



Broadland and South Norfolk

Our Plan for Recovery from the Covid-19 Crisis

Two Councils
One Team



Leading the recovery of our areas



Shaun Vincent,
Leader of Broadland District Council

The world has changed in a way none of us ever expected. Broadland District Council led the way in managing the crisis locally, it is now the time to plan for the future and our recovery.

We are determined to see local jobs retained and facilitate businesses to recover quickly, while continuing to support those residents that need our help the most. This way we will drive our local economy and in turn, sustain our communities ensuring they prosper.

This plan ensures that local businesses are helped, not hindered, through the recovery, and can bounce back to prosperity. We will use our statutory, regulatory, licencing and financial powers to offer something practical to local businesses.

We have supported hundreds of residents during this crisis and it is vital we continue to during the recovery. That is why we will continue to work with our partners and local volunteers to help our most vulnerable residents and their families.

Broadland has community at its heart and with our deep understanding of local issues, we are best placed to lead this recovery.



John Fuller, OBE
Leader of South Norfolk Council

This crisis has proven, once again, that local works. Bigger is not better. Our national recovery will only happen with hundreds of smaller, local ones. And District Councils, like ours, will mobilise our economy in the same way as we stood up with our community response.

While we continue to look after our most vulnerable residents, we will lead this recovery, working closely with our local businesses to get our market towns trading. We understand local issues and we are best placed to offer the help and support needed to get the cash registers, on our high streets, ringing again.

This is a major piece of work and as you will see from this plan, we are mobilising every part of the Council to deliver a bespoke response to every business, one job at a time.

We will measure our success by the way that businesses and consumers can get back to normal as quickly as possible in towns, industrial estates and villages and by how many jobs can be saved, if not created. Together we will work to ensure South Norfolk continues to be a great place for businesses to invest, grow and thrive.

The impacts of the Pandemic and the plan for recovery

Coronavirus is the biggest challenge the UK has faced in generations. Its impact on people's health, wellbeing and the economy continues to be substantial. The response to date has required the support of people and organisations at all levels to work together. From delivering food to those in need to supporting businesses through quick access to grants; the wider community in our districts have truly pulled together.

The Vision for our Place, as set out in our Strategic Plan, still stands true as we plan for recovery: 'Working together to create the best place and environment for everyone, now and for future generations'

There is still much uncertainty about the pandemic, with one thing being clear, the pandemic is not yet over. Therefore, it is necessary that we, working in collaboration with our key partners,

start to take a look at how the pandemic is affecting our areas in the short term, while planning on how best to support and rebuild our districts longer term.

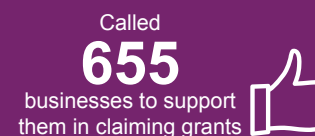
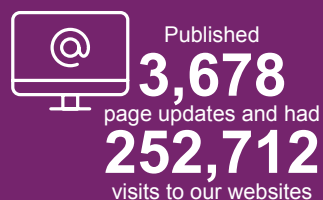
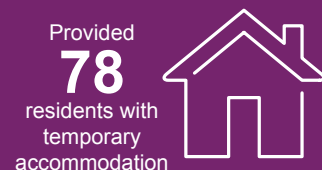
This document outlines our initial and strategic 6-point plan for recovery based around 3 key themes. Action plans will underpin each of these areas, to manage delivery and to achieve the measures of success set out for each area.

Recovery will be about rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating our communities and economy and our plan seeks to address these points, alongside increasing our resilience as a community. The challenges facing us will require creativity and imagination. Our plan will need to remain flexible as we respond to the changing environment in an agile way.



Our achievements working together – March - June 2020

Since the lockdown on 23 March we have:



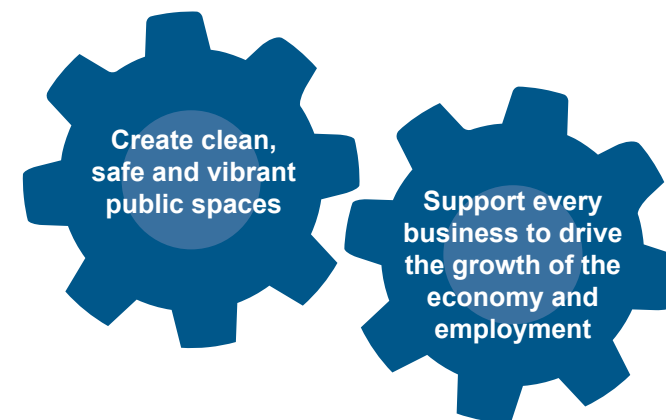
**Broadland**
District Council
Community at heart

**South Norfolk**
COUNCIL

Challenges for the future



Our Plan for Recovery – Economy



In the first 3 months of the financial year, the UK has experienced the sharpest economic decline since the peak of the financial crisis in 2008¹. The national unemployment rate has grown and continues to grow, alongside significant impacts anticipated for certain sectors of the economy.

The economic impacts within the East of England are expected to be less than a large proportion of the UK, but the pandemic still presents serious economic challenges in the future. Recent modelling by The Centre for Progressive Policy showed that the economic output for the UK will decline, with Broadland showing a 32% decline in GVA and South Norfolk showing a 25% decline in GVA². Alongside this, challenges will grow for key sectors such as retail, tourism/hospitality, construction

and manufacturing. Both districts have a large percentage (89% in Broadland, 91% in South Norfolk) of micro businesses (0-9 employees) and these businesses are particularly vulnerable at this time.

Great work has taken place so far as part of the response phase to facilitate as many businesses as possible to become open for business, alongside providing advice, guidance and grants. Over the past few months, over £50m in grant payments has been made to local businesses to help keep them on their feet. More recently, the two Councils announced the launch of the Local Discretionary Grant Scheme, which will see over £2.7m of additional funding aimed at small businesses and charities who were unable to apply for previous grants. The Councils have also been working in partnership with Breckland Council to

launch the 'Shop in Confidence' campaign which in the first instance, aims to give people confidence that they can safely shop in their local towns and help businesses get back on their feet.

Broadland and South Norfolk are great places for businesses to invest, grow and thrive. While recognising these challenges for the economy, our ambition is to continue to build a productive, high performing and dynamic economy for the future.

We know there is more to be done and below outlines our plan of action for the economy:

¹ The economic effects of coronavirus in the UK – Resolution Foundation

<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-economic-effects-of-coronavirus-in-the-uk/>

² Which local authorities face the biggest immediate economic hit? – The Centre for Progressive Policy

<https://www.progressive-policy.net/publications/which-local-authorities-face-biggest-immediate-economic-hit>

Our Plan of Action – Economy



Short Term:

- Support our businesses to survive and continue to operate, including the delivery of new grant schemes where appropriate
- Unlock business opportunities by utilising our regulatory powers to support small businesses where we can to set up and/or recover
- Support local businesses through reprofiling business rates payments and utilising discretionary business rates reliefs as appropriate
- Review and progress our Capital Programme, with the view of supporting our businesses and economy in the future
- Maintain an up-to-date overview of impacts and trends within our local economies to inform our support and services, working in partnership with key stakeholders
- Early engagement with the LEP skills board to understand the future skills needs within our Districts
- Explore the potential of working jointly with the LEP and DWP to support Education Accounts
- Continue to ensure that residents have access to employment support schemes and services

Medium Term:

- Support businesses to diversify into new areas where the market has changed
- Promote the visitor economy in Broadland and South Norfolk
- Develop an unlock service to resolve furlough issues and skills support to enable both continued trading and growth in the economy
- Restart the Disabled Facilities Grant and Warm Homes Fund, in line with Government guidelines, to support local tradespeople and supply chains
- Facilitate business to business support, including clusters
- Review of how, working independently and in partnership, we can support and grow our businesses and economy long term
- Support business to buy local and promote social value in procurement by engaging with local businesses to ensure they have the opportunity where appropriate, to bid to supply the Councils with goods and services

Long Term:

- Investigate new approaches which strengthen the economies of our areas and support businesses to diversify and innovate
- Continue to unblock constraints to growth through delivering and supporting infrastructure projects which will help to transform our areas including the Long Stratton bypass, Norwich Western Link Road and the dualling of the A47
- Encourage the adoption across Norfolk of a common set of Contract Standing Orders and procurement processes, to assist local businesses in responding to tenders for public sector contracts by reducing the bureaucracy



Short Term:

- Continue to take the necessary steps as part of our 'Confidence Campaign' to promote our market towns and high streets and to encourage people to visit and transact with our businesses
- Utilise our licensing powers to support key business impacted by the pandemic to recover e.g. the hospitality sector
- Continue engagement with the community to inform the measures being taken in our high streets and market towns

Medium Term:

- Deliver key community events and community based-leisure activities with key partners, in line with government guidance to support the creation of vibrant public spaces
- Continuously review and improve of our measures to ensure clean, safe and vibrant public spaces

Long Term:

- Work with local communities, businesses and Councils to ensure the vitality and vibrancy of our market towns and key service centres
- Review and consider the vision and future role of our market towns and high streets and how we will play a role in leading the change required



Measures of Success

- Employment Rates
- % of vacant retail space in market towns
- Business Survival Rates
- External funding to support growth
- Number of new jobs created

Our Plan for Recovery – Communities

Central to the Councils' response to the Covid-19 pandemic was supporting the most vulnerable individuals and families in our communities. We recognised that our response needed to maximise and work in the context of the local community, voluntary and public sector, while ensuring that resources and support reached communities as quickly as possible.

Since 23 March to the beginning of June, over 17,000 calls from the community have been triaged by our Help Hub's team of staff including redeployed Leisure Staff and volunteers, while also writing to all residents to offer support, making 3,500 home visits, and 5,000 calls to check shielding residents have what they need to stay safe. We also used our own data to help identify and contact any other residents who may be vulnerable and need support.

The impact of the pandemic on our communities has been vast. Many individuals and families have been affected, with some becoming ever more reliant

on support from the Government through different schemes such as furlough, council tax support, hardship funding etc. We know there has been an increase in the number of cases of domestic abuse across Norfolk as a whole as more people have been within their homes during lockdown. We have also seen an increase in demand for emergency temporary accommodation, with nearly double the usual number of people being supported, alongside an increase in out of work benefits being claimed.

As part of the response, our approach to support was and continues to be: 'Don't be afraid to ask for help'. We utilised our existing Help Hub models to provide a range of services from advice to practical help like collecting medicines and delivering food to people who are self-isolating or unable to go to the shops. The support was completely free and available to people of all ages who are local residents. We also set up our Hardship Fund for those in need and extended our operating hours to 7 days to ensure that no call went unanswered.



Moving forward into recovery, we will need to take a holistic, collaborative and leadership role to ensure we can put the building blocks in place to support our communities to adapt and recover. We know we can't do this alone and it will require working with all of our key partners, as well as harnessing community and volunteer power at a street level.



Our Plan of Action – Communities



Short Term:

- Working collaboratively, define our approach to responding to the surge of hidden issues which are likely to increase as the lock down reduces, such as support for victims of domestic abuse and mental health issues
- Produce a comprehensive Impact Assessment, to understand the impacts the pandemic has had on our communities. This will form an evidence base for future service design
- Harness the voluntary sector which has grown during the pandemic by engaging volunteers in meaningful activity which connects them within their local communities
- Ensure the Council Tax recovery process signposts those in need to the early help hub

Medium Term:

- Review lessons learnt and the role of our Help Hubs, with the ambition to develop an even more effective collaborative Community Hub model
- Given the upsurge in neighbourhood schemes and mutual aid groups which have largely met local demand for community support, develop a clearer and cohesive position on community capacity development across the districts
- Support voluntary and community groups to return to their business as usual and support for new groups to continue providing critical support to the community

Long Term:

- Build and harness the relationships we have developed with key partners during the pandemic, in particular adult social care and mental health services
- Further scoping of a Community Hub model, utilising existing community assets in our areas
- Develop a predictive tool which helps us to understand demand levels for key Community Hub services

Short Term:

- Work closely with key partners such as the housing sector and County Council to ensure there is an effective approach in the short term to meet needs of vulnerable individuals
- Continue to utilise partnerships with the Help Hub to ensure those in hardship are supported to become independent

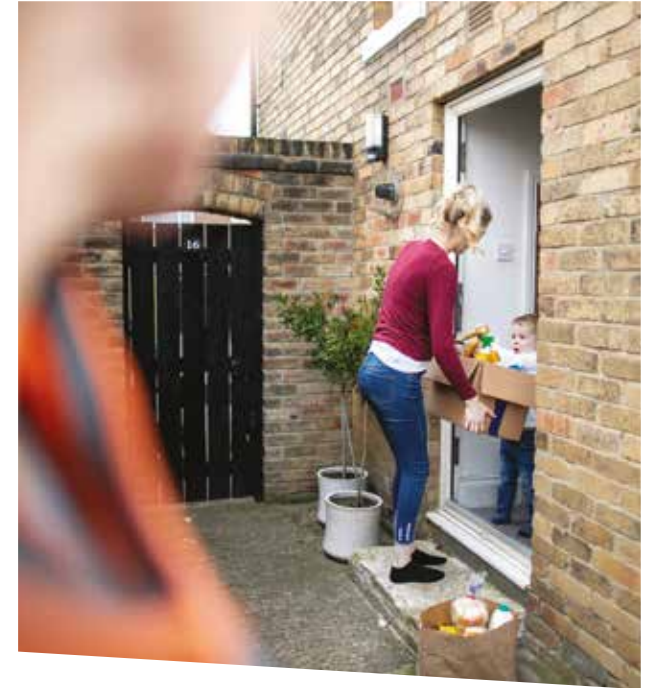


Medium Term:

- Review opportunities for a County wide model for high needs accommodation
- Provide support to help people back into employment including skills development and encouraging apprenticeships and work placements

Long Term:

- Secure longer-term resilience of our Hardship Offer through a review of our internal systems and policies



Measures of Success

- Number of those in employment claiming benefits
- Successful interventions to prevent or relieve homelessness
- Number of residents supported by discretionary prevention services
- New Community Hub Model scoped and in place

Our Plan for Recovery – Organisation and Governance

The way in which the organisations works and delivers services has had to change in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Councils needed to adapt fast, changing ways of working and governance models to ensure that key services and support could be delivered quickly and effectively to residents and businesses alike. We enabled the majority of our staff to be able to work remotely through increasing our IT capabilities and created an effective internal redeployment plan, utilising our flexible and agile workforce, to ensure services being provided to vulnerable people and our businesses were fully resourced.

Many services have seen an increase in demand over the past few months, in particular our community services such as the Help Hub and Housing and Benefits. Since late March, our Help Hub and Benefits teams alone, have seen nearly three times the usual number of calls compared to business as usual. Comparatively, some services have also seen a decrease in demand such as South Norfolk Councils' Leisure Centres. Though

some services have seen a decline, teams have been developing creative solutions to ensure that some level of service is maintained. For example, the South Norfolk Leisure Team launched a brand-new YouTube channel and developed an outdoor class programme to help residents keep fit and active during lockdown. As well as service changes, our governance processes have also had to change. Both Councils were keen to ensure that the key business matters of the Councils continued and that decisions that were needed to be made were progressed. The Councils embraced the use of technology to achieve this and held committee meetings virtually. With these changes has come opportunity and we are keen to take the learnings of delivery at pace, to create a modern and flexible organisational culture moving forward.

These changes and challenges have had a significant impact on the Councils' budgets. The combination of increased Covid-19 related spending and loss of income through key services will have a significant impact on South Norfolk Council's and



Broadland Council's 2020/21 budget, alongside our medium-term finances. The Councils have estimated that if the impacts of the lockdown last until the end of November, the full financial impact for Broadland District Council could be close to £4m in 2020/21 and closer to £10m for South Norfolk Council in 2020/21. Though Central Government has recognised the work that Councils have been doing by providing additional funding, this has proved to not be enough, with the consensus across Local Government being that without stable finances, recovery will become increasingly challenging.

Central to our long-term financial plan to become more financially self-sustaining focusses on utilising the benefits of commercialisation to support our economies to grow, work with our key partners to deliver economies of scale and secure our finances transforming and reimagining our services.

Our Plan of Action – Organisation and Governance



Short Term:

- Closely monitor the Councils' finances and the impact of Covid 19
- Continue to work alongside our Local Government partners to lobby Central Government for stable and fair funding to cover the cost pressures of Councils
- Support the commercialisation agenda through the production of clear business cases to allow Councillors to make informed decisions
- Explore new avenues for South Norfolk's Leisure service offer and income, including developing innovative ways of extending our offer both to make sure that opportunities to maximise income and extend the leisure offer to as many as possible
- Deliver a report to Councillors on how new ways of working for the One Team can enable and enhanced customer offer, use of space effectively and efficiently, reducing the carbon footprint, maximising the use of technology and developing an agile approach

Medium Term

- Production of the 20/21 budgets and medium-term financial plans, reflecting the longer-term impact of Covid 19 on the Councils' finances
- Re-introduce existing and new leisure services, in accordance with evolving governmental advice, ensuring a safe environment is created
- Continue to expand our outdoor leisure offer

Long Term:

- Review the Councils' development company structures to ensure they can deliver the number of properties in line with the aims and ambitions of the companies in order that they can deliver a return to the councils



Short Term:

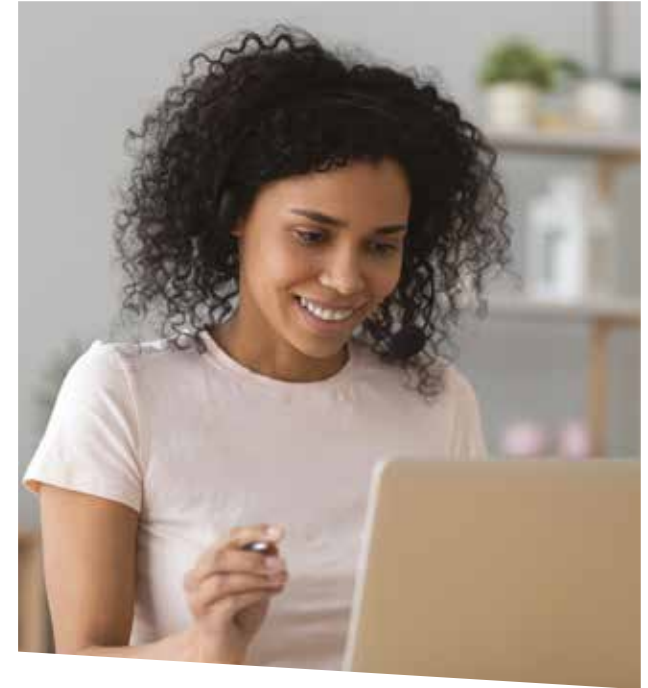
- Reset of our 2020/21 Delivery Plan to ensure that it reflects the changing nature of service delivery and new priorities for the districts
- Review our Transformation Programme in line with the update to the Delivery Plan
- Delivery of IT equipment which enables our staff to work in a more agile manner and improve the service for customers, this includes: a single telephony solution, laptop roll out (where appropriate) and the implementation of a joint Office 365 solution (includes Members)
- Ensure our staff are able to perform to the best of their ability by:
 - Ensuring the One Team Managers are trained to provide support for their staff and to identify and assist any wellbeing concerns
 - Upskilling Managers in managing staff remotely
 - Increasing the number of staff who are trained as Mental Health First-Aiders
 - Revisiting our recruitment and on-boarding process for new staff during this period of social distancing and remote working
 - Continuing to implement the wellbeing action plan

Medium Term:

- Improve our service offer by providing more services and appointments online to improve customer service and reduce the need for customers to travel to a physical location
- Ensure that our opening hours are reflective of the needs of our community and extend our offering through the availability of a 24/7 digital self-service
- Utilise IT to support locality working to provide improved accessibility to services
- In line with social distancing guidelines and in consultation with members, continue to run Committee Meetings virtually and live stream these to ensure transparency of decision making

Long Term:

- Deliver the 5-year IT investment programme to release efficiencies through removing duplication of IT systems

**Measures of Success**

- Delivery of savings through the Broadland/South Norfolk collaboration
- Leisure Centre Income (SNC)
- Strong financial management to close our budget gaps

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