

Stronger Futures:

**A Four Year Plan for Recovery and Renewal
Following COVID-19**

Summary Version

2020-24

Introduction

The Stronger Futures Plan was approved by Cabinet in December 2020. It builds on the [‘Play Your Part to Thrive’](#) Council Plan in light of the impact of COVID-19. It sets out how we will move through and beyond the pandemic crisis to prepare our borough for a stronger future that addresses the vulnerabilities exposed during the pandemic and grasps new opportunities.

The plan builds on the new way of working in partnership with communities that was set out in the Council Plan and that has come to the fore in the community response to the pandemic. Following the declaration of a Poverty Emergency by the Council in October 2020, the Stronger Futures plan also includes tackling poverty alongside the existing Council Plan priorities, to set out seven priorities:

- Tackling the climate emergency
- A fairer future – tackling the poverty emergency
- Growing the local economy and delivering good jobs with fair wages for our residents
- Supporting children and young people to have the best start in life and reach their full potential
- Enabling more adults to live longer, healthier and happier lives
- Making our neighbourhoods even better places to call home
- Delivering a more efficient and empowering Council

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 on local communities and on the local, national and global economy is unprecedented. It presents a huge challenge to the way that local people live, learn, work and spend their time. It also presents a huge opportunity for change. The borough has seen unprecedented community spirit, reinforced relationships with partners, new relationships with businesses, digital transformation and a more collaborative culture. All of these positive features are goals within the council plan and the challenge is to ensure they are not lost. Moving beyond the pandemic also provides the opportunity to consider how the Council and its partners approach strategic challenges such as tackling the climate emergency,

having a more successful and sustainable economy, and supporting our more vulnerable residents.

This plan includes actions taken to restore Council-run local services and facilities, as well as public spaces and town centres while providing support and guidance to partners and businesses to do the same. This has been defined as recovery. It also focuses on renewal - the more fundamental changes and transformation that need to be made to make the borough and the Council more resilient for the medium and long term.

Priorities and objectives

The full [Stronger Futures Plan](#) describes the challenge and opportunity behind each priority, what success would look like, the activities the Council will undertake, and what local residents and businesses can do to play their part.

The seven priorities and the objectives that underpin them are:

1. Tackling the Climate Emergency

- Reducing the carbon footprint of the Council
- Support the decarbonisation of the energy, industry and business
- Improve sustainable transport and infrastructure
- Enable low carbon buildings, home and development
- Enhancing green spaces
- Reduce waste and increase recycling

2. A Fairer Future – Tackling the Poverty Emergency

- Establish a clear understanding of poverty in the borough
- Take a whole borough approach to tackling poverty and homelessness
- Engage and support those furthest from the job market
- Tackling food insecurity
- Build and develop capacity in affected communities
- Contribute to national and regional policy development

3. Growing the Local Economy and Delivering Good Jobs with Fair Wages for our Residents

- Take action to address unemployment, underemployment and reskilling
- Enhance support to existing and new businesses
- Deliver regeneration and housing programme to drive local growth

- Improve the quality and marketing of the place
- Provide support to key sectors
- Delivering inclusive growth
- Secure appropriate governance and funding to deliver

4. Supporting Children and Young People to have the Best Start in Life and Reach their Full Potential

- Ensuring high quality and inclusive education is available to all children and young people
- Reinforce virtual working across a range of settings to complement face to face support
- Further development of early help and prevention services
- Introduce new models of provision to meet the complex needs of children and young people
- Enhance emotional health and wellbeing support

5. Enabling More Adults to Live Longer, Healthier and Happier Lives

- Reinforce interventions to tackle health inequalities
- Redesign models of adult social care to build on the strengths of local people and offer more tailored support
- Secure the sustainability of adult social care
- Further integrate adult social care, wider services and communities with local NHS services
- Enhance Adult Mental Health support
- Take a whole borough approach to tackling poverty and homelessness
- Safeguarding adults and tackling abuse

6. Making our Neighbourhoods Even Better Places to Call Home

- Develop new approaches to engaging local people in local decisions and local services
- Consider the assets communities have that enable local residents to come together to influence and affect local services
- Develop a new deal with the voluntary and community sector to ensure they can play their full part in tackling shared challenges
- Improving the customer experience
- Improving digital democracy

7. Delivering a More Efficient and empowering Council

- Deliver a financial recovery programme that addresses how services will be affordable with increased demand and constrained resources
- Bring forward plans to embed agile working across the workforce
- Implement a People Plan which develops our staff and enables the organisation to deliver
- Introduce a new digital first programme that is universal across all services

Delivering the Plan

The full [Stronger Futures Recovery and Response Plan](#) includes a detailed action plan setting out the activities underpinning each objective along with dated milestones and the responsible Cabinet Member and Director.

Whilst implementing the plan, the Council will continue to work with partners and Government to monitor the prevalence and impact of COVID-19 within the borough, the sub-region and beyond. Controlling the spread of the virus remains an overarching priority and the Council, its communities and partners is likely to need to return to response mode one or more times during the lifetime of this plan.

Monitoring of the delivery and impact of the plan will be through our existing governance mechanisms and operational planning. Over time, the plan will be aligned with both the performance management framework, which reports the Council's performance to Members and the public four times a year, and with the annual 'State of the Borough' report which monitors wider issues which impact on the quality of life of residents but that are not in the direct control of the Council.