



Hertfordshire



Hertfordshire County Council

# COVID-19 Recovery Strategy

## Recovery Strategy Purpose

This document provides a strategic view of the next steps Hertfordshire County Council will take to support local recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It describes the drivers and motivations for taking this action, specifically focusing on emerging and known issues, and how this strategy aligns to the Council's strategic priorities for Hertfordshire.

Within this document, the vision and ambition for the recovery programme is set out, as well as the key priority themes that provide the framework for the Council's COVID-19 recovery interventions.

The vision and key themes set out how Hertfordshire County Council will, in partnership, continue to work and direct resources to support residents and businesses as they recover from the impact of COVID-19.

Respond, Restore and Rethink are our three phases of tackling the challenges presented by the pandemic, and our focus to recover and renew our ways of working, delivering services and engaging with residents. The recovery roadmap then further outlines what each of the three phases involve.

The diagram on the following page demonstrates the strategic alignment of the recovery strategy approach.







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## Foreword from the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested us in every way imaginable, but we have risen to meet the challenge and, by working ever closer together, it has taught us that as a county we can overcome adversity. From keeping our essential public services running, to mobilising thousands of volunteers and protecting the most vulnerable in our communities, as an authority we have played our part to support Hertfordshire's residents through the most troubling of times.

As we look ahead, we are collectively aiming for a return to normality and learning to live with the virus. Without doubt it is a different landscape we return to, but we believe focusing our attentions on the things that matter most will ensure Hertfordshire's social and economic recovery over the years to come. By prioritising the health and wellbeing of our people, the environment and sustainable, responsible growth, our aim is to ensure Hertfordshire continues to be the County of Opportunity, where our people thrive, our places prosper, and our planet is protected.

As we move beyond crisis and outbreak management, our aim is to build on our existing strengths to put in place a clear plan that aligns to our priorities, whilst ensuring a fair recovery for all and a county fit for the future. This will allow us to continue to deliver our vision, whilst recognising and responding to the impact COVID-19 has had on Hertfordshire and its residents.

In this strategy, we lay out our plans to achieve just that and more, acknowledging the local context alongside the national, as well as the need to address the inequalities in our society amplified by the pandemic.

**Responding** to COVID-19, **Restoring** to our pre-pandemic environment and **Rethinking** how we work and deliver services is the three-stage approach we have set out for recovery.

As an authority our vision is to create a cleaner, greener and healthier Hertfordshire. Our recovery ambitions are also centred on the priorities that will help to deliver this ambition:

- A cleaner and greener environment
- Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents
- Sustainable, responsible growth in our county

We want to improve the health and wellbeing of our people, ensure our places thrive and protect our precious natural environment to create a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire, now, and for the future.

We will also ensure that **Hertfordshire County Council continues to be a modern and innovative organisation** to underpin our recovery approach and shape how we design, deliver and resource our work.

Overall, our strategy seeks to ensure Hertfordshire, its people, communities, and businesses can be the best that they can be as we not only recover but emerge from the pandemic as a stronger and more resilient county.



**Richard Roberts**  
Leader of the council

# National and Local Context

## National Context

In the wake of the pandemic, Central Government identified three key areas of consideration when rebuilding the UK in a world with COVID-19:

1. **Health** – Increased demand on health services, increase in mortality or ill health due to postponement and diversion of resource, long term health effects of any increase in deprivation.
2. **Economy** – Considering the short-term economic impact, long term economic future, sustainability of public finances, financial stability and people's living standards, recognising there are disparities in impact on different income levels, age groups, business sectors and parts of the country.
3. **Social** – Considering social impacts such as on mental health, risk of domestic abuse, days of education lost, protecting the most vulnerable and ensuring any interventions are implemented fairly.

The Government's core aim is to 'return life to as close to normal as possible, for as many people as possible, as fast and as fairly as possible...in a way that avoids a new epidemic, minimises lives lost and maximises health, economic and social outcomes' .

In response to COVID-19, the UK was the first to sanction a vaccine, and many individuals, communities and businesses have received support via medium term UK Government policies (some of which are imminently coming to an end). There is no doubt the pandemic continues to have significant health, social and economic impacts which must continue to be addressed, such as:<sup>2</sup>

- Unlike the 2008 economic downturn, average house prices increased while the economy shrank. The average UK house price stood at a

record high of £266,000 in June 2021. This is an increase of 13.2% on last year

- Debt as a percentage of the economy has reached levels last seen in the early 1960s
- Since the start of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme back in March 2020, a cumulative total of 11.6million jobs have been supported by the scheme at various times. Numbers of the scheme peaked at 5.1million in January for 2021
- In the last week of January 2021, more than 5,000 critical care beds were occupied in hospital. This is compared with around 3,000 a day during the same week in 2020

<sup>1</sup> [Data Source – Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 Recovery Strategy \(May 2020\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Graphic Data Sources - Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 29 July 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) [Vaccinations in the UK | Coronavirus in the UK \(data.gov.uk\)](#) [Coronavirus: a year like no other - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) [Vacancies and jobs in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) [UK House Price Index - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) [Coronavirus: a year like no other - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)



## Local Context

In Hertfordshire, the County Council has responded to the immediate needs of our residents, businesses, and communities over the previous 18 months. Working closely with our partners, District and Borough Councils, we have supported those affected to minimise the impact of

COVID-19 and responded to emerging challenges from the pandemic. New services were provided, for example the provision of food parcels and vaccinations, while existing council services were operating in new ways to respond to demand and ensure the safety of service users and our staff (further details can be found in the County Council's Annual Report).

# Covid-19: Hertfordshire's response

  
**1.5 million**  
to the **Covid-19** pages  
on our website

  
More than  
**11,500**  
**keeping-in-touch** calls  
to local family carers

**2,400 businesses**  
checked or advised by  
**Trading Standards**

  
**£7.7m**  
of funding secured to  
improve walking and  
cycling schemes

**Ongoing support**  
from our Covid-19 response  
team provided to all childcare  
and education settings



  
More than  
**72,000 visits**  
by our **social workers** to families  
they support

  
**4,470 referrals**  
to our Money Advice Unit,  
raising over **£22.2m** in  
**additional benefits** for  
residents

### HAPpy Holiday

Activity programme  
supported  
**1,624** children in person,  
**2,309** online and provided  
**3,424** wellbeing packs

  
**1.75 million**  
**downloads**  
from our e-library

**1.2 million**  
**Hertfordshire**  
**residents**  
playing their  
part

Funding from the  
Covid-19

### Winter Support Grant

helped **109,137** families,  
**96,610** of these with children  
under 19



More than  
**163,000 enquiries**  
dealt with by HertsHelp  
community helpline



**80,377 rapid tests**  
conducted at more than **65**  
**sites** and **53,307** home rapid  
**test kits** provided to residents  
and businesses



**8 large**  
**vaccinations**  
**sites delivered**



**103,608**  
**support tasks**

completed by volunteers with  
**2,667** continuing to help **3,616**  
people regularly

**600 care homes**  
**and care providers**

and **35,000+** social care staff  
supported through our new  
Care Provider Hub



More than  
**9 million pieces**  
**of vital PPE**

delivered to groups including  
GPs, care homes, social  
workers, charities, schools  
and public transport  
providers



More than  
**132,000**  
**food and medicine**  
**packages delivered**

**114,789** food parcels  
delivered to individuals

**11,323** food parcels  
delivered to  
organisations (food  
banks, charities  
and district and  
borough councils)



**6,266**  
**medicine**  
**deliveries**



As a County Council, we gained a wealth of learning over the subsequent months, and we are using and building upon this learning, along with our existing good practice, to continue to deliver high quality services that enhance the lives of Hertfordshire's residents.

Hertfordshire has an estimated population of almost 1.2m residents with a high vaccination take-up across the county. We have helped with the provision and operation of several large-scale vaccination sites, alongside GPs and pharmacies who have provided vaccinations in their own premises. We also operated a number of fixed and mobile testing centres to reduce the spread of COVID-19 across the County.



## Local Context - Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

Trend data shows that there has been an increase in both adult and children's mental health referrals, which is consistent with the national picture.

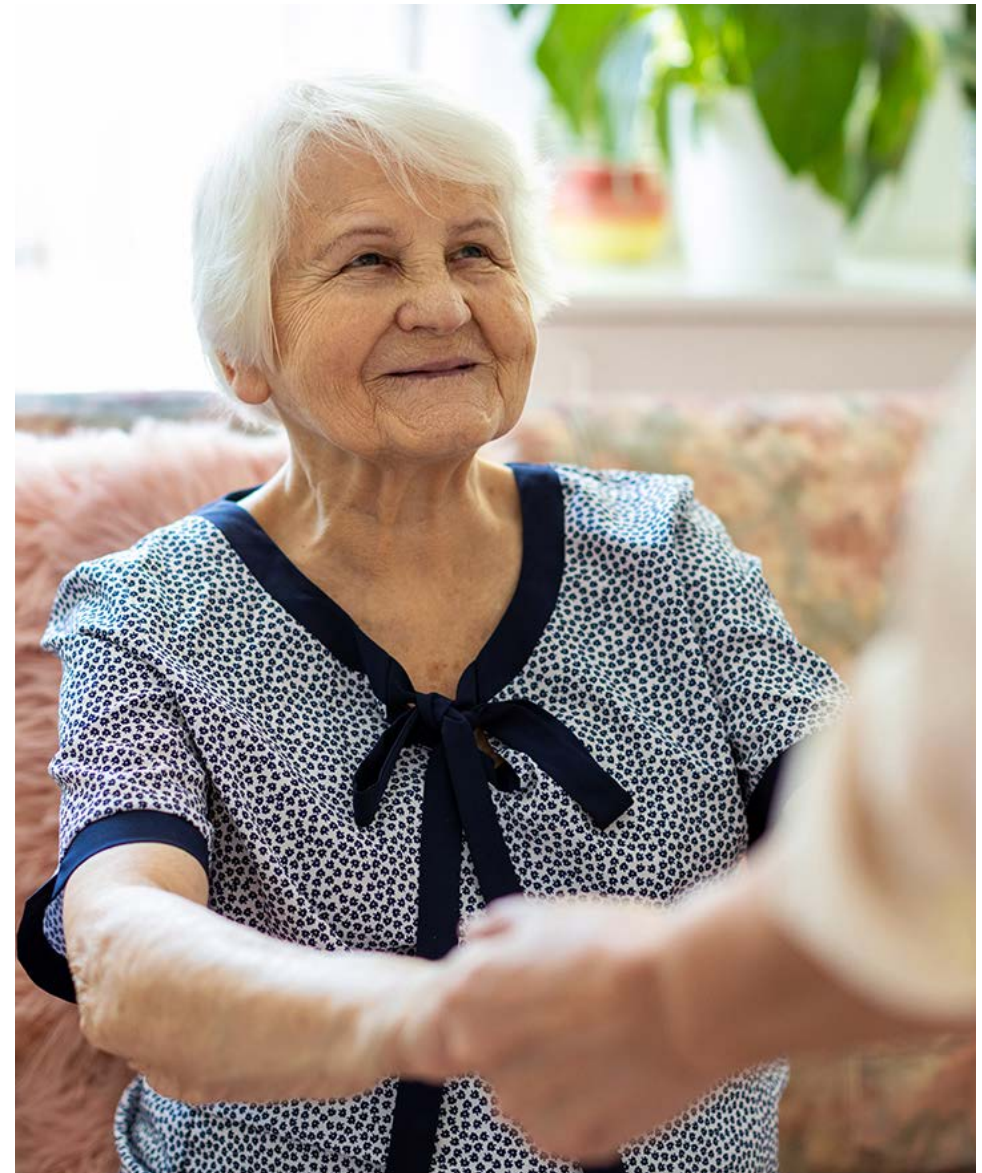
Adult care services continue to experience significant Covid-related pressures with an overall increase of 5% in social care referrals compared to pre-pandemic levels. Mainstream homecare has increased by 15% in hours of care provided, with long term residential services, including nursing, also seeing numbers increasing.

The **impact of inequality** on individuals and communities has also been an area of increasing concern even before COVID-19 and many of the underlying inequalities have been highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic<sup>3</sup>. This is especially true for people with learning disabilities, sensory impairments and unpaid caring responsibilities.

**Health and social inequalities for adults with a learning disability** are evident, with life expectancy significantly lower than the general population. A public health review into COVID-19 deaths of people identified as having learning disabilities concluded that death rates were over three times higher for adults with learning disabilities than for the general population.<sup>4</sup>

[Build Back Fairer](#)<sup>5</sup>, commissioned by the Health Foundation to investigate the impact of the pandemic on health inequalities, shows a greater impact being felt in black and mixed ethnicity families and those with household members with a long term health condition. The report also demonstrates that many carers have seen significant increases in their caring responsibilities during the pandemic.

Hertfordshire is in a relatively strong position with regards to children's social care and has one of the lowest levels of **safeguarding referrals** in the country. While in a strong position, with the re-opening of schools from March 2021 we've seen a rise in referrals, peaking in July 2021, potentially due to suppressed demand during the pandemic.



<sup>3</sup> Identifying and tackling inequalities – the role of the HWE, ICS, February 2021

<sup>4</sup> PHE Review of Covid 19 deaths of people identified as having learning disabilities, November 2020

<sup>5</sup> Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review, December 2020

## Local Context - A cleaner and greener environment

Hertfordshire's natural environment is our county's greatest asset. The effect of climate change is one of our biggest challenges; protecting the environment for future generations must run through all we do as an organisation. We've responded to the climate change challenge for a number of years, and in 2019 announced our Climate Emergency declaration with a commitment to having net zero emissions by 2030. We are also reviewing our [Sustainable Hertfordshire Action Plan](#) to assess progress made against our commitments to make Hertfordshire cleaner, greener and more sustainable.

Hertfordshire is a well-connected county, situated on two major rail routes out of /into London, with Stansted and Luton airports nearby, and several principal road routes running through the county – the M11, M25, A1 and A414. Hertfordshire's Daily Peak Traffic Volumes (August 2021) have shown an overall **decrease in road traffic** compared to February 2020, with the greatest reduction across the morning peak period of 22%. This generally reflects the change in working practices for a wide range of commuters, leading to a positive impact on the environment in terms of air and noise pollution, and reducing stress on the infrastructure. In April 2020 (the first national lockdown), the highest reduction in daily traffic volumes occurred - a reduction of 65%<sup>6</sup>.

We want to build on these reductions and support more sustainable forms of transport, and to continue to encourage walking and cycling over car travel and promote more low emission vehicles and charging points. We have an Air Quality Strategy which aligns with the county council's Local Transport Plan 4, seeking a **shift away from reliance on the private car** towards walking, cycling and public transport.

<sup>6</sup> Data source: Transport Planning and Data Team, Highways Hertfordshire County Council

## Local Context - Sustainable, responsible growth in our county

Hertfordshire is a prosperous county with one of the strongest economies in the country, and is generally considered to be affluent (42% of households represent more affluent groups), however the data also shows almost a third of Hertfordshire's households (31.5%) are recognised as experiencing financial difficulties. As of September 2020, of the estimated working age (16 to 64) population of Hertfordshire, 83% were classed as economically active and 4.1% were unemployed.

Historically Hertfordshire has a lower unemployment claimant rate than many areas of the UK. This has continued through the pandemic, despite the increased claimant rate in Hertfordshire by 80% from 14,370 in March 2020 to 25,795 in April 2020 and peaking at 38,550 in May 2020. With the **claimant rate** at 31,280 as of July 2021, it



remains 129% higher than the pre-pandemic figure in January 2020 for Hertfordshire.

We have a thriving business community and are home to specialist industries of both national and international significance. With the growth anticipated in the county in future years, it will be vital that Hertfordshire's strong economy continues to grow, with resilient and successful businesses that offer good employment opportunities and help to maintain a high quality of life for all.

Over the past 10 years enterprises within Hertfordshire have increased by 36%, from 48,496 in 2011 to 65,950 in 2020. The largest increase has been in micro enterprises (those employing up to 9 people), representing up to 91% of enterprises in 2020. It is anticipated that **smaller businesses have experienced a greater impact on business operations** as a result of COVID-19.

**Job vacancies advertised** within the county are increasing significantly, and are 26% higher than they were in June 2019, and 82% higher compared to July 2020. This demonstrates businesses are re-opening and this is expected to have a positive impact on the local unemployment figures.

Funded projects will need to provide a **greater level of support around skills and employment**, and we have worked closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Department of Work and Pensions and other partners to refresh our [Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Strategy for 2021-24](#)

In relation to education, the number of pupils having to self-isolate if they encounter a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 has led to **COVID-19 related absences** of 10.8% in the last week of the summer term. This is an increase from 0.6% in early June 2021. Although our missed school sessions are on average lower in Hertfordshire (5.2%) compared to England's (7%), it is expected that these absences will negatively impact pupil's education, attainment and future life chances, supporting the need to invest in interventions.

Figure 2 Increase in COVID-19 related absence during 2021 summer term<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Data source: Department for Education, Central Government



## Challenges and Opportunities

A growing understanding of the challenges and potential opportunities is beginning to emerge from the pandemic but we still yet don't have the full picture. Whilst it is essential that support comes at a national level from the UK Government, it is equally important that interventions continue to be **designed and managed at a local level** so they can be driven by and tailored to local need. Recovery must be delivered in ways that meet the needs of local communities, target the challenges that the county is experiencing.

We will implement recovery initiatives that address the issues created or exacerbated by the pandemic, while ensuring Hertfordshire's strengths are maintained, and exploit the opportunities identified to develop new growth areas and sustain some of the positive changes that are starting to emerge.

There is also a great opportunity to **build on partnership working** that has grown stronger in supporting the response to COVID-19 and crisis management. We will need to continue to work closely with our partners, including District and Borough Councils to look at long-term interventions and provide the support and capacity needed, whilst building agility and resilience for any future challenges.

# Recovery aligned to our priorities for Hertfordshire

Our recovery strategy builds on work already underway, and our ambitions and priorities set out for the future.

We will continue to progress towards achieving our vision, **acknowledging the good practice prior to the pandemic**, but also building on new ways of working, delivering services and maintaining close engagement with our local communities.

We have set out our approach to recovery in the context of our overarching priorities for Hertfordshire in order to effectively categorise our interventions and future initiatives.

Figure 3 Our Priorities for Hertfordshire



## Priorities for Hertfordshire

### Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

Hertfordshire is the county of opportunity, and as such our focus is to ensure everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential, and live healthy, fulfilling, safe and independent lives.

Recognising the significant effect that remaining healthy and safe has on people's happiness and life chances, our services work together to improve the overall wellbeing of our residents, including using effective early intervention measures to help tackle inequalities.

However, the pandemic has exacerbated income inequality, socio-economic inequalities and intergenerational inequalities, and there has been increased pressure in areas such as education, mental health, domestic abuse and homelessness. It is essential we provide support to those individuals and communities who have been most impacted to prevent societal inequalities being widened.



### A cleaner and greener environment

Hertfordshire's natural environment is one of our county's greatest assets. The effects of climate change are without doubt one of the biggest challenges of our times and as such, protecting the environment for future generations must run through all we do as an organisation.

The County Council has been responding to the climate change challenge for a number of years and our Climate Emergency declaration in July 2019, and commitment to being a council with net zero emissions by 2030 is a recognition of how important this is to us.

The pandemic has also had several effects on the environment and climate, including improvements in air quality, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and lower levels of noise pollution, highlighting the interrelations between societal and community resilience with environmental resilience. As we move into recovery, there needs to be a focus on environmental sustainability, reshaping our behaviour and consumption patterns to maintain these positive impacts long term.

Our influence is wider than the services we directly deliver. With the ability to influence carbon emission reductions, improve air quality, promote energy efficiency, reduce waste production and promote better land use practices, we can drive forward our commitments to creating a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire for all.

### Sustainable, responsible growth in our county

As with other parts of the UK, Hertfordshire is facing the challenge of how to accommodate and support a growing population. Alongside our district and borough council partners, who are the local planning authorities in Hertfordshire, we are preparing for around 100,000 additional new homes over the next 15 years. It is essential that the necessary infrastructure and other community resources are in place to support these new developments.

Hertfordshire is a prosperous county with one of the strongest economies in the country. We have a thriving business community and are home to specialist industries of both national and international significance. With the growth anticipated in the county in future years, it will be vital that Hertfordshire's strong economy continues to grow, with resilient and successful businesses that offer good employment opportunities and help to maintain a high quality of life for all.

By sustainable growth we mean ensuring Hertfordshire is prepared to meet the economic and social challenges of the future, whilst minimising our impact on our natural environment.

### Excellent council services for all

As well as ensuring that Hertfordshire remains a county fit for the future, we will need to address our own organisational recovery. We will utilise the lessons learned from the pandemic to ensure the County Council is operating in a way that benefits staff, services and residents.

The events of the pandemic have allowed us to review how and where we work, and to consider how working differently can enable us to be a more modern and flexible organisation. From these experiences we've developed a longer-term vision for our 'ways of working'. With this flexibility comes a better work/life balance for our staff, a reduced environmental impact, financial savings, and opportunities to deliver services differently to better meet the needs of a changing Hertfordshire.

We will continue to champion equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives as the foundation of building an inclusive workplace, honing in on the most relevant parts of the [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-24](#) to respond to COVID-19 related issues (for rebuilding a sense of connectivity and belonging after a long period of working remotely at home). We will also seek to understand how to maximise the benefits of data and digital tools that can support recovery and help us to rethink the way services can be delivered.



# Our Recovery Roadmap – Respond, Restore, Rethink

**Respond, Restore, Rethink** are the three phases of our approach as a council to tackling the challenges presented by the pandemic and our focus to recover and renew our ways of working, delivering services and engaging with residents.

## Respond

### → Respond:

Supporting our residents and local businesses through the pandemic and minimising the impact COVID-19 has on both the community and the Council, and responding to emerging challenges from the pandemic.

### → Restore:

Restarting council services and building capabilities back up to the levels of operation pre-COVID-19, as well as building community resilience.

### → Rethink:

Focusing on medium to long term initiatives and using lessons learned from the pandemic to innovate and carry out more transformative work, both in the Council and the community. Initiatives will be reviewed and adapted as required to ensure objectives are being met, that sustainable change is being implemented, and that activity contributes to future proofing the Council.

## Restore

## Rethink

We will use this roadmap to guide our continuing investment in recovery, supporting initiatives that maximise the best impact for Hertfordshire.

In order for this approach to be successful, we will need to be **flexible and responsive to any changes**. For example, if there is a decision to impose new lockdown rules then focus will shift back towards the ‘respond’ phase, or if there is a clear negative and ongoing impact on our residents and businesses that we need to address, we will do so.

Delivery will acknowledge the individuality of Hertfordshire and the **need for localised initiatives**, alongside adopting best practice where it aligns to what we are trying to achieve. Where possible, existing mechanisms and partnerships will be utilised to minimise duplication and simplicity will be adopted wherever possible, rather than adding additional layers of complexity and governance.

# Delivering Recovery - Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

## Our Ambitions and what they mean for us:

- 1. Continuing to support communities, adults, families and children to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, whilst addressing health and social inequalities**

*The impact of inequalities on individuals and communities has been an area of increasing concern and this has been further exacerbated by the pandemic. As a County Council we will continue to support communities, adults, families and children to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, whilst delivering recovery interventions which directly support those in Hertfordshire who have been the most severely affected by COVID-19.*

- 2. Supporting prevention and independence through early intervention, and improving community resilience through inclusion and empowerment**

*The effects of the pandemic on residents' wellbeing have been wide ranging, including a rise in mental health issues, alcohol use and significant changes to our eating and exercise routines, which has led to increased pressure being put on our services. We will work hard to combat these effects through delivering early intervention initiatives and ensuring that residents are equipped with the tools they need to remain independent and resilient, whilst continuing to deliver high quality specialist health care services to those that need them.*

- 2. Building on established relationships to improve health and wellbeing outcomes**

*Through the pandemic we have developed stronger relationships with healthcare providers and voluntary and community organisations. As we recover from COVID-19, we intend to continue to utilise these relationships by working closely with our partners to deliver the best health and wellbeing outcomes possible for Hertfordshire residents.*



## Ambition: Continuing to support communities, adults, families and children to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, whilst addressing health and social inequalities

# Restore

- ➔ **Increasing Service Capacity** – We will increase the provision of public health nursing and speech & language services to support vulnerable children and young people. We will support children and young people with their social, emotional and mental health needs by increasing Educational Psychologists' capacity and counselling schemes.
- ➔ **Supporting Residents to Stay Active and Maintain a Healthy Weight** – We will restart physical activity and healthy eating interventions interrupted by COVID-19 and review the current weight management service and physical activity programme offer in 2022. We will launch several new initiatives, including a Hertfordshire pilot linking physical activity with good mental health and the 'Never too late' Campaign to increase physical activity for residents aged 55 and over. We will seek to establish initiatives to provide healthy weight management support for people with learning disabilities, those with mental health conditions, and children and people from ethnic minorities.
- ➔ **Supporting Mental and Physical Wellbeing** – We will restart services such as health checks in primary care and in workplaces, where appropriate, while continuing the existing programme of work delivered by health visitors and family centres. We will provide additional support through wellbeing and dementia cafes, as well as tailored support for those groups who are less likely to use these services. This includes the 'HAPpy Holiday Activity Programme' that allows groups or organisations access to funding to deliver daily, four-hour activity sessions for young people aged 5 to 16 who are in receipt of free school meals.
- ➔ **Safeguarding the Vulnerable** – We will help our most vulnerable through restarting our Implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards project that was halted by COVID-19. This will ensure we are prepared for the Liberty Protection Safeguards scheme launch in 2022 which will empower our staff to provide better protection for individuals who lack the relevant mental capacity. We are working closely with District Councils to fund a Transitional Safeguarding pilot for vulnerable 16-24-year olds who are moving out of children's services. We will provide additional funding to extend the Family Safeguarding Education project to continue to help improve the educational records of children on child protection and Child in Need plans.
- ➔ **Providing High Quality Care** – We have secured additional staff resources to be funded through the Social Care Grant and COVID-19 Recovery Fund to ensure we will meet the increased demand for care services. We also aim to visit all our care homes within three months of reimplementing care home monitoring to ensure that expected standards of care are being delivered.
- ➔ **Safe and Well visits** – The County Council's Fire & Rescue Service will continue to provide Safe and Well visits, supporting vulnerable people in their home to ensure not only their safety from fire, but also sign posting to a wide range of preventative services. Members have provided additional funding to help 'catch-up' on the suspended programme of visits and provide additional service capacity.

# Rethink

- ➔ **Embrace New Ideas** – We will reflect on the learning from the pandemic and will pilot alternative delivery models for health checks, such as point-of-care testing and virtual delivery, where there are clear benefits of using these approaches. We will also streamline health and wellbeing services through making use of a holistic common assessment tool to provide more person-centred care and improve outcomes for patients.
- ➔ **Adopt a More Holistic Approach to Care** – We will provide Make Every Contact Count training for all health and service professionals within the healthcare system. We will develop plans for the long-term sustainability of Healthy Hubs, which offer free health and wellbeing information, advice and support, and will seek to re-establish physical hubs in each district. We will also consider plans for new initiatives to support individuals with complex unhealthy lifestyle behaviours and health inequalities.
- ➔ **Improving Life Chances** – Through the Building Life Chances Programme, we will deliver several projects to tackle inequalities across a range of areas. We will offer advice on home adaptation, fuel tariffs and signposting to home improvement assistance schemes to support people struggling to manage their utilities. We will develop and deliver new food welfare initiatives and will also work alongside the Money Advice Unit and Citizens Advice Bureau to increase the availability of specialist financial and benefits advice to care leavers, and families with disabled children. Several new posts will be created to support these projects.
- ➔ **Support Vulnerable Parents** – We will provide £600k in funding over three years to voluntary and community organisations to deliver more antenatal and postnatal support for new and vulnerable parents through individual and group support sessions at family centres. We will also fund a pilot scheme to support new parents who are care leavers themselves, with practical and mentoring support. Additionally, we will launch a New Parent Drop In project to reduce social isolation, support early intervention of physical and mental health needs in families and support parents returning to work.
- ➔ **Improve Services for Children and Young People** – We will develop strategies to ensure that our services meet the individual needs of our children and young people, including:
  - The Voice of the Child
  - Young Person & Family Strategy
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy
  - Hertfordshire Children’s Services Commissioning Strategy

We will also fund informal youth activity community projects, making £25,000 available in each district for providers to bid for, facilitating locally-based community activities for young people aged 12-17, to run outside of school hours.

## Ambition: Supporting prevention and independence through early intervention, and improving community resilience through inclusion and empowerment

# Restore

- ➔ **Providing More Accessible Services** – Deaf and hard-of-hearing people are facing communication barriers due to the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE). We will help to mitigate this by funding additional staff to support the implementation of the Multi-Agency Sensory Strategy which aims to improve sensory awareness, support those with sensory needs to become more independent and improve emotional and peer support. We will also provide an additional specialist Community Navigator to help people with sensory loss access their local community services.
- ➔ **Tackling Domestic Abuse** – We will create additional Development Manager and Project Manager posts to ensure our corporate strategy, governance, policy and commissioning, are informed by an awareness of issues that intersect with domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. The posts will also support the continued development of the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse partnership to help us align our efforts with partners across the county. This will include creating and overseeing an Expert by Experience panel, enabling us to commission and embed services that reflect the needs of victims and survivors of domestic abuse and also meet our statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). Further partnership work with the Herts Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Home Office will enable us to develop innovative projects, working with those that perpetrate domestic abuse, across the County, enabling this to be a key consideration in our work, going forward.
- ➔ **Increasing Early Intervention Provision** – We will increase our early intervention provision across a range of areas including the expansion of the ‘Just Talk’ mental health campaign to reach more young people and families, working to improve and join up mental health services across the voluntary, community and public sectors. We will provide additional Cognitive Behavioural Therapy resources for those not eligible for more specialist services and roll out suicide prevention training for professionals working with young people and adults.
- ➔ **Addressing Drugs and Alcohol Misuse** – We will continue to deliver our community and patient detox programmes treatment for dependant drug and alcohol users, and plan to implement a new telecoms support service for non-dependant drinkers/drug users. We will combat drug-related offending and deaths through the use of additional grants to fund drug treatment and crime and harm reduction plans.
- ➔ **Fighting Homelessness** – We will continue to work collaboratively with District Councils to reduce and prevent homelessness, acting as the single point of contact for all rough-sleeper queries and mobilising support services across the county. We plan to initiative a countywide pilot which aims to reduce referral timeframes, address the barriers service-users face in accessing support and contribute to the development of a countywide rough-sleeper funding framework.

# Rethink

- ➔ **Review Hospital Discharge Processes** – We will evaluate the impact of hospital discharge processes and identify opportunities for further improvement. We will then establish and agree a funding model for hospital discharge across Integrated Care Systems to support new arrangements and develop a post-Covid hospital discharge model that provides the best outcomes for patients.
- ➔ **Reinvent Future Prevention Work** – We will review the Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service model for smoking cessation support and conduct a drug and alcohol needs assessment. These pieces of work will allow us to make informed choices about future service delivery and commissioning approaches.
- ➔ **Investigate Healthy Weight Initiatives** – We will take a system wide approach to understand and tackle the factors that cause obesity within our communities. We will work with NHS partners on the development of a Healthy Weight pathway for Hertfordshire and develop a healthy weight charter for workplaces. We will launch two place-based pilots that will engage residents in research to understand the role community facilities, amenities, the built environment, food retailers and interactions with these play in contributing to obesity. These pilots will provide us with a better understanding of how we can support our residents to achieve a healthy weight informed by community need.
- ➔ **Protecting Children’s Futures** – We will develop and deliver a range of strategies to address the needs of children in Hertfordshire at a local community level and ensure they get the best start in life and are supported at school, at home and through our services, including:
  - The Voice of a Child, Young Person and Family Strategy, which will outline how we will involve children, young people and families in the planning, development and improvement of our services
  - School Improvement and School Place Planning strategies which will inform how we will continue to improve our schools and aim to have the right number of places in schools for all our children
  - The One Team Fostering Strategy that will grow and improve fostering in the county through ensuring that all individuals and partners involved in the fostering process work as a united team
  - The Residential Strategy to provide additional places in children’s homes
- ➔ **Strengthen Care Services Resilience** – We will re-evaluate our incident response and emergency planning, building on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform future health protection arrangements. This aims to improve resilience to future health crises and ensure that disruption to our care services is minimised.

## Ambition: Building on established relationships to improve health and wellbeing outcomes

# Restore



- ➔ **Supporting Carers and Care Staff** – We are developing a workplace programme offer that will include digital checks for NHS and primary care staff, to continue to monitor their health and wellbeing. We will also develop a carers’ strategy, outlining how we will address issues facing those with care responsibilities in Hertfordshire. We intend to introduce a number of initiatives to increase carers’ wellbeing, and tackle loneliness and digital exclusion. This includes:
  - Funding a post to enhance pathways between HertsHelp and carers’ support providers through signposting, referrals and sharing expertise
  - Continuing Carers’ Hub meetings for a further two years and continuing to fund two posts to support the needs of carers from ethnic minorities
  - Introducing a new post which will focus exclusively on working with carers to support them to reintegrate with their local communities during the recovery period
  - Funding the extended provision of telephone support offered by Carers in Herts.
- ➔ **Continuing Voluntary and Community Work** – We will support the Volunteering and People Assistance Cell (VPAC) to help communities impacted by COVID-19. This includes working with the voluntary and community sector to provide support to restore independence, work to combat loneliness and promote digital inclusion. We will continue to develop HertsHelp (our community navigation service) as a key support pathway for residents in Hertfordshire.
- ➔ **Monitoring the Care Market** – COVID-19 has significantly impacted the care market and has highlighted the increasing importance on services that support people to stay at home. In response, we will continue to monitor the sustainability and financial resilience of the care market through 2021/22 and review our existing care strategies. We have recruited additional staff to support this work, have put a support framework in place for providers and agreed a resilience funding pot.
- ➔ **Tackling Learning Disability Health Inequalities** – We will fund two practitioner posts to reduce health inequalities amongst individuals with learning disabilities by developing models of rights-based interventions, working alongside hospital prevention teams and integrated health partners. We will also employ a commissioning manager to help lead on the work with providers and commissioners to develop clear targets for services that provide social care for people with learning disabilities. We will support the new frailty falls model and tool that has been developed and rolled out by Hertfordshire Adult Disability Services. This tool intends to enable better care and support planning, in order to reduce hospital admissions.

# Rethink

- ➔ **Fighting Homelessness** – We will build on our collaborative work with District Councils to reduce and prevent homelessness, acting as the single point of contact for all rough-sleeper queries and mobilising support services rapidly across the county. Our partnership work will also create and develop multi-disciplinary teams to launch a countywide pilot for 2021/22, aiming to reduce referral timeframes, address the barriers service-users face in accessing support and contribute to the development of a countywide rough-sleeper funding framework.
- ➔ **Protect Children** – We will continue to protect children and young people through our work with schools and partners, including the Hertfordshire Tackling Poverty Partnership, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Domestic Abuse Partnership.
- ➔ **Strengthen Voluntary and Community Partnerships** – We will work with the Health, Voluntary and Social Enterprise Sector as well as working across our Adult Social Care, Public Health and Children's Services to identify opportunities for joint commissioning. We will build on the successful Volunteering and People Assistance Cell (VPAC) work carried out through the pandemic and develop a co-produced Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy to ensure the joint working relationships are further strengthened and incorporated into business as usual.
- ➔ **Strive to Reduce Health Risks** – We will explore the potential for further work with Districts and Borough Councils and the voluntary sector to reduce the health risks from poor quality housing and from high-risk occupational settings. We will also continue to work



with new and existing health inequalities governance groups, identifying gaps in policies and programmes, and commissioning interventions, where appropriate.

- ➔ **Analyse Service Demand** – We will utilise available data from our Adult Care Services to determine patterns of demand across Hertfordshire and develop recommendations on how our strategies and policies may need to change to address any gaps identified. This work will help us to adopt interventions and approaches that support inclusive practice and service transformation.
- ➔ **Developing the Health and Wellbeing Board** – We will work with Essex County Council to establish the role of the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board in the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System. We will consider the proposed creation of an Integrated Care Systems Health and Care Partnership to better coordinate services, improve population health and reduce inequalities.

# Delivering Recovery - A cleaner and greener environment

## Our Ambition and what it means for us:

1. **Utilising our resources to improve quality of life, and inspiring residents and businesses to take action to protect the environment**

*With many of us working from home and 'remaining local' throughout the pandemic, we've seen the significant benefits that fewer cars and active transport has for the environment, health and wellbeing, and the importance of green spaces. The flexibility the county has demonstrated throughout the pandemic has affected the climate and our aims of improving levels of air quality, biodiversity and wildlife on land and in water, as well as encouraging and helping communities to design their own local green space plans.*



## Ambition: Utilising our resources to improve quality of life, and inspiring residents and businesses to take action to protect the environment

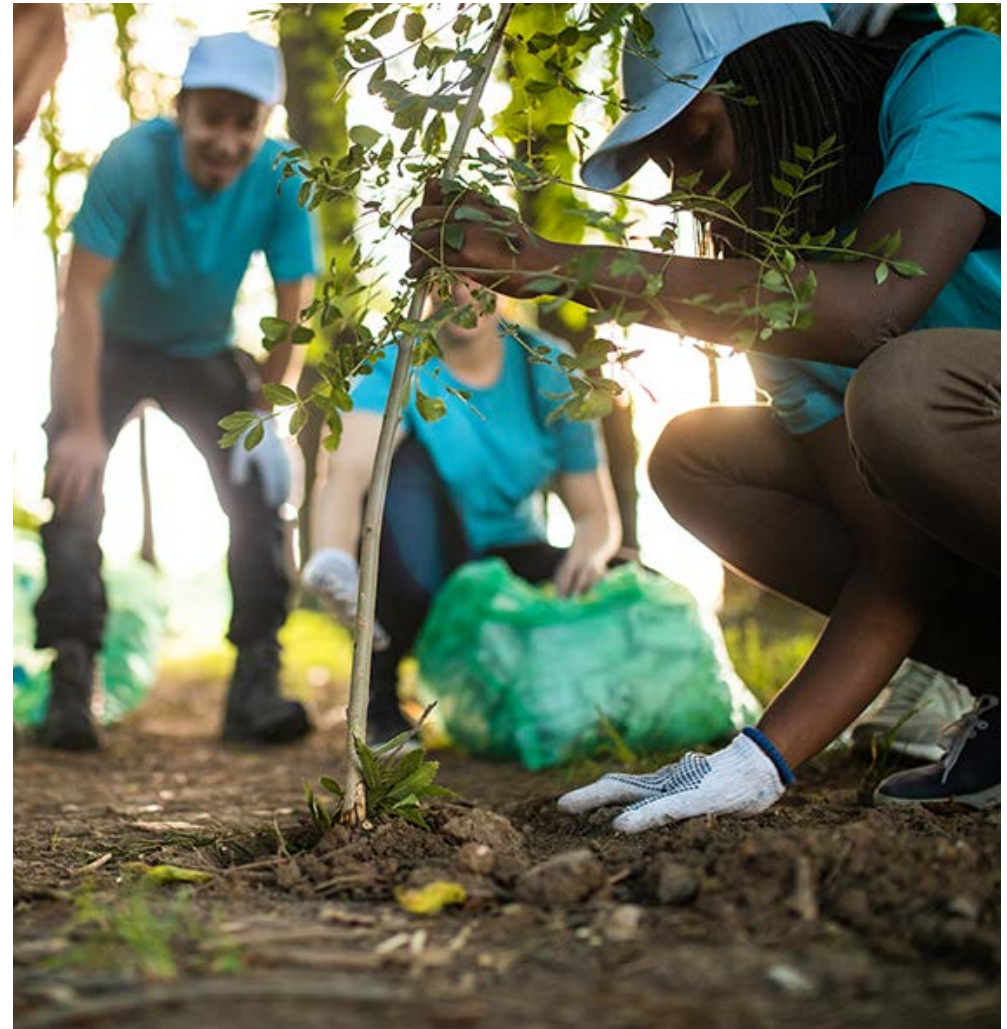
# Restore

- ➔ **Supporting the Delivery of the Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy** – We will support the delivery of the Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy and accompanying Action Plan by ensuring that all recovery interventions and projects complete appropriate Sustainability Impact Assessments. This aims to ensure that sustainability implications are considered in the planning of projects, negative impacts are mitigated and opportunities to maximise positive sustainable actions are identified.
- ➔ **Leading on the Agreement of Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5)** – We will continue to lead on the agreement of the next Local Transport Plan and work hard to deliver transport that is better for the environment and for residents. We will focus on continuing to improve Hertfordshire’s public transport offer and will strive to embed the uptake in active transport seen throughout the pandemic by encouraging and promoting walking and cycling above car usage where possible.
- ➔ **Cutting Food Waste** – Around 52,000 tonnes (approximately 25%) of Hertfordshire’s residual waste is food waste, which costs Hertfordshire’s taxpayers around £7.1 million to dispose of each year. We will launch a new food waste initiative to support residents to reduce food waste, cutting carbon emissions and waste disposal costs. This campaign will also form part of a longer-term multi-channel campaign promoting food waste prevention measures.
- ➔ **Continue Working Towards Clean Air** – As part of our ambition to ensure clean air for the county by 2030, we will create a new Air Quality post, to be shared between the Sustainable Hertfordshire and Public Health teams. The role will provide specialist advice to elected members and partner organisations, playing an integral part in delivering the county’s ambition to be a sustainable place to live. We will also collaborate with the NHS to facilitate effective engagement with the air quality agenda and improve messaging to the public.
- ➔ **Active Travel** – We will continue to invest and develop schemes and projects on the ground that facilitate and enable people to consider more environmentally-friendly ways to travel, including cycling, walking and bus services. This includes bus priority measures and surfacing of off-road cycling routes to allow their use all year round.
- ➔ **Environmental Volunteering** – We will restart our increasingly popular and in demand environmental volunteering programme so local people can contribute to improving the environment. This includes rights of way task forces, wood wardens, conservation volunteers, guided walk and health walk leaders, Friends of Greenspaces and rights of way surveyors.



# Rethink

- ➔ **Work Closer with Partner Authorities** – We will support our partner authorities within the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) to develop and deliver strategic action plans to increase biodiversity, reduce emissions, decarbonise transport within the county and mitigate the effects of the climate crisis on our water supply, including protecting the unique habitat of Hertfordshire’s chalk streams.
- ➔ **Tree Planting** – We will increase tree canopy coverage in urban areas across the county to benefit the environment and contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities. We will do this through expanding the tree canopy along the highways network and delivering tree planting recommendations of District and Borough Council greenspace audits.
- ➔ **Expand Health Walks Project** – We will seek funding to increase engagement in the Districts and Boroughs currently served by Hertfordshire Health Walks, as well as the expansion of the initiative into Stevenage and Broxbourne. This will allow us to target locations and communities impacted by multiple forms of deprivation and the effects of COVID-19.
- ➔ **Provide Demand Responsive Transport** – We will run a 4-year demand responsive transport pilot project in rural East and North Hertfordshire with grant aid from the Department for Transport to improve access to sustainable transport and for those who do not have access to a car. This project also aims to help rebuild confidence in passenger transport as we emerge from COVID-19.



# Delivering Recovery - Sustainable, responsible growth in our county

## Our Ambitions and what they mean for us:

### 1. Supporting education, skill development and generating new jobs

*The pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to education and employment. This has been especially detrimental to the lives of young people aged 16-24, who have experienced the largest increase in the number of universal credit claimants and are now at increased risk of not being in education, employment or training. We will tackle this through supporting residents to complete their education and find gainful employment, develop their skills for the future and increase visibility of the opportunities Hertfordshire has to offer.*

### 2. Supporting local businesses, encouraging investment in the hardest hit sectors and driving sustainable and responsible growth

*The pandemic has negatively impacted local businesses across the county and evidence shows that smaller enterprises are amongst the worst affected. Going forward, we intend to help stimulate economic recovery by providing advice and funding to local businesses, to encourage investment within Hertfordshire. We will also support the delivery of a range of ambitious infrastructure projects which aim to enhance the lives of Hertfordshire's residents and support sustainable economic growth.*

## Ambition: Supporting education, skill development and generating new jobs

# Restore

- ➔ **Implement the Skills and Employment Strategy** – We have worked with our partners at the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to produce the third edition of the Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Strategy, which focuses specifically on skills and employment needed in Hertfordshire in the wake of the pandemic. We will engage in partnership working to ensure we effectively implement this strategy and provide the best opportunities for employment to our residents.
- ➔ **Supporting Set-Back Employment Sectors** – We will seek to help employment sectors within the county that have been worst affected by the pandemic. We will work with our partners within the LEP to undertake analysis to determine which sectors are most in need following the end of the furlough scheme. We will then use this evidence to provide targeted support.
- ➔ **Promoting Apprenticeships** – We will work with the LEP to increase the number of apprenticeships offered by employers in the county and make more employers aware of the incentives available to them, such as the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer scheme. We will promote the benefits of apprenticeships to young people through schools and carers, using a variety of programmes, including the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network and the Hertfordshire Supports Apprenticeships Campaign.
- ➔ **Supporting Vulnerable Jobseekers** – We will work closely with employers to secure apprenticeships for care leavers, and placements in HCC for vulnerable young people an extension to the ‘Hop into Your Future’ employability programme. We will also match the funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to fund a project to provide supported employment for 725 adults with learning disabilities. We will work with the LEP to develop and launch the Hertfordshire Supported Apprenticeship programme, to support more young people with learning difficulties access apprenticeships and promote training and engagement programmes provided by the voluntary and community sector.
- ➔ **Connecting Students and Employers** – We will unlock emerging talent by supporting students who are leaving education to find secure employment. We will do this through working with the LEP to create an additional Careers Hub to increase careers provision in schools and raise awareness of the national Kickstart programme to support young job seekers. We will also work with local Further Education institutes to raise awareness of the wealth of employment opportunities that are present in Hertfordshire for graduating students.
- ➔ **Securing Education for Children** – In response to the increase in children missing from education through the pandemic, we will carry out targeted early intervention work with the pupils most at risk of exclusion, especially those with additional social, emotional and mental health needs, to help them stay in school. We will also fund MCR Pathways, a relationship-based mentoring initiative delivered in schools, designed to mitigate the impact of disruption to teaching and learning which children have experienced over the last 18 months and support vulnerable children to achieve better outcomes.

# Rethink

- ➔ **Connect employers and employees** – We will work with our partners at the LEP to promote and fund further development of the new Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP) - a freely available online resource providing employment and training opportunities for job seekers and a recruitment portal for employers to better connect with potential employees. Through the LEP we will also develop employer engagement strategies to raise the profile of industry placements to ensure our local employers are aware of national programmes including Skills Support for the Workplace, Restart, the Lifetime Skills Guarantee and the National Careers Service.
- ➔ **Support employers to reach a wider talent pool** – Through our work with the LEP, we will consider the feasibility and options for the development of an employment agency for the county to more effectively match the skills of employees to employers, and support the recruitment of individuals with barriers to employment.
- ➔ **Ensure Workforce is Future Ready** – We will seek to enhance the digital skills of the county's workforce through the delivery of our Digital Skills Strategy and action plan while working in conjunction with national programmes such the Digital Skills Bootcamp. We will work with the LEP and Higher and Further Education sectors to ensure the right skills for the future are embedded across our workforce.
- ➔ **Address Employment Inequalities** – We will work with the LEP and Hertfordshire's District and Borough Councils to carry out local skills and employment analysis, map local skills demand and supply, and develop effective employment and skills plans. Through the LEP we will work with local partners to address local barriers to employment and employment inequalities across the county. Additionally, we will aim to enhance the Pathways to Employment Forum to continue supporting employers to recruit from groups with barriers to employment.



## Ambition: Supporting local businesses, encouraging investment in the hardest hit sectors and driving sustainable growth

# Restore

➔ **Accelerating the Building of New Homes** – We will work together with the Growth Board to accelerate the building of new houses to deliver the homes that Hertfordshire needs. We will support the delivery of up to 100,000 homes by the mid 2030's to address market failure which has led to a substantial shortfall in the number of homes built for workers in key sectors, including public service, retail and administration. We will do this by seeking a support package from HM Government to allow us to accelerate our delivery trajectory over the next ten years through a single housing delivery programme for the county.

➔ **Subsidising Use of Public Transport** – We will raise the upper age limit for our SaverCard scheme from 19 to 25, to allow 20 to 25-year olds to claim a half price discount on bus travel for the next 3 years. This will support an age group who have suffered a significant economical setback to gain easier access to employment, education, retail and leisure facilities and supporting Hertfordshire's wider economic recovery. We will also introduce e-wallets and flexible ticketing options on our buses. This will support the demand for contactless payment and better reflect changing working patterns, supporting the recovery of public transport services and the wider economy.

➔ **Supporting Businesses** – We will work with our partners at the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to provide a range of business support packages including:

- The emergency COVID-19 business support package
- Hertfordshire Business Expansion Grant Scheme, providing grants of between £10k-£100k for small to medium sized businesses
- The Hertfordshire SME Growth Loan Scheme providing loans of up to £500k to Hertfordshire businesses
- Crowdfund Hertfordshire supporting small and micro businesses with grants up to £5k.

We will also work with the LEP to deliver the Volunteer Business Support Scheme providing local businesses with access to business mentors and tailor national schemes to the Hertfordshire context, such as the Peer Network Programme and Small Business Leadership Programme which support businesses to develop skills though learning from peers.

➔ **Encouraging Growth of Key Industries** – We will work with the LEP to support the film and TV sector, including investing in Elstree Film Studios through the Getting Building Fund and advancing plans for a major new studio complex at Elstree. We will accelerate the growth of the cell and gene therapy cluster, through the Getting Building Fund and through the creation of a longer-term cluster development plan. We will also support the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector, through STEM skills

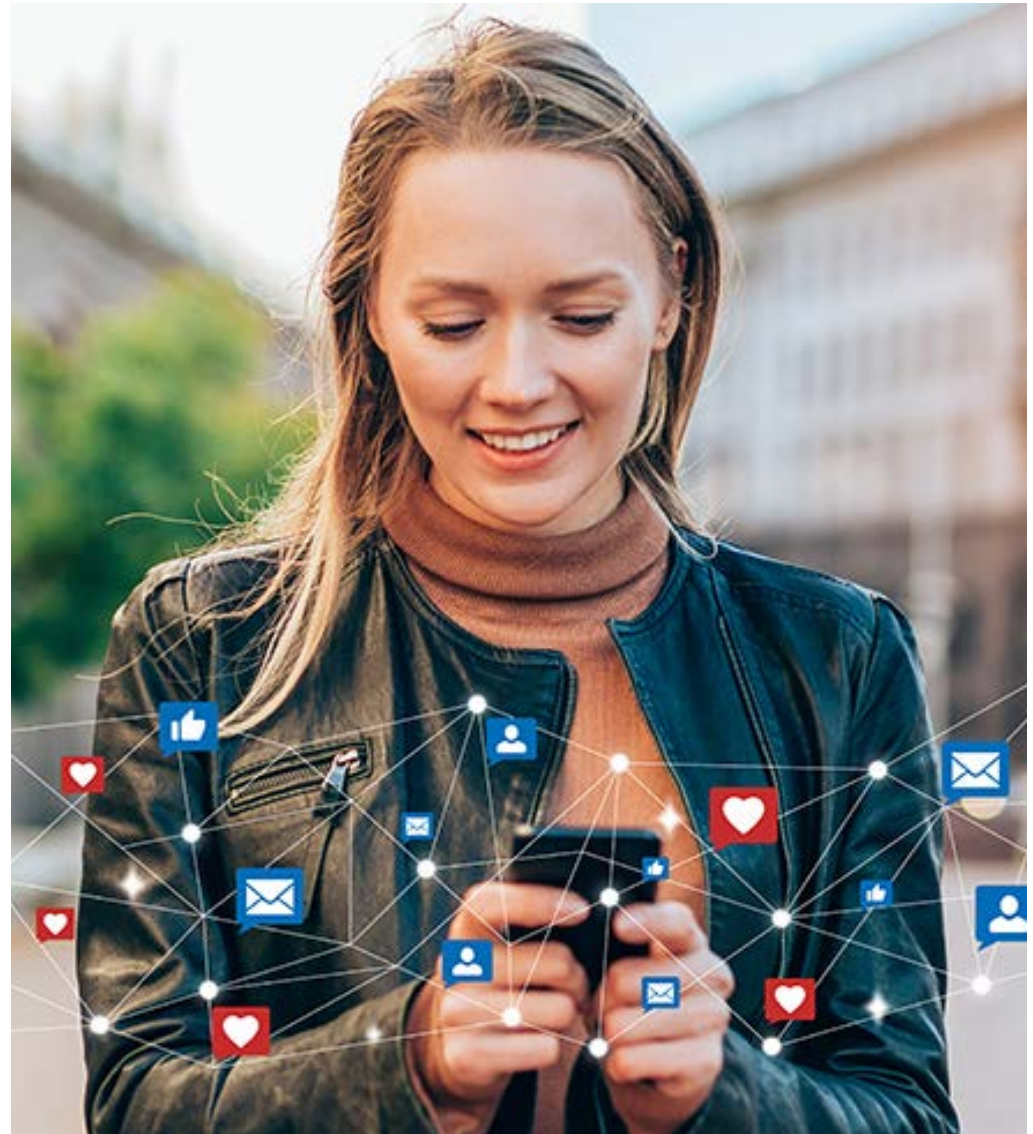
provision (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and support developing plans for Gunnels Wood Road, which has crucial potential importance in relation to both the cell and gene therapy cluster and the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector.

➔ **Increasing Digital Connectedness** – We will work with central Government, the LEP and other local partners to ensure continuing access to high speed networks, including gigabit capable connections and improved 4G and 5G coverage. Central Government recently announced funds of between £140m and £237m being targeted across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and East of Berkshire for Phase 2 of the Project Gigabit. We will continue work with our partners to support the delivery of the Gigabit voucher scheme, which supports those in rural areas access fibre speed broadband. We will also support the Gigahubs project which will target the provision of Full Fibre coverage to public buildings and sites. This work will continue to build upon the successful Hertfordshire Broadband Programme, which has made more than 54,000 additional connections available across the county since 2013.

➔ **Supporting businesses to trade safely and comply with COVID-19 regulations** – As a leading member of the Better Business for All (BBfA) partnership, we will provide a suite of support for Hertfordshire businesses to help them trade safely and recover from the pandemic. The partnership has secured funding to develop the Stay Safe, Stay Open offer, which includes:

- Provision of a COVID-19 helpline for businesses
- Webinars, face to face events and workshops
- A 'Safe to Trade' accreditation scheme

- Health & Safety consultancy and grants for ventilation advice and mechanical systems
- Free annual memberships to the Federation of Small Businesses and Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce to access free legal support



# Rethink

- ➔ **Redeveloping Town Centres** – We will work with the LEP to redevelop our urban spaces across the county including:
  - Supporting the development of Stevenage’s Town Investment Plan proposal to government, which will include a range of projects such as developing the station gateway and providing managed workspace in a town centre enterprise facility.
  - Implementing long term plans to develop 20,000 new homes in Hemel Hempstead together with new college space and improved retail and leisure facilities.
  - Advancing plans for major private and public sector investment in Watford providing new retail, public spaces and ambitions to redevelop Watford Station.
  - Supporting regeneration plans in Bishops Stortford; St Albans; Hatfield; Waltham Cross; and Welwyn Garden City
- ➔ **Focus on Residents’ Wellbeing** – As a member of the Growth Board we will work closer with the health sector, to ensure that residents’ well-being is given greater attention through both the planning and delivery stages of growth projects in order to make places that enhance residents’ lives. A working group has already been established with members of the health sector with the aim of enhancing cross sector working and impact, with a particular focus on infrastructure and place-making.
- ➔ **Make Development More Sustainable** – We will work with the Growth Board to ensure that growth work is aligned with the sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy. Further more, we will work with our partners at the Growth Board to consider the priority area action plans delivered by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, with a view to selecting specific projects that could form part of the individual growth corridor, greening our growth projects.
- ➔ **Providing Sustainable Transport Infrastructure** – As part of the Growth Board’s long term place agenda, we will support the delivery of the Hertfordshire to Essex Rapid Transit (HERT) project, a sustainable passenger transport system that will run east to west through the county, supporting sustainable connectivity between new and existing communities.
- ➔ **Develop Investment Opportunities** – We will work with the Growth Board to develop a purposeful Investment Ready Strategy to bring greater investment into Hertfordshire from both public and private sources. We will investigate options such as regional funds and potential impact to determine the conditions that need to be created locally to leverage in investment and investigate potential funding options for large scale, partly or non-commercial infrastructure projects.
- ➔ **Advance Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (IQ)** – We will work with the LEP to advance Hertfordshire IQ, an enterprise zone that will include three million square feet of new commercial space across seven sites in Hertfordshire and a supporting package of benefits to attract inward investment from two key sectors; construction and agri-tech. This will help to accommodate Hertfordshire’s growth businesses and stem any potential loss of enterprise and talent, as well as attracting new companies to the area and delivering a target of 8,000 new jobs and a further 2,000 jobs across the wider Hemel Garden Communities development.

## Delivering Recovery - Excellent council services for all

### Our Ambition and what it means for us:

1. Maximising the potential of data and intelligence to develop services fit for the future, whilst re-imagining our workforce, workplaces and ways of working

*Working through the pandemic has forced us to adopt new ways of working, and to reconsider what we need from our workspaces. As an employer we will make the most of the lessons that we have learned to enhance our productivity and flexible working culture, whilst maximising the use of data, intelligence and technology to inform policy development and modernise the way we operate and deliver services.*





## Ambition: Maximising the potential of data and intelligence to develop services fit for the future, whilst re-imagining our workforce, workplaces and ways of working

# Restore

- ➔ **Restarting Recruitment** – Over the last year recruitment for many roles has been put on hold and the level of staff vacancies has increased across several sectors of the council and partnership bodies. We will respond by restarting recruitment across the council and reconsidering our recruitment approach. We will work with a recruitment specialist to develop and implement an innovative recruitment campaign for social care staff, both internally and externally, to fill vacancies and meet increase in demand.
- ➔ **Embedding New Ways of Working** – We are committed to work more flexibly, seeking to embed hybrid working, encouraging staff to work from home and use local touchdowns when they can. This is intended to enhance productivity by reducing travel time, lowering our environmental impact and supporting a positive work-life balance for our employees. We will trust staff to make the right decisions about how and where they work, based on the needs of their role and their preferences, and equip them with the tools they need to work in a variety of locations.
- ➔ **Supporting our Staff** – We recognise the severe impact that the pandemic has had on the mental and physical wellbeing of our staff. We will continue to build on the legacy of our Winter Wellbeing campaign that supported our staff through the pandemic. We will also be providing support to staff experiencing mental health/PTSD, bereavement and the effects of Long Covid. We will also ensure that care providers that we work alongside prioritise the health and wellbeing of their staff.
- ➔ **Reconfiguring our Workplaces** – As our staff will be adopting different ways of working, our offices will be used for different functions. We will review and reconfigure our main sites to make them better suited to the needs of our future workforce, such as including more collaborative working areas.
- ➔ **Promoting Diversity and Inclusion** – We will work with our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Team, and the voluntary and community sector to support the delivery of their agreed inclusion and diversity interventions. We will deliver action plans and work programmes tailored to specific areas and departments of the council to promote the key priorities of our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. One example is the Adult Social Care Action plan that focuses on celebrating the dynamics of diversity by valuing difference and variety of experience, to create a department with zero tolerance to racism or discrimination in any form.



# Rethink

- ➔ **Using Data to Improve Services** – We will seek to improve the efficiency and quality of our services, ensuring that we are responsive to the changing behaviours and needs of our residents and rethinking how and when residents interact with the Council. We will investigate potential opportunities for using data to enhance our services and investigate where using data could help the Council to solve real life service problems through providing insights and forecasts that will facilitate data-driven decision making.
- ➔ **Investigate Technological Opportunities** – We will investigate how technology can improve our services and outcomes for residents and for staff. We will consider the applications of cloud infrastructure for our organisations and how it could improve our user experience and resilience. We will also consider the further applications of smart devices and network enabled products to help us to deliver more effective services, investigating if robotic process automation could alleviate pressure on staff and allow them to focus on activities that add greater value to our services.
- ➔ **Effectively Recruit and Retain Talent** – We will seek to attract and retain talented employees by becoming a centre of excellence for professional development, supported by our Future Workforce Recruitment & Retention Strategies. We will, where it is suitable, move recruitment and selection processes online, preventing unnecessary travel time for line managers and candidates, saving candidates money and making recruitment more accessible. Online recruitment will also help candidates and the council reduce our impact on the environment in line with our sustainability strategy.

- ➔ **Develop a More Agile Workplace** – We will continue to support the dynamic working environment created by our response to the pandemic, redeploying staff where necessary and allowing them to work in more diverse teams, without hierarchy, to provide the best outcomes for the council and that we provide the best services we can.



## Prioritisation, Governance and Measuring Success

As we deliver our identified recovery ambitions, we will need to ensure that this work continues to align to our priorities for Hertfordshire and complements the recovery interventions that our partners are delivering. Only through strong and effective partnership collaboration will we be able to deliver optimal outcomes for residents and local businesses.

To ensure effective prioritisation, decision making, and overall delivery, a comprehensive recovery programme is being established that outlines responsibility and accountability for delivery. Where possible, existing governance structures will be utilised to manage and monitor both planning and delivery.

We recognise the importance of this governance and will invest in maintaining the following enabling factors: cross directorate and partnership working, necessary oversight and leadership, effective controls and risk management, performance management, and an agile and innovative working culture.

The ambition and approach to delivering recovery set out in this strategy marks a line in the sand to kick off our recovery journey and we will continue to review our approach as the pandemic evolves. It will be essential that we have a way of measuring success to understand if we have achieved what we set out to do. In order to do this, we will maximise the use of data and intelligence to assess the impact of recovery interventions and will ensure there are clear baselines to measure against, clear benefits, and appropriate mechanisms for reporting.

Having effective governance in place to measure the impact of our interventions will allow us to deliver a strong recovery for Hertfordshire. Our return to 'normal' will certainly look different but we are confident that our community-focused approach will play a key role in securing Hertfordshire's social and economic recovery over the years to come.



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**PORTUGUESE**

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**TAMIL**

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[equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk) என்ற மின்னஞ்சல் முகவரியில்  
எங்களதைத் தொடர்புகொள்க

**URDU**

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## How to contact us

To find out more about the services we provide you can:

- **Look at our website** [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk) where you can access many of our services online
- **Telephone.** If you wish to contact us you can call **0300 123 4040**
- **Write to us.** Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DQ
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