

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 13 October 2021

Subject Corporate Annual Report 2020/21

Purpose To present to Cabinet the Corporate Annual Report 2020/21 on the progress of delivery against the Corporate Plan 2017-22

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Head of People and Business Change

Ward All

Summary This is the fourth Annual Report on the delivery against the Corporate Plan 2017-22 'Improving People's Lives'. This report reflects back on the progress made against the delivery of its four Well-being Objectives: To Improve skills, education and employment opportunities; Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment; Enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient; and to build cohesive and sustainable communities. These Well-being objectives contribute towards the overall delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2018-23.

In 2020/21 Newport Council also had four Strategic Recovery Aims to support the City's and Council response / recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. These Aims focused on employment and education; economic and environmental recovery; well-being and health of people and safeguarding the most vulnerable residents in the city; and provide people and communities with the opportunities to move out of the crisis. This report reflects back on the progress made against these aims and how the Council alongside its strategic partners and communities responded to crisis.

This report highlights the achievements made by the Council in the year including: the continuing improvement to household recycling; launch of the Council's first electric refuse collection vehicle; ongoing regeneration of the City Centre including the redevelopment of Market Arcade and Newport Market; success in achievement of pupils and schools in GCSE and A Level exams, and the continuing to support the residents and businesses of Newport through the pandemic. This report also raises the challenges that the City is now facing, most particularly with the demand for adult and children social care; the ongoing sustainability of the environment; the need to become net zero carbon neutral by 2030; and increasing demand for secure and affordable housing for residents.

Following the endorsement of the annual report by Cabinet, the Report will be published online.

Proposal Cabinet is asked to endorse the Annual Report 2020/21 and enable the report to be published by the 31st October 2021.

Action by Corporate Management Team

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Corporate Management Team

Signed

Background

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has set seven Well-being goals for all public bodies in Wales to work towards. The Act also requires public bodies deliver 'sustainable development' to improve economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing. To deliver these goals the Future Generations Commissioner has set 5 principles for public bodies to consider in their decision-making activities: Long Term, Collaborative, Involvement, Integration and Prevention.

Newport Public Services Board (PSB) 'One Newport' has set their Wellbeing Plan 2018-23 to deliver the Wellbeing goals for Newport. In support of the PSB work, Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22 has set a mission statement '*Improving People's Lives*' to address the root causes of inequalities and to give our citizens the best possible chance to achieve their ambitions, to build strong and resilient communities and to have a local economy and thriving city. To achieve these aims we set four Well-being Objectives:

1. To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
2. To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.
3. To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient.
4. To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

This year's Annual Report also reflects back on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic that impacted Newport and the world since February 2020. The Council's response alongside its partners to the crisis has led towards the re-evaluation of how services are delivered and re-focused some of the priorities set in the Corporate Plan. The Council recognises the work that is required to help support the recovery of the City's economy, support of vulnerable and marginalised communities that have been impacted by Covid-19 and the delivery of Council services. This has resulted in the Council adopting its four Strategic Recovery Aims to support the Corporate Plan and the delivery of the four Well-being Objectives in 2020/21:

1. Understand, and respond to, the additional challenges, which Covid19 has presented, including loss of employment, impact on business and on the progress, achievement, and wellbeing of both mainstream and vulnerable learners.
2. Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.
3. Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities.
4. Provide people with the resources and support that they need to move out of the crisis, considering in particular the impact that Covid 19 has had on our minority and marginalised communities.

This is the fourth Annual Report on the delivery of the Corporate Plan as required by the Well-being Act. The purpose of the annual report is to self-reflect on the achievements made, where the Council can do more to improve performance and what we intend to deliver in 2021/22 for the rest of the Corporate Plan. As part of the Council's Annual Review, the Council will commit to the delivery of the four Well-being Objectives in 2021/22, supported by our Strategic Recovery Aims.

The 2020/21 Annual Report looks back at the Council's performance against its finances, performance measures and progress against the four Well-being Objectives. The report also looks at other areas such as how Newport City Council supports the delivery of services, staff and decision making such as: corporate / service planning, workforce well-being, procurement, equalities (including the Strategic Equality Plan) and engagement. The Annual Report also highlights the ongoing collaborative work that it is involved with in the city and across the wider South East Wales region.

In February 2021 the Local Government (Wales) Act received Royal Assent and replaced the 2009 Local Government (Wales) Act. Whilst the new Act no longer requires Annual Reports to be published by 31st October deadlines, Audit Wales have confirmed that they will note the final publication to meet this requirement for 2020/21.

The Report for 2020/21 financial year highlights that it has been challenging and unconventional due to the impacts of the Covid pandemic. The traditional considerations for delivering a balanced revenue budget involving increasing demand on social services and schools, have been added to with pressures on income budgets, and the cost of responding to and recovering from the pandemic.

At the end of the financial year (March 2021) the Council reported a net revenue underspend of £14m against the £300.3m budget. The underspend was due to a range of factors including:

- the receipt of one-off Wales Government funding to assist councils with mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the inability to deliver against savings targets agreed for the 2020/21 financial year;
- underspending on general revenue contingency budget, council tax reduction scheme and council tax income;
- underspends across the service areas due to changes in working practices; and
- not undertaking planned/normal services as Covid-19 response work was prioritised.

The report also highlights where the Council is performing well over the last four years and where further improvement can be made. The Council strives to continuously monitor these areas and make the necessary improvements for the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

In this year's Annual Report 2020/21 the following has been successfully delivered by the Newport Council:

Well-Being Objective 1: To improve skills, education and employment opportunities

- Remote learning was a challenge for some families. Using funding from Welsh Government Hwb EdTech programme, 6,735 devices were delivered to schools to support pupils. 1,300 MiFi units were provided to families without access to the internet at home and 150 families were supported with mobile data uplifts.
- Ensuring the wellbeing and mental health of pupils during the pandemic, including the Gwent whole school approach (WSA) in collaboration with the Gwent Regional Partnership Board.
- Council officers and partners continued to support young people in Newport which resulted in less than 2% not being in education, employment or training.
- Neighbourhood hubs teams continued to offer online and virtual support to vulnerable people across the city. The Reach / Restart project supporting refugees completed 95 assessments and supported 74 people to gain employability skills.

Well-Being Objective 2: To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment

- Business support team have helped over 4,000 businesses to access advice and financial support through Welsh Government discretionary grant fund.
- Income and revenues team have also administered over £19million of business rates relief to nearly 1,000 businesses.
- Public protection teams provided Covid-19 secure advice, guidance and enforcement to businesses when they were allowed to reopen.
- Continuous regeneration of the City through the support and delivery of schemes such as the Chartist Hotel, Indoor Market, Market Arcade, Mill Street Post Office building, Transporter Bridge Visitor Centre and now the Information Station.
- Implementation of the new smaller bins across households in the City contributing towards the increase in the Council's recycling rates to 67.2% which is the best in the UK.
- As part of the Newport Offer, Council agreed to develop a new multi-million pound leisure and wellbeing centre, being the first step in the deliver of the Newport Knowledge Quarter.
- Installation of 20 charge points across our car parks and £260k worth of LED lighting within Newport Live and car parks
- Council was awarded the prestigious Alan Clark Award for local / community energy in recognition to the solar project installing over 7,000 solar panels across 27 buildings

- Delivery of various bio-diversity and green projects to improve the City's environment. This allowed us to discover a thriving population of rare bees in the city in September 2020.

Well-Being Objective 3: To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

- Home First is now fully operational at the Grange Hospital incorporating hospital discharge pathways and reablement services to prevent unnecessary admissions.
- Technology in the Council's three care homes enabled residents to stay connected with their families during the pandemic
- Community Connector team provided a service to 2,136 people with information, telephone advice and 1:1 support including a rise in those seeking information and support regarding health, mental wellbeing and financial assistance.
- 70 rough sleepers were provided with temporary accommodation during the pandemic. Further work is required to move people onto more permanent solutions with appropriate levels of support.
- Innovative work has continued to grow – family group conferencing; Baby and Me and a toolkit for children at risk of exploitation was developed and is being shared throughout Wales.
- The roll out of MYST (my support team) to support our children in placement was launched
- During lockdown, improvements to air quality (36 % reduction) across the city as people used their card less and found alternative ways of travelling.
- Delivery of the Council's Active Travel schemes such as Fourteen Locks and Gaer Fort, Monkey Island and Tredegar Park offering improved access to walking and cycling. With an Active Travel increase of 47% over the year.
- Established local Test Trace Protect service working alongside other Gwent local authorities and ABUHB. Enabled rapid deployment of mobile testing units contributing to breaking the transmission chain.
- Council together with Newport Live and TTP service established a mass vaccination centre at Newport Centre.
- Public protection teams have provided advice and guidance to local businesses over 2,343 occasions and completed over 2,700 inspections. This has been instrumental in helping them safely reopen.

Well-Being Objective 4: To build cohesive and sustainable communities

- Collaborative working with Gwent Police, Probation Service, ABUHB and many others to find temporary and safe accommodation for those homeless and / or at risk of rough sleeping. Offering a range of physical and mental health support for those with complex needs and substance abuse.
- Collaborative working with the City's Registered Social Landlords to deliver the Housing Support Grant and Innovative Housing Programme that will offer more affordable good quality housing for its residents.
- Neighbourhood hub teams supported residents in need throughout the pandemic. Involving over 5,000 phone calls to shielding residents; coordinating the Welsh Government food parcel scheme: working in partnership to deliver over 800 food parcels to isolated and vulnerable families.
- Flying Start settings repurposed during first lockdown and summer holidays to provide childcare for children of key workers. This was extended through the summer holidays.
- Council worked with Clybiau Plant Cymru and Newport Live to provide childcare for 110 vulnerable children during the pandemic.
- Continuing engagement and involvement of Newport's communities through collaborative groups provided information on Covid-19 in home languages to our minority ethnic communities.
- Community Cohesion team have been helping Newport residents who are EU nationals to promote awareness of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and monitoring other Brexit related tensions. Almost 8,000 applications made to EUSS by Newport residents to March 2021.

Attached at Appendix 1 of this report is a copy of the draft Annual Report. The Council's Communications team will be finalising the report before it is published on the Council's website in Welsh and English.

Cabinet also received a report outlining the progress against the Strategic Recovery objectives and as such this is not covered in detail here.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

Financial Summary of the Council's capital and revenue position is reported included in the Annual Report.

Risks

| Risk Title / Description | Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L) | Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L) | Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect? | Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk? |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| The Annual Report is not published in accordance with the Wellbeing Act 2015. | M | L | The Council will be finalising the report with the communication's team and publishing the report on the Council's website. | Head of People & Business Change Communications Manager |

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2018-23
NCC Corporate Plan 2017-22
Strategic Recovery Aims

Options Available and considered

1. Cabinet to endorse the Annual Report and for officers to publish the report in accordance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Local Government Act 2009.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of the report

Preferred Option and Why

1. Cabinet are requested to endorse the Annual Report 2020/21 to enable publication by the 31st October 2021 deadline.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. The report highlights the impact of COVID through 2020/21 and the ongoing financial pressures that have been and continue to be managed through the Welsh Government Hardship Fund and other specific WG grant funding. The report also highlights the financial aspects of other actions delivered throughout the year.

The Council has a Corporate Plan which is reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan and this report outlines its four Strategic Recovery Aims to support this plan and delivery of the four Wellbeing Objectives in 20/21. The report also acknowledges where recovery was supported by Welsh Government grant funding, including the Hardship Fund.

The link between the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan will continue to be monitored and updated as the Corporate Plan progresses. Any necessary changes to the MTFP will be identified and implemented if required.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. The Council has a duty to publish an annual report in relation to its duty to secure continuous improvement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and also publish an annual report in relation to the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Council has adopted a single integrated process of performance monitoring to provide a more streamlined and robust approach to performance management. The improvement and well-being objectives are closely aligned under the over-arching Corporate Plan and the delivery is underpinned through individual service plans. Therefore, this Annual report sets out the progress made in delivering the Corporate Plan during 20/21 and is intended to meet the reporting requirements of both the Measure and the Well-Being Act. It sets out the significant achievements during the last financial year in the delivery of services and also the challenges in relation to the response to Covid-19, the pressures on social care and the sustainability and environmental issues that need to be addressed. It should be noted that the 2009 Measure and the continuous improvement duty was repealed with effect from April 2021 by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and replaced with a new performance self-assessment requirement. However, there are savings provisions within the relevant Commencement Order which still require the publication of this final Improvement plan report for the last financial year 20/21 before October 2021. The new performance self-assessment report will need to be published in 2022/23.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires the Council to publish its Annual Report on progress of delivery against the Corporate Plan 2017-22. This provides the Council an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and the further work we have to do in delivering the Corporate Plan to 2022. The publication of this report also provides an opportunity for Newport residents, businesses and staff to understand the progress of delivery. The comments of the Scrutiny Committee are also included in the report.

This report, alongside our ongoing COVID recovery reports outline the continuous progress that is being made.

Scrutiny Committees

The Annual Report was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 10th September 2021. The agenda and video of the committee meeting is linked [here](#). A summary of the Scrutiny Committee's comments and recommendations are below and have been considered as part of the final version of the Annual Report presented to the Council's Cabinet.

- The Committee noted that the Corporate Plan Annual Report was well written and well structured, with good visual stimulus and information in layman's terms.
- The Committee would like to see some changes to the graph on page 8 of the Corporate Plan Annual Report, to make Non-Service and Capital Financing Costs more clear in terms of their purpose – one Committee Member noted that the phrase 'Non-Service' is not particularly inspiring or explanatory to a layman.
 - The Committee also noted that they may wish to see the data in the graph presented either in alphabetical order or in order of value/increasing cost.
- The Committee would like further context within the Corporate Plan Annual Report with regards to employment figures - the amount of businesses in Newport and the jobs they generate specifically.
- The Committee noted in areas where the Performance Indicators have changed (specifically pages 25-27) whether it might be possible to provide more context around those figures or previous date held for similar performance indicators, as at present the lack of data gives little context or framing to 2020/21 figures.
- Committee noted that the inclusion of Disabled Facilities Grant data on Page 53 seemed incongruous and wondered whether it may fit better in another part of the report.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

These areas have been considered and reported as part of the Council's Annual Report.

Consultation

Not Applicable

Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2017-22

PSB Well-being Plan 2018-23

Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015

Dated: 6 October 2021