respect and sympathy for the victims, their families and friends, of a disease that does not discriminate.

Amongst the challenges, however, there have been many examples of North Devon rising to the challenge, people pulling together and supporting each other. As we talk about recovery to a strong future for North Devon, we are mindful that the direct and deadly impact of coronavirus continues and our primary focus with our partners' remains protecting the health of our residents as far as is possible. It is, however, only fitting as a legacy that we capture what has been positive in response and work together to shape a future North Devon that even better supports the wellbeing of all our residents.

The recovery phase is different to that normally seen in response to an emergency, such as a flood. The timescales are not clear, with potential for changing restrictions on life reflecting fluctuating future peaks and outbreaks, the potential for services to be restarted then stopped again over a prolonged period, with particular communities (e.g. those being shielded) and particular areas having different restrictions to others.

This creates an extremely complex and challenging set of circumstances that require flexible and agile responses. The recovery is the process of restart, regrow and reset following the pandemic, to get back to "normal" functioning across our communities and towns. However, in doing so, we must recognise that what was "normal" before may not be possible or desirable in the future and our district may be forever changed by what we have faced. There are many opportunities to use the learning of the response phase to improve the ways services are delivered and build upon the new arrangements put in place. Therefore, a sense of renewal within communities

and services, representing opportunities to return to something better and make the most of future opportunities to create a positive future is critical.

As we respond with this positive approach, we will re-evaluate our priorities through engagement with our partners and with the community and this will influence our actions for recovery. Local authorities have been hard hit by Covid-19 in terms of staffing, restrictions on how we operate, loss of income and increased costs, however, by maintaining a focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for people, we will capitalise on this opportunity to build back better.

This will only be achieved through the collective working of North Devon's communities, businesses, organisations, and public services. The Government's recovery strategy and the process by which restrictions are implemented or eased will shape the both the approaches and timescales of the actions we can take locally. This is changing over time and we must recognise that there are trade-offs in all these decisions in the protection of public health now, the future health and wellbeing of people, the economic impacts and the effects on our environment.

Most importantly, at the heart of all decisions, must be the health and wellbeing of our residents.

2. Executive summary

This document provides a strategy for the recovery from Covid-19 (C19) of North Devon Council and for the whole of the district. Certain elements of the Plan have a northern Devon focus, building on existing partnerships and plans and reflecting the distinct economic, cultural and community geography of the area that is covered by North Devon and Torridge District Councils.

It provides an overview of the Council's initial response to the virus and the priority themes and actions which will frame the area's recovery.

Elements of the recovery will be led through a partnership approach, utilising the Northern Devon Futures, One Northern Devon and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve partnerships to help steer the area through the challenges and opportunities ahead, reflecting our desire to build back **Stronger, Fairer, Greener**.

During 2019/20 the Northern Devon Futures partnership has been working on a 2050 vision for the area. In light of C19 it is suggested that a shorter timescale would better reflect current uncertainties, whilst allowing for the considerable time that it will take to truly see recovery realised. Therefore, this vision is to 2030.

Draft 2030 Vision

Northern Devon in 2030 remains a highly desirable place where people are able to live well, work productively, move freely and benefit from excellent economic, education, health, leisure and cultural opportunities which are in harmony with our world-class environment.

To achieve this the objectives of our vision are:

- A sustainable, inclusive economy
- A net zero carbon society, biodiversity gain and environmental improvement
- The health and wellbeing of our communities

Themes and Actions

The following themes and actions provide a framework for the recovery of the Council and the district:

1. **Improving overall population health and wellbeing and supporting the most vulnerable** - develop a sustainable approach to tackling homelessness; work with partners to develop longer-term pathways out of poverty for the most deprived; gather evidence and lessons on long term approaches to reducing inequalities and crisis support.

2. Council services:

1. **Critical service resilience** - Ensure that critical services are resilient and continue to operate effectively
2. **Modernise the Council** - maximize the reach of new arrangements which replace pre-COVID-19 systems
3. **Reimage local services** - transform the Council - reimagine how services are delivered and recast service transformation plans; develop an IT, technology and engagement strategy to improve services and drive efficiencies.
- 3 **Secure the Council's finances** – lobby government to fully compensate the Council for the financial impacts of C19; review budgets to identify scope for in-year savings; reduce non-essential spending; begin the process to set the Council's budget for 2021/22; refresh the Council's medium-term financial strategy.
- 4 **Support the local economy, businesses and infrastructure** of the District to a position of stability and functionality in a constructive manner whilst seeking to support access to all opportunities for assistance and growth.
- 5 **Housing, regeneration and development** – Create a housing strategy; support people in private sector rented accommodation; create Town Plans; encourage good design and genuinely sustainable development; 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.
- 6 **Climate change and the green economy** – embed in the recovery work – publish the Council's Environmental Policy, Strategy and Action Plan; identify opportunities to reduce carbon emissions across Council operations; consider options to further promote sustainable travel; work to ensure that future housing and regeneration schemes are subject to the highest possible environmental standards.
- 7 **Communities and social capital** - ensure that affected communities are fully involved in the recovery process. Harness social capital – adopt an approach which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in neighbourhoods; communications strategies which create two-way conversations with communities to inform decision-making.

Oversight and monitoring progress

Utilise existing strong local partnerships to guide the recovery work, each partner reporting through their own processes, and engaging and co-producing with the community throughout.

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

In order to monitor progress, the Council is developing a dashboard of measures to identify the impacts of C19 on the economy, people and communities. These will be tracked monthly (wherever possible) to enable timely action.

Engaging with residents, businesses and community groups

It is crucial to consult and engage with a range of partners, residents and businesses to ensure that future plans are comprehensive and that the whole of North Devon feels connected to the recovery.

The North Devon Futures, One Northern Devon and Biosphere partnerships provide an opportunity to seek views from a wide range of partners but it is recognised engagement needs to go even wider and deeper. The Council will use the variety of communications and media channels it has available to consult and engage with residents and businesses, including the use of social media surveys, resident consultations, and use of Ward Councillors to gather views. The approach of co-production¹ will also be explored.

¹ The LGA notes a definition of co-production as "delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change".

3. The purpose of this report

3.1 This report presents a strategic framework for recovery from Covid-19 (C19) for North Devon Council and the district of North Devon. It sets out a number of priority themes and actions which will frame recovery. These actions will be subject to change as further evidence of the impact of C19 comes forward. We are determined that recovery responds to the desire of many that we build back better than before, therefore we are proposing that the our work is guided by an aspirational vision for the future.

3.2 The draft vision in Section 4 has been drawn from a variety of sources and been subject to a limited consultation amongst partners. The paper which accompanies the visions is intended to start discussion with community and partners our aspiration for the sort of place we wish North Devon to be.

3.3 For North Devon Council, the report sets out some areas of focus for how the organisation intends to operate in the future - as well as how services might be delivered differently - with the opportunity to embed the flexibilities which have developed as the Council has adapted to C19.

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

3.5 Ultimately, the future prosperity of the district in the aftermath of C19 will depend on the communities and businesses of North Devon, however, the Council and its strategic partners have a vital leadership and delivery role in continuing to take immediate actions to keep people safe, whilst working towards a compelling long-term vision for the future.

3.6 The report emphasises the need for northern Devon's recovery to be led through a partnership approach, utilising the Northern Devon Futures and One Northern Devon partnerships as the key fora for steering the area through the challenges and opportunities ahead. The partnerships brings together organisations from across the public, private and community sectors and are well placed to oversee the district's recovery.

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

3.8 Some themes – such as the need to harness the social capital and community participation which has developed in response to the virus – are likely to require the creation of individual strategies and action plans. It is essential that residents, businesses and community groups are actively engaged throughout the recovery

and the report sets out emerging thinking on an engagement strategy to guide the Council's approach.

DRAFT

4. Draft 2030 Vision and Discussion Paper

4.1 Early in 2020 the Northern Devon Futures Partnership was working on a 2050 Vision for the area, North Devon Futures, when Covid-19 struck. North Devon and Torridge District Councils were also developing a new economic strategy. Whilst we want to retain the thrust of our ambition for northern Devon, Covid-19 has paused this work as we reframe our thinking to focus on the shorter term. With current uncertainties, our 'long term' is now more realistically to 2030. The world has changed but we believe that it is still important to have our response to Covid-19 informed and given direction by an ambitious and aspirational vision for northern Devon. Much of what we wanted to see for our future has been retained and given extra impetus by the necessity of responding to and recovering from Covid-19.

4.2 This vision will be our guide for the work we do as partners to assist in the recovery of north Devon from Covid-19, to grow again and reset.

Principles

4.3 The overarching principles of our vision for northern Devon are that we want to build back better in a way that makes us stronger, greener, fairer:

- Resetting our approach to achieve:
 - the health and well-being of our communities
 - the local economy and sort of growth we want
 - higher skilled, secure work in resilient sectors and
 - recognition of the value of on our world class environment, reducing carbon use to net zero by 2050 and increasing biodiversity.
- Demonstrating through collaboration:
 - flexibility and responsiveness, recognising a fast-changing environment – incorporating regular reviews
 - an evidence based approach – importance of collecting data on issues and opportunities.
 - the inter-linked nature of the problems and solutions
 - working with communities

4.4 The emergency has emphasised what we always knew but hadn't really achieved the full benefit from; that we work better together. Whilst we address the immediate priorities of keeping people safe and maintaining essential services this plan addresses the desire we feel amongst our communities to see real and sustained change, set against a re-evaluation of our priorities and the values that underpin them, focusing on what really matters.

4.5 On the following pages we have tried to capture the outcome of the North Devon Futures work with the additional perspectives that Covid-19 has necessitated. It is lengthy for a vision but as a discussion piece the hope is that having read it you will have a real sense of the type of place that northern Devon will be. The accompanying delivery plan will interplay with the vision and both will evolve as one or the other changes, as wider engagement in the discussion about our future ensues and as new evidence becomes available.

2030 Vision

Northern Devon in 2030 remains a highly desirable place where people are able to live well, work productively, move freely and benefit from excellent education, health, leisure and cultural facilities in harmony with nature and our world-class environment.

To achieve this our ambitions are:

- *A sustainable, inclusive economy*
- *A net zero carbon society, biodiversity gain and environmental improvement*
- *The health and wellbeing of our communities*

A Sustainable, Inclusive Economy

In 2030 Business has recovered from the worst of the impacts of Covid-19 and northern Devon is the location of choice for those looking to establish new businesses, supported by first rate infrastructure and networks, alongside a superb environment with a supportive community and thriving cultural scene. High speed broadband is available to support high demand businesses and residents.

The northern Devon economic strategy, together in partnership with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, has helped to create a stronger local economy that has benefited from investment and significant growth in the availability of rewarding job opportunities. It has addressed the weakness in the assumption that 'trickles down' is enough to ensure prosperity throughout society, through embedding community wealth building and other approaches that endeavour to create a fairer society.

Creative and digital businesses continue to thrive and are a major part of the increasingly important knowledge-based sectors. The lifestyle of northern Devon has played a key role in attracting non-place dependent businesses to the area and the whole of the Heart of the South West and Cornwall have benefited from the government's 'levelling up' agenda.

Agricultural businesses using the latest technology sit alongside those using traditional methods and all have settled to post EU market conditions and play a major role in achieving the goals of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Northern Devon to be a net zero in terms of food production and consumption.

All business sectors are successfully adjusted to a 'new normal' and have seized the opportunities provided by digital infrastructure.

Facilities exist for businesses to start up, grow, prosper and innovate. The revival of the high street and evening economy have been led by a greater variety of offer in town centres with more homes, leisure and cultural opportunities and places to meet.

The circular economy model, in which resources are kept in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recovering and regenerating products and materials at the end of each service life, is ascendant over the traditional linear economy of make, use, dispose.

We offer high quality educational and training provision from early years to degree level which is accessible physically, digitally and culturally. Businesses have access to a locally based, highly skilled workforce, and Petroc College builds on its success with local universities, businesses and the public sector, which helps to attract and retain the brightest graduates and apprentices in the area.

The Globe training hotel project between Petroc, Torrington District Council and The Plough in Torrington will be operational offering the first degree-level apprenticeship course in Hospitality and Tourism in the South West, and the first degree-level course in Torrington.

The Digital Biosphere Big Data & Artificial Intelligence project has underpinned a shift towards green innovation based on data, increasing environmental protection and enhancement methods and creating aspirational employment routes which are built in to local school curriculum models.

We are digitally savvy. One example is a network of [Community Hubs](#) which deploy technology to help address deep seated challenges in communities, be it language barriers, social isolation, youth disengagement, starting a business, reducing carbon or enhancing the environment. A 'Community How To' website brings together top digital tools for organisations and networks under one roof.

Tourism remains an important element of our economy but with greater emphasis on higher value offers that have extended the season and provided exciting new opportunities for visitors and for workers in the industry. Whilst the 'Adventure Coast' meets its promise new tourism offers are being established inland to relieve the pressure on the coast. Businesses are supported to invest in quality facilities, accommodation and services.

Our beaches were the first World Surfing Reserve in the UK and the area builds on the marine environment's latent ability to attract investment to deliver port regeneration and renewable energy production.

A Net Zero Carbon Society, biodiversity gain and environmental improvement

In 2030 northern Devon will have reduced carbon consumption considerably and is on the way to being net carbon neutral by 2050.

Renewable energy production of all types has been delivered or is in the planning stages, with the aim of making northern Devon a net exporter, with infrastructure carefully balanced against priorities for the environment in which it sits. Woodlands and grasslands have been established to sequester carbon, provide valuable wildlife habitats and opportunities for recreation.

More residents enjoy an active and healthy life through the investment in Green Infrastructure, which has improved the quality of and access to a better-connected network of open spaces and achieved a net gain in biodiversity.

The North Devon Biosphere Reserve has provided the catalyst for achieving innovative and exemplar sustainable development, protected and enhanced the natural environment and innovated in opportunities for investment in the quality and connectivity of natural capital. Local building styles and materials have been encouraged, using local trades and supply chains.

Our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty continues to protect the dramatic coastal landscape, from Marshland Mouth on the Cornish border to Combe Martin on the boundary of Exmoor National Park.

Ecosystem services form the cornerstone of northern Devon's continued success and are enshrined in plans for the area. The coast and estuary, the historic environment and the rolling rural landscape continue to provide a sense of identity and belonging which remain vital assets for northern Devon's economy.

New developments have been designed to promote healthier living and the public realm within towns and villages is accessible, of a high standard, well maintained and 'owned' by the community that it serves.

Residents, businesses and visitors enjoy better accessibility within and beyond the area through the implementation of improvements to the highway network and improved links to Exeter via the North Devon Rail Line. Our town centres will have been reconfigured to prioritise walkers and cyclists.

There will also be a series of smaller but vital infrastructure improvements across the area, including improvements to local roads, more cycling and pedestrian provision, public transport provision, drainage, water infrastructure, flood protection and resilience to future flood risks. These improvements will make a positive impact on local residents' day-to-day life and give confidence to investors.

Barnstaple and Bideford are the main focus locations for delivering new jobs and homes, supported with continued inward investment to deliver key infrastructure to support their roles as vibrant and innovative centres in commerce, culture, education and services.

Braunton and Wrafton, South Molton and Holsworthy have achieved growth in the number of new jobs, which has been supported by new homes and facilities to meet their own and wider needs. A regeneration led strategy at Ilfracombe has delivered new jobs, homes and facilities, and it has built on its reputation as a maritime hub and a centre for creative excellence. Northam (including Appledore and Westward Ho!) and Great Torrington meet their needs and continue to offer local services and remain at the heart of the area's coastal and rural economy, respectively.

North Devon Council works closely with the Exmoor National Park Authority sharing responsibility for Lynton and Lynmouth, and sharing environmental ambitions.

All towns will have plans in place based on the principles of sustainable development and that have been created by and with the community. We are strong advocates for the particular needs of coastal communities.

The rural area has evolved in terms of village growth (where appropriate and supported locally) and there are opportunities for rural businesses and agriculture to thrive. Development in villages is guided not by incremental assessments of local need but by an evidence based approach to achieve a long term sustainable future which provides high quality homes, employment opportunities, meeting places and other open spaces, enhancing a sense of place and belonging. Key open spaces will be retained in rural communities.

The Health and Wellbeing of our Communities

In 2030 our communities provide a high quality of life for everyone that lives there, free from poverty and crime. They have a sense of common purpose, take pride in their living environment, and have a sense of pro-active volunteerism that enables local people to work together to address local problems.

Our communities are cohesive, safe, confident, prosperous and happy places where children are collectively looked after and older people are valued for their leadership potential. Skill transfers and sharing between generations is commonplace. Northern Devon is somewhere that people wish to stay and see their children and grandchildren grow up.

Our communities respect and support one another regardless of age, gender, race or creed.

Our communities were called upon to show resilience during Covid-19 and are now better able to be self-determining, which has nurtured a confidence in their identities that has become a bustling bridge to link with other communities. They have the ability to adapt and undergo change. Empowered members of the community have the best interests of everyone at heart, and are selfless in pushing for improved community facilities and public services for their area.

Our communities have accessible healthy living options, easy access to medical care and healthy food; and are designed to enable healthy living at home, work, and school; and provide good mental health resources. It is safe and easy to walk, bike, and play in parks and community spaces.

Northern Devon is at the forefront of an approach to improving health and well-being, and at its heart is an understanding that people need more than just good NHS services to keep well. The One Northern Devon partnership is working across the area to reduce health inequalities through co-ordination of the activity of all partners involved in the wider determinants of health.

Local residents and those working in the area will have access to a range of housing types and tenures that will help to meet the needs of all households, particularly young families and older persons.

Northern Devon has a plan to meet the need for affordable housing in terms of location and type, working with national as well as local partners to ensure that this most basic of needs; for a safe, secure and warm home, is met. Housing has become more affordable, adaptable and accessible for first time buyers and for those living on their pensions and wishing to stay in their communities.

Mechanisms are in place to deliver warm, well insulated homes, tackling fuel poverty and reducing carbon fuel consumption.

Following the example of Bideford and Ilfracombe more towns have taken on the [Incredible Edible](#) approach to making the streets healthier, brighter places to be, producing food, bringing the community together and giving people an opportunity to make a difference.

Community orchards and parks provide volunteering opportunities and outdoor places to visit.

Northern Devon is beginning to be known for its cultural offer. It innovates in the areas of culture and the environment, creative making and literacy and learning.

The Third Sector in plays a vital role in developing high-quality services the public rightly expects. It is value driven and re-invests surpluses and raises funds to further social, environmental and cultural objectives. Charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises make use of their particular strengths to reach the most disaffected people and find innovative solutions with a personal touch.

The objectives of our ambition are the health and wellbeing of our communities, measured by individual but also as social capital.

5. North Devon Council's response to Covid-19

5.1 Covid-19 has had a devastating impact across the world and in the UK, however, in common with many rural areas northern Devon has had very low numbers of deaths related to the virus. Although the death rate has been relatively low the impact on the economy and people's way of life has been dramatic.

5.2 The virus has had a significant impact on the Council, both in terms of how staff carry out their jobs (with, in some cases, staff redeployed into other roles to support the Council's response) and how services to residents and businesses are delivered. Whilst difficult, some of the changes made in response to the virus present opportunities for how the Council operates and how services are accessed in the future. It is important that the Council builds on this momentum and continues to adapt to changing behaviours.

5.3 Throughout, the Council has actively engaged with the Devon, Cornwall and Isle of Scilly Local Resilience Forum (LRF) as the statutory body for coordinating the regional response to crisis events. The Head of Environmental Health and Housing Services of North Devon Council was a member of the strategic group of the LRF - which steers the county-wide response - with other Council officers sitting on the tactical response groups. The Chief Executive sits on a wide variety of groups, some with the Leader of the Council, including those involving direct contact with government ministers.

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

The main strands of the Council's response

Changes to the way the Council operates

5.5 From an organisational perspective, the Council had to change rapidly as the impact of the virus increased. Improved IT capabilities to allow more staff to work from home were developed and rolled out quickly, which enabled the majority of office based staff to work from home since March. The Council had only recently developed the capability to work remotely so it is a testament to the hard work of the ICT service and remote working teams that they moved from being office based to full time home working with little disruption to critical services.

5.6 Virtual Council meetings using the secure Microsoft Teams platform are being held in order to limit the risk of spreading the disease through close contact, although the organisation will revert to 'face to face' meetings in the future when it is appropriate to do so. The widely used Zoom conferencing app is also being used but not for formal meetings and for external events.

5.7 Small numbers of colleagues have worked in the Council offices throughout the emergency and officers are working through measures to make them safe for larger numbers to come back, drawing on government guidance and best practice

from elsewhere. Plans are largely implemented to give two metre spacing, which allows, for instance, under a third of the planning teams to be in the office (9 of 33) at any one time. The government has reduced the requirement to at least one metre, however, the existing proposals will stand for the time being. Unions have been engaged through the process and C19 specific risk assessments are in.

5.8 Initial assessments show that, by reconfiguring desk space approximately a third of Council staff are able to work from the offices on a daily basis. It is clear that flexible working and working from home for many staff will continue for some time. Some council (and other organisations) are re-evaluating their office accommodation needs in the light of experience gained of extensive home working.

5.9 New ways of working have the potential to change the Council's culture and make it a more modern organisation which supports a flexible approach to work/life balance for staff and contributes to the climate agenda by reducing the need to travel (recognising that this may be balanced somewhat by the need for more home heating etc.)

Changes to service delivery

5.10 The way many Council services are delivered has changed in response to C19. The decision was made - when lockdown measures were announced by government - to close Brynsworthy Environment Centre and Lynton House as public buildings and move face to face customer contact to appointment only (and only in emergencies). The most notable changes have been to customer contact services, with the majority of services now provided by telephone, video conferencing and via the Council website.

5.11 Compared to May 2019, data for May 2020 shows a 40% increase in contact with the Council made online. This creates opportunities for the Council to continue to make more services available online and more accessible to users.

5.12 Overall contact to the Council across all channels decreased 39% during May 2020 compared to May 2019 (Customer Services only). The customer services team saw a 44% decrease in calls during the same period. As of mid-June 2020 calls received by Customer Services had returned to pre-Covid-19 levels. The revenues and benefits team saw a substantial increase during this period due to administering the government's business grants and dealing with additional claims for council tax support

5.13 Throughout the Council has continued to meet its statutory requirements with regards to homelessness and the provision of emergency housing support. The Housing and Homelessness teams maintained a presence in both Brynsworthy Environment Centre and Lynton House throughout to provide this service, with the virus leading to increased numbers of people requiring emergency accommodation. Further details on the Council's housing response during C19 is provided below.

5.14 In terms of service demand, whilst some services inevitably became busier through the response phase, such as revenues and benefits; demand for other

services, for instance parking and building control reduced, while others, such as planning were maintained.

5.15 The Council developed a process for redeploying staff from across the organisation into critical frontline services in order to improve resilience. Examples include street scene officers being redeployed into the waste and recycling team to maintain waste collection services. However, this has not been as significant as might have been expected early on.

Supporting the most vulnerable

5.16 Community Response

5.17 Overall objectives are:

- to provide support to people on the government's 'shielded' list – and with others who are vulnerable that had no other support available to them (such as neighbours, family or friends living locally) who have requested help with their shopping, collection of prescriptions or someone to talk to – and assess their needs; and
- sign post them to the relevant support, be it Council services (those provided by the Council as well as social care support provided by the County Council) or support within the community. The Council has worked in close partnership with One Northern Devon, North Devon Voluntary Service and parishes to deliver support to individuals by using volunteer networks set up within communities.

5.18 On 2 April 2020, the Council launched and implemented a dedicated support line for individuals to contact the Council. The Council also set up a form on its website to enable individuals to contact the Council out of hours. These requests were monitored over the Easter Bank Holiday and two May Bank Holiday weekends. 37 requests for support were received directly via the website.

5.19 The Council has worked closely with the Northern Devon Foodbank and provided additional funding to provide emergency food parcels to individuals and families who were experiencing financial difficulties. The Council, as well as referring an increased level of customers to the foodbank for emergency food parcels, delivered over 70 emergency boxes to families to support the Government's national food box delivery.

5.20 The Council worked in partnership with Devon County Council regarding the delivery of top up food boxes. This service commenced in April following the introduction of the Government's national food boxes. The national food boxes contained basic essential supplies however did not cater for individuals and families who had dietary needs such as vegetarian, vegan, dairy or gluten intolerance. The Council arranged the delivery of the top up food boxes to 30 individuals every two weeks until the end of June.

5.21 Following the Government's announcement to end the provision of support to those individuals who had been identified as "shielding" which included the delivery of food parcels at the end of July, the Council has sent a letter to 410 individuals to

confirm that the food parcels would cease and also to contact the Council if they required any further support.

5.22 By the end of June, the Council had received over 300 requests of support from vulnerable people across the district.

5.23 The Council took a decision early on in its response about how the hardship fund money provided by government should best be used to support the most vulnerable in the district. The council tax hardship fund awarded £585,000 to 3,235 council tax payers to provide an additional £150 reduction off council tax bills for those in receipt of council tax support.

5.24 Devon County Council awarded funding to each district council to enable them to assist the economically vulnerable within each district area. The total funding provided to North Devon Council is £120,865. The fund assisted individuals and families to cope with immediate financial hardship arising from the Covid-19 crisis. This includes emergency funds to assist with fuel costs, replacement of white goods and provision of food. As part of this fund, the Council awarded grants of £12,000 and £15,000 to the North Devon Foodbank and the Salvation Army respectively to enable those organisations to continue providing vital assistance. The Council also awarded a grant of £1,000 to 6 secondary schools in North Devon to enable the schools to provide financial assistance to families who were experiencing financial difficulties to purchase food. The Council also secured a contract with a local taxi firm for individuals who needed assistance with travel to essential hospital or medical appointments. Up to the end of June the Council had received 28 requests from individuals for this service.

5.25 The Council worked in partnership with Devon County Council in the COVID-19 Prompt Action Fund providing North Devon district community and voluntary groups with the opportunity to apply for grants of up to £500 towards their work. Both councils contributed 50% of the total of the grants awarded to each group with funding partly coming from contributions from each North Devon district councillor's community councillor grant for the year. The grants were introduced to help tackle the social and economic impacts of the virus outbreak and help those who are most vulnerable in North Devon communities. The fund was paused mid-June and funding was awarded to 24 groups in the North Devon area.

Supporting businesses

5.26 The Council has administered grants to small businesses who are eligible under the government's guidance (up to £25k per business with less than 50 staff in the hospitality sector). By 24 June, the Council had paid out over £41m in grants to over 3,600 businesses.

5.27 The Council worked with other local authorities in Devon to develop a county wide framework for the delivery of the government's discretionary business grants scheme announced in May. This discretionary scheme – worth just over £2.2m for North Devon - is primarily designed to assist those businesses which fall outside the original criteria for grants. This includes small businesses in shared accommodation and other flexible workspaces, regular market traders with fixed costs, bed and

breakfast accommodation, and charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for small business rates relief. By close of the scheme 431 applications had been received and by 19 July 227 grants had been paid totalling £1,380,000.

5.28 Alongside paying out grants, the Revenues and Benefits team moved quickly to provide business rates relief through the expanded retail hospitality and leisure reliefs which saw £20.3million going to 1,124 businesses. These businesses were all re-billed with no business rates to pay for 2020-21 year.

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

5.30 The Council has continued to consider requests for further support on a case by case basis. Where tenants who rent our properties contacted us due to their businesses being closed and no ability to pay their rent we deferred their Q1 rent for a discussion at Q2 when potentially re-open and spread any arrears over a longer period.

Town centres

5.31 Council town centre and economic development officers carried out a review of 'pinch points' in the Barnstaple town centre, and have put in place signage and physical measures to support social distancing and similar work has been undertaken in the other towns such as Ilfracombe and South Molton.

5.32 Proposals have also been developed to close some roads to vehicles in order to help a smoother flow of pedestrian and vehicle traffic and the Council is working with the County Council on implementation.

5.33 The Council and local partners will continue to work together to review measures to support social distancing and take further action where necessary.

Homelessness and rough sleepers

5.34 In March, the government issued guidance to all local authorities, requiring them to urgently procure accommodation for rough sleepers. North Devon, like many other areas across the country, has seen an increase in the number of people requiring emergency accommodation during the pandemic. This was on top of already high demand for services.

5.35 The C19 pandemic has had a profound impact on demand notwithstanding the control on evictions put in place by the government. At the start cases came in at a rate of around 25 cases per week. This peaked when 99 new cases were received over a period of 2 weeks. Current demand has stabilised at around 35-40 cases per week. The presenting issues are predominately around relationship/ family breakdowns. The statutory code has also been revised to reflect an individual's potential vulnerability to COVID-19 and more people will now have a statutory entitlement to support.

5.36 The Council needed to quickly increase its supply of temporary accommodation. Currently around 40 households are being accommodated. This includes a number of people with high support needs.

5.37 During the pandemic more people became street homeless. The council's housing outreach team are currently engaging with around 10-15 rough sleepers.

Waste and recycling

5.38 Waste services and recycling services have continued throughout despite being under pressure from reductions in staff numbers and the need to provide a safe working environment for the crews. Some changes were made, such as the request for households to separate glass waste from other recycling, however, crews responded to all the challenges to ensure that waste was collected and recycling rates maintained with high levels of customer support.

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6. Priority themes & actions

6.1 The UK will be feeling the impacts of C19 for a long time and, as the country emerges from lockdown towards recovery, the government's overriding objective is to avoid a second peak of the virus. The Council shares this objective when it comes to the recovery of North Devon, particularly as a popular destination for visitors with the potential for bringing the infection with them.

6.2 In practice, although certain aspects of the Council's response will begin to scale back, it is likely that Council will need to continue to provide an ongoing response with partners to C19 for some time, particularly to the district's most vulnerable residents.

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

6.4 This section sets out the priority themes which will guide the Council's approach as the organisation and the district transitions from response to recovery. These themes, together with a set of associated key actions, form a framework for recovery.

6.5 Some of the actions the Council will take – working with partners – are short-term, such as measures to support social distancing in the town centres. Others, such as reducing our carbon usage and regenerating parts of the district, will be longer-term programmes. Together, these actions form part of the district's initial recovery and longer-term prosperity.

6.6 Building on this, the intention is to work with local partners to develop a comprehensive recovery action plan as well as a suite of data and indicators to monitor progress.

Recovery themes and key actions: Summary

6.7 Underlying thematic actions is the need to understand the challenge and what needs doing now:

- Respond to support the whole community as challenges emerge.
- Understand the challenge of recovery across the district in the short, medium and long term,
- 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.
- Identifying impacts, critical areas of activity and key services.
- Mitigate and manage the long-term impacts upon the resident population and
- Maintain public trust and confidence in the effective co-ordination of recovery.

Theme	Key actions the Council will take
1. Improving overall population health and wellbeing and supporting the most vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create conditions for good health, physical activity and social interaction • Improve housing conditions, reduce homelessness and increase supply of appropriate, high-quality housing • Over the longer-term, work with partners, particularly 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 narrow gaps in educational attainment and adult skills • Reduce levels of child poverty • Work with domestic abuse support providers to signpost victims of domestic abuse (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. • Tackle pre-existing and emerging financial and digital inclusion in the district, as part of tackling wider inequality. • Support healthy workplaces and schools • Help keep communities and individuals safe • Reduce loneliness in all age groups • Identify people at risk and intervene to improve poor mental health as soon as possible • Proactively address the mental health consequences of trauma and adverse childhood experiences • Promote a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing
2. Council services i. critical service resilience; ii. modernise the Council; iii. reimagine local services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that critical services are resilient and continue to operate effectively over the coming months alongside plans to clear backlogs in work that have accumulated during the response phase. • Identify and embed the benefits of initiatives and developments that have arisen throughout the response to maximize the reach of new arrangements which replace pre-COVID-19 systems. Modernise the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ continue to allow staff to work from home where possible, striking a balance between home and office-based working and allowing flexibility for staff ○ reimagine how services are delivered and recast service transformation plans; ○ 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. • Implement changes to the internal layout and other safety measures within council offices to support social distancing as more staff return when it is appropriate to do so, with a risk assessment of the building carried out and unions engaged. • Take forward an organisation wide review of service delivery, to look at reimagining how services are delivered in future. • Recast service transformation plans in light of this service review, to be taken forward as part of the 2021/22 budget and business planning cycle. • 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 district stakeholders.

<p>3. Secure the Council's finances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely monitor and update budget impact analysis and regularly update SMT and Strategy and Resources Committee. • Lobby government to ensure that North Devon 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 Strategy and Resources in August on the approach and timeline. • Move forward with a commercialisation strategy, using lessons from crisis.
<p>5. Business and the local economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the local economy, businesses, partners and infrastructure of the District to a position of stability and functionality in a constructive manner whilst seeking to support access to all opportunities for assistance and growth. In particular, recognise that whilst C19 has impacted all sectors, it is important to work with the tourism, hospitality, arts, and culture sectors to understand the issues they face and seeks solutions together. • Continue to deliver grants and wider support to businesses, working with North Devon Plus and the LEP's Growth Hub. • Give business the vital cash flow that they need to adapt by rescheduling business rates. • Pivot the planning balance in favour of accelerated delivery, revisiting pre-commencement conditions, adapting to desktop surveys. • Help cash flow by profiling S106 payments. • Flex licensing rules, supporting adaptation and businesses to reach new customers, licensing taxis to take public transport slack. • Work in partnership to develop appropriate solutions to the challenges identified, including through our planning, licensing and enforcement functions. • Work with partners on issues including skills and pathways to work. • Consider how the Council's role as an anchor institution can support an inclusive economy and community wealth building through the use of Council assets, contractual, recruitment and procurement levers. • Assist in bringing local business together across crucial local sectors to aid adaptation and developing a new customer base. • Re-shape empty shops to foster business adaptation and new start-ups, increase housing or deliver services. • Review the emerging Northern Economic Development Strategy with Torridge DC and North Devon Plus to identify any new actions required to respond to C19 challenges and opportunities. • Engage in Devon and wider recovery plans with partners including Devon County Council and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership. • Work with Town Centre Management, traders groups, local councils Chambers of Commerce, police and Devon County Council to review and implement physical measures and signage in the district centres to support social distancing. • Use licensing and planning 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 safely. • Work with the tourism and hospitality sector; arts, heritage, leisure and culture sectors to enable North Devon's institutions and events to reopen in a safe way when it is safe to do so; engage closely with the sectors to understand the issues they face and seeks solutions together. • Investigate the creation of a Destination Management Organisation for North Devon.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is evidence of malpractice, assess whether action can be taken against employers who fail to provide a safe working environment. • At the appropriate time, work to deliver Council run events, including to celebrate the hard work of the district over this period, in line with social distancing requirements. • Work with Northern Devon Vision and One Northern Devon partners to develop the culture offer of North Devon, which places the arts, culture and heritage at the centre of the area's recovery. • Evaluate capital investments to support town centres. • Work with the North Devon Biosphere partners to maximise the sustainable economic impact of the natural capital of the area. • Understand the potential for applying circular economy approaches.
5. Housing, regeneration and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a housing strategy. • Review housing allocation and housing options policies. • Support people in private sector rented accommodation, taking action against sub-standard accommodation. • Prepare, submit and implement Town Plans (Stronger Towns) • Put in place a framework to guide development in the district and encourage it to be well designed and genuinely sustainable – part of Climate Action Plan. • 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. • Develop options to address housing need, including the setting up of a Housing Company. • Continue to identify opportunities to promote sustainable travel in the district – with a focus on walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable travel as appropriate. • Work with BT Outreach, Airband and the County Council to deliver a full fibre broadband network in North Devon. • Work with local council's and their communities on Town Plans. Develop and deliver the Barnstaple Town Centre Vision and Future High Streets Fund bid – requesting commitment of funding from government. • Review the Coastal Communities plans
6. Climate change and the green economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed climate change and the green economy in the recovery work and in the day to day work of the Council. • Consult on, publish and action the Council's Environmental Policy, Strategy and Action Plan; • Identify opportunities to reduce carbon emissions across Council assets and operations; • Consider opportunities to further promote sustainable travel in the district, 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. • Ensure that the Council's emerging Climate Change and 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. • Undertake an 'opportunity audit' across the Council's place-making activities to identify and prioritise specific opportunities to delivery quantifiable environmental benefits, to supplement the Environment Strategy. • Work with partners to enhance the retrofit of carbon reduction measures to the existing housing stock.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review our green infrastructure¹ to ensure that it meets the needs of our communities, supports eco systems and provides green corridors within and between our settlements, including supporting nature recovery networks <p>¹ the network of natural and semi-natural features within and between our villages, towns and cities. These features range in scale, from street trees, green roofs and private gardens through to parks, rivers and woodlands.</p>
<p>7. Communities and harnessing social capital</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that affected communities, whether based on individual places, common interests or C19 ,impacts, are fully involved in the recovery process. Support economic growth in more disadvantaged areas Develop a Community Participation Strategy which looks at how the Council can work with communities across the district 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. Harness social capital¹ and adopt an asset-based community development approach² which empowers residents and allows for community-led decision making in neighbourhoods. 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 and inspire key messages. Enhance the social impact of the new North Devon Leisure Centre, Barnstaple. Work with One Northern Devon and the 'One' towns to address health and wellbeing of communities. <p>¹ Social capital is defined by the OECD as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups”. In this definition, we can think of networks as real-world links between groups or individuals. Think of networks of friends, family networks, networks of former colleagues, and so on.</p> <p>² Asset-based community development (ABCD), or asset-based community-driven development as it is sometimes called, is a bottom-up way of working with communities that focuses on community strengths and assets rather than on deficits and problems.</p>

Theme 1: Improving overall population health and wellbeing and supporting the most vulnerable

Why it is important

6.8 Emerging analysis of the health and economic impact of C19 suggests that inequalities are being exacerbated. The pandemic has left many households reliant on state support such as Universal Credit. Many of these household were just about 'getting by' before the pandemic, with the impacts of C19 likely to have made the situation worse.

6.9 There is a real risk that population wellbeing may well dip further. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in the US identifies [clear phases in disaster recovery](#). The honeymoon phase, is characterized by a dramatic shift in emotion. During the honeymoon phase, disaster assistance is readily available. Community bonding occurs. Optimism exists that everything will

return to normal quickly. As a result, numerous opportunities are available for providers and organizations to establish and build rapport with affected people and groups, and for them to build relationships with stakeholders. The honeymoon phase typically lasts only a few weeks.

6.10 Phase 5, the disillusionment phase, is a stark contrast to the honeymoon phase. During the disillusionment phase, communities and individuals realize the limits of disaster assistance. As optimism turns to discouragement and stress continues to take a toll, negative reactions, such as physical exhaustion or substance use, may begin to surface. The increasing gap between need and assistance leads to feelings of abandonment. Especially as the larger community returns to business as usual, there may be an increased demand for services, as individuals and communities become ready to accept support. The disillusionment phase can last months and even years. It is often extended by one or more trigger events, usually including the anniversary of the disaster.

6.11 The work of the Council and partners in responding to the crisis means that we are currently providing a level of direct support to many residents that exceeds usual provision. This level of support will, over time, be reduced, as the Council and partners move out of crisis response. This will require a collaborative approach with others, both statutory partners who have specific duties around vulnerable cohorts (particularly DWP, the County Council and the health sector), and with a wide range of voluntary and community sector agencies who provide services and have trusted relationships with residents.

6.12 Key groups will be social welfare advice providers, advocacy organisations, support groups for people with disabilities and those with sensory impairments, amongst others. The relationship with these groups will need to be multi-faceted, not simply a relationship based on grant-funding or contractual arrangements - or as a conduit for communications - but based on two-way dialogue, to understand the issues that they and their service users are facing, as well as learning lessons about where Council and public sector policy and practice is hindering positive outcomes.

6.13 In addition, there is likely to be a long-term need to maintain holistic support for some residents who face particular disadvantage and those who absorb large amounts of public sector resources. One Northern Devon has established a multi-agency high frequency user's project.

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

Further Outbreaks

6.15 It is vital that partners remain vigilant for the possibility of another outbreak, which will particularly impact those already badly affected by C19. Devon County Council are establishing Local Outbreak Control Plans, required of all local authorities with Public Health functions. This involves the establishment of a Covid-19 Health Protection Board led by the Director of Public Health with responsibility for developing local outbreak control plans and engaging with other partners such as the

NHS, Public Health England, Local Resilience Forums. The establishment of an Outbreak Control Advisory Board will ensure effective local implementation of the national Covid-19 test, trace and track programme and ensure wider public engagement. The board will ensure there is communication and engagement of residents to respond to the control plan.

6.16 The new programme is also likely to grant additional powers for local authorities to impose local lockdowns if deemed necessary to deal with any emerging increase in C19 cases.

A sustainable solution to homelessness and rough sleeping

6.17 The Council has responded to increased demand for emergency accommodation and has offered support to all rough sleepers. This has not been easy and has involved use of a variety of accommodation types. It has also presented knock on social impacts on specific areas. However, providing emergency accommodation alone is not a satisfactory solution. The key to maintaining capacity and ensuring outcomes for vulnerable people is to ensure an onward route and appropriate wrap-around health led support.

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

6.19 Over the longer-term, the Council's approach will be to work with housing providers, the County Council and the voluntary and community sector to look at pathways out of poverty for the most vulnerable in the district. This will look at access to training and skills opportunities and measures to move people closer to the labour market and into employment. This approach will mean that the Council is acting beyond its statutory duties so will require careful considerations as demand grows for its statutory services and funding reduces.

Supporting the victims of domestic abuse

6.20 With more people being at home during the lockdown, there has been an increase in cases of domestic abuse across the country and in Devon. As recovery progresses, the Council will continue to work with district and county-wide domestic abuse support organisations to sign post people to the help on offer.

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

Theme 2: Modernising the Council; reimagining local services

Why it is important

Towards a new way of working

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

6.23 The Council is continuing to look at options for improving its IT functionality and is rolling-out Microsoft Teams as an alternative to Zoom for formal virtual meetings.

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

6.25 Although there is a desire to reopen council offices it is important that the Council builds upon the flexibilities it has developed. With changes to the internal layout of offices - which are necessary to support social distancing - buildings will not be able to accommodate all staff at the same time. This means that staff will need to continue to work flexibly.

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

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

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

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

Reimagining local services

6.30 The period during lockdown has demonstrated that the Council can deliver change at pace and it is important to continue that momentum. Through necessity,

the Council adapted how services are delivered, with the increased use of technology and channel shift away from face to face to online support. Whilst it is important to guard against digital exclusion, there is an opportunity to embed the learning from the Council's response to reimagine how services are delivered.

6.31 Covid-19 has shown how effective the public sectors support to vulnerable people can be when it is joined up, as well as the role communities can play in shaping and supporting their own neighbourhoods. There is an opportunity to learn lessons from these experiences and apply it to how the Council works with vulnerable people and communities through the recovery and in how Council services are re-shaped.

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

Theme 3: Securing the Council's finances

Why it is important

6.33 The Covid-19 pandemic has had, and will continue to have a considerable impact upon the Council. The government's lockdown announced on 23rd March 2020, has meant that many businesses have been forced to close – significantly impacting on the local economy and upon sources of core income to the Council. In addition the Council has incurred additional expense ensuring the most vulnerable in our community are cared for, the homeless are kept safe during this period and ensuring that key front-line services such as collecting waste and recycling are maintained throughout the crisis.

6:34 The Council has had to adapt and be flexible in its approach, ensuring the above resource is deployed efficiently and effectively and have also supported local businesses by administering and paying out £42million in government funded business grants to over 3700 businesses in the district.

6.35 These additional costs have not had a dramatic impact on the financial outturn for 2019/20 as the pandemic only started to make a notable impact upon the public and businesses in the last two weeks of March. The impact is being felt in 2020/21 with losses across major income sources such as parking, commercial waste, planning fees and income from our pannier market, together with reductions in the collection of taxation income from council tax and business rates.

6.36 As part of closing the year-end accounts for 2019/20 we looked at the amount of debt outstanding to the Council and have reviewed the level of bad debt provision made and increased some areas of the provision to ensure that we prudently make provision for any impact from the pandemic.

6.37 Of course, it is early days in terms of the recovery and these provisions are estimates; however they will be monitored ongoing through this year and reported as part of in-year monitoring as the true scale of its impact on the Council's finances will be felt during 2020/21.

6.38 It is difficult to quantify the impact of C19 at this stage with any certainty, however, the financial pressure on the Council will be substantial through 2020-21 and beyond – even after taking into account the emergency Covid-19 funding announced by the Government (we have currently received £1.189m). The Council does have both general fund and earmarked reserve balances which it could call upon in 2020-21 to mitigate the economic impact being experienced but clearly this would have much longer term solvency implications for the authority.

6.39 The pandemic has had and continues to have a profound impact on all aspects of life in North Devon and through 2020/21 the Council has already and will continue to adopt a pro-active approach to ensure that it responds to the emerging needs of residents and businesses.

6.40 Moving forwards, the Council will reset its Medium Term Financial Strategy in recognition of the impact of the pandemic and the refresh of the Council's strategic objectives. The changing environment and 'new normal' in which we are likely to find ourselves will require the Council to review the services it provides, how these are delivered and the outcomes that are of the highest priority.

6.41 Regular financial monitoring will continue to ensure the Council takes all necessary remedial action where it can, with a continued focus on delivering key services to our communities against the financial backdrop of considerable reduced resources.

Theme 4: Business and the local economy

Why it is important

6.42 The Council will work closely with businesses across all sectors and support them to open up again, in a measured way although the visitor economy and hospitality is particularly important for North Devon. The Council's objective is to support the local economy whilst doing what it can to protect residents and visitors from the virus and to avoid a second peak.

6.43 The data shows that the district has been less impacted than some of its neighbours. The self-employed Income Support Scheme supports 10.8% of the total employment (48,000) whereas the highest rate is 16.5% (Torrige) and for Devon the figure is 10.5%. Likewise, whilst 25% or 12,100 people have been furloughed, the Devon figure is slightly higher and the worst figure, 34% and 16,500 people, was experienced by Torbay.

6.44 North Devon benefits from having a large public sector presence: district and county council, Petroc FE/HE College, police, fire and rescue and the district general hospital as well as significant pharmaceutical and manufacturing companies which

have continued trading. A large public sector can, however, be a disadvantage when funding from central government reduces.

6.45 The impact of lockdown on the Barnstaple Town Centre (and other centres) has been significant. Evidence shows declines in footfall and a slow return of confidence and expenditure. A [study by the University of Southampton and the Centre for Towns](#) has confirmed the trend that we are already aware of; that coastal communities are likely to be most affected economically by the lockdown measures brought in as a result of the C19 pandemic, with former industrial towns also at risk from longer-term effects of the crisis. Of the top 20 most at risk towns in the UK, the study showed that nine were coastal and 10 were ex-industrial.

6.46 The researchers looked at the distribution of workers in four sectors that are most impacted by the economic shutdown: Non-food retail, Accommodation, Pubs & Restaurants and Arts & Leisure. Their findings revealed that over a quarter of employees in coastal towns in England and Wales work in these sectors. The towns with the highest proportions working in this sector are Newquay in Cornwall (56%) and Skegness on the East Midlands coast (54.7%).

6.47 The closure of hotels, campsites and caravan parks has had a major impact on coastal towns but they are also disproportionately affected by the shutdown of pubs, restaurants and shops which has also hit former industrial towns where a large proportions of the population work in these sectors.

6.48 As well as looking at the current economic risks, the study also considered how resilient towns could be to the impact of the COVID19 shutdown by looking their socio-economic characteristics. Whilst the UK population is getting older across the whole country, places are aging at different rates. University towns and large cities continue to attract younger people whilst ex-industrial and coastal towns are seeing a steady aging of their populations. This is already impacting local economies which will make recovery more difficult.

6.49 Furthermore, the researchers found that many coastal and ex-industrial towns already suffer from economic decline, social isolation, a lack of investment, under-employment and low levels of social wellbeing. These challenges are likely to be further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID19 pandemic.

6.50 Hospitality, visitor economy, arts, culture and environment are central to the district's vision for the future. The sector creates jobs and is fundamental to the wellbeing of residents, to the district's attractiveness as a place to invest or visit, and to the creation of an innovative and vibrant economy. However, the district also has the opportunity to diversify its economy giving it greater resilience and building those sectors that are more resilient.

6.51 These sectors will be integral to the recovery of the district, not only for its economic impact, but as the opportunity to enjoy the visitor experience, albeit in a socially distant way, and will be an important marker for many of a return to an element of normality.

Measures to support social distancing

6.52 The Council has worked with local councils, traders and Devon County Council to develop a range of measures to support social distancing in Barnstaple and worked with local councils on plans for their town centres.

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

Licencing and Planning Powers

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

6.55 The Council, [through its new licencing powers](#), will work with the hospitality sector to assess such requests and take a pragmatic view in order to support outlets to vary their business models where possible. In doing so, the Council will need to strike a balance between supporting such requests and the need to ensure that people – particularly those with disabilities – can continue to move safely around the district and that access is not blocked.

Sustainable travel and transportation

6.56 The Council will continue to promote the benefits and opportunities of sustainable travel as the district moves to recovery. Through its work with businesses and the County Council, the Council will continue to look at opportunities to promote cycling and walking in the district, in anticipation of people being reticent about returning to public transport (with the government actively encouraging people to avoid it). This will include looking at opportunities for further cycle and pedestrianised routes.

Car parks

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

6.58 Early on in the C19 emergency, the Council took the decision to cease charging for use of car parks. As town centres have re-opened charging has recommenced and new payments methods are being investigated.

Enforcement against businesses which fail to protect staff

6.59 The Council has a role to play in helping to ensure that businesses in the district put in place measures to protect staff as they reopen. Although capacity in

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

Broadband and digital connectivity

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

6.61 The Council is working with partners, including BT Outreach, and Airband in rural areas, to deliver a full fibre broadband network in North Devon.

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

Social inclusion

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

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

6.65 Existing relationships with businesses and organisations including the Town Centre Management, Chambers of Commerce, the HotSW LEP and the Growth Hub in particular will be critical in helping us understand the issues and in supporting businesses through the phases of the recovery.

6.66 Analysis of the local economy going into C19 produced for the new economic strategy for northern Devon, and of its wider strengths and challenges, will also be useful. This will need to be supplemented by engagement with businesses of all types to gain as rich a picture as possible of the impacts of C19. Plans for the data to be used to support this work are set out in section 7.

6.67 An effective response to the challenges identified will require partnership working, and it is proposed that the economy should be one of the key themes for the Northern Devon Futures partnership.

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

Developing a Vision for Barnstaple and Place Board

6.69 Work on developing a Future High Streets Fund Programme - as part of the Vision and action plan for Barnstaple - is continuing. Through the programme the Council, working alongside local partners, has an opportunity to access £9m in additional resources to support growth in the district. The Council is awaiting guidance from government but it is expected that alignment to C19 recovery will be required and the Council will ensure join up where appropriate.

Theme 5: Housing, regeneration and development

Why it is important

Supporting people in the private rented sector

6.70 People living in the private rented sector have been hit hard by the pandemic, particularly those who have been left unemployed or in financial hardship. Although the Council's direct powers to intervene are limited, there are things that can be done to support private tenants such as making tenants more aware of their legal rights and enforcing against sub-standard accommodation. As part of its recovery plan, the Council will deliver against these measures and identify other areas where it can support those in the private rented sector.

Regeneration and development

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

6.72 The district is well placed strategically to attract investment. Northern Devon has seen significant housing growth in and around the district in recent years. Barnstaple town centre (up to the lockdown) has remained vibrant, relatively low vacancy rates and some change of use away from traditional retail towards leisure-based activities has also increasing dwell time in the district centre.

6.73 External linkages are improving due to investment in the strategic road (North Devon Link Road improvements) and rail network (line speed increases, improved timetable and newer rolling stock), however, considerable concerns remains about the adequacy of the local road network, particularly in and around Barnstaple.

6.74 North Devon Homes have carried out extensive housing regeneration schemes and stock improvement and the Council is keen to develop an ambitious programme of regeneration and retrofit of energy saving measures. It will also look to work with partners to pilot new, innovative construction methods such as modular housing, seeking a construction facility in Devon.

Theme 6: Climate change and the green economy

Why it is important

6.75 Commentators have noted that the pandemic is both a prefiguring of the threat posed by climate change and also an opportunity to accelerate our collective response to that threat. Climate issues and environment will be an underpinning element of everything we do and our ambition is being captured in a draft Environmental Policy currently going through Council committees.

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

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

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

Theme 7: Communities and harnessing social capital

Why it is important

6.79 Through the current crisis, the role of neighbours and local community support has become vital both in terms of providing support to the vulnerable and as a way to engage residents in their community and make them feel safe and connected. This is critical to the Council's draft 2030 Vision aspirations contained in this document.

6.80 Residents need to have trust in their local community and the Council has an important role to play – which it must step up to – in trusting communities to lead the response to challenges in their neighbourhoods. In this northern Devon is fortunate

in having One Northern Devon and the network of 'One' towns which have strong links into their local communities.

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

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

6.83 Outside grassroots development, it must be acknowledged that the impact of C19 on the voluntary and community sector will be severe and long lasting. North Devon and Devon Councils will need to support the sector to identify the gaps in services and rebuild capacity.

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

6.85 The amount of volunteering across Devon and in North Devon to support the most vulnerable has been a highlight of the response phase and it will be important to harness this social capital and identify how people can volunteer to support the district's recovery.

7. Oversight and monitoring of the District's recovery; key data and indicators

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

7.2 The crisis has both clarified and exacerbated some pre-existing challenges, whilst generating new ones as well as opportunities. Emerging themes include:

- Ensuring that the public health risks are managed as a pre-condition for recovery, as well as ensuring public confidence in the safety of the district.
- The rapid and possibly permanent change to footfall due to mass home-working, absence of cultural and other leisure activities, and the digitalisation of retail and socialising.
- The exacerbation of the digital divide and other inequalities during and after the crisis, and the need to address these in recovery.
- The need to engage widely with diverse groups and stakeholders across the district and the opportunity that technology can bring if deployed correctly.
- The need to ensure sustainable transport into the district as well as within district boundaries.

7.3 Northern Devon Futures (NDF) and One Northern Devon (OND) have separate but overlapping partnership arrangements in terms of principles, themes and partners and will be invaluable in providing the partnership approach that is needed to be successful. It will be necessary to agree how these two umbrella partnerships work together, to provide efficient and effective collaborative partnership arrangements.

7.4 We also benefit from having the North Devon Unesco Biosphere Reserve and with NDF and OND have expertise and resources to deliver against the three strands of sustainable development: Community, Economy and Environment.

7.5 Any recovery task groups will not replace internal governance procedures in each of the partner organisations and, as such, the group would have the power to make recommendations only. Consequently, any impacts for the Council(s) would be subject to normal internal policy development and decision making processes. In the case of North Devon Council, its Strategy and Resources Committee.

Monitoring the progress of recovery: Key data and indicators

Why it is important

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

7.7 In order to monitor progress, the Council will need to develop a dashboard of measures to identify the impacts of C19 on the economy, communities and environment. The aim is that these should be tracked monthly to enable timely action.

7.8 As far as is possible the Council will adopt measures that reflect the wellbeing of individuals and communities, recognising the limitations of KPIs, such as gross value added, and the need to re-align the values we work to post C19. Consequently, some official sources of data are unlikely to be of use given time lags in their production, but the council is considering using the following sources to measure impact:

- Impact of hardship on residents: e.g. local claimant count unemployment, housing benefit claimants, levels of debt owed to council (rent arrears, council tax), homelessness applications, food bank referrals.
- Impacts on businesses: e.g. business occupancy data, business closures or redundancies, footfall data, vacancies/arrears in commercial premises (including the market), supplier issues.
- Ongoing implementation of support/interventions: e.g. business rates pay-outs, council tax benefit claimants, rough sleepers housed, people supported through community hubs, North Devon + and LEP Growth Hub info on businesses supported or seeking support.
- Implementation of any new interventions as they are introduced: e.g. possible use of work experience/apprenticeships/procurement/asset levers to support economic recovery.
- Community capital and recovery: e.g. local area survey resident views on feelings of and trust in community, volunteer numbers or hours, community organisations supported.

7.9 To identify the most appropriate sources of data, the Council will engage local and regional partners. Engagement with business, residents and communities to understand their experiences will also be important.

7.10 More broadly, within the Council's existing performance framework, there will be a review of the key performance indicators for 2020/21 to remove those which are no longer relevant and introduce new indicators which will support our understanding of the impact of C19. This will be undertaken alongside a review of the Corporate Plan, into which this plan will have considerable input.

7.11 Continuing work on outcome indicators (rather than output indicators in the performance framework which measure what we can more directly control) will allow an update to a regular state of North(ern) Devon report to show wider knock on impacts from C19, for example in terms of numbers of people cycling, air quality and CO² emissions.

Key actions

The Council will:

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

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8. Engaging with residents, businesses and community groups

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

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

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

- Social media surveys with residents,
- Resident consultations,
- Use of Ward councillors to gather views.

9. Next steps

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

9.2 It is intended that this recovery strategy will significantly inform the Corporate Plan as the Council's key strategic level document guiding the future of the Council and the district.

9.3 In terms of the immediate next steps, the Council will:

- Continue to work as part of the Devon, Cornwall and Isle of Scilly Local Resilience Forum and with other Devon councils to ensure that recovery plans are joined up across the wider county and Heart of the South West area.
- Work with other partners such as Devon County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure that the Council's recovery strategy is consistent with their own recovery proposals and that each report complements the other.
- Convene further meetings of the Recovery Working Party and agree 'Board' arrangements to act as the steering group for district's recovery.
- Develop a detailed action plan for C19 recovery to sit alongside this strategy document.
- Update Strategy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis on progress made against this recovery plan and other issues impacting the district which are directly related to C19.

9.4 Take a report to Strategy and Resources Committee to secure agreement to this strategic plan for consultation purposes.

9.5 Seek agreement from Torridge District Council that the relevant elements of this plan are taken forward to the Northern Devon Futures Partnership and One Northern Devon for consideration by partners.

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Appendix 1: The impact of Covid-19 on North Devon

This is currently only an indicative set of data and an early task is to develop a robust baseline of evidence.

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

Cases and deaths

ONS data breaks down the number of Covid-19 related deaths by small geographical areas containing around 7,000 people – known as MSOAs – between March 1 and May 31. North Devon and Torridge has 23 MSOAs, with 14 in North Devon and nine in Torridge.

The ONS figures show that of the 45 deaths across the two districts in those three months, 11 were registered in the Holsworthy, Bradworthy and Welcombe area.

There were six registered deaths in both the Barnstaple Pilton area and South Molton.

There were three deaths registered in Ilfracombe West; Bratton Fleming, Goodleigh and Kings Heanton; Bishop's Nympton, Witheridge and Chulmleigh; Bideford South and East, and Shebbear, Cookworthy and Broadheath.

There have been no deaths registered in nine areas.

Of the deaths registered, 23 have occurred in hospital and 18 in care homes, with four deaths occurring in private homes.

There were 26 coronavirus-related deaths registered in North Devon and 19 in Torridge.

As of June 18, there have been 128 confirmed cases of Covid-19 across the two districts.

In Torridge, the district has 36 confirmed cases at a rate of 52.8 cases per 100,000 people – the lowest rate of any lower tier local authority in England.

There have been 92 confirmed cases in North Devon, which has an infection rate of 95.7 cases per 100,000 people.

Vulnerability

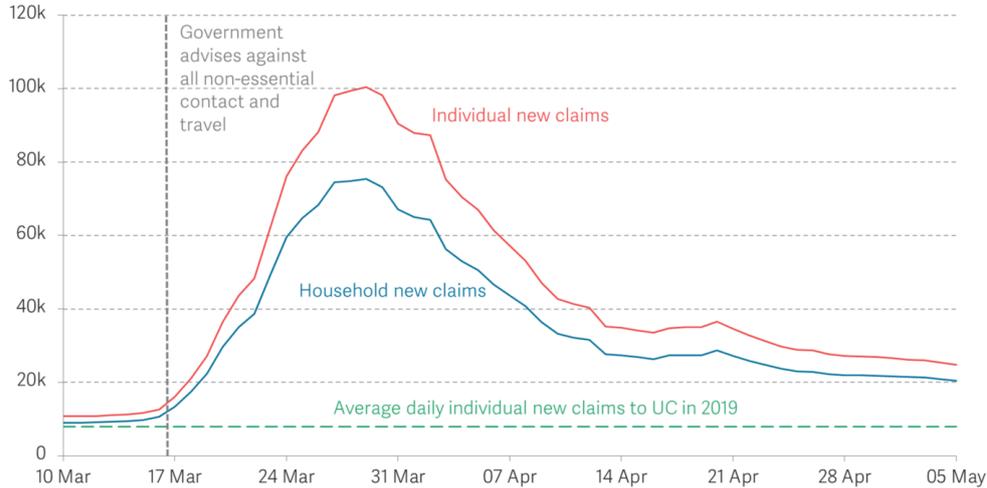
To be developed.

Impact on workers

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

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

Daily new declarations to Universal Credit: GB



Notes: A declaration is when an individual or household provides information on their personal circumstances to begin a Universal Credit claim. Not all declarations will go on to receiving a payment, so this data is not directly comparable with statistics on the number of Universal Credit claims. There are more declarations for individuals than households, because two adults in a household can claim. 2019 figures are based on a different methodology and are not directly comparable. Source: RF analysis of DWP, Universal Credit declarations and advances management information. © Resolution Foundation 2020 resolutionfoundation.org

A12. Survey data

Economic impact

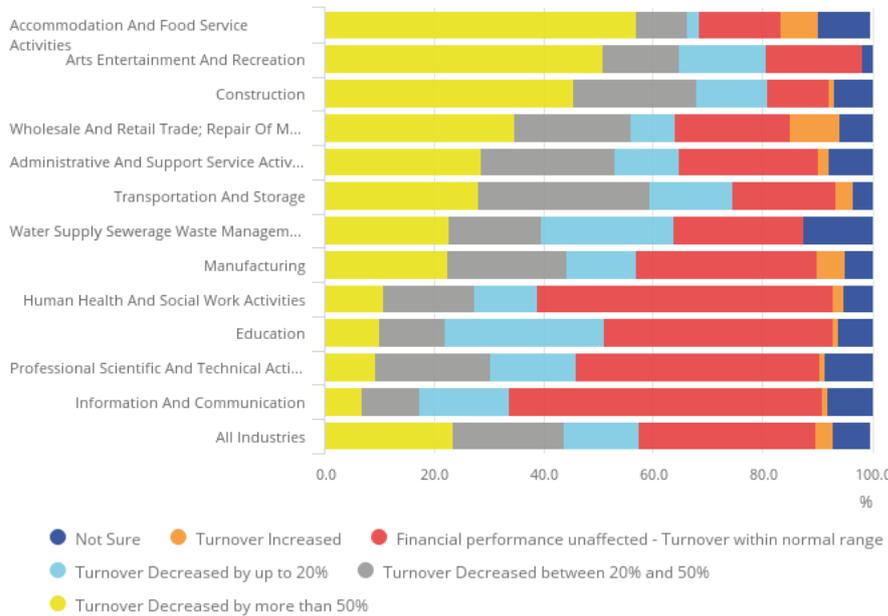
The estimate for the impact of C19 on economic output, measured by Gross Value Added (GVA), recognising that this will need to be complemented by measures of wellbeing in future.

Business impact

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

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

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



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

Area	Self Employed ISS Claims	Employment	% Claims
Torridge	3,800	23,000	16.5%
West Devon	3,000	20,000	15.0%
Mid Devon	4,000	30,000	13.3%
South Hams	5,100	41,000	12.4%
Torbay UA	5,900	48,000	12.3%
Teignbridge	6,100	50,000	12.2%
East Devon	6,400	53,000	12.1%
North Devon	5,200	48,000	10.8%
Devon County	37,600	359,000	10.5%
South West	224,000	2,597,000	8.6%
England	2,056,000	26,842,000	7.7%
Plymouth UA	8,200	111,000	7.4%
Exeter	4,000	94,000	4.3%

Area	Furloughed	Employment	% Furloughed
Torbay UA	16,500	48,000	34%
Torridge	7,700	23,000	33%
Teignbridge	16,200	50,000	32%
East Devon	16,300	53,000	31%

Mid Devon	9,100	30,000	30%
West Devon	5,600	20,000	28%
Plymouth UA	30,400	111,000	27%
Devon County	90,600	359,000	25%
South West	654,800	2,597,000	25%
North Devon	12,100	48,000	25%
South Hams	9,900	41,000	24%
England	6,445,800	26,842,000	24%
Exeter	13,800	94,000	15%

DCC report by Cambridge Economics June 2020

Social impacts

Wellbeing.

Mobility and travel has reduced considerably during the period of lockdown. This implies that residents have been remaining closer to their homes and neighbourhoods, although this may start to reverse with the easing of restrictions.

Devon

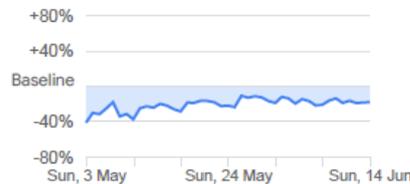
Retail and recreation

-63% compared to baseline



Supermarket and pharmacy

-18% compared to baseline



Parks

+51% compared to baseline



Public transport

-31% compared to baseline



Workplaces

-20% compared to baseline



Residential

+7% compared to baseline



Google - Covid-19 Community Mobility Report 14 June 2020

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