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# Tewkesbury Borough Corporate Recovery Plan

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## Covid -19 2021





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Councillor Rob Bird, Leader of the Council



Mike Dawson, Chief Executive

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“We recognise that we need to put our **residents and businesses at the very heart** of our recovery plan”

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## Foreword

Since March 2020, Covid-19 has impacted the council and its services significantly and this local picture is replicated across the globe. Since the onset of the pandemic we have been overwhelmed by the dedication shown by our members and employees in the response to this pandemic. The commitment to supporting and protecting our borough from this virus has been nothing short of fantastic - we have seen amazing flexibility, initiative and dedication in all aspects of service delivery and community support. The response from our communities has been admirable too - thanks to the help of volunteers and community groups, we have been able to offer vital support to all of our vulnerable residents across the borough.

Our Covid-19 Recovery Plan, approved in August 2020 gives us a focus on improvement for the future, and the flexibility to adapt as things change. The plan outlines how we responded to the crisis and, in more detail, what we need to do to recover from it. None of this has been done or will be done solely by ourselves - throughout this pandemic we have worked closely with a wide network across Gloucestershire to help limit the impact of the virus and support our residents in every community.

Our elected councillors, of all political groups, have played a really important role in their wards by supporting vulnerable residents and voluntary groups, as well as working closely with officers to make difficult decisions and ensure what we are doing protects our residents and makes our borough safe.

The pandemic has reshaped how we operate. It has forced us into becoming a much more flexible and agile organisation - utilising partnerships, technology and creativity in a way that we have never done before. We have already achieved a great deal, including fantastic support

given to our business community through the administration and payment of business grants as well as the general support and advice from our unique Growth Hub. We have also supported the safe re-opening of our high streets and set up our new Business Transformation Team to support service improvements across the council – all achieved in a ‘virtual’ world.

We recognise that we need to put our residents and businesses at the very heart of our recovery plan, which is why we used our Council Plan priorities to shape it. It is the intention that when we next refresh the plan, in March 2022, we will transition the longer term recovery actions into our main Council Plan thereby working again to one strategic document.






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“The council’s  
response to  
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## The council's response to Covid-19

The council’s response to Covid-19 has been unprecedented. We have had to adapt and respond to a fast-moving emergency in a way that we have never had to do before. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has created some unprecedented challenges, the council has been well placed to respond. These include (but is not an exhaustive list):

- Our unique Growth Hub, set up in 2018 has provided the foundation for our business support during the pandemic through its excellent network of business intelligence.
- Our excellent relationship with Places Leisure has seen early success in the recovery of the Tewkesbury Leisure Centre, which is incredibly important for our business and for community activity and health.
- The sharing of our building – the Public Service Centre - with the police, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and county council’s Children’s and Adult Services has enabled a multi-agency approach to addressing many of the complexities arising from the pandemic.
- Our strategic growth plans, particularly our Joint Core Strategy in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council, were well-developed before the pandemic, and now provide a solid foundation to help kick start economic recovery.
- Organisational changes were made, which saw many members of our staff redeployed to other services. Staff are our greatest asset and the ‘can do’ culture we have saw staff adapt quickly and work tirelessly to overcome these challenges as well as continue to provide essential services to our residents and businesses.
- Our achievement pre-Covid in attaining accreditation to the ‘Workforce Wellbeing Charter’ meant we already had in place the building blocks such as a mental health plan to support our organisational resilience.
- Our excellent financial management framework supported by our technically strong finance team (as recognised by the Local Government Association peer challenge team) enabled the quality of financial monitoring and reporting to be maintained despite the added complexities of the financial landscape.
- Our ICT Strategy, approved pre-Covid, gave us the direction of travel to implement the necessary technology to support the organisation, particularly through remote working. Exemplifying our ‘can do’ attitude, it meant swathes of the strategy being delivered in a few months.
- Although re-deployed for the first few months, our new Business Transformation Team was up and running in September and has already achieved notable successes. This includes the implementation of a new digital platform, a new complaints framework, a new Freedom of Information request portal, project led the delivery of our new bulky waste system and taken our garden waste income to nearly £1m.

A snapshot of the impact of Covid-19 is shown on the next page.

## Covid-19: How we supported our residents

over  
**£408k** PAID  
through the council tax  
**HARDSHIP FUND**

over  
**1000** SOCIAL  
**MEDIA** posts

additional  
**1859**  
**COUNCIL TAX**  
**REDUCTION**  
applications received

over  
**24%**  
increase in  
**RESIDUAL WASTE**  
per household

average of **10** TONNES  
per month **FOOD**  
**WASTE** increase

**£73,000**  
**TEST and TRACE**  
self isolation payments paid to  
**146** applicants

## Covid-19: How we supported our community

over  
**£104k** paid out to over  
**125** COMMUNITY  
GROUPS

**£180,000**  
additional **LEISURE**  
**CENTRE** funding

over **80** WARNINGS  
issued to businesses relating to  
non-compliance to  
**COVID GUIDANCE**

**566**  
**COMMUNITY HELP**  
**HUB** requests received

**6** FIXED PENALTY  
notices ISSUED to  
**BUSINESSES**

over  
**670** ENQUIRIES  
responded to by the  
Environmental Health team  
since **JULY 2020**

## Covid-19: How we supported our businesses

**105** virtual help  
and support **WEBINARS**  
for **BUSINESSES** through  
the **GROWTH HUB**

**5384** SUPPORT and  
ADVICE visits to businesses by  
**ENVIRONMENTAL** health team

over **30m**  
paid in **BUSINESS**  
**GRANTS**

**£21m**  
awarded through  
**BUSINESS RATE**  
**RELIEF** and expanded  
retail/nursery discount

**1230**  
**BUSINESSES CONTACTED**  
via email or letter by the  
**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
health team

**780**  
**VISITS to BUSINESSES**  
by our Environmental Health  
team

## Covid-19: How we maintained good governance

over  
**40,200**  
**VISITS** to the Covid-19  
**MICROSITE**

**81**  
**VIRTUAL**  
**COMMITTEES**  
and member working  
groups delivered

**527**  
Management  
**TEAM**  
**ACTIONS**

**82**  
information **BULLETINS**  
for councillors and  
parish councils

over **70** FREEDOM  
of **INFORMATION** requests  
relating to **covid-19**  
received

**6082**  
**SUPPORT TICKETS**  
dealt with by **ICT TEAM**




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“Our recovery plan will **need to reflect** the national approach”

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## Our plan to rebuild

Recovery plans will be created at national, regional and local levels and it is really important we recognise this interconnectedness, together with the role of working with our wide network of partners, so that we achieve a joined-up approach to our recovery.

Locally, our Corporate Recovery Plan will need to reflect the national approach of setting out the short, medium and long-term support needed to address the challenges associated with Covid-19. We will be doing this by considering the need to refocus, recover and rebuild communities, businesses and the voluntary sector.

- ✓ **Refocus:** reflects the short-term analysis of the implications of Covid-19. We will work closely with partners to understand how and what resources they need to be refocused and where opportunities to collaborate on emerging recovery plans can help us gain a better understanding of what recovery looks like.
- ✓ **Recover:** reflects the medium-term, primarily focusing on the creation of a recovery plan, that sets out the strategy and actions that will support businesses, communities and voluntary groups, allowing them to survive, stabilise and adapt to the challenges of Covid-19.
- ✓ **Rebuild:** reflects the longer-term measures required to allow businesses, communities and voluntary groups to rebuild and develop resilience to a post Covid-19 environment.

Our Recovery Plan details key actions, these will be monitored through the Corporate Recovery Plan performance tracker. As described in the foreword we will transition more medium and long term actions into our Council Plan at its next refresh.







“The council is  
determined to  
meet its  
financial  
challenges”

## Finance and resources

The pandemic has had a huge impact on our finances. Albeit, the General Fund outturn for 2020/21 is positive, for example due to government funding to relieve expenditure pressures as a result of Covid, new burdens funding for administering the various Covid related grant schemes and compensation received from government for loss of income streams. This places the council in a good position, with significant one-offs available to meet service requirements and mitigate risk in a number of areas. However, it must be stressed that this good financial outturn does not mean that our ongoing budget pressures have eased. There remains much uncertainty around government plans for funding and our Medium Term Financial Strategy still shows a substantial ongoing deficit over the next five years.

To deliver this priority we will:

### Refocus

- a) ~~Continue to work with partners to ensure adequate measures are in place on our high streets to enable social distancing.~~
- a) Continue to monitor the financial impacts of Covid-19 and revise the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in light of those impacts.
- e) ~~Produce a new six monthly internal audit plan and review the whole suite of internal audit recommendations to determine if recommendations remain relevant and timescales for implementation remain feasible.~~
- b) Ensure the effective recovery of the internal audit function.
- b) ~~Ensure adequate measures are in place and government guidance is adhered to for those staff that need to return to the Public Service Centre offices, whilst exploring the future demand for space in light of new ways of working.~~
- b) Continue to monitor the safety of our working environment now that restrictions have been lifted and moving forward utilise our office space effectively.
- e) ~~Produce a revised 2020/2021 budget.~~

### Rebuild

- a) ~~Revise the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in light of additional financial pressures arising from Covid-19.~~
- a) Maximise the use of business intelligence within the council to ensure the accuracy of the rating list and help businesses build resilience.
- b) Work with businesses and residents and seek to rebuild council tax and business rate collection rates.

### Recover

- a) ~~Agree and monitor the Tewkesbury Leisure Centre recovery plan in partnership with Places Leisure.~~
- a) In partnership with Places Leisure build on the early success of the Tewkesbury Leisure Centre recovery plan.



“Tewkesbury  
Borough  
remains the  
place to do  
business”

## Economic growth

Tewkesbury Borough remains the place to do business - and a focus for our recovery plan will be to utilise our Growth Hub so our current businesses, and businesses wanting to locate within our borough, are given the opportunity to thrive. We will work hard to promote our borough and its assets to visitors, to help support the future prosperity of the local tourism industry.

In addition, part of our economic growth recovery will focus on our role as an employer, and how we can look to work collectively with other councils, businesses and the voluntary and community sector, to support retraining, reskilling and placement opportunities/employment in light of the redundancies and decline in some sectors as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To deliver this priority we will:

### Refocus

- a) ~~Review the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy to identify any actions required to respond to Covid-19.~~
- a) Develop a new four-year Economic Development and Tourism strategy that includes a focus upon the economic recovery of the borough.
- b) ~~Undertake an economic impact assessment and analysis to understand the needs of local businesses.~~
- e) ~~Work with our partners at Cotswold Tourism to understand when and how to safely encourage visitors back to the borough.~~
- b) Work with our partners at Cotswold Tourism to promote the borough as a safe destination to visit.
- d) ~~Work closely with partners, businesses and groups to enable the safe and successful reopening of high streets and retail centres.~~
- b) Deliver sector specific advice and events, helping support local supply chains.
- e) ~~Work with partners to support employment and skills initiatives targeted at those affected by unemployment~~
- b) Develop a bid to host a Department of Work and Pensions Youth Hub within the Tewkesbury Growth Hub.

### Rebuild

- a) ~~Launch grant and support packages focused on innovation and growth, linking grants and Growth Hub advice.~~
- a) Launch the new Tewkesbury Borough Council Business Grants scheme.
- b) ~~Support the revitalisation of the high streets and retail centres across the borough, including delivery of the Tewkesbury Heritage Action Zone programme, to help drive economic recovery.~~
- e) ~~Work with partners to identify funding opportunities and support key infrastructure projects.~~
- d) Promote Tewkesbury Borough as an excellent location for business and investment.
- b) Develop and deliver the Welcome Back Fund action plan.

### Recover

- a) ~~Work with our partners to engage with businesses to create tailored business support solutions through Tewkesbury Growth Hub, as a single point of contact to support business recovery – helping businesses to recover, innovate and thrive.~~
- a) Continue to support businesses through the Tewkesbury Growth Hub to aid their economic recovery.






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“We recognise  
the **pressure the  
pandemic has  
brought** to our  
communities”

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## Housing and communities

We recognise the pressure the pandemic has brought to our communities and we will continue to work closely with partners to help ease this strain whilst also harnessing the skills our communities have to offer. We have focused our recovery plan to show our commitment to supporting those with a housing need whilst providing much needed support to our wider communities.

To deliver this priority we will:

### Refocus

- a) ~~Refocus the council's Place Approach to reflect the issues within our communities arising from Covid-19.~~
- a) Continue to support our communities with issues arising from Covid-19.
- b) ~~Assess the additional demand on those using the housing service, taking into consideration the county-wide rough sleeper initiative.~~
- b) Assess the additional demand on the housing service.
- c) Work with landlords and tenants to assess the potential demand ~~once restrictions are lifted.~~ now that restrictions have been lifted.

### Recover

- a) ~~Support our communities to become more resilient and harness community spirit.~~
- a) Work with the integrated locality partnership to build community resilience within the borough.
- b) ~~Respond to localised outbreaks of Covid-19 quickly and effectively and in conjunction with the Gloucestershire County Council's Local Outbreak Management Plan.~~
- b) Continue to deliver the Covid-19 community grant scheme.

### Rebuild

- a) ~~Recognise and harness our relationship with the voluntary and community sector to support the building of resilient communities.~~
- a) Deliver a series of online training seminars to support the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- b) ~~Build on the Local Housing Needs Assessment and start developing the Tewkesbury Borough Housing Strategy for 2021 onwards.~~
- e) ~~Consider future working arrangements within new communities to ensure there are adequate local businesses and self-employment hubs.~~





“We want to make it **as easy as possible for our customers** to contact and engage with us”





"We will continue to work with Homes England and partners to deliver our garden communities"

## Garden communities

The garden community programmes reflect our commitment to delivering sustainable, well-designed and vibrant communities where people can live, work and raise families. Whilst the pandemic has caused minor delays our programme of work remains unchanged. We will continue to work with Homes England and other partners to develop plans for the Tewkesbury Garden Town and the Golden Valley garden community in Cheltenham. We are committed to improving transport links, education provision and green infrastructure, such as new parks and cycle routes which will play a big role in the development of these communities.

We have adapted the way in which we get messages and information to residents, after the events planned had to be cancelled. Our website - [tewkesburygardentown.co.uk](http://tewkesburygardentown.co.uk) - is complete with all the information that is publicly available on the Ashchurch bridge project which will unlock land for the Garden Town. It includes the drawings, proposed location, and background information that would have been provided at the events.

To deliver this priority we will:

### Refocus

- a) ~~Work with partners at Cheltenham to speed up delivery of the garden village site.~~
- a) Explore opportunities to enhance new digital jobs and training with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and partners at Cyber Central.

### Recover

- a) ~~Seek further government funding with our partners to support sustained delivery of the garden community programmes.~~
- a) Actively seek capital funding with our partners to support the programme.

### Rebuild

- a) ~~Work with partners to seek resolutions to infrastructure requirements around Junction 9 and Junction 10.~~
- a) Work with partners to maximise sustainable development and low carbon technologies as part of the Garden Communities programme.








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“We recognise  
the ongoing  
importance of  
**managing our  
carbon  
footprint**”

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## Sustainable environment

Globally, the lockdown period of the pandemic has highlighted the impact people have on the environment. Moving forward, we recognise the ongoing importance of managing our carbon footprint and supporting our climate change declaration. The council has delivered the first year of its carbon reduction action plan and has a number of ambitious targets within year two to reduce its emissions. Our Garden Town programmes provide good opportunities to explore low carbon technologies. We also know that minimising waste and increasing recycling is key to helping our environment flourish, and we will work with our residents to promote responsible recycling habits.

To deliver this priority we will:

### Refocus

- a) ~~Exploit the opportunities provided through agile working to enhance or accelerate carbon reduction and climate change initiatives.~~
- a) Harness the benefits of changes to working practices in order to ensure our reduced carbon footprint continues.
- b) ~~Work with our businesses and communities to support cleaner and greener living and working.~~
- b) Work with partners to promote climate change and carbon reduction awareness and activities across our communities and businesses in the run up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in November.

### Recover

- a) Increase awareness in the effects of recycling contamination.
- b) Work with our communities to reduce waste to minimise the impact on our environment.
- c) Agree funding for and appoint a new Carbon Reduction officer to support the council's climate emergency declaration and the delivery of its action plans.

### Rebuild

- a) ~~Support the deployment of the carbon reduction action plan.~~
- a) Commence planning and scoping study for implications of, and opportunities for, Borough wide decarbonisation.
- b) ~~Work on the Mixed Recycling Facility (MRF) contracted services procurement.~~
- e) ~~Build on our communities' connections with green space, walking and cycling to encourage healthy, sustainable living and appreciation of biodiversity.~~
- b) Promote a healthier lifestyle through working with Active Gloucestershire through the 'we can move' programme.



## Governance and performance management

Our 2020-2024 Council Plan sets out our priorities for the next four years.

The Corporate Recovery Plan has been aligned with our Council Plan priorities and objectives and at the next refresh in March 2022 we will transition any longer-term recovery actions back into our Council Plan. To monitor progress in delivering our recovery plan, for 2021/22 we will continue with our 'Corporate Recovery Plan performance tracker' document. The tracker details each individual action, a feasible implementation date, accountable officer, a status column plus a comments column to provide an overview on delivery. This is a proven monitoring tool as the same methodology is used to monitor delivery of our Council Plan actions.

Similar to the Council Plan performance tracker the recovery tracker will be presented and scrutinised by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. As there are synergies between both tracker documents, these will be reported alongside each other. The findings from the review of Overview and Scrutiny Committee are personally reported by the chair of the committee to the council's Executive Committee and remedial action taken when appropriate.

All members will play a really important role as the recovery process develops, particularly in terms of community support and community contact. Members have been instrumental in terms of helping to develop strong links with many businesses and voluntary and community groups

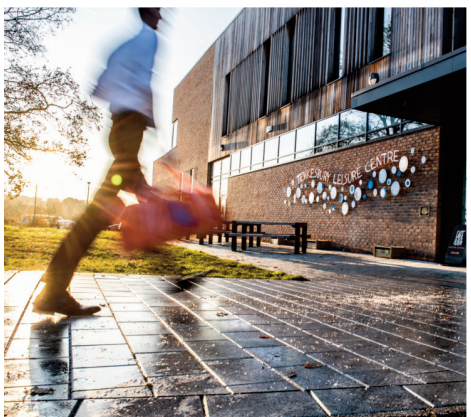
during the pandemic. We need to capture this community spirit and use it to help in the recovery phases, together with the local knowledge that members have. By utilising our Council Plan priorities for the Recovery Plan framework, Executive Committee members will have a lead role in the recovery process as it relates to their portfolio.

Whilst Covid-19 has and continues to present us with a significant challenge, we are hopeful that now restrictions have been lifted we can work to the 'new norm'. If we experience a worse-case scenario where restrictions are re-instigated, we have proven over the last 18 months that we can continue to provide effective core services to our communities whilst delivering any Covid related activity. Lessons we have learnt over the period will also be invaluable. Our Recovery Plan needs to be dynamic and flexible, and actions may need to change, if we need to return to 'response' mode at any point in the future.

Should you require any further information about the Recovery Plan, please contact:

**Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services**

Email: [corporateservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk](mailto:corporateservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk)



## Our achievements since March 2020

Covid-19 response – in addition to the Covid-19 infographics on page three.

- Our business grants team continues to work extremely hard to support local businesses gain access to government covid-19 support grants. Over 6,000 individual payments have been made resulting in excess of £30m being paid out since March 2020.
- Recognising the volume and complexity of the information being issued by the government relating to the pandemic, we built and maintained a Covid-19 microsite so it was easier to access and digest.
- Working with Places Leisure, we've supported the reopening of Tewkesbury Leisure Centre in line with covid-19 safety requirements.
- Supporting our commitment to ensuring our services are provided to our residents, business and communities, we have put in measures to ensure staff feel safe returning to the Public Services Centre while also supporting the benefits that come with remote working.
- We have worked with Cotswold Tourism through social media, campaign work and our website to promote the borough as a place to visit when it is safe to do so.
- Our Growth Hub has supported businesses throughout the pandemic – including around 100 webinars to more than 360 attendees. Topics included online marketing, video development, social media and goal setting.
- A bid has been developed to provide a Youth Hub service hosted within Tewkesbury Growth Hub, which will provide advice and information for young people.
- Supporting the reopening of the high streets and retail centres across the borough, we have delivered a range of promotion activity funded by the Reopening High Street Safely Fund. Initiatives included posters and floor stickers in town centres, footfall counts and social media campaign work.
- Supporting the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents in our borough, we worked with community groups to provide a winter grant scheme. This helped 556 vulnerable families struggling to pay for food, essential supplies and fuel costs.
- We provided active support to the countywide response and recovery to homelessness.





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