

**Agenda Item No:** 7  
**Report To:** Cabinet  
**Date of Meeting:** 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020  
**Report Title:** Recovery Plan 2020  
**Report Author & Job Title:** Lorna Ford (Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications)  
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**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Clarkson  
**Portfolio Holder for:** Leader of the Council



**Summary:** This report presents the draft Recovery Plan 2020. The Plan sets out the council's approach to making a timely and successful recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic; the Plan reflects the difficult and challenging times ahead and the opportunities that are arising as we recover from the pandemic as an organisation and local leader. The Plan sets out how we can embrace the 'new normal' to build; a stronger local economy, increased community resilience and public participation and to encourage living more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, keeping our pledge to achieve carbon neutrality as a core focus of the Plan. Included is the long term ambition for the borough. Developed in consultation with a wide of range of stakeholders this ambition is the conduit for a consistent journey from recovery phase to implementing our key strategic documents in the near future. The Plan covers the next 18 months reflecting economic forecasting for the return of economic stability during the next two years. Given the many uncertainties faced at present on timing of easing of restrictions and as more is learnt about the pandemic and how to suppress further peaks in infection The Plan will need to be flexible and responsive. The Recovery Plan macro-economic forecast is based on the assumption of an orderly departure from the EU at the end of 2020. The actions set out are those that can be started within the next 9 months. The plan will be regularly reviewed and further actions brought forward at the time where they will assist with furthering recovery across the borough.

**Key Decision:** YES  
**Significantly Affected Wards:** All  
**Recommendations:** The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- I. **approve adoption of the Recovery Plan as the main strategic document of the council for the next 18 months;**
- II. **give delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to vary the Delivery Plan programme, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Recovery Monitoring and Advisory Group, in order to expedite a timely response to changing circumstances to support the recovery of local residents, communities and business;**
- III. **authorise the CEO, in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder to commence delivery of the Recovery Plan prior to its being recommended for adoption at Full Council in October;**
- IV. **note the reallocation of Business Rate Pool funding (Economic Growth) from the town centre framework projects to the focus on the economic recovery priorities within the Recovery Plan delivery;**
- V. **note and agree the long-term ambition for the borough: and**
- VI. **note the Ashford Ambition Report (shaping a prosperous, sustainable & inclusive future for the Borough in 2030 & beyond) as the evidence base for the forthcoming Corporate Plan**

**Policy Overview:**

The government's Recovery Plan – Our Plan to Rebuild has guided the underlying principles of the Ashford Recovery Plan. The government plan sets out the steps it will take to keep people safe and reduce transmission of the coronavirus whilst easing restrictions to revitalise the economy and deliver a greener, more resilient future for everyone.

The Plan will be responsive to information, guidance and policy emerging from The Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) as it assesses the impact of the coronavirus at a local level.

**Financial Implications:**

As a result of reduced income to the council while the stay at home restrictions were in force and the costs of responding to the coronavirus emergency the council has a budget deficit. The Recovery Plan is structured around supporting the council's financial position, economic recovery, carbon neutrality and community resilience over the next 18 months. The proposed actions are prioritised as they will contribute to balancing the MTFP through increasing efficiencies, income generation and / or commercialisation or are cost neutral or

have external funding sources and are meeting the assessment criteria set out in the Recovery Plan. The Recovery Plan is funded by a combination of funds redirected from the NNDR (National Non-Domestic Rates) pool and delivery plan reserves (formerly project reserves). The Business Rate Pool funding (Economic Growth) has been reallocated from the town centre framework projects to the focus on the economic recovery priorities within the Recovery Plan delivery. The Pool funding was originally approved for town centre framework projects which was agreed in 2019.

**Legal Implications:**

**Equalities Impact Assessment:**

See Attached. No negative impacts were identified.

**Data Protection Impact Assessment:**

Where necessary individual actions will be assessed for any data protection implications, such as remote working.

**Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):**

Potential risks arising as a result of the coronavirus pandemic have been assessed. The Recovery Plan mitigates those risks, which have been included on the corporate risk register.

A second wave of the coronavirus could result in funds being diverted away from delivering the Recovery Plan to deal with an emergency response that maybe required depending on the severity of any subsequent outbreak.

**Sustainability Implications:**

The Recovery Plan has a **positive** impact on the council's commitment to achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2030. This remains an overriding commitment of the council and permeates through all four themes of the Recovery Plan. The proposed actions are considered in respect of their contribution to carbon reduction, promoting a green economy and encouraging; a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable way of living. This will set in place good foundations as the council moves out of the recovery phase and takes forward the Corporate Plan priority to be a 'Green Pioneer' and adopt the Carbon Neutral Strategy.

For example, actions that will contribute to achieving carbon neutrality include:

- Remote working for staff – reduces commuting by car, to offices and for meetings.
- Reviewing councils own assets – will include buildings, energy efficiency, water consumption etc.
- Increasing options for walking and cycling for work and leisure, reduced car dependency.
- Progressing with digital transformation to increase use of

virtual meetings and information sharing, both internally and with the wider public.

- Increasing local energy generation through renewable energy sources.
- Increasing biodiversity and provision of open space through improvements in our parks.
- Run promotional campaigns for staff and public to increase knowledge and share ideas for more sustainable lifestyles.
- Encourage businesses to develop and use green processes and actively encourage green industries to establish in the borough.

**Other Material Implications:**

None

**Exempt from Publication:**

**NO**

**Background Papers:**

UK Government Recovery Plan – Our Plan to Rebuild  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/884760/Our\\_plan\\_to\\_rebuild\\_The\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_COVID-19\\_recovery\\_strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884760/Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy.pdf)

Ashford Ambition Report July 2020 (available on request from the authors)

Ashford Residents Survey 2020 Report (available on request from the authors)

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## Report Title: Recovery Plan 2020

### Introduction and Background

1. The Recovery Plan 2020 (Appendix 1) has been developed to put in place a framework to enable a timely and structured recovery from the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The plan sets out to deliver a number of actions that will allow the council to re-configure how it works and can most effectively deliver services to residents and how, in collaboration with others, help mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on the local economy, communities and residents. The underlying principles are to build back to a greener, more prosperous, resilient and caring borough. The 'Principles for a Green Recovery' set out by the Kent Resilience Forum will be used as a guide to inform decision making. (An explanation of the principles for a green recovery are in appendix F of the Recovery Plan).
2. To inform the next Corporate Plan, consultants had been commissioned to undertake a study – 'Ashford Futures' (in consultation with members, staff and local stakeholders) to develop an aspirational ambition for the borough. This culminated in a report 'Ashford Ambition, shaping a prosperous, sustainable & inclusive future for the Borough in 2030 & beyond' and the ambition will be the guiding principle of key strategic documents, the Corporate Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, the Carbon Neutral Strategy and the Local Plan. As this work was drawing to a conclusion the coronavirus pandemic became prevalent in the UK and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March the government introduced 'lockdown' to save lives. The remaining consultation was carried out by online methods. The Executive Summary of the Ashford Ambition Report is at appendix H of the Recovery Plan)
3. The council's immediate priority turned to responding to the coronavirus pandemic; supporting communities, residents and business. This meant that the public consultation for the Corporate Plan, planned to take place during June and July, was suspended. As the implications of the lockdown became clearer; reduced income to the council, rapid introduction of different ways of working, the stalling of the economy and disruption and hardship to many local people it became evident that a Recovery Plan should developed to provide local leadership and direction to enable a timely recovery in what have and continue to be challenging and unprecedented circumstances.
4. The Leader has steered the development of the Recovery Plan, assisted by the Recovery Group of senior officers (Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Environment and Land Management, Head of HR and Customer Services, Head of Finance and IT). It is recognised that the Recovery Plan will need to be responsive to potentially yet unknown consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and further guidance from the government as restrictions are eased and possibly re-imposed should infection rates increase. A Recovery Monitoring and Advisory Group,

nominated by The Leader will be formed, as a committee of the Cabinet, to oversee the delivery of the Recovery Plan.

5. Included within the Recovery Plan are;
- the revised Equalities Objectives and
  - the Service Design Principles

Equalities Objectives.

The Equalities Objectives were due to be reviewed concurrently with the Corporate Plan, in accordance with the legal requirement for public authorities to set at least one equality objective every four years to help focus attention on priority equality issues.

With the introduction of a new Corporate Plan paused to take stock of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, this Recovery Plan has been developed and our equalities objectives reviewed in light of the current circumstances. They will be kept under constant review and adapted accordingly.

Objective 1: Improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do

Objective 2: Encourage all residents to have a say in the decisions that affect them and get involved in their local communities

Objective 3: Deliver services and customer care to meet the needs of all our residents

Objective 4: Deliver organisational change to enable a more inclusive and diverse workforce

The full equalities objectives are included in appendix D of the Recovery Plan

Service Design Principles

Service Design Principles are a set of considerations that form the basis of any good product/service. They provide a framework within which to operate, a structure made up of rules, guidelines and considerations that need to be considered when creating services/processes. They are fundamental pieces of advice that should make creating any new service/process easier as they give parameters that pre-empt tough questions and decisions.

The design principles have been developed in consultation with staff through a presentation and a series of workshops and are:

- Do the hard work, test and learn to keep it simple
- Focus on the customer journey, making it quick and uncomplicated to empower customers to do more for themselves
- Focus on the goals and delivery
- Less is more
- Distinctive
- Seamless approach
- Who needs this information?
- Tell customers what to expect and keep them up to date along the way
- This is for everyone

The full design principles are found in appendix E of the Recovery Plan.

## **Proposal**

Members are requested to:

6. Approve adoption of the Recovery Plan as the main strategic document of the council for the next 18 months.
7. To give delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to vary the Delivery Plan programme, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Recovery Monitoring and Advisory Group, in order to expedite a timely response to changing circumstances to support the recovery of local residents, communities and business.
8. Authorise the CEO, in consultation with the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder to commence delivery of the Recovery Plan prior to its being recommended for adoption at Full Council in October;
9. Note the reallocation of Business Rate Pool funding (Economic Growth) from the town centre framework projects to the focus on the economic recovery priorities within the Recovery Plan delivery;
10. Note and agree the long-term ambition for the borough:  
  
*The Ashford Ambition: to be a thriving, productive and inclusive Borough in 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing.*
11. Note the Ashford Ambition report as the evidence base for the forthcoming Corporate Plan.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

12. Members are referred to the attached Assessment at Appendix 2. There are no negative impacts identified as arising from the implementation of the Recovery Plan

## **Consultation Planned or Undertaken**

13. The Recovery Plan has been developed by The Leader and Management Team Recovery Group. The Cabinet was consulted on the draft Recovery Plan at Call Over on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.
14. There has been extensive consultation with members, staff and local stakeholders to develop the long term ambition for the borough as part of the Ashford Futures study. In addition the Ashford Residents Survey asked questions relating to priorities for the Corporate Plan and achieving Carbon Neutrality. These have been taken into consideration in the development of

the Recovery Plan. The Recovery Plan is an intermediate step in the journey towards adopting the next Corporate Plan, The Economic Development Strategy and the Carbon Neutral Strategy. With stakeholders and residents views already gathered at its core, the Recovery Plan can be adopted without further delay. A summary of the consultation is in Appendix B of the Recovery Plan.

## **Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended**

15. The coronavirus pandemic has impacted on a number of areas of council business, our communities and local economy. It is important that a clear plan is in place to guide the council's strategic decision making as we recover from the pandemic and are able to respond flexibly to changing circumstances as and when they arise in the near future.
16. Delivering the actions in the Recovery Plan will enable the council to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities going forward over the next 18 months.
17. This provides a period in which to review the Corporate Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Carbon Neutral Strategy to ensure they are reflecting lessons learnt and focused on building back better for the longer term to achieve the ambition for Ashford borough in 2030 and beyond.

## **Next Steps in Process**

18. The CEO commences delivering the Recovery Plan. This will provide a short timeframe to understand any further constraints and opportunities and where the plan will need to be flexible and/or revised ahead of it being present to Full Council for adoption.
19. Further to approval at Full Council the Recovery Plan will be published on the council's website.

## **Conclusion**

20. The Recovery Plan provides a strong basis in which the council can move from an emergency response footing to instigating a well-planned recovery to the benefit of the council as an organisation, the local community and economy.
21. The Recovery Plan keeps at its core the commitment to achieve carbon neutrality, through the interventions and actions wherever possible, building back a more sustainable borough.
22. Comprehensive and regular review will ensure our recovery remains focused and on track to deliver a timely recovery that is inclusive and ensures those hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic are not disadvantaged.

## **Portfolio Holder's Views**

23. This Plan represents an important step forward in ensuring the recovery of our communities and economy and prioritises what we must deliver to get there. In many ways we have already begun the journey to recovery.
24. As an organisation our working practices have had to change and indeed we are demonstrating better ways of working with added environmental benefits. There are opportunities we will take to embed longer term changes to the way we work whilst ensuring the quality of our services are maintained and delivered as efficiently as possible.
25. Throughout the coming months there will be many uncertainties facing us and regular review of this plan will be necessary in order to keep our Recovery Plan actively on track and responsive to changes be they global, national or local. In order to deliver this Recovery Plan for our borough of Ashford, it is important that we all work together to ensure that we return to prosperity and good health as speedily as possible.

## **Contact and Email**

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Ashford Borough Council

# Recovery Plan

July 2020



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# Foreword by Cllr Clarkson, Leader



When we embarked on renewing our new 5 year Corporate Plan, due for introduction in 2020, we could never have envisaged that we would be in the throes of a global pandemic, with such tragic loss of life. As we are now hopefully coming through this crisis, we find ourselves in the position of having to adopt a Recovery Plan to steer us through the next 18 months. By early 2022 we should have recovered enough to be back on track to forge ahead with our longer term ambitions for Ashford, which are also outlined in this Plan.

During the pandemic I was extremely heartened by how our communities rallied round to help those who were vulnerable or in need. This period of enforced social distancing has also caused us to take a closer look at what is important to us; caring for each other and valuing what we have and what others do to support us in our daily lives. Our pledge to become carbon neutral remains a firm commitment. Whilst the coronavirus is a significant setback to our economic and social

journey we must look ahead to how we can work together to build a brighter, greener more sustainable future for the borough now and for the generations to come.

As an organisation our working practices had to change and indeed have worked extremely well and provided environmental benefits. There are opportunities we will take to embed longer term changes to the way we work whilst ensuring the quality of our services are maintained and delivered as efficiently as possible.

Throughout the coming months there will be many uncertainties facing us and regular review will be necessary in order to keep our Recovery Plan actively on track and responsive to changes be they global, national or local. In order to deliver this Recovery Plan for our borough of Ashford, it is important that we all work together to ensure that we return to prosperity and good health as speedily as possible.



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# 1. Introduction

We find ourselves in an unprecedented position. There will be consequences of the coronavirus pandemic that will influence our lives now and in the years to come. This Recovery Plan sets out the action we will take over the next 18 months to address the challenges and grasp the opportunities whether they are economic, social or environmental.

There will be opportunities to be gained by working collectively across all sectors, statutory and voluntary.

We shall continue to support and collaborate with the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF). This will ensure we are acting consistently with the county wide approach, able to draw on experiences of others and deliver coordinated and consistent recovery messages to the public and business. We will actively engage with the KRF Recovery Advisory Group, which will provide us with increased knowledge, information and support, which will inform the decision making in each of the districts.

The voluntary organisations in the borough have been outstanding in their response and the joint working established must be continued to ensure all residents have access to support and advice for their physical, mental and financial wellbeing. We will need to be aware that some communities have suffered particular loss and hardship and may need additional, longer term support to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

There has been wide acknowledgment that the restrictions introduced to minimise transmission of the coronavirus have significantly reduced climate change emissions. There is now a global discussion about how this could become mainstream; supporting the green economy through helping business to transition away from carbon intensive activities, assisting individuals to work differently and smarter, utilising technology, less commuting and increasing active travel options which prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. The UK Climate Secretary said in April 2020 'the world must work together, as

it has to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, to support a green and resilient recovery, which leaves no one behind.' In this Recovery Plan our actions are carefully considered to ensure wherever possible they are contributing to carbon reduction by taking opportunities to introduce new ways of working and supporting changes to enable a more sustainable way of living. We will, wherever possible, use the Kent Resilience Forum 'principles for a green recovery' as a framework against which all our actions are considered in order to assist in prioritising those which have positive environmental outcomes.

As the restrictions are gradually eased we will need to be responsive and ready to advise, where necessary, how this can be effected safely such as the reopening of town and village centres, play areas and making space for cycling and walking.

This Recovery Plan will culminate in the knowledge that we have seized opportunities and addressed the challenges thrust upon us by the pandemic to build a better future.





## 2. Government Policy

From midnight on the 23rd March 2020 the government required as many people as possible to stay at home wherever possible and to only make essential journeys. All non-essential businesses and workplaces were required to close, in addition to the earlier closure of schools and the leisure and hospitality sectors. Social distancing was introduced for everyone and, for the most vulnerable to infection, a shielding programme was activated. These 'lockdown' measures were put in place until it was determined that the reproduction rate of the virus had fallen to a level to suppress the virus, save lives and protect the NHS.

At the beginning of May the reproduction rate had fallen, meaning the number of infected people is falling. On the 10th May the Prime Minister announced a slight easing of lockdown restrictions. The following day the government issued its COVID-19 recovery strategy – Our Plan to Rebuild. This plan recognises that there will not be a quick return or any easy answers and it will be necessary to adapt as more is learnt

about the virus. The long term solution lies with finding a vaccine or drug treatment to the virus but the time scale for this is unknown and it is possible that a vaccine will not be found. Therefore the government's overriding priority remains to save lives and to do that it must be acknowledged that life will be different for the foreseeable future. The easing of restrictions will take place in steps, determined by the reproduction rate of the virus and 4 other tests.

The government is acutely aware of the impact on the economy of lockdown and the devastation it is causing to some businesses and livelihoods, health and wellbeing.

The government refers to the impact of the virus on the global economy and that it is not expecting the world to return to normal. The UK must adapt and shape the new world to improve living standards across the nation and strive to deliver a UK and world economy which is stronger, cleaner, more sustainable and more resilient after this crisis.

The Government COVID-19 Recovery Strategy can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

A summary can be found in Appendix A.



# 3. Key Assumptions

## 3.1 Macro-Economic Position

The economic forecasts used to help set a baseline for our new Corporate Plan have been revised to reflect the potential impact to the UK economy and the rate of economic recovery which will be dependent in part on the easing of restrictions.

Our consultants, Experian, have shared analysis of four possible scenarios in terms of macro-economic recovery. It is understood that the UK government is basing its recovery plans on what is known as the 'delayed-V' scenario which assumes:

- COVID-19 successfully contained in Q3 of 2020.
- Suppression measures begin to unwind in September.
- Activity remains at very subdued levels for most of 2020 Q3.
- Government mitigation policies have a fair amount of success.
- A tightening in credit conditions proves mild and short lived, while Sterling stabilises.

This scenario also assumes that the UK exits the single market and customs union in an orderly way at the end of 2020 with a Free Trade Agreement coming into effect in early 2021.

## 3.2 ABC Financial Position

Prior to the coronavirus outbreak, the council's Medium Term Financial Plan highlighted the risks and difficulties that the council was facing in terms of increasing demand for services and proposed reviews of funding mechanisms. However; the council was in a strong financial position and this will need to be deployed differently to support the council through the crisis and into recovery period. There are significant budgetary pressures that, despite government's allocation of nearly £1.4m in additional funding, will need careful management and the use of reserves to cover the gap.

As a result of the crisis the council's income from services has reduced and it has incurred expenditure to support the emergency response which has drawn on reserves.

Income will be severely reduced in the 3 months from April, as the stay at home, stay safe message prevails. Then, as lockdown is eased income will slowly increase. It is anticipated that income levels may not return to normal until the end of 2020, or indeed into 2021, as confidence grows and restrictions are lifted in a phased programme, determined nationally. Some income streams may take longer to recover due to uncertainty in the global economic outlook.

The 2020/21 budget will see a significant financial pressure. Government funding of £1.36m will cover the direct pressure on the budget in responding to the coronavirus but will only partly offset lost revenue. Any further government funding to local authorities will be a welcome contribution towards easing the pressure on our budgets.

There will be ongoing review of budgets over the coming months and the forecast will be refined to identify where efficiencies can be made, savings, our borrowing strategy and economic forecasting.

As part of the recovery the council will need to rise to the challenge of supporting the local community and economy after the crisis, the council will need to restore its financial strength and transform itself to enable it to deliver services in an appropriate way for the future. This will mean that further emphasis will need to be placed on developing further commercial initiatives and identifying efficiencies from the council's operations.

## 3.3 Local Economy

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on the world-wide economy. It is recognised that there will be a period of recession, how long and how deep this is will be dependent on many factors, global, national and local.



The UK government has put in place a number of measures to help reduce the impact on business and to safeguard employment, however it is expected that there will be significant economic difficulties in the short and longer term.

Unemployment is predicted, by the ONS, to rise from around 4% in February 2020 to nearly 9% under lockdown. Three of the sectors that are expected to see a particularly negative impact from the coronavirus outbreak are the arts and entertainment, accommodation and catering, and much of the retail and wholesale sectors. These sectors represent approx. 30% of Ashford's employment and would therefore have a big impact on local unemployment and associated deprivation levels and consumer spending.

Finding alternative employment will be difficult as vacancies have dropped as businesses delay hiring people until they know the full scale of the impact to their business. The government's Furlough scheme is being taken up by many businesses, but many small and medium businesses will likely be forced to lay off high numbers of staff in order to address their cash flow problems.

Business growth is likely to be curtailed and some businesses will consider how they operate, which may lead to increased productivity in the longer term but could adversely affect employment opportunities as businesses streamline their activity and find alternative ways of making or selling products or services. In Ashford manufacturing accounts for approximately 5,000 jobs many of which will be affected as businesses close or reshape the operation to allow for more automation.

Business start-ups and survival will both be negatively affected. For start-ups it can be expected that the rate will decrease considering the uncertainty of the business landscape and the reduced amount of disposable income many households will have, together with a reluctance by investors to support higher risk businesses.

# 4. Challenges & Opportunities

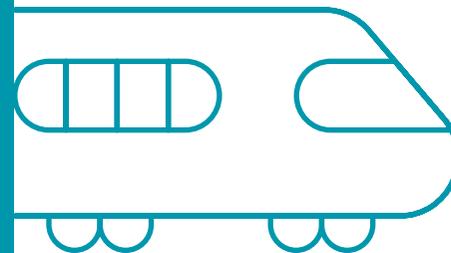
In our work to develop our next Corporate Plan, a number of challenges and opportunities were identified. Some of these have been heightened by the coronavirus pandemic, others will emerge as we recover. Over the next 18 months our endeavours will be focused on responding to the challenges we face and how everyone who lives and works in the borough can benefit from any opportunities that arise.



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## Impacts on the Council

Challenges	Opportunities
Additional demand - Benefits / Debt Recovery / Homelessness / Environmental Health	Capturing changes to working practices as a result of remote working
Office accommodation (social distancing)	More staff able to homework, reduces travel and carbon emissions
Participation in meetings – actual and virtual	Virtual meetings, reduces travel and can increase public participation
Face to face customer contact and third party visits	To review Organisational Structure to dovetail in with new working practices
Loss of revenue	Digitalisation of services – more access for customers through online methods
	Introduce new Commercial Delivery Hub to assist with income and improve commercial acumen
	Develop a robust commercial approach to generate income



# Impacts on the Economy

Challenges	Opportunities
Business survival	Encourage local businesses to adapt and re-establish themselves
Unemployment	Relocation of Government and business from London as they review costs and ways of working
Skills and knowledge	Capitalise on creating the green recovery
Consumer confidence (spending)	
Changes in consumer purchasing (move to online)	
Reduction in visitors to the borough	
Stalling of housebuilding and other infrastructure projects	

# Impacts on the Community

Challenges	Opportunities
Voluntary and charitable organisations funding decreasing	Resilience enhanced for communities and voluntary and charitable organisations
Less affluent neighbourhoods are disproportionately affected	Greater recognition of the established Ashford Volunteer Centre to assist ABC in delivering the Recovery Plan outcomes
Unemployment	Empowering communities to help themselves where possible
More people evicted from their homes	Increased clarity of community strengths and needs
Mental health and wellbeing issues	Greater collaborative work across sectors/organisations
	Improved wellbeing
	Enhance community safety and thus confidence
	Realign services where possible to support vulnerable groups, using our data to assist those most in need



# 5. Taking a Longer-term View

This Recovery Plan focuses on the next 18 months setting out what we can do to revitalise our local communities and local economy. Throughout this time it will be important to keep in mind the long term aspirations for the borough developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

This has also been informed by the most recent residents' survey findings carried out in February 2020. (Summary of consultation findings at Appendix B).

The priority actions included in this Recovery Plan are all contributing to achieving the overall long-term ambition for the borough.

*The Ashford Ambition: to be a thriving, productive and inclusive borough in 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing.*



**This ambition is supported by three themes:**

**1. Green Pioneer** – Where businesses, communities and the public and third sector have come together to become carbon neutral, respect the local environment and ecology, and embrace a more sustainable way of living.



**2. Caring Ashford** – A caring and supportive place to live, with rich heritage; thriving towns, villages and rural communities; great schools; high-quality housing; a plethora of cultural activities and events; and a strong sense of civic pride.



**3. Targeted Growth** – A place where productive, innovative, responsible town and rural business communities offer good quality work to an agile and skilled local workforce who have embraced a culture of lifelong learning.



The following section sets out what we will do over the next 18 months to make a timely recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Supporting everyone through the recovery phase to strengthen the resilience of our communities and economy, taking the path to achieving our long term ambitions.

# 6. Our Recovery Plan

**This plan has four themes each with a set of priority actions:**

- Economic Recovery
- Community Recovery
- Place Making, Regeneration, and Infrastructure
- Organisational Change and Workforce Development

**Each action has been assessed to make sure it meets at least one of the following criteria:**

- Carbon reduction
- Building community resilience
- Improved customer experience
- Balancing our MTFP
- Income generation / Commercialisation

**And how they contribute to achieving the three themes of the longer term aspiration for the borough as outlined in the section above.**

- Green Pioneer
- Caring Ashford
- Targeted Growth



We continue to provide our 'day to day' services to support residents and business and the delivery of our strategic sites to attract inward investment for job creation and homes. Below we set out our actions that will be the priority to progress and deliver over the next 9 months. These will be constantly reviewed.

The Delivery Plan will be dynamic, responsive to change and regularly updated to bring in new actions to support recovery over the next 18 months, as we learn more about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our economy, communities and residents. The Delivery Plan will be monitored against milestones and measures to track the progress of how we are meeting each of our priority actions.



## 6.1 Economic Recovery

This Recovery Plan will need to balance resources available to support existing businesses and safeguard jobs that have suffered due to the coronavirus pandemic, alongside stimulating economic growth to create employment and increase productivity.

Priority Action	Benefits
Provide advice and support to existing businesses including specialist support	Safe reopening of local business. Revitalising the economy of local centres. Protecting jobs. Increased opportunities for independent local traders
Continue the programme to attract business	Revitalising the town centres of Ashford and Tenterden with a diverse and attractive offer to consumers
Enable the delivery of Newtown Works	Delivery of prestigious scheme with opportunities for new business growth and employment
Continue to engage with the largest local employers	Increased business resilience and supply chains
Work with Ashford college to ensure local skills needs are met	Skilled local workforce able to take up local employment offers in existing and new creative sector business attracted to the borough
Utilise any government funding to implement and promote new employment	Increased access to jobs market, particularly for young people and the unemployed
Support the Tourism industry to rebuild and adapt the tourism offer as recovery progresses	More resilient and sustainable tourist industry attracting increased visitors numbers and spend to the area
Encourage businesses to develop and use green processes and actively encourage green industries to establish in the borough	Contribute to reducing the borough's carbon footprint and achieving the aim of carbon neutrality. Increasing skills and employment opportunities

The following indicators will be used to monitor our performance in delivering economic recovery.

Indicator	Frequency	Indicator	Frequency
Parking usage	Quarterly	% of business survival of those who have received support during the pandemic	Annual
Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Quarterly		

We will also monitor the following indicators to help assess the wider impacts on our economic recovery using information from external sources.

Indicator	Frequency	Indicator	Frequency
Business survival rates	Annual	Unemployment 18 – 24 yr. olds	Quarterly
Unemployment	Quarterly		



## 6.2 Community Recovery

The response of local communities, during the pandemic, to support and help others has been truly outstanding. Sharing information and working collaboratively, over the coming months, will be critical to forging stronger more cohesive communities that are enabled to protect and promote their own wellbeing. We will work with the statutory providers and assist the voluntary sector, to support the most vulnerable in our borough through the recovery phase, particularly those most adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Priority Action	Benefits
Maintain and strengthen the community and voluntary sector	The community spirit seen during the coronavirus pandemic is continued longer term. Volunteering opportunities are established and valued
Involve and enable individuals and communities to take an active part in civic society and local decision making	Residents actively engage in local democracy so decision making process is well informed by local knowledge. Communities share ideas and learn from each other increasing their resilience
Undertake a community engagement programme, funded by the Kent Violence Reduction Unit. Pilot programme to begin in Bockhanger and Beaver and, if successful, rolled out to other ward areas	Inequalities are reduced through communities identifying issues and taking action to improve and promote community wellbeing, safety and cohesion
Delivery of community safety recovery actions with partners, including the expanded KCC Community Warden service	Borough wide provision for victims of domestic abuse Safer communities with less anti-social behaviour
Work closely with our health colleagues including support for the One You Shop	Reducing health inequalities through residents leading healthier lifestyles
Enabling those adversely impacted by COVID-19 to access the help they need	Reduce the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic



The following indicators will be used to monitor our performance in delivering community recovery.

Indicator	Frequency	Indicator	Frequency
Rent arrears/loss(HRA)	Quarterly	Lifeline answer speed	Quarterly
Homelessness presentations	Quarterly	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	Quarterly
Homelessness prevented	Quarterly	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	Quarterly
No. of complaints regarding poor conditions in the private rented sector	Quarterly	Universal credit new claims	Quarterly
% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	Quarterly	Welfare intervention number of new cases	Quarterly
No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	Quarterly	Number of community voluntary groups grant funded by ABC	Annual
Number of volunteering hours for grant funded organisations	Quarterly	Website visits to COVID-19 pages	Quarterly
Food hygiene rating	Quarterly	Number of referrals to voluntary sector	Quarterly

We will also monitor the following indicators to help assess the wider impacts on our community recovery using information from external sources.

Indicator	Frequency
Number of positive COVID-19 cases	Quarterly

## 6.3 Place Making, Regeneration and Infrastructure

The council has a strong track record of delivering a wide range of projects, many in collaboration with partners, which have brought prosperity, events and heritage to the fore in the borough. As we adapt to the challenges post coronavirus, this Recovery Plan prioritises projects over the next 18 months that will make a significant contribution to creating sustainable places to live and work.

Priority Action	Benefits
Maintain appropriate housing delivery through our place making agenda	Economic recovery is supported by housing delivery. Improved health and wellbeing through good quality homes, suitable for the household's needs, and local facilities contribute to building sustainable communities. Our 5 year land supply is maintained
Continue our programme of affordable housing delivery - phases 5 and 6 HRA (and enabling work with our housing association partners)	Reduces number of households living in unsuitable accommodation, benefitting their health and wellbeing
Progress the temporary accommodation project at Henwood	Reduction in homelessness Savings made to general fund in reducing use of costly accommodation such as B&B
Complete the leisure procurement exercise	A range of affordable leisure and sports opportunities that encourage good health and wellbeing
Implement the Cycling and Walking Strategy and local cycling and walking infrastructure plan	Increased opportunities for exercise through walking and cycling, improved air quality as car dependency reduces. Lowering the borough's carbon emissions
Improve broadband coverage and reliability	Growth in online communication, working practices and business expansion, leading to job creation and reduction in carbon emissions through less travel
Increase clean energy generation through local renewable energy	Increased locally generated clean energy that, generate income to the council and reduces the borough's carbon footprint
Town centre reset	A clear direction of use of the town centre to create a vibrant local place to live, work and visit
Increase and improve public open space at Discovery Park, Victoria Park and Conningbrook Park	Well maintained, accessible, outdoor space improves individual health and wellbeing and provides space for communities to come together. Local biodiversity is protected and enhanced
Carry out preparatory work for forward plan for next waste collection service	Residents continue to receive high quality waste collection services and recycling protects the environment and reduces the use of valuable resources



The following indicators will be used to monitor our performance in delivering place making, regeneration and infrastructure.

Indicator	Frequency	Indicator	Frequency
No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	Quarterly	Number of live planning cases (reducing backlog)	Quarterly
No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	Quarterly	% of working population cycling to work	Annual
% of planning applications approved	Quarterly	Number of organisations committed to travel plans	Annual
% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	Quarterly	Recycling rate	Quarterly
% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	Quarterly	Refuse collection rate	Quarterly
% of major planning application decisions overturned at appeal	Quarterly	Number of new garden waste users	Annual



## 6.4 Organisational Change and Workforce Development

The coronavirus pandemic has thrust upon many organisations a need to work differently. We must consider where it can be of continued benefit for our staff and customers to establish different approaches to how we work. Our income streams have been reduced and we must be innovative in how we adapt to a challenging financial outlook to maintain quality service delivery.

We will seek to improve our customers' experience of accessing services and participating in the democratic process whilst ensuring no-one is excluded. Our core values remain as; ambitious, creative and trustworthy. We will be guided by our service design principles and our equalities objectives.

We will embed across the organisation the council's aspiration to become a carbon neutral borough and use the Kent Resilience Forum 'principles for a green recovery' to ensure our decision making puts environmental sustainability that is well informed and thoughtful at its core.

### Our Equalities Objectives:

These are refreshed every four years to ensure the council has due regard to; eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

#### Objective 1

Improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do

#### Objective 2

Encourage all residents to have a say in the decisions that affect them and get involved in their local communities

#### Objective 3

Deliver services and customer care to meet the needs of all our residents

#### Objective 4

Deliver organisational change to enable a more inclusive and diverse workforce

The full explanation of our Equalities Objectives can be found at **Appendix D**.

### Our Service Design Principles:

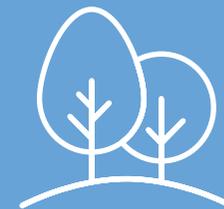
These will help guide teams to make appropriate decisions that are consistent across the entire council when designing services.

- Do the hard work, test and learn to keep it simple
- Focus on the customer journey, making it quick and uncomplicated to empower customers to do more for themselves
- Focus on the goals and delivery
- Less is more
- Distinctive
- Seamless approach
- Who needs this information?
- Tell customers what to expect and keep them up to date along the way
- This is for everyone

The full explanation of our Design Principles can be found in **Appendix E**.

## Principles for a Green Recovery:

- All investment to support recovery and future growth should have low or zero carbon emissions, use resources efficiently and aim for environmental net gain
- Employees and residents are supported to protect and enhance their wellbeing through a cleaner environment and more access to rich and varied nature
- Communities are well connected both digitally, and through an effective network of footpaths, cycle way's and public transport
- Future development and existing communities are resilient and adapted to the changing climate and severe weather events
- Biodiversity is protected, restored and created; nature-based solutions are considered first and invested in at every opportunity
- Ensure any green recovery solutions are equitable and fair; a green and equitable recovery go hand in hand
- Greater partnership working and collaboration



A full explanation of the principles is found in **appendix F**

Priority Action	Benefits
Balance the MTFP through sound financial management and generate long term income through secure investment opportunities	Restoring a strong financial position Maintaining a low council tax for residents
Enable remote working for staff to continue where it is safe and productive to do so	Adherence to social distancing guidance Flexible working to retain and attract a diverse workforce Reductions in carbon emissions from commuting by car
Review council owned assets	Efficient use of council assets contributes to income generation and savings targets
Continue the digital transformation programme to increase access to services and public participation	Council decisions are better informed by residents views and opinions Customers confidently access online services to find information and complete transactions
Develop and run an environmental awareness raising campaign for staff to increase knowledge and understanding and instigate behaviour change	Staff become ambassadors for achieving carbon neutrality Reducing carbon emissions is a priority in all work and service level decision making
Deliver the council's commercial strategy to strengthen the council's commercial approach through generating income and improving the efficiency of services	Services are maintained and improved

The following indicators will be used to monitor our performance in delivering organisational change and workforce development.

Indicator	Frequency	Indicator	Frequency
Lifeline – number of new users	Quarterly	Income target % achieved	Quarterly
Contribution to budget from commercial investments (%)	Annual	Number of days sickness per full time equivalent – long and short term sickness	Annual
% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council	Quarterly	Litigation - % of cases on which formal proceedings are issued	Quarterly
% of council tax collected by the council	Quarterly	% of s106 completed within agreed timeframe	Quarterly
Savings target % achieved	Annual		

# 7. Delivery, Monitoring and Review



This Recovery Plan together with the Delivery Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed in the light of any changing circumstances. This will ensure the intended outcomes are being delivered and we can adapt to any changes rapidly. There are many external factors, some unknown to us at this time, which will influence this plan over the next 18 months.

A Recovery Monitoring & Advisory Board will be created, chaired by the Deputy Leader this will be a committee of the Cabinet. The Leader of the Labour Party will be invited to attend as a contributing observer, without voting rights.

## Delivery

The Management Team (MT), under the direction of the CEO, will have overall responsibility for the effective delivery of the Recovery Delivery Plan, which will in turn ensure delivery of the approved Recovery Plan on behalf of the council.

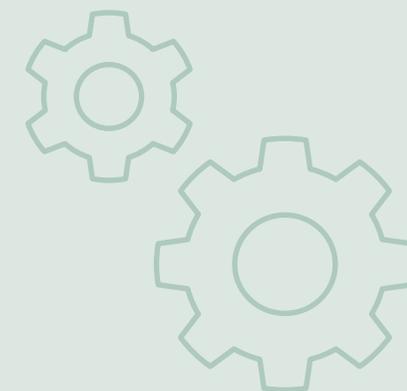
Heads of Service will liaise closely with and update their respective Portfolio Holders and feedback progress on delivery to MT, who under the direction of the CEO, will handle any day to day issues that arise. Any significant concerns or proposed changes to the approved Delivery Plan must be reported to the Leader, who will liaise with the CEO and Chair of the Recovery Monitoring & Advisory Board. The Leader in consultation with the CEO and Chair of the Board will decide on any appropriate action, which will in turn be reported to Cabinet and Council.

## Monitoring

The Cabinet, will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Recovery Plan and for authorising any significant policy or practical changes, which will be reported to Full Council. The Recovery Monitoring & Advisory Board will meet bimonthly to receive a progress report from the Management Team under the direction of the CEO. The Board will report to Cabinet every quarter. In terms of any urgent decisions needed the Chair of the Board will consult with the Leader of the Council who in turn will liaise with the CEO and decide on any appropriate action, which will be reported to the Cabinet and Council.

## Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive quarterly reports on progress and will be invited to scrutinise, comment and recommend as appropriate. In addition, the Leader will at his regular monthly meeting with Opposition Group Leaders, give an update on the current situation regarding Recovery.



# Our Recovery Plan 2020 - 22

The Ashford Ambition: to be a thriving, productive and inclusive borough in 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing.

## Recovery Plan Themes



## Our Objectives

**Carbon reduction; Job creation; Building community resilience; Improving the customer journey; Revitalising the local economy; Promoting health and wellbeing; Tackling inequalities**

## Our Service Design Principles

This is a framework that guides us when designing services to ensure our services are;

- Efficient • Consistent • Inclusive
- Improve the customer experience

## Green principles



- 1 All investment to support recovery and future growth should have low or zero carbon emissions, use resources efficiently and aim for environmental net gain.
- 2 Employees and residents are supported to protect and enhance their wellbeing through a cleaner environment and more access to rich and varied nature.
- 3 Communities are well connected both digitally, and through an effective network of footpaths, cycleways and public transport.
- 4 Future development and existing communities are resilient and adapted to the changing climate and severe weather events
- 5 Biodiversity is protected, restored and created; nature-based solutions are considered first and invested in at every opportunity.
- 6 Ensure any green recovery solutions are equitable and fair; a green and equitable recovery go hand in hand.
- 7 Greater partnership working and collaboration.



## Equalities Objectives

These are refreshed every four years to ensure the council has due regard to; eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations



Improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do



Encourage all residents to have a say in the decisions that affect them and get involved in their local communities



Deliver services and customer care to meet the needs of all our residents



Deliver organisational change to enable a more inclusive and diverse workforce

# 8. Appendices

## Appendix A – Summary of the UK Government Recovery Strategy – Our Plan to Rebuild, May 2020.

From midnight on the 23rd March 2020 the government required as many people as possible to stay at home wherever possible and to only make essential journeys. All non-essential businesses and workplaces were required to close, in addition to the earlier closure of schools and the leisure and hospitality sectors. Social distancing was introduced for everyone and, for the most vulnerable to infection, a shielding programme was activated. These 'lockdown' measures were put in place until it was determined that the reproduction rate (the R value) had fallen to a level to suppress the virus, save lives and protect the NHS.

At the beginning of May the R value had fallen to below 1 meaning the number of infected people is falling. On the 10th May the Prime Minister announced a slight easing of lockdown restrictions. The following day the government issued its COVID-19 recovery strategy – Our Plan to Rebuild. This plan recognises that there will not be a quick return or any easy answers and it will be necessary to adapt as more is learnt about the virus. The long term solution lies with finding a vaccine or drug treatment to the virus but the time scale for this is unknown and it is possible that a vaccine will not be found. Therefore the government's overriding priority remains to save lives and to do that it must be acknowledged that life will be different for the foreseeable future. The government is acutely aware of the impact on the economy of lockdown and the devastation it is causing to some businesses and livelihoods, health and wellbeing.

'The longer the virus affects the economy, the greater the risks of long-term scarring and permanently lower economic activity, with business failures, persistently higher unemployment and lower earnings. This would damage the sustainability of the public finances and the ability to fund public services including the NHS. It would also likely lead to worse long-run physical and mental health outcomes, with a significant increase in the prevalence of chronic illness.'

The easing of restrictions will take place in steps. Each step being reviewed and should the R value start to increase then more stringent restrictions will be reinstated. Including the R value the government has 5 tests it will use to determine easing of lockdown measures.

The government reinstates that widespread compliance will be needed by everyone.

The easing of restrictions will enable a careful and planned return to work and limited social interaction and physical activity where social distancing can be observed or other measures to reduce transmission of the virus can be safely put in place. The government is enacting measures that have the largest effect on controlling the epidemic but the lowest health, economic and social costs, over the coming weeks and months. As more data and scientific evidence becomes available it may be that future restrictions are targeted more locally dependent on the risk in different locations.

They are increasing funding to promote and empower people to live healthier more active lives. Where there are public places those with responsibility for the spaces must be able to put in place appropriate measures for them to be used safely in accordance with the relevant COVID-19 secure guidance.

The government refers to the impact of the virus on the global economy and that it is not expecting the world to return to normal. The UK must adapt and shape the new world to improve living standards across the nation and strive to deliver a UK and world economy which is stronger, cleaner, more sustainable and more resilient after this crisis.



## COVID-19 vulnerable groups

(as defined in the Government strategy – Our Plan to Rebuild)

Group	Explanation	Current and continuing guidance	Government support
Clinically extremely vulnerable people (all people in this cohort will have received communication from the NHS)	People defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable, meaning they are at the greatest risk of severe illness. This group includes solid organ transplant recipients, people receiving chemotherapy, renal dialysis patients and others.	Follow shielding guidance by staying at home at all times and avoiding all non-essential face-to-face contact. This guidance is in place until end June.	Support available from the National Shielding Programme, which includes food supplies (through food boxes and priority supermarket deliveries), pharmacy deliveries and care. Support is available via the NHS Volunteer Responders app.
Clinically vulnerable people	People considered to be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Clinically vulnerable people include the following: People aged 70 or older, people with liver disease, people with diabetes, pregnant women and others.	Stay at home as much as possible. If you do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household.	Range of support available while measures in place, including by local authorities and through voluntary and community groups. Support is available via the NHS Volunteer Responders app.
Vulnerable people (non-clinical)	There are a range of people who can be classified as 'vulnerable' due to non-clinical factors, such as children at risk of violence or with special education needs, victims of domestic abuse, rough sleepers and others.	People in this group will need to follow general guidance except where they are also clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable, where they should follow guidance as set out above.	For those who need it, a range of support and guidance across public services and the benefits system, including by central and local government and the voluntary and community sector.



## Appendix B - Consultation summary

### Ashford Futures Study and Ashford Borough Council Residents' Survey.

The Ashford Futures Study commenced in October 2019 with face to face interviews with the Leader of the council and the Chief Executive. This was followed by workshops with Cabinet Members and the Management Team.

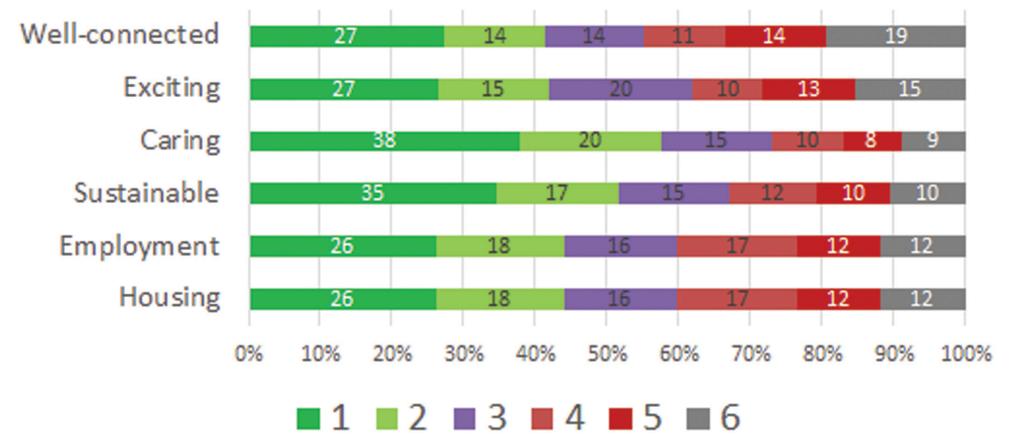
A visioning workshop which included a broad range of stakeholders was held in February 2020. Three further workshops to test and refine the vision developed in February were planned for March 2020. The first was undertaken the second and third moved to an online webinar and survey due to implications of the coronavirus lockdown.

The Ashford Residents' Survey was distributed to 10,000 households in February 2020. A 20% return rate was received.

### Consultation findings:

Positively, the consultations highlighted strong support for the overall structure and content of the vision, with most comments suggesting more minor modifications rather than large revisions or changes. This is exemplified through the results from the online survey. Three quarters of the importance ratings for the different sub-themes and scenarios provided ratings at 7 or above (with a rating of 10 representing the highest importance). The most important outcome was for Ashford being a Caring place to live. This was followed by Responsible Growth, seeing Ashford as a productive place to work. The third most highly rated goal was the Global Green Pioneer. These results were supported by those from the Residents Survey 2020. The priorities with the highest importance ratings were 'Caring', 'Sustainable' and Employment.

Figure – Importance ratings attached to different priority outcomes



Source: Ashford Borough Council Residents Survey 2020, April 2020



The online survey also asked respondents about the words that best reflected Ashford's aspirations. The most popular were: thriving (59%), wellbeing (59%) and shared prosperity (46%). This again confirmed core dimensions of the vision.

In addition, the consultations explored local stakeholders' perspectives on the most effective actions that could be taken in the area. Whilst many stakeholders were concerned about the impact of COVID-19, and reflected on the implications, there was a general feeling that it is now more important than ever to agree strong effective local action to manage the effects and enhance the short and long term recovery. As such, there was an overwhelming view that the long term vision and plan provided a vital opportunity to shape a strong and coherent response for the borough, and that if the right action was prioritised that this would help to ensure the immediate negative effects were short term. The survey asked respondents to rate achievability.

Most scenarios secured high ratings with the majority of stakeholders suggesting they were achievable. The exception was the global green pioneer, which had the lowest scores in achievability (but even then just under half of respondents gave ratings of 7 or above for achievability).

The open-ended survey comments and feedback at the workshop and webinar gave a sense of what actions local stakeholders felt to be important. Some of the most common and important feedback has been summarised below.

Many stakeholders raised concerns about the economic impact of COVID-19 and outlined the importance of actions that protected the pre-existing strengths and assets in the local economy. This outlined the vital role that foundational sectors, such as retail, hospitality, leisure and recreation, and food and drink production were already playing in the area, and which had seen significant growth and employment. There was concern that these sectors were supported in the recovery, to continue to support future growth. Relatedly, there was a call for responsible business and greater recognition for the value of essential and key workers. This included demands for better working practices that provided good, well paid work and terms and conditions that created careers of first choice. Aspects of responsible practices developed through the lockdown period involving retaining staff through job retention schemes and developing comprehensive health and safety plans that considered staff welfare, whilst remote working, as well as their safe return to work were given as examples that could be built upon.

Another area of common concern related to the need to protect essential services and to ensure that they reached the needs of different parts of the community, especially those made most vulnerable such as younger and older age groups, people from lower socio-economic groups, and those with pre-existing health conditions for example. Unsurprisingly, a key focus was placed on the vital role of health and social care to effectively support the sick and manage the public health measures to protect public safety. But, there was an emphasis on wider social concerns too such as housing and general public wellbeing and the vital role of broader community and voluntary services in meeting these broader community needs. People cited examples of existing initiatives such as One You that had the potential to be further developed to create a wider range of community out-reach activities through networks and hubs. Stakeholders felt that COVID-19 effectively demonstrated the potential of providing services remotely using digitally enabled tools to reach far reaching parts of the community, and that once social distancing measures were lightened these could be complemented with community-based meeting points and facilities providing on-line access as well as face to face services.

In the context of broad economic uncertainty, stakeholders also raised the important role of education and employment services, in addition, to business support. It was recognised that it was now more important than ever that individuals and businesses alike could access a range of support and advice to ensure they could take the best course of action moving forward, whether that was: accessing job retention schemes; pursuing upskilling, training, and re-skilling activities; securing advice about the best future employment or business opportunities; and accessing finance to support future development activities. An onus was placed on integrating such services as much as possible so that priority courses available locally for example aligned to the jobs available.

In setting out key actions and agreeing priorities for investment, stakeholders also emphasised the importance of "geography", and moving beyond the usual priority areas such as the Ashford and Tenterden town centres. That means ensuring a sufficiently balanced approach which is appropriately targeted, and reaches out to the different needs of all parts of the community across the borough, including rural areas.



Community Recovery												
Priority Action	ABC Lead	Partners	Savings	Income generation	Equalities objectives	Carbon reduction	Job creation	Building community resilience	Improving the customer journey	Revitalising the local economy	Promoting health and wellbeing	Tackling inequalities
Maintain and strengthen the community and voluntary sector	Arts and Cultural Industries Manager	Voluntary sector, parish councils, community councils, social enterprises										
Involve and enable individuals and communities to take an active part in civic society and local decision making	Head of Corporate Policy Economic Development and Communications	parish councils, community councils										
Undertake a community engagement programme, funded by the Kent Violence Reduction Unit. Pilot programme to be agreed in Bockhanger and Beaver	Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager	Parish and community councils										
Delivery of community safety recovery actions with partners, including the expanded KCC Community Warden service.	Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing	CSP										
Work closely with our health colleagues including support for the One You Shop	Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing	AHWP, KCHFT, KCC										
Enabling those adversely impacted by COVID-19 to access the help they need	Housing Operations Manager											



Organisational change and workforce development												
Priority Action	ABC Lead	Partners	Savings	Income generation	Equalities objectives	Carbon reduction	Job creation	Building community resilience	Improving the customer journey	Revitalising the local economy	Promoting health and wellbeing	Tackling inequalities
Balance the MTFP through sound financial management and generate long term income through secure investment opportunities	Head of IT and Finance											
Enable remote working for staff to continue where it is safe and productive to do so	Head of HR and Customer Services / Head of IT and Finance											
Review council owned assets	Deputy Head of Corporate Property & Projects											
Continue the digital transformation programme to increase access to services and public participation	Head of HR and Customer Services / Head of Corporate Policy Economic Development and Communications											
Develop and run an environmental awareness raising campaign for staff to increase knowledge and understanding and instigate behaviour change	Head of Corporate Policy Economic Development and Communications											
Deliver the council's commercial strategy to strengthen the council's commercial approach through generating income and improving the efficiency of services	Head of Environment and Land Management											

## Appendix D - Ashford Equalities Objectives

### Objective 1

Improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do

We will do this by:

- Improving the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to shape decision making (e.g. through use of analytical tools, data sources and performance measures).
- Disseminating our improved understanding of different characteristics within our communities to members and officers using tools such as the borough profile and training.
- Maintaining and strengthen community resilience (e.g. maintaining the good relations with our partners built through the Covid-19 response and working together to understand where we may need to target interventions).
- Developing a community action plan.

### Objective 2

Encourage all residents to have a say in the decisions that affect them and get involved in their local communities.

We will do this by:

Further developing ways of engaging individual and communities to ensure their voice is heard (e.g. virtual meetings, social media campaigns, petition scheme).

### Objective 3

Deliver services and customer care to meet the needs of all our residents

We will do this by:

- Enabling those adversely impacted by Covid-19 to get the help they need.
- Ensuring we are not leaving people behind when adapting our practices to take account of social distancing (e.g. allowing carers, interpreters and children to attend appointments).
- Delivering Digital transformation (e.g. new website that delivers our accessibility statement through embedded design principles).
- Including appropriate impact assessments in Cabinet reports and ensuring these are completed to a high standard (e.g. through regular reviews of draft Equality Impact Assessments).

### Objective 4

Deliver organisational change to enable a more inclusive and diverse workforce

We will do this by:

- Organisational cultural change (e.g. mandatory equalities and diversity training).
- Remote working (e.g. review of HR policies, production of remote working guidance, recruitment and selection and employee engagement).

## Appendix E – Ashford Design Principles

### Do the hard work, test and learn to keep it simple.

We need to regularly review our process – just because we have done it for years doesn't mean it's the best way. Working in an agile way where feedback on processes is actioned. Customers should have less points of contact. It's ok to make mistakes, as long as we learn from them and share our experiences.

### Focus on the customer journey, making it quick and uncomplicated to empower customers to do more for themselves.

We need to use data to inform the construction of the customer journey. Aligns with corporate values of Ambitious, Trustworthy and Creative. We must balance our digital persona with also being seen as human beings.

### Focus on the goals and delivery.

We need to know the purpose of what we're hoping to achieve. There should be a clear path of how we will do this set out at the start of a project.

### Less is more.

We need to work efficiently and smartly. Less is more. If something works we should look to reuse it elsewhere in the organisation.

### Distinctive.

We should be seen by others as trailblazing and distinctive developing new and innovative services using open source so that we can share. Thinking outside of the box and be risk aware, not risk averse. Ask yourself: "How can you make this process more distinctive as an ABC service?" We should dare to innovate, whether that is using new ways of working or existing solutions.

### Seamless approach.

We will put the customer at the heart of what we do. We'll provide easy to use digital services that collect information only once. We need to be consistent across council systems to provide resilience.

### Who needs this information?

When designing content or a process we should always be asking ourselves this question. We need to have an understanding of the customer's needs and should only collect the information we need. This information should only be collected once, at the first point of contact. Please share this information with other departments who may find it useful.

### Tell customers what to expect and keep them up to date along the way.

We must manage the expectations of our customers. They should be able to track the progress of their transactions/applications. We need to clearly communicate when they can expect to hear back from us and what else we may need. We should constantly seek feedback from our customers to continually improve services.

### This is for everyone.

Consider the ability of those using our services and create content/processes that can be completed by anyone. Ensure services and customer journeys are accessible. Write in plain English, use heading styles, explain acronyms, use alt text and cater for users who have English as a second language.

## Appendix F – Kent Resilience Forum – Principles for a Green Recovery

1. All investment to support recovery and future growth should have low or zero carbon emissions, use resources efficiently and aim for environmental net gain. This means new infrastructure, developments, processes and businesses should be looking to minimise the use of energy and water, reduce waste, promote the circular economy and use renewable energy and sustainable materials where possible. It also means that investment doesn't lock in carbon emissions in the future.

2. Employees and residents are supported to protect and enhance their wellbeing through a cleaner environment and more access to rich and varied nature. This means benefiting from the health and wellbeing advantages associated with: warmer, more energy efficient homes; better air quality inside and outside; increased access to public green space; and a high quality natural environment thriving with wildlife.

3. Communities are well connected both digitally, and through an effective network of footpaths, cycleways and public transport. This means active travel; public transport and low carbon vehicles are not only the best way to get around in our personal lives but the default for business travel and communications; virtual working is supported and encouraged; and homeworking is enabled to become the norm.

4. Future development and existing communities are resilient and adapted to the changing climate and severe weather events. This means adaptations are in place to cope with, and build resilience against, increased drought, flooding and heatwaves, and new designs account for these from the beginning.

5. Biodiversity is protected, restored and created; nature-based solutions are considered first and invested in at every opportunity. This means species are protected and, where threatened, are recovered; existing habitats and greenspaces are enhanced to regain and retain good health; communities are inspired by, and engaged with, their local environment and are realising the mental and physical health benefits of such a connection; and natural options to tackle climate change impacts such as flooding, temperature change and water management are considered before other options.

6. Ensure any green recovery solutions are equitable and fair; a green and equitable recovery go hand in hand. This means ensuring new greenspaces are planned in areas where everyone will see benefits and not just new development; and the delivery of clean growth does not affect some people disproportionately.

7. Greater partnership working and collaboration. This means engaging all parts of the community to contribute to and realise environmental, economic and social benefits.

## Appendix G – Glossary

ABC	Ashford Borough Council
AHWP	Ashford Health and Wellbeing Partnership
B&B	Bed and Breakfast accommodation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DfT	Department for Transport
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
KCC	Kent County Council
KCHFT	Kent Community Health Foundation Trust
KRF	Kent Resilience Forum
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
NHS	National Health Service

## Appendix H – The Ashford Ambition report - July 2020, Executive Summary

In October 2019, Ashford Borough Council appointed Work Advance Ltd and Experian PLC to undertake a major futures study for the local area. The work has encompassed a blend of research, forecasting, scenario planning and extensive engagement with local stakeholders, to understand their views and aspirations for the future.

This process has supported the development of the Ashford Ambition: a strategic framework to shape a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future for Ashford, Tenterden and the surrounding villages and rural areas in 2030 and beyond.

The work was commissioned during a period of considerable uncertainty: a new Government and policy agenda; Britain's exit from the European Union (EU); growth stalling in the global economy.

Since then of course, the world has shifted even more dramatically in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid spread of the novel virus is creating unprecedented challenges for national and local government across the UK, as well as Governments around the world. Paramount among these concerns are treating the sick, enforcing social distancing, supporting the vulnerable, maintaining vital community services, ensuring public safety, and mitigating the economic fallout for local businesses and residents.

While minds are undoubtedly focussed on responding to the current crisis, once the situation begins to stabilise longer-term strategic planning will be vital.

Now more than ever Ashford will need an agreed direction of travel: to act decisively to drive the recovery and exploit opportunities; to prioritise fiercely, focussing finite resources and funding on those actions that will move Ashford towards a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future.

There was a strong sense amongst local stakeholders that while it was clearly vital to consider and respond to the changed context the Covid-19 pandemic presents, that it was important not to let the current crisis knock Ashford off the ambitious path it has forged.

Many of these local stakeholders - though themselves busy dealing with the immediate fallout of the pandemic - emphasised that having a clear view of the future of the Borough was made more vital. That the aspirations articulated – the Ambition of a “caring and supportive place; where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector come together to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing” – feel all the more compelling as we reflect on these unprecedented times. That this work could in fact galvanise the community behind a shared Ambition that they themselves have developed, in order to deliver real and lasting change.

**The Ashford Ambition** - as set out in the next few pages and throughout the rest of this document - is ambitious indeed. It reflects Ashford's 'go first' 'self-made' attitude, forward-thinking mindset and appetite for growth and innovation. It is founded on what has been achieved in the past: the Borough's impressive growth performance, strategic location and investment decisions; distinct assets and sense of place. It acknowledges the diversity of the Borough - its mix of towns, villages and rural areas - and how this strengthens its position and offer. It seeks to reflect a place that is proud of its history but also keen to look to the future.

The weights and measures assigned to different outcomes has proved one of the most interesting findings from this work. Growth has and will continue to be a feature of Ashford's story - indeed it is central. In October 2019, Ashford Borough Council appointed Work Advance Ltd and Experian PLC to undertake a major futures study for the local area. The work has encompassed a blend of research,



forecasting, scenario planning and extensive engagement with local stakeholders, to understand their views and aspirations for the future. This process has supported the development of the Ashford Ambition: a strategic framework to shape a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future for Ashford, Tenterden and the surrounding villages and rural areas in 2030 and beyond. to improving earnings and living standards. But stakeholders were clear that this should not come at cost to the environment and ecology of the Borough, only bring benefits to select people or places, or risk driving divides within the local community.

Rather, in line with a growing global agenda, [there was a strong consensus that the Borough should be prioritising other outcomes alongside growth, such as ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to thrive in Ashford, strengthening cohesion, improving wellbeing and embracing a more sustainable way of life.](#)

The Ashford Ambition paints a picture of the Borough in 2030 and beyond that reflects these goals. There is much already underway - from the design principles of Chilmington Green, the Taittinger investment in local vineyards and plans at Newtown Works, to the 'Made in Ashford' and 'Ashford For' initiatives, the Scale Up programme, You Shop and the Council's success in reducing its own carbon footprint (to name a few). These set the Borough on the right course and there is no lack of ambition or commitment amongst local stakeholders to push forward at pace.

In identifying priority actions for the future we have looked back at past efforts and there is much on which to build. The 15 priority actions identified - which span the 5 strategic themes of economy; work and skills; communities;

environment and the visitor economy - emphasise the importance of existing interventions, explore how to enhance them further learning from best practice from elsewhere, and seek to promote greater alignment between local activities and county, regional and national initiatives. Further, many of these priority actions are mutually reinforcing - their collective impact will undoubtedly be greater than the sum of the parts. How the Borough measures impact and tracks progress towards the Ashford Ambition will be important too. A key aspect of our approach has been to model and quantify desired outcomes - to establish tangible goals to work towards, allowing Ashford Borough Council and its partners to 'start with the end in mind'.

Some of these targets have been economic in focus, for example increasing the numbers of jobs in the knowledge economy or driving significant improvements in productivity. Some consider other outcomes, such as improving qualifications, reducing the number of children affected by income deprivation or dramatically cutting and wholly offsetting carbon emissions, which are equally important. In addition, we argue that a new Ambition for inclusive and sustainable growth requires a new framework for [measuring what matters most to local people.](#)

We establish a robust and wide-ranging framework structured around five strategic themes. In a climate where local resources are limited and funding is stretched, this framework will be vital to ensure that effort and spend is directed towards those things that matter most to local residents and businesses, and will deliver greatest returns in achieving the Ashford Ambition: a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future for the Borough in 2030 and beyond.





# Equality Impact Assessment

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1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

## Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

## Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership\*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

\*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

## Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
  - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
  - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.
7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

### Armed Forces Community

9. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community made through the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant the council's Cabinet agreed in November 2017 that potential impacts on the Armed Forces Community should be considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

10. Accordingly, due regard should also be had throughout the decision making process to potential impacts on the groups covered by the Armed Forces Covenant:

- Current serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- Former serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- The families of current and former Armed Forces personnel.

### Case law principles

11. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or

service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

<b>Lead officer:</b>	Lorna Ford / Jennifer Shaw
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy, project, service, contract</li> <li>• Review, change, new, stop</li> </ul>	Recovery Plan 2020/21
<b>Date of decision:</b> The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
<b>Summary of the proposed decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims and objectives</li> <li>• Key actions</li> <li>• Expected outcomes</li> <li>• Who will be affected and how?</li> <li>• How many people will be affected?</li> </ul>	<p>The Recovery Plan sets out the councils actions to aid the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic over the next 18 months.</p> <p>The Plan sets out how the council will bring forward new ways of working, enable the delivery of key infrastructure, support economic recovery and strengthen community resilience. Central to the Plan is achieving a more sustainable way of living for residents, communities and business.</p> <p>The outcome of the Recovery Plan is to give Ashford a secure basis on which to work towards achieving its long term ambition through the adoption of the Corporate Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Carbon Neutral Strategy in 2022.</p> <p>Everyone living and working in the borough will have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic to some extent.</p> <p>Therefore the Recovery Plan will be relevant to most residents, business owners and employers depending on their own circumstances and the level to which their life and livelihoods have been disrupted.</p>
<b>Information and research:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline the information and research that has informed the decision.</li> <li>• Include sources and key findings.</li> </ul>	<p>The Ashford Futures study, to inform the long term ambition for the borough and the next Corporate Plan and Economic Development Strategy was extensively consulted on prior to the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent restrictions.</p> <p>Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Corporate Policy carried out the council's biennial Residents' Survey, which assesses resident's opinions of the council, its service provision and the local area. This survey is pivotal in understanding issues affecting particular groups in the borough through cross-tab analysis. In particular, older people generally have a lower opinion of Ashford Town Centre and the council as a whole. Notably, the survey highlighted some issues faced by residents with physical disabilities, such as the lack of toilet provision and accessibility issues in some places. The survey data provides a better understanding of potential equalities challenges moving forward.</p>

<p><b>Consultation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific consultation has occurred on this decision?</li> <li>• What were the results of the consultation?</li> <li>• Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics?</li> <li>• What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics?</li> </ul>	<p>Ashford Futures study and residents survey are informing this Recovery Plan.</p> <p>Informal consultation, revision by MT and the Cabinet members</p> <p>Due to pandemic unable to undertake face to face and formal consultation is minimum of six weeks which would delay implementation.</p>

**Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.**

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>Relevance to Decision</b> High/Medium/Low/None	<b>Impact of Decision</b> <b>Positive</b> (Major/Minor) <b>Negative</b> (Major/Minor) <b>Neutral</b>
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	High – impacts of coronavirus on health and wellbeing due to shielding and underlying health issues	Positive (major) - number of interventions to ensure appropriate support. Continuing partnership working with voluntary sector.
Middle age	Medium – economic hardship e.g. furloughed, potential job losses, child care stresses	Positive (Major) - economic regeneration measures, support / advice for business, creation of new industries, skills development
Young adult	High – more impact for young people particularly those seeking entry level employment. Disruption to education.	Positive (Major) - economic regeneration measures, support / advice for business, creation of new industries, skills development, working with college and local business
Children	Medium – disruption to education High – safeguarding issues	Positive (minor) - flexible working practices for ABC employees.

		Maintaining safeguarding procedures and awareness
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	High – impacts of coronavirus on health and wellbeing due to shielding and underlying health issues, accessing public transport, isolation	Positive (major) - number of interventions to ensure appropriate support. Continuing partnership working with voluntary sector
Mental	High – isolation, unable to access services / support, pressures from financial hardship	Positive (major) - number of interventions to ensure appropriate support. Continuing partnership working with voluntary sector
Sensory	High – isolation, unable to access services / support, pressures from financial hardship	Positive (major) - number of interventions to ensure appropriate support. Continuing partnership working with voluntary sector
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	Medium – heighten possibility of domestic abuse	Positive (minor) - community engagement for well-being and safety. Usual safeguarding practices.
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	N/A	N/A
<u>RACE</u>	High – disproportionate negative impact of coronavirus on BAME groups, health and financial status	Positive (major) - targeting less affluent neighbourhoods and providing ongoing support through community initiatives
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	Low - risk of unemployment is higher in lower paid employment	Positive (minor) economic interventions but not specifically targeted at men
Women	Medium – potentially high unemployment for women in part time and low paid work	Positive (minor) economic interventions but not specifically targeted at women
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	None	Neutral

Former service personnel	Medium - risk of homelessness	Positive (major) housing intervention and temporary housing interventions that will be of benefit to homeless persons
Service families	Low	Neutral

<p><b>Mitigating negative impact:</b></p> <p>Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.</p>	Regular monitoring of coronavirus and our recovery plan actions will ensure any negative impacts on groups with protected characteristics are recognised and reported to ensure mitigating steps can be taken.
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<p><b>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?</b></p> <p>Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's <a href="#">Essential Guide</a>, alongside fuller <a href="#">PSED Technical Guidance</a>.</p>	
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Yes / No / N/A</b>
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A Recovery Plan is not discriminatory
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

<p><b>Conclusion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish.</li> <li>There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above).</li> <li>Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.</li> <li>How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or</li> </ul>	<p>Local data has been used (Ashford Futures study and Residents Survey) as well as monitoring of national trends. The Recovery Plan should have positive outcomes across groups who have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. And to enable a swift recovery for all groups of the community. The Recovery Plan will be monitored by the Management Team reporting to the Recovery Monitoring and Advisory Group.</p> <p>The Interim Equalities Objectives will be adopted at the same time as the Recovery Plan to ensure any potential impacts arising from Recovery Plan actions are noted and intervention completed accordingly.</p>
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decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported?	
<b>EIA completion date:</b>	26 June 2020