

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 10 November 2021

Subject Newport City Council Covid-19 Response and Recovery Update

Purpose To present to Cabinet an update on the Council's progress being made towards recovering services and supporting Newport's communities as part of its Strategic Recovery Aims.

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Head of People and Business Change

Ward All

Summary The UK and Wales is now into its 20th month (since February 2020) of the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, the crisis has impacted all communities, businesses and services delivered by the Council and partners across Newport. Newport as a city has had to adapt and respond as necessary to the restrictions to minimise the spread of the virus. The Council's priority has been to ensure the continuity of services with our strategic partners, supporting the most vulnerable residents, support businesses and ensure the safety of staff and customers. This report provides an overview of what action the Council has taken to date progress against its Strategic Recovery aims and Wellbeing Objectives.

Since the last Cabinet report in September, Wales and the region has continued to see positive Covid cases increase but hospital admissions remain lower in comparison to last year and the winter period. As the city and the Council enter into the autumn and winter period, there is likely to be further increase with the case rate which will have an impact on the hospital admissions. The focus over the autumn will be to get the over 50s, vulnerable and health & social care workers boosters alongside vaccinating 12 to 15 year olds across secondary school settings.

Proposal Cabinet is asked to consider the contents of the report and note the progress being made to date, the risks that are still faced by the Council and the city.

Action by Corporate Management Team

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Gold Recovery Group
- Corporate Management Team

Signed

Background

Since the last Cabinet Report on [13th October](#), Newport Council and its partners have continued to monitor the Covid-19 cases in the city through its role at the multi-agency Gwent Incident Management Team the Council's Emergency Response and Recovery Group (Covid Gold) and liaison with Welsh Government (WG), Public Health Wales (PHW) and ABUHB partners.

Wales Covid-19 Update (October/November)

Since the last report to Cabinet in October, Covid cases continue to remain prevalent across communities in Wales and Newport. The case rate remains over the last four weeks has been above 600 per 100,000 of the population with the seven day trend in Wales is showing an increase in the overall case rate ([Public Health Wales Dashboard](#)). Since August, hospitals across ABUHB have been experiencing increases in the number of covid related admissions requiring critical care. Whilst these remain lower than those experience during last winter, this is still having an impact on the NHS to provide services to residents and sadly Wales is still experiencing covid-19 related deaths.

Since the vaccination programme commenced in December 2020, over 2.4 million people have received a first dose of the vaccine with over 2.2 million receiving 2 doses. Since September the booster programme for over 50s and the most vulnerable commenced across Wales as well as the annual seasonal flu jabs. 12 to 15 year olds also became eligible to receive the covid vaccine which is being administered across school settings in Newport and Wales.

In October, the Welsh Government the legislation was passed for [NHS Covid passes](#) to be required before attending large events and nightclubs in Wales. The legislation requires people from Wales and the rest of the UK to present the pass either to demonstrate that they have been vaccinated or that have had a negative lateral flow test result. Venues in Newport and Wales will be required to ensure those attending show a copy of their pass before entering the venue. This new requirement is in addition to the existing measures from WG who still require people to socially distance wherever possible, and to continue to wear face coverings indoors except for hospitality premises. It will also be important for people and businesses (where they can) to continue to work from home.

As the economy has been reopening, Wales and Newport are starting to be impacted by wider economic factors due to vacancies, increasing household costs due to food and energy, disruption to food and goods supply chains. These impacts will be affecting those in low-income households and could disrupt economic recovery. These are being monitored by the Council as part of its business continuity arrangements.

Newport City Council Update

To date the vast majority of Newport City Council staff have continued to deliver front line services and the Council has continued to follow WG advice for staff (where they can) to continue to work from home. This message has been relayed to staff via regular staff communications. This equally applies to Members and access to the Civic Centre and the democratic functions of the Council continue to be undertaken virtually.

Risk assessments are in place for all work that we do, and these take into consideration work environment and task, health and safety legislation and current Government guidance. In this way we can ensure that staff can safely undertake their duties, protecting both themselves and people they are working with. For the 5,500 staff employed by Newport City Council (including schools) approximately 1200 have been regularly working from locations other than their usual place of work (including home working). The remaining staff and the services that they deliver have continued in line with the risk assessments in place and Government guidance during the Pandemic.

Where appropriate we have enabled teams to resume activity previously being undertaken from home as and when required. This has been possible because of the work done with service areas, Health and Safety, staff and Trade Unions to put in place robust risk assessment arrangements. We will continue this process over the coming months, whilst monitoring and responding to changes in the infection rates within the population. Services such as libraries and face to face customer services are again operational and are providing in-person activity.

We have also been working to undertake more face to face and hybrid meetings within the Council. Currently, due to restrictions in our Civic Centre, it is not possible to undertake face to face meetings for many activities. However, we have installed technology in a number of rooms that will enable us to provide hybrid meeting facilities.

For this to operate effectively we are finalising the technology requirements and will then develop specific protocols for the management of these meetings. To facilitate this, we will:

1. Operate a hybrid Corporate Management Team meeting
2. Undertake a hybrid Cabinet meeting
3. Based on the learning from these activities and where Covid restrictions and case numbers allow, we will aim for a hybrid Committee meeting

Work is on-going to ensure we can meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act regarding hybrid meetings.

Key for us is maintaining the benefits achieved by working flexibly to this point (these benefits are set out in the New Normal report previously discussed at Cabinet). A separate report to Cabinet (November 2021) will outline a series of decisions regarding policy changes and building utilisation, along with the associated benefits, risks and impacts. Once agreed we will develop necessary policies and implement a detailed building utilisation plan which will also address usage during the current and future restrictions.

A summary of the Council's activity since the last Cabinet Report is outlined below with a full update provided in appendix 1.

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 1 st November 2021
Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's school meals provider (Chartwell's) has reported some challenges within supply chains and as a result are experiencing difficulties obtaining certain food products and catering equipment. • High levels of pupil absence are still being reported by schools at the start of the new academic year. • 1,389 EdTech funded Chromebooks are due to be delivered to schools over the next week. These will come direct from the supplier. Delivery of the remaining devices is still anticipated by the end of the Autumn term. • The hospitality and HGV driving sector has an increasing demand for staff and we are working closely with employers and organisations to assist with this demand. • The Celtic Manor are running several jobs fairs, supported by NCC Work & Skills team in order to meet recruitment requirements.
Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERF Summer Restrictions Grant supported 296 businesses with a grant of £1,000 - £10,000. £389,000 has been defrayed protecting a reported 334 jobs in the city. • City of Newport Business Development Grant launched offering new and expanding businesses up to £10k in funding. • The affordable housing development programme continues to be delivered in partnership with RSLs operating in Newport. To date over £5 million of Newport's funding award has been drawn down this financial year. • Supporting local supply chains through quick turnaround of invoice payments and encouraging use of local suppliers for small value contracts.
Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint impacts of Covid, Brexit and the beginnings of the usual winter pressures have led to major challenges in all areas in providing full care packages. • Higher than normal demand on services and staff shortages are also impacting on the delivery of Adult and Children services.

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 1 st November 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy will feed into the forthcoming updated Air Quality Action Plan for NCC in respect of the 11 AQMAs we have. • All leisure facilities that have not been redeployed as either vaccination or testing centres, have been reopened to the public.
Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DFG team are dealing with a backlog of applications which amassed during previous lockdowns when only urgent cases were permitted. Materials cost increases have resulted in average grant costs significantly increasing with longer contractor/material lead time. This has been evident since Covid-19 and Brexit. • The Social Housing Grant programme is funding the development of over 500 new affordable housing units with several schemes due to complete early in the New Year. • Restart plans have been approved, with a triage process being well received. Home visits are an exception, with criteria developed to ensure consistency across all FS areas (e.g. language and play, parenting and ALN).

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The Council's financial (revenue and capital) update is reported separately as part of the Council's regular budget reports to Cabinet. The Covid-19 impact(s) are considered in the finance reports and are closely monitored as part of the Council's financial management processes.

Risks

Through the Council's Risk Management process, the Covid risk has been monitored every quarter to the Council's Cabinet and Audit and Governance Committee. Below is the latest update taken from Quarter 1 (April to June '21) 2021/22 risk report update. Quarter 2 update to be provided in November.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (1-5)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (1-5)	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?
Covid 19 Pandemic Risk (Corporate Risk)	5	4	Mitigation actions outlined in the report and managed by the Council's Covid Gold Group.	Head of People & Business Change

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Corporate Plan 2017-22
Strategic Recovery Aims

Options Available and considered

1. To consider and note the contents of the report and for Cabinet / Cabinet Members to receive updates from officers as part of their portfolio.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of the report

Preferred Option and Why

1. To consider and note the contents of the report and for Cabinet / Cabinet Members to receive updates from officers as part of their portfolio briefings.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Welsh Government have been supporting local authorities through the pandemic with a Hardship Fund intended to reimburse for all Covid related spend over and above existing budgets and within a set criteria. The fund also includes loss of income compensation; again, within a set criteria. The fund ran for the entire 20/21 financial year and will continue until the end of March 2022, albeit with a reduced scope for the second half of this financial year. In addition, where relevant, Welsh Government have provided specific grant funding to fund particular costs arising. This means that, overall, the financial impact of the pandemic upon the Council has been largely mitigated.

Close monitoring of the financial issues arising, as a result of Covid, will continue throughout the year and will be reported as part of the regular monitoring process. All activities up to November detailed in this report have either been funded via core budgets, specific grants or the Hardship Fund. To date, and in a similar vein to 2020/21, an overall underspend against the revenue budget is being projected. However, the underlying reasons for the underspend are not solely due to the effects of the pandemic and are largely one-off in nature. Also, there are a number of service pressures contained within the position and, therefore, this means that the medium term outlook remains challenging. Because of this, it will be important to identify and quantify any lasting financial impact of the pandemic, particularly in light of the Hardship Fund ending in March 2022. Consideration will need to be given as to whether any of the issues require funding as part of next year's budget and it will also be necessary to continue discussions with Welsh Government regarding the need for financial support for pressures specifically linked to the pandemic.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report, which provides an update on the actions taken to deliver the Council's Covid-19 Response and Strategic Recovery Aims and progress since the previous report. Any legal issues will be picked up at the appropriate time as part of the operational delivery of the individual actions, within service areas. The move the alert level zero and the relaxation of most restrictions have changed the nature of both the TTP contact tracing work and the work of the Environmental Health officers in managing clusters and containing transmission. The TTP team have taken on more of a "warning and informing" role with the reduction in requirements for self-isolation of contact cases and Environmental Health are focussing on closed care setting and support for schools, given the removal of strict social distancing requirements and the opening-up of community contacts. Enforcement staff are also focussing on providing advice and assistance in relation to the individual risk assessments that are now required for businesses and also monitoring compliance with the Covid-passes required for night-clubs and larger events. As the Covid response work is gradually scaling-down, then regulatory staff are able to resume other priority inspection and enforcement work, in accordance with the Covid-recovery aims.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

As part of the Council's New Normal project, we will continue to encourage as many office based staff that are not required to work either on the frontline or in Council buildings to work from home in line with the Welsh Government. We will eventually move towards a hybrid approach for the Council that will provide flexibility for staff and mitigate the number of people in office spaces and this is the subject of a Cabinet Report

Building on what we have learned over the last 18 months, the Council's Human Resource team is developing new approaches to manage staff's wellbeing and delivery of services.

Scrutiny Committees

Not Applicable

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

The areas covered in this report demonstrate the progress being made against the Strategic Recovery Aims which also support the Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22.

In consideration of the sustainable development principle, 5 ways of working:

Long Term – The progress reported against the Strategic Aims support the long term aims of the Council to improve people's lives.

Preventative – The preventative work outlined in the report support the Council's approach to minimising future Covid 19 outbreaks and as necessary provide targeted support to those that need it. Re-establishing services in line with necessary legislation and regulation enables the Council to operate in the new normal.

Integration – The Strategic Recovery Aims have been integrated with the Council's Wellbeing Objectives set in the Corporate Plan as well as Service Plans. Recommendations from the Community Impact Assessment will also shape how the Council can improve the delivery of services across communities.

Involvement – Included in this report are actions to involve Newport's communities to provide assurance and shape the way in which services are being delivered by the Council. Their feedback and involvement in the process will enable the Council to consider how services are delivered in the long term.

Collaboration - The actions in the report are being undertaken in collaboration with partners from the Council's Public Services Board but also strategic partners within each service area. The collaborative work enables the Council to share resources and build expertise and knowledge.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable

Consultation

Not Applicable

Background Papers

Cabinet Report (Strategic Recovery Aims) – July 2020

Corporate Plan 2017-22

Strategic Recovery Aims

[Responding to the 'New Normal' Report to Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee](#)

Dated: 3 November 2021

Appendix 1 – Progress of Delivery against Strategic Recovery Aims (to 1st November 2021)

Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment.

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.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.

Strategic Aim Step	November 2021 Update (By Exception)
Support schools and other educational establishments to safely reopen for staff and pupils.	<p>Pupils eligible for free school meals received supermarket vouchers to cover the October half term holiday. The voucher scheme also continues to be used to support any free school meal eligible pupils who are unable to attend school after testing positive for Covid.</p> <p>Free Breakfast Clubs are operating at 37 of our 47 primary, nursery and special schools, in accordance with local risk assessments undertaken and monitored by the relevant Headteacher.</p> <p>The Council's school meals provider (Chartwell's) has reported some challenges within supply chains and as a result are experiencing difficulties obtaining certain food products and catering equipment. Where this is happening, the team is looking to offer suitable alternatives, but have advised that this may result in menu options being changed to accommodate shortages. Chartwell's have also highlighted difficulties with staff shortages due to sickness and recruitment. These issues continue to be monitored to ensure that the service can operate as close to normal as possible.</p>
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>High levels of pupil absence are still being reported by schools at the start of the new academic year. Education Welfare Officers continue to work closely with schools to analyse individual learner level attendance. This work helps identify learners and families who are referred to the Education Welfare Service for follow up. Home visits are ongoing with a Covid-19 risk assessment in place to support this work. Education Welfare Officers attend school meetings with families and other agencies to offer support with an updated risk assessment in place to support this work.</p> <p>The current Welsh Government Operational Guidance for schools takes the view that punitive measures, including fines, are not be appropriate unless local authorities deem it necessary to pursue a small number of cases relating to persistent absence, which are unrelated to the Covid-19 pandemic; and there are concerns about the welfare of the child; or there have been extensive efforts to try and re-engage with the family by the school and / or the EWS. In such cases local authorities are advised to follow guidance set out in the All Wales Attendance Framework. Newport has not pursued any punitive measures to date.</p> <p>The number of parents notifying the local authority of their intention to home educate their children continues to rise. As of 30th September 2021, 185 children were known to be home educated. The Education Welfare Service has developed the first of a series of newsletters that will be circulated to home educating families on a regular basis. This provides details of how the local authority can support home educating families to provide an education for their children</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment.

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Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.

Strategic Aim Step	November 2021 Update (By Exception)
Support schools to enhance and develop digital skills; digital teaching and learning platforms; and enhanced support for digitally excluded learners.	<p>1,389 EdTech funded Chromebooks are due to be delivered to schools over the next week. These will come direct from the supplier. Delivery of the remaining devices is still anticipated by the end of the Autumn term.</p> <p>The ICT Strategic Group continues to meet on a termly basis. Membership of this group includes Headteachers, local authority officers and SRS officers who monitor implementation of the EdTech programme and delivery of the SRS SLA for schools. A project to migrate school users of @newport.gov.uk emails to Hwb using the @newportschools.wales domain is ongoing.</p>
Support and enable people that are digitally excluded to access community IT programmes, Council services and other public services.	<p>All libraries now open to direct access by the public, without the need to make an appointment. Public IT access is available in 8 of 9 sites.</p> <p>Get Connected Digital Ambassador project launched in partnership with EYST to support community members from an ethnic minority background to develop their digital skills. Ambassadors will be supported to work with their respective communities to support others to do the same.</p> <p>Feedback from minority ethnic staff and community members indicated that getting online using council enabled wifi was overly complex. 7 community locations now have 'one click' wifi enabled.</p>
Support people who have been affected by unemployment to access new opportunities through training and re-employment required for post Covid 19 businesses.	<p>Work & Skills teams continue to work with participants to support them into employment or upskill to enable them to move closer to the labour market.</p> <p>The hospitality and HGV driving sector has an increasing demand for staff and we are working closely with employers and organisations to assist with this demand.</p> <p>The Celtic Manor are running several jobs fairs, supported by NCC Work & Skills team in order to meet recruitment requirements.</p> <p>The Hubs are running engagement events throughout the half term week to increase engagements and referrals to our employment programmes.</p>
Ensure our diverse communities are appropriately supported through tailored interventions specific to their needs, including consideration of language, culture and points of access.	<p>The Digital devices are still being requested for use by families across Newport in order to access services and online meetings for matters relating to their children. This is a shift from previously where the requests were for families and children to attend online parenting courses or online lessons. The expansion of online group conferencing has meant that families need digital devices to participate effectively.</p> <p>Information on the Get Connected Programme has been translated into 10 community languages and delivery will be available in languages other than English.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment.

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.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.

Strategic Aim Step	November 2021 Update (By Exception)

Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 2 – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.	ERF Summer Restrictions Grant supported 296 businesses with a grant of £1,000 - £10,000. £389,000 has been defrayed protecting a reported 334 jobs in the city. City of Newport Business Development Grant launched offering new and expanding businesses up to £10k in funding.
Enable and support the construction industry to re-establish the supply of new and affordable housing.	The affordable housing development programme continues to be delivered in partnership with RSLs operating in Newport. To date over £5 million of Newport's funding award has been drawn down this financial year. The construction industry is reporting issues with supply of materials and increased costs as a result of Brexit and Covid-19.
Enable and support businesses to re-establish normal operations whilst maintaining the health and safety of their workers and customers.	<p>Officers continue to carry out interventions to assess compliance with risk assessment requirements related to Level Zero controls. Officers are now integrating these compliance checks into general working. Each regulatory intervention will now have at least two purposes; the COVID check and the "business as usual" check. Work has been carried out to educate businesses requiring their customers to display a "COVID Pass". Guidance was circulated to all businesses, and this has been backed up with visits and checks. Officers are still dealing with higher-than-normal levels of non-compliance in the "business as usual" work areas.</p> <p>Environmental Health activity is still primarily focussed on delivering the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, however programmed inspections of Food businesses have restarted to endeavour to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan. Additional resources will be made available for this work as soon as resources can be pulled back from Covid. A new Food Safety EHO has been recruited.</p>
Enable and support businesses to prepare for future trade arrangements resulting from Brexit negotiations.	See Brexit Cabinet Report provided. The wider economic, Brexit issues combined with the covid pandemic are impacting businesses to be able to supply goods and services. Businesses are also experiencing increases in the costs in producing and selling goods, materials food and energy. These impacts are being realised across the Council in delivery of services and key projects.

Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 2 – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>Whilst the Central Payments Team has been working remotely since the end of March 2020, we have maintained all payment functions and continue to meet our performance indicator of paying at least 90% of undisputed invoices within 30 days. Where local or other key suppliers have requested, we have sought to pay invoices as quick as possible, to ensure at risk businesses receive their payments without delay.</p> <p>We have worked within the scope of Welsh Government Procurement Policy to ensure at risk suppliers are also financially supported, where they can demonstrate that they need government funded support in order to continue trading, both in the short and medium term. The idea being that we need our key suppliers who are at risk to be financially sustainable, so they are still trading when full contractual obligations return post COVID.</p> <p>Our revised Contract Standing Orders also allow for local suppliers to be selected to bid for lower value contracts, without competition from suppliers further afield. This ensures the Newport pound stays either in Newport, or as close to home as possible, supporting our local supply chains.</p>
Protect and improve the environment, including air quality and decarbonisation of the city for its residents, businesses and visitors.	<p>Action Planning associated with the Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy will feed into the forthcoming updated Air Quality Action Plan for NCC in respect of the 11 AQMAs we have. The two documents will work in tandem with subtly different emphasis. Plans to revoke some AQMAs are ongoing.</p> <p>RE:Fit building retrofit provider appointed, site surveys underway and works to commence before March 2022. Following a successful application, NCC have been awarded £400k from WG for heat pump installations in 21/22.</p> <p>Local Area Energy Planning energy system modelling complete and a workshop took place to share the outputs with wider stakeholders. A consultation draft of the Council's Organisational Climate Change Plan is now complete. Public consultation due to start in early November.</p> <p>As Development Control consultees, Air Quality mitigation requests currently include EV infrastructure, anti-idling schemes, low carbon boilers and ASHP, s.106 contributions towards updating/maintaining air quality monitoring infrastructure. These are being sought for all new development that needs to contribute towards reducing emissions. ECO Stars scheme is in follow up phase and metrics on fuel/emissions saved are being sought from members of scheme. Gwent PSB may provide opportunities to facilitate fresh sign ups in future.</p> <p>Trading Standards has been awarded a grant to seek to improve the energy efficiency of housing showing poor and unlawful energy performance. A programme has been commenced to ensure landlords improve the energy performance of 330 homes. Also, nearly 3000 homes do not have an assessment at all; Trading Standards will endeavour to improve this situation.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 2 – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
	Funding secured from the Rural Development Fund to deliver carbon literacy training to organisations and residents in Newport wards that fall within the rural development area. The project includes a “train the trainer” element which will support wider roll out of carbon literacy training across the city as a legacy of the initial project.
Continuing support and safe delivery of the Council's City services including waste, cleansing and highways.	Driver shortages are having an impact on waste collecting services, with minor disruptions to recycling collections to date, support measures have been put in place but there is potential for this issue to become more significant if the driver situation worsens.

Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
Support people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.	Domiciliary care has experienced a period of significant disruption. The joint impacts of Covid, Brexit and the beginnings of the usual winter pressures have led to major challenges in all areas in providing full care packages. This has led to some packages of care being reduced and some citizens having to wait for care. This has then impacted on family and friends who provide care with greater demands. While the difficulties have begun to ease in the past two weeks this is certainly going to be an area of continued challenge. Social workers are continuing to prioritise requests for care. Work is being undertaken locally, regionally and nationally to try to address the workforce shortages which underpin this current crisis in our ability to meet demand.
Fully restore Children and Adult Services, supporting partners that have been impacted by Covid 19 and ensuring service users and staff are supported and protected.	We continue to work with citizens and providers to build confidence and reinstate services as circumstances change. The relatively small number who have not returned are being reviewed and options discussed. All services are being negatively impacted by staffing challenges but staff continue to work to prioritise services and consider how to best deliver given these issues.
Assess the impact and the long-term sustainability of the social care sector in Newport informing future service requirements.	Across Adults and Children's Services further information has now been received about grant funding to aid covid recovery. While the funding is welcome it is in year funding and the issues of sustainability for services continues to exercise staff. Regional and National discussions are ongoing to look at increased demand and sustainable funding for the future.

Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
	Demand for all services is at higher than normal levels and the biggest risk to sustainable provision is currently around staffing. Demand is continuing to rise and currently there is little sign of a reduction in the demand for services.
Safeguard and support children and young people to remain safely with their families.	Services are fully operational across Children's Services. The demand for service is exceptionally high. Staff are supporting an increased number of families. Some teams have seen an increase of over 20% in demand for services. It is extremely difficult to meet this sort of demand in the existing framework of services and with the current issues in staff recruitment and retention
Improve opportunities for Active Travel and work towards improved air quality.	<p>Accessible Active Travel bridge project has moved into the Phase 2 Construction. Works have begun on site with the closure of the subway and confirmation of the Right of Way extinguishment. Footings are being dug ready for piling works beginning at end of September and into October. Taxi rank will be temporarily moved to the west of the main entrance by October. Works to crown reduce the trees will take place and precede the erection of a large crane in the taxi rank area ready for the Christmas lift. Spans are currently in fabrication at the base of ProSteel of Pontypool and the main spans on schedule to be lifted into place at Christmas 2021. All other Active Travel schemes are progressing with design and development including the canal towpath works and the city centre cycling scheme. Additional works on Gaer fort route are underway with lighting installation both there and at the old Tredegar golf course site.</p> <p>Action Planning associated with the Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy will feed into the forthcoming updated Air Quality Action Plan for NCC in respect of the 11 AQMAs we have. The two documents will work in tandem with subtly different emphasis. Plans to revoke some AQMAs are ongoing.</p> <p>Work with Air Inequalities and Healthy Open Spaces projects has allowed engagement with communities and vulnerable groups. Engagement will lead to community involvement in projects such as anti-idling schemes and local air quality monitoring at schools e.g. Charles Williams Primary, Caerleon. Introduction of real time monitors where resources allow will provide air quality intelligence that will assist in developing interventions.</p>
Regulate businesses and support consumers / residents to protect and improve their health.	<p>Environmental Health activity is still primarily focussed on delivering the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and this includes providing advice and support to citizens who have contracted Covid-19 and are still required to self-isolate i.e. the 'Protect' element of 'Test, Trace Protect'. The support also ensures that citizens are aware of the financial support to self-isolate which they may be eligible to claim.</p> <p>Officers continue to carry out interventions to assess compliance with risk assessment requirements related to Level Zero controls. Officers are now integrating these compliance checks into general working. Each regulatory intervention will now have at least two purposes; the COVID check and the "business as usual" check. Work has been carried out to educate businesses requiring their customers to display a "COVID Pass". Guidance was circulated to all businesses, and this has been backed up with visits and checks. Officers are still dealing with higher-than-normal levels of non-compliance in the "business as usual" work areas.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens

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Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>The move to Level 0 has seen the removal of most business controls. There remains a requirement for each business to have in place a risk assessment to control the spread of coronavirus. Officers have analysed the compliance performance of each business and identified over 350 who had shown poor practices during the higher-level restrictions. These businesses have been targeted and a programme of engagement has been put in place to deliver the risk assessment requirement message. By the end of September this programme will have ended, and the service will move to a complaint/response model rather than proactive engagement.</p> <p>Trading Standards and Licensing are engaged enforcement programmes that will result in health improvement and protection.</p> <p>Food Standards Surveillance has been active since July 2021. The focus of the inspection effort is on the catering and hospitality sector and audits of 'allergen safe systems of work'. It is notable that whilst businesses were not subject to inspection during lockdowns, standards have slipped. Officers are reporting that higher numbers of businesses are showing poor and dangerous practices. Five food businesses are currently under investigation in this threat area.</p> <p>Trading Standards has been continuing enforcement in the illegal tobacco trade. Rogue businesses are targeted. ASB Closure Notices are being issued; seizures of tens of thousands of cigarettes are being completed; and prosecutions/investigations are being carried out.</p> <p>Trading Standards has carried out under-age-sales test purchase work. Higher non-compliance has been identified. Further advice and enforcement work is planned.</p>
Work with key partners to safely re-open cultural and leisure facilities including the promotion of the city's parks, open spaces and coastal paths.	<p>All leisure facilities that have not been redeployed as either vaccination or testing centres, have been reopened to the public. The exception remains the Newport Centre pool which requires significant building works to be undertaken.</p> <p>All public rights of way that were closed during covid are now fully open as are all countryside sites, parks and buildings. Volunteer groups have started back up on countryside sites and rights of way. New field sports season underway and all sites are now receiving plenty of bookings and usage. Where approved by risk assessments the changing room facilities have been allowed to reopen.</p> <p>Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery have now reopened on a drop-in basis. Numbers are slowly returning to normal but remain well below pre-pandemic levels. Enhanced cleaning procedures are in place.</p>
Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.	<p>With the relaxation of restrictions as confirmed by Welsh Government in early August, the Council is reviewing the Civic Centre risk assessment to reflect any possible adaptations, whilst being mindful that as an employer we are accountable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and will continue to be required to protect the workforce from any infectious disease transmission wherever possible. The removal of the legislative requirement for social distancing does not remove our obligation to seek to prevent transmission of infectious disease and our mitigation measures may alter as a</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
	result. In the meantime the Council continues to advise staff to work from home wherever possible, which remains in line with Welsh Government guidance. Separate Cabinet Report is being presented on the new ways of working options in November.

Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19

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.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our most vulnerable people as a priority.	<p>WG hardship funding is continuing to be used to support the additional pressures on temporary accommodation which have increased due to the pandemic. The authority continues to follow WG guidance to provide temporary accommodation to all homeless persons. We are working in partnership with RSLs to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation. Additional funding has been provided by WG to prevent homelessness for those living in the private rented sector who have rent arrears because of the pandemic.</p> <p>The DFG team are dealing with a backlog of applications which amassed during previous lockdowns when only urgent cases were permitted. Materials cost increases have resulted in average grant costs significantly increasing with longer contractor/material lead time. This has been evident since Covid-19 and Brexit.</p>
Assess and address the inequalities that Covid 19 has highlighted or contributed to within our communities.	<p>Inequalities highlighted by COVID-19 are included in the focus of work ongoing to embed the Socio-economic Duty in council decision-making processes. This will ensure longer term planning and policy aims to reduce inequalities that have arisen as a result of both socio-economic disadvantage and for minority/marginalised communities and encourage more effective engagement with those groups who are affected by council decisions. The council is currently refreshing its Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment to better understand enduring or emerging inequalities since its development. This will inform the allocation of funding made available in our second Participatory Budgeting programme.</p> <p>The council has now published a new Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment template and accompanying guidance which has a greater focus on effective engagement with groups more likely to experience inequalities of outcome as a result of council decisions. Training has been made available to all staff.</p> <p>A community steering group has now been established to deliver Participatory Budgeting Programme 2 which will see around £500k distributed to grassroots and voluntary sector groups across the city. Funding priorities will be informed by</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19

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Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities

Strategic Aim Step	November'21 Update (By Exception)
	the refreshed Community Impact Assessment which will highlight those communities that continue to experience disadvantage as a result of the pandemic. PB training has been undertaken by steering group members and the first decision-making sessions commence in October.
Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.	<p>The Policy, Partnership and Involvement team will be conducting a survey with the Citizens Panel and the wider public through the bus wifi on the impacts of the second lockdown measures, the Council's (including partners) response and communication with Newport's communities. An NRPF group established during the height of the pandemic to respond to people experiencing hardship who may not have access to public funds has continued to meet as a refreshed 'Hardship Solutions Group', responding in the main to families and individuals affected by changes to immigration rules.</p> <p>The council is working in partnership with GAVO to ensure best use of the latest tranche of food poverty funding received from the WLGA. This will the creation of a Food Sustainability Co-ordinator post who will work with established food networks and services across the city to manage a capital grant scheme and take a more strategic approach to addressing the root causes of food insecurity.</p>
Developing opportunities for people to access suitable and affordable housing.	The Social Housing Grant programme is funding the development of over 500 new affordable housing units with several schemes due to complete early in the New Year.
Deliver a community cohesion programme that effectively responds to community tensions and creates a shared sense of identity across the city.	<p>Welsh Government have confirmed funding for continuation of community cohesion work until 31st March 2022. The council's minority ethnic e-bulletin continues to update grassroot community groups on developments that affect them and a number of small grant schemes will be promoted during the autumn, focussed on encouraging community cohesion and supporting EU communities in particular.</p> <p>Community tensions continue to be monitored via partnership meetings with local authority colleagues from across Gwent and Gwent Police. The Connected Communities Team have increased the levels of internal and external communications focussed on cohesion and diversity, this period delivering events and awareness raising activities in relation to Black History Month and Hate Crime Awareness Week. Around 90 council staff undertook hate crime training delivered by Victim Support.</p> <p>Work continues to focus on supporting migrant communities who have been disproportionately affected by both the impacts of Covid 19 and Brexit. The council co-ordinates a regular EU citizens partnership forum and is well connected with grassroots communities in order to respond to emerging concerns (e.g. levels of anti-vaccination sentiment).</p>

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	<p>The council are developing a Welcome to Newport App in partnership with Cardiff University which will offer newcomers to the city a resource which supports integration, connects them to their local community and complements the Welsh Government's Sanctuary website.</p> <p>The council is supporting work towards Newport becoming a City of Sanctuary, focussing on improving integration and outcomes for migrant communities across key areas including health, employment and access to public services.</p>
Prevent and address instances of antisocial behaviour (ASB) impacting upon the residents and the business community of Newport.	<p>The response to addressing ASB is continuing to work dynamically, utilising a strong partnership approach through the twice monthly Problem Solving Group and CaSAMs. These are led, chaired and facilitated by the ASB Liaison Officers in Law & Regulation. It has been noted that there is possible link of the perception of ASB in the community and the increasing numbers of rough sleepers in the city.</p> <p>The Community Safety Warden Service will continue to respond to incidents of ASB as it has throughout the pandemic. Following a severe shortage of staff recently due to various factors, the Service returned to operating until 10pm each night from 13/9/21 and reductions of service provision due to Covid-19 hazards have been ended.</p> <p>ASB powers are being utilised to close businesses causing nuisance and ASB via their sale of illegal tobacco. Such businesses are operated by OCGs and have guards on their door to alert sellers of the presence of enforcement officers.</p> <p>Licensing and Trading Standards are working to reduce alcohol related ASB. Under-age-sales enforcement work has restarted. Following the 3 operations where 46 visits were undertaken and 17% of businesses sold products to a child; a formal test purchase programme has taken place. All but two businesses followed the correct procedures and refused to sell. The businesses that failed the test will now be investigated. Licensing Officers are active in improving the practices of businesses that facilitate drunken misbehaviour in communities and the city centre.</p> <p>Newport Live – Positive Futures, Alternative Education, and Families First Health & Wellbeing programmes continue to work with referred children, young people and families around improving education, attainment, wellbeing, and community safety/risk of criminality using sport as an engagement tool. Youth engagement and diversionary work with community safety partners continues in identified hotspot areas (e.g. Pill, Maesglas, Ringland, Always, Duffryn, etc.)</p>
Re-establish Community Regeneration facilities and services where it is safe to do so for staff and its service users.	Restart plans have been approved, with a triage process being well received. Home visits are an exception, with criteria developed to ensure consistency across all FS areas (e.g. language and play, parenting and ALN).

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	<p>Arrangements are in place for October half term playscheme delivery, including sessional play across all hubs, CIW registered sites in Pill and Bettws, plus complex provision in Llanwern. We are working with Newport Live to support the provision.</p> <p>Additional funding has been awarded through the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) for early help and support to increase the number of children, young people and families who can receive support and reduce waiting lists which have developed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.</p>
Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.	<p>A budget allocation for £500k over 2 years has been made for a Covid Recovery Fund to support grass roots groups and projects. A participatory budgeting approach will be adopted to help build social capital, deliver social value and bottom-up recovery. An updated Community Impact Assessment will inform the programme and a high degree of community involvement in planning and delivery will be a key feature.</p> <p>Applications will open in November with arrangements underway to set up the steering group for voting events in January. This has also been distributed to partners.</p>