

# Finance Services






## Mid-Year Review 2021/22



**Leader of Newport City Council – Councillor Jane Mudd**  
**Director of Corporate and Transformation – Rhys Cornwall**  
**Head of Service – Meirion Rushworth**

# Introduction

This is the Finance Services update on the progress being made against the objectives, actions, performance and risk for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Service plans have been designed to support the delivery of the [Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22](#). As one of the 44 public bodies, Newport Council must consider the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the delivery of its plans and the sustainable development principle of meeting our duty under the Act.

Long term		The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
Prevention		How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse, may help public bodies meet their objectives.
Integration		Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
Collaboration		Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
Involvement		The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area, which the body serves.

The Finance Services service plan focuses on the delivery of the following Wellbeing Objective(s) in the Corporate Plan:

- **Well-being Objective 2** – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment
- **Strategic Recovery Aim 2** – Understand and respond to the impact of Covid-19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again

The 2021/22 Service Plan has ten objectives that are focused on:

**Objective 1** – Internal Audit to provide assurance on the adequacy of the Council's systems of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control to ensure the proper use of public funds and to minimise fraud and corruption within the Authority.

**Objective 2** – The Income Collection team will increase the options available for customers to transact digitally.

- Objective 3** – We will support the organisation by developing good financial management practices including:
1. Robust medium term financial projections to ensure key priorities have funding and the organisation understands its financial challenge.  
We will support the delivery of efficiency and change plans.
  2. Enabling robust financial management by budget managers through effective systems, processes and business partnering.
- Objective 4** – To achieve earlier closedown of accounts and as minimum, meet statutory deadlines and requirements
- Objective 5** - Implement and embed the revised operating model for strategic procurement. Seek improvements in full P2P cycle process.
- Objective 6** - Embed principles of Fair and Local Procurement and Ethical Supply Chains into Procurement Gateway Process
- Objective 7** - In collaboration with Her Majesty Revenues and Customs (HMRC), identify financially vulnerable households and signpost them to specialist partners to provide support, financial advice and guidance.
- Objective 8** - Administer and deliver post Covid-19 Debt Recovery Protocols and various Welsh Government Covid-19 related schemes including Eligible Business Rate Covid-19 Grants; and Business Rate retail, Leisure and Hospitality Relief Scheme.
- Objective 9** – Upgrade and replace the existing financial systems to a fully supported and integrated Cloud based system including the exploration for replacing the existing Revenues IT (Council Tax, NDR and benefits) systems with Cloud based infrastructure
- Objective 10** - Implement - New Breathing Space Legislation

## Cabinet Member(s) / Head of Service Executive Summary

The document here shows the current position on some of the services' key objectives as well as performance.

The service continues to perform well and work flexibly and mainly 'from home' in line with WG/Council guidance. Sickness levels are low and service managers have put in place appropriate arrangements to keep in touch with teams and enable face to face meetings and catch-up's. The importance of both these informal and formal 1-1 meetings is being made to all line managers. We are still in a potentially difficult period and managing the 'well-being' of staff colleagues remains an important priority. This has an immediate and longer term positive impact on performance. As expected, the current arrangements pose some real challenges still in the work of the service in some respects and the teams continue to work hard to mitigate those as best they can.

We are making reasonable-good progress across most of the key 10 objectives we set ourselves. In only two of these areas we are experiencing more difficult challenges and not making progress as planned. These are:

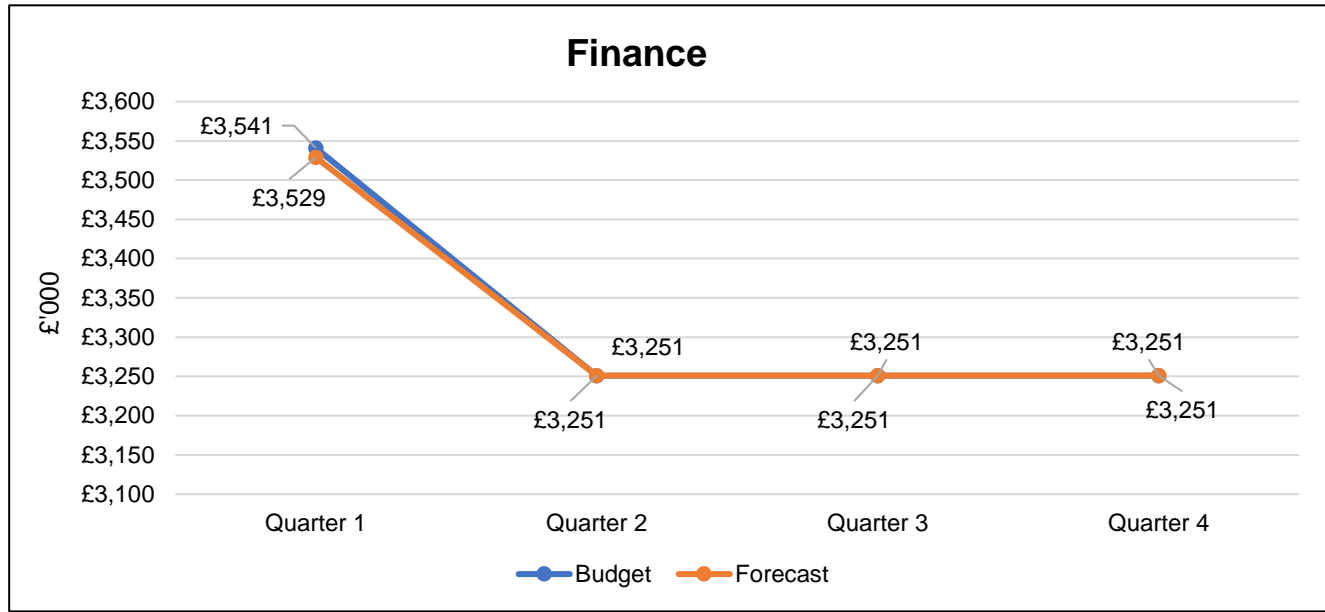
- Implementing a digital transactions capacity for our Council Tax and Business Rates payers. Whilst the C Tax / Business Rates system is enabled for customer direct access for various functions, there are on-going IT technical issues in integrating this to the Council customer services system. This is an important requirement as this is the common 'front-door' for customers accessing Council services. Work continues to resolve and involves both our SRS partners and the system supplier, Civica.
- Implementing a new operating model and processes for strategic procurement, specifically around utilising electronic forms within 'my council' intranet to manage the internal work-flows. Despite best efforts, the solution does not work well enough to use and roll-out and we are proposing that this is stopped. We will explore other potential solutions but work on that has not progressed yet.

Some issues on individual actions exist on a number of objectives as the detail shows and this is always to be expected. Notwithstanding this, the objectives there are progressing.

Performance is good with nearly all areas on target at least. Not unexpectedly, we are still facing some challenges in the collection of Council Tax / Business Rates, as a result of the Covid pandemic. In saying that, the overall collection of Council Tax is forecasted to meet the budget target. The revenues team continue to support residents to catch up on arrears coming out of last year in particular and progress is being made in this respect. When needed, residents are being signposted towards assistance where needed, including the availability of Council Tax Reduction Scheme where applicable.

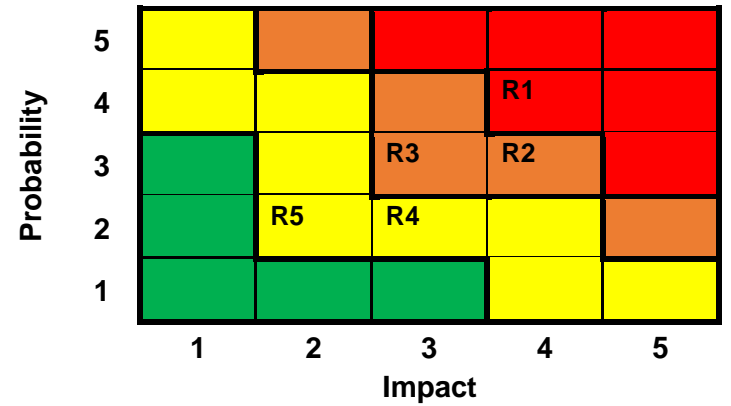
The service is forecasting to operate within budget for 2021/22 and will be requesting that the small underspend is utilised for the resourcing of the project implementation costs for the new finance system which will 'ramp up' in 2022/23.

# Finance – Mid Year Forecast Vs 2021/22 Budget



This provides an overview of the Finance forecasted position to the end of quarter 2 (April to September 2021).

## Finance Risks at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021



Finance Risk Heat Map Key (Quarter 2 2021/22)	
R1 – Balancing Medium Term Finance	R4 – In Year Financial Management
R2 – Post Covid 19 income reduction	R5 – ICT Self Service within C/Tax and NNDR
R3 – ICT – Key systems (Oracle / C Tax / NNDR)	

# Glossary

## Actions (Red / Amber / Green)

C	Green RAG – Completed
%	Green RAG – Action is on course to be completed within timescale
%	Amber RAG – There are potential issues which unless addressed the action might not be achieved within agreed timescales.
%	Red RAG – The action requires immediate action to achieve delivery within agreed timescales.
?	Unknown RAG (Data missing)

## Programmes and Projects

This provides an update on the delivery of key programmes and projects that contribute towards the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2017-22. This covers the progress of delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Programme / Project Title	Brief Programme / Project Overview	Anticipated Programme / Project Completion Date	% of Project Completed	Commentary
Digital Transactions for Council Tax payers	To provide the means for customers to carry out routine transactions digitally. To enable citizens to access their council tax records and carry out routine transactions digitally which will improve efficiency, reduce costs and reduce unnecessary contact. It will also allow the Revenues Team to focus more on recovery of debts and not deal with low level transactional matters.	Quarter 1 2021/22	60%	Work is continuing with the Digital services Team to fully integrate the council tax digital services with the council web service.
Council Tax & HMRC arrears project.	This is a pilot and HMRC data will be used to enable the Council to improve council tax collection and reduce significantly the cases that are sent to bailiffs each year.  We will identify those households that are in Council Tax arrears and look to	Quarter 4 2021/22	C	The timetable for this project is set by the Cabinet Office and was delayed by around 18 months due to covid.  The data for the project was submitted to the Cabinet Office in September in line with the revised timetable, it is anticipated that matched

Programme / Project Title	Brief Programme / Project Overview	Anticipated Programme / Project Completion Date	% of Project Completed	Commentary
	<p>signpost them to specialist support which will provide advice, guidance, and measures to help them reduce their Council Tax arrears and other household's debts. This will enable vulnerable households to better manage their finances and provide long term resilience and provide wellbeing and economic opportunities.</p>			<p>data will be returned from around the beginning of November 2021.</p>
<p>Upgrade to a new financial system</p>	<p>The current financial system is on an unstable platform and consists of a number of different modular systems that feed into the ledger. It is important that a move is made to a more stable platform, preferably in the Cloud, and have a more integrated financial system.</p> <p>This should allow employees to access the systems on a remote basis more readily therefore supporting the Modernised Council and Strategic Recovery Aims linked into a healthier and more productive workforce.</p>	<p>Quarter 3 2021/22</p>	<p><b>25%</b></p>	<p>The PQQ process was completed earlier in 2021 and the LA is close to completing the tender process, with demonstration days having been undertaken with the four preferred suppliers over recent weeks. The tender evaluation is expected to be completed within the next two weeks, at which point the Council will start to plan the implementation phase. The project implementation team is almost in place. The main risk, at this point, is the commercial and affordability element, which is yet to be evaluated.</p>

# Workforce Planning

To support the delivery of the Service Plan and Corporate Plan objectives, service areas in collaboration with the Council's Human Resources team have identified three key actions to improve the capacity and capability of its workforce in 2021/22

Action	Outcome(s) of Action	Action Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% of Action completed	Commentary
Review and identify key areas of transactional processes within the Finance teams which could be automated.	Improve the efficiency of transactional processes and reduce resources.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	35%	This is currently focussed on the revenues teams and linked to the implementation of self-service capacity / digital transactions which was due originally for completion in 2021/22.
Introduce succession planning practices and strengthen resilience in teams.	Develop and promote career progression and resilience across Finance teams, specifically Accountancy, Income & Collection.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	10%	Revised structure and responsibilities in the revenues team currently in progress. Some compromise required due to resources but revenues manager now implementing revised JD's via JE Panel and then commencing staff consultation.



## Objectives and Action Update (30<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

This is an update on the progress against service objectives and actions to the end of quarter 2 (30<sup>th</sup> September 2021).

<b>Objective 1 – Internal Audit to provide assurance on the adequacy of the Council's systems of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control to ensure the proper use of public funds and to minimise fraud and corruption within the Authority.</b>						
<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action Description</b>	<b>Action Outcome(s)</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Anticipated Completion Date</b>	<b>% Action Completed</b>	<b>Action Commentary</b>
1	Undertake audit work in line with the agreed Internal Audit Plan 2021/22.	As a result of Covid 19 we will work with Heads of Service to prioritise audit workload in order to provide appropriate assurance in key areas. IA will make greater use of Control Risk Self Assessments; will work with service managers to gain folder access to their specific systems to work remotely where possible and practical; will work with the Council's Intelligence Hub to develop data analytics to strengthen counter fraud work; will use assurance from third parties where possible. IA will maximise the level of assurance provided by prioritising key controls within each audit job and look to increase the number of jobs undertaken across the service areas. As always IA will maintain a reserve list of audit jobs to replace any jobs which may not be possible to undertake due to Covid – 19 restrictions. Sufficient audit work is undertaken to provide appropriate assurance on the effectiveness of governance,	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	30%	At the end of Q2 the team have achieved 30% of the agreed audit plan in line with the target of 30%. Work is progressing although we now have reduced resources within the team.

**Objective 1 – Internal Audit to provide assurance on the adequacy of the Council's systems of Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control to ensure the proper use of public funds and to minimise fraud and corruption within the Authority.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
		risk management and internal control.  Maximise audit work and related assurance in context of on-going working patterns restrictions due to Covid				
2	Review and report on how many of the agreed management actions (from previously completed audits) have been implemented within service areas to improve service delivery, controls and governance in 2021/22.	Service areas are implementing agreed management actions within the timescales agreed to improve service delivery, controls and governance. Where actions are not completed these are escalated accordingly.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	30%	Work is ongoing in relation to the verification that agreed management actions have been implemented and will continue into Q3. When all previous years' audit work has been finalised a report will be prepared with more accurate data.
3	Submit data returns to NFI for data matching. Co-ordination of the review of returned data matches from NFI. Respond and then investigate allegations of fraud / corruption.	Liaise with other organisations where appropriate. Identification of Fraud and appropriate action taken. Report results of exercise to Head of Finance, CMT and Audit Committee	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	90%	The majority of data matches have been checked and a memo drafted which is currently within the IA management review process.
4	Include the training on the corporate training programme  Provide a link on NCC intranet to digital training package	Raise awareness of the Council's Anti-fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy. Members and Officers are aware of their role and responsibilities to report any incidents where fraud and corruption occur in the Council.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	0%	No further updates this quarter. Other audit work is taking priority.

**Objective 2 - The Income Collection team will increase the options available for customers to transact digitally.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Project plan and delivery of the project.	We will have delivered a system that will enable residents and businesses to transact digitally and to have a self-service functionality.  The outcomes of this work will improve the efficiency revenue transactions and provide greater options for users to monitor and pay their bills.	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2019	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	90%	The project plan is in place and all actions identified, it has not yet been delivered and some technical issues remain to be overcome.
2	The facility to transact digitally has been installed and tested and is working. The next step involves imbedding the facility into the Newport City Council website as part of 'my council services' to offer a seamless experience for the customer.	Integration of self-service system functionality into the Council's web service software partner into the main council website	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	75%	The functionality of the digital portal has been successfully tested, however there remain some technical issues related to embedding the portal in the existing 'my council services'. These issues have been referred to the software provider who are working to resolve them.
3	Publicity campaign to inform residents of online services and encourage uptake.  Following an initial soft launch of the online services a coordinated campaign will be run. This will include promotion on social media, council website and flyers included with council tax correspondence such as bills etc.	Raise awareness of the online services and encourage/maximise residents to transact digitally for routine council tax transactions.	01 April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	0%	A promotion exercise will be undertaken when the digital services are ready and available for the public to use.
4	Review of working practices and staffing requirements around routine transactions	Maximise the impact of self-service capability on effectiveness and efficiency of revenues team	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	N/A	This will follow once the digital services are up and running and there has been time to assess the impact.

**Objective 2 - The Income Collection team will increase the options available for customers to transact digitally.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
						We will be able to assess a completion date once we finalise completion of the digital services.
5	Further expansion of online self-service provision	Maximise potential and impact of self-service to both tax payers and revenues team.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	N/A	<p>This cannot be started until the basic digital services are available for the public to use.</p> <p>We will be able to assess a completion date once we finalise completion of the digital services.</p>

**Objective 3 – We will support the organisation by developing good financial management practices including:**  
**i. Robust medium term financial projections to ensure key priorities have funding and the organisation understands its financial challenge. We will support the delivery of efficiency and change plans.**  
**ii. Enabling robust financial management by budget managers through effective systems, processes and business partnering.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Review the centralised accountancy assistant's team structure to allow for greater exposure to Finance Business Partners for development and succession planning and improve resilience and processes.  Implement any conclusions from review	Review accountancy structure to allow for development and succession planning	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	10%	Whilst discussions have continued regarding the way forward in terms of the Accountancy Assistants, no clear plan has yet been confirmed. This is because the focus has been upon recruiting to vacant posts. In addition, there is a need to await a decision regarding the new system and evaluate the opportunities that this presents in relation to the work of the Accountancy Assistants and, therefore, the structure going forward.
2	Continued improvement of transactional processes undertaken by the Centralised Accountancy Team.	Further standardised and automated processes by the centralised accountancy team including linking the manpower with the new HR system.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	15%	Due to resource challenges within the team, the scope to review and improve processes has been limited. However, emphasis has been made on ensuring that the current process is being followed as intended. Any scope to improve processes will most likely be linked to the new financial system.
3	Bring schools finance systems in line with the Council finance systems including BMS.	This will allow for more efficient working practices and avoid duplication of work carried out by schools business managers and accountancy's schools finance team.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	95%	All schools have now moved over to using the Council's Budget Management System.
4	Upgrade the financial system which includes the integration of other systems, including the main ledger, procurement, debtors and asset register.	- A financial system on a more sustainable platform, preferably on the Cloud - Greater efficiency of working practices due to less down time and speed of processing	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	25%	The PQQ process was completed earlier in 2021 and the LA is close to completing the tender process, with demonstration days having been undertaken with the four preferred suppliers over recent weeks. The tender evaluation is expected to be completed within the next two weeks, at which point the Council will start to plan the

**Objective 3 – We will support the organisation by developing good financial management practices including:**  
**i. Robust medium term financial projections to ensure key priorities have funding and the organisation understands its financial challenge. We will support the delivery of efficiency and change plans.**  
**ii. Enabling robust financial management by budget managers through effective systems, processes and business partnering.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Far greater level of support and business continuity</li> <li>- Ability to access systems on multiple platforms such as mobile phones and tablets i.e. to authorise orders on the go.</li> </ul>				implementation phase. The project implementation team is almost in place. The main risk, at this point, is the commercial and affordability element, which is yet to be evaluated.

**Objective 4 - To achieve earlier closedown of accounts and as minimum, meet statutory deadlines and requirements**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Update of closing timetable to reflect the critical deadlines to be achieved in 2021/22	Clear timetable and deadlines to follow to achieve earlier closedown. Allow time for quality assurance to take place at the draft stage.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	<b>C</b>	An updated closing timetable was implemented, although it proved challenging to adhere, for various reasons, some of which were beyond the control of the team. Quality assurance took place, although this was later than planned.
2	Work with Audit Wales to agree which tasks can be undertaken and audited earlier in the year.	Early assessment of notes by Audit Wales will save time on auditing the draft Statement of Accounts during the main audit period and reduce number of amendments required between draft and final accounts.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019	30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2021	<b>C</b>	Work has been undertaken with Audit Wales to agree areas of the accounts that can be reviewed and tested prior to the year-end or at an early point during the audit. Therefore, this objective has been completed, however there remain challenges in terms of Audit Wales adhering to this agreement, which has led to delays in the 2020/21 external audit process.
3	Attend CMT to get buy-in from service areas for earlier deadlines and emphasise importance of robust	Heads of Service communicate to service managers the importance of	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	<b>C</b>	Year end in terms of CMT/services involvement predominantly completed. Audit now in progress which may highlight

Objective 4 - To achieve earlier closedown of accounts and as minimum, meet statutory deadlines and requirements						
Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
	closedown processes within service areas.	meeting closedown deadlines. More robust closedown processes by service areas leading to less audit queries and amendments				issues we need service help on but completed in the main.
4	Ongoing challenge of existing processes and timetables. Requires 'buy-in' from senior management and service areas. Timetable updated with processes completed in shorter timescales with some year-end tasks being completed in year.	Enable Service areas and senior management to become more efficient and effective in their monthly forecasting. This will also enable the Finance teams to provide more specialist support, advice and guidance to the high risk areas of the Council throughout the year.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021	90%	There remains a risk that other factors will impact upon the Council's ability to meet the earlier closing deadline (31 <sup>st</sup> May). In addition, there remains concern regarding Audit Wales' ability to meet their earlier audit deadline, which could impact upon the final sign off of the Statement of Accounts.

Objective 5 - Implement and embed the revised operating model for strategic procurement. Seek improvements in full P2P cycle process.						
Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	To develop and embed new electronic Gateway Forms into procurement process for greater self-service and automation	Easier, more automated Gateway Process	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	20%	As at the end of September 2021, one form has been developed, and the process of using this form through the 'My Council Services' portal has been tested. The result of this testing is that it is felt this way of trying to adopt a fully electronic method of writing and approving Procurement Gateway documentation is not appropriate and would create a more challenging and elongated process that would not be in the interests of the Council. This alternative way of managing forms feels clunky and

**Objective 5 - Implement and embed the revised operating model for strategic procurement. Seek improvements in full P2P cycle process.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
						restrictive and would not be the right way forward. It is therefore proposed to 'park' the current task, and review in the new year once the new Finance System is being integrated within the Council and explore the option of using the new finance system to streamline the Gateway process and the relevant forms.

**Objective 6 – Embed principles of Fair and Local Procurement and Ethical Supply Chains into Procurement Gateway Process**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	To adopt the Welsh TOM's (themes, opportunities, measurements) around Social Value into procurement processes	The Welsh TOM's will be embedded into NCC procurement process as part of NCC's overall Social Value Agenda	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	50%	To date, a presentation of the TOM's framework has been presented to the Leader, Cabinet Member as well as the CEO and CMT. This presentation details the working of the TOM's framework, and how we could progress the adoption of TOM's in Newport City Council. The next steps are to explore how NCC could use the framework to support procurement and the wider Council in the delivery of Social Value. To this end, a workshop is scheduled for the 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2021 to look at our options, and decide if we should contract with a private sector partner (Social Value Portal) to help NCC embed TOM's within our organisation.
2	To monitor any new Procurement Policy Notes (PPN's) in relation to Supplier Support for 'at risk' suppliers	At risk suppliers are financially supported in line with Government advice	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2021	90%	This action is to monitor any Procurement Policy Notes adopted by Welsh Government that apply to Local Authorities in Wales, specifically in relation to offering financial support to at risk businesses. In this regard, there have been no updates.



**Objective 6 – Embed principles of Fair and Local Procurement and Ethical Supply Chains into Procurement Gateway Process**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
						<p>However, it is worth noting that since April there have been 2 PPN's issued, the first was not applicable to local authorities, but other contracting authorities instead, and the second which has recently been published is being considered, and detailed in brief below;</p> <p>WPPN 06/21 adopts the UK Procurement Policy Note 06/21, providing further information specifically to Welsh public sector contracting authorities to help them meet the 2030 target for a net zero public sector in Wales. This comes into effect from 1st April 2022. In line with the adoption of the UKG PPN 06/21, from 30 September 2021, WPS contracting authorities should make the inclusion of a <u>carbon reduction plan</u> (CRP) a requirement at the selection stage of the procurement of public contracts valued at £5 million or more. By introducing this new selection criteria as part of assessing a supplier's technical and professional ability contracting authorities can assure a bidders commitment to contributing to a net zero public sector in Wales by 2030 and net zero UK by 2050. This will also support NCC's current commitment to detail our own Carbon Reduction Plans currently being developed across the organisation.</p>

**Objective 7 - In collaboration with Her Majesty Revenues and Customs (HMRC), identify financially vulnerable households and signpost them to specialist partners to provide support, financial advice and guidance.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Collate Data for submission to HMRC.	Comprehensive data collection and cleansing exercise to be undertaken.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2021	C	The data for submission to HMRC is ready to be submitted in early August in line with the timescale set by the Cabinet Office.
2	Submit data to HMRC	Data submitted in the correct format	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2021	C	Data is ready to be shared with HMRC, this will be done in august 2021 in line with the project timescale. This has been a major piece of work and over 6500 records have had to be collated, analysed and put into the required format.
3	Data returned from HMRC with updated information.	Financially vulnerable households identified and offered support via specialist partners. Households with debt offered pathway to resolve and support to maintain payments.	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	N/A	Not Applicable

**Objective 8 – Administer and deliver post Covid-19 Debt Recovery Protocols and various Welsh Government Covid-19 related schemes including Eligible Business Rate Covid-19 Grants; Business Rate retail, Leisure and Hospitality Relief Scheme.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Distribute further business grants	Distribute any further covid-19 business rate grants to eligible businesses in line with the criteria set out by Welsh Government	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	C	No new grants have been announced
2	Implement and Administer the Business Rate Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Relief Scheme 2021-20	Once details of the 2021-22 scheme are known seek approval from Council to adopt the scheme and ensure that qualifying businesses are identified and the rate relief	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	C	The scheme was successfully delivered and all eligible rate payers have received the rate relief.

**Objective 8 – Administer and deliver post Covid-19 Debt Recovery Protocols and various Welsh Government Covid-19 related schemes including Eligible Business Rate Covid-19 Grants; Business Rate retail, Leisure and Hospitality Relief Scheme.**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
		applied to the individual rate accounts.				
3	Work with partner agencies and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector to provide advice and assistance to those with debts and financial problems.	Hold regular liaison meetings with partner organisations such as CAB to establish a joined-up approach to assisting those with arrears to find a sympathetic and sustainable way collect the debt.	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	44%	Work has started and meetings have taken place with Newport Citizens Advice Bureau to provide guidance on how we can offer help to financially vulnerable customers. In addition we will ensure that there is a flow of information where the agencies are working with vulnerable clients to help them achieve the best outcome.
4	Submit business case and recruit additional staff to work in a post covid debt recovery team.  The team will be part of the Recovery Team and will work with customers with arrears and experiencing payment difficulties to recover the outstanding council tax due to the Council.	Catch up on debt recovery work	01 April 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	C	Fixed term staff have been recruited, trained and are now working to help reduce the arrears backlog from 2020-21.

**Objective 9 – Upgrade and replace the existing financial systems to a fully supported and integrated Cloud based system including the exploration for replacing the existing Revenues IT(Council Tax, NDR and benefits) systems with Cloud based infrastructure**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Explore the options for ICT provision of Revenues & Benefits system, to include a managed cloud based service.	Establish whether a managed cloud based ICT solution could provide a more robust platform and cost effective solution to	<del>1<sup>st</sup> April 2021</del> 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	N/A	To be commenced in Q3

**Objective 9 – Upgrade and replace the existing financial systems to a fully supported and integrated Cloud based system including the exploration for replacing the existing Revenues IT(Council Tax, NDR and benefits) systems with Cloud based infrastructure**

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
		deliver council tax, benefits and NNDR services.				
2	Complete PQQ tender documents to allow for invitation to tender of potential suppliers to deliver new financial system.	Tender specification complete for initial PQQ to evaluate potential suppliers	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	<b>C</b>	Completed and see statement below.
3	Issue and evaluate PQQ submissions for new financial system	Choose preferred suppliers to take to next stage	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	<b>C</b>	The Pre-Qualification Questionnaire stage was completed with four suppliers shortlisted for the ITT stage
4	Evaluate preferred suppliers through ITT and award contract to preferred provider	Preferred provided chosen to deliver the new financial system	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2021	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	<b>75%</b>	The tender process is nearing completion, with the four shortlisted suppliers having taken part in three demonstration days. The quality aspect of the evaluation is almost complete, with the commercial aspect to be considered imminently. It is anticipated that a preferred supplier will have been decided upon by the end of this month.
5	Bring together an implementation team to deliver the project	Identify appropriate officers required to deliver the project Develop job descriptions and finalise with HR Appoint project implementation team and any back filling required Appoint external project manager to support the project	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	<b>75%</b>	The two lead roles within the Project Team have now been filled and an overall structure has been agreed with HR. For certain roles within the team, relevant individuals have been identified, with most of the challenge now relating to implementing adequate backfill arrangements for those individuals who will be involved in the project.
6	Undertake the implementation of the project and complete for 'Go Live'	A new fully integrated system ready for 'Go Live' prior to closing period	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	N/A	To be commenced in Q3.

### Objective 10 - Implement - New Breathing Space Legislation

Action No.	Action Description	Action Outcome(s)	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	% Action Completed	Action Commentary
1	Work with other departments to establish where debt information is held, draw up an implementation timetable and identify key staff.	Identify key staff and draw up implementation timetable.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	<b>C</b>	Action completed
2	Devise on-line training course for staff and members to raise awareness of the Breathing Space initiative.	All members and front line staff receive training.	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2021	<b>C</b>	Training for Members and staff completed in July 2021
3	Review impact of Breathing Space requests on workload and staff resources.	Report to Head of Finance on impact of introduction of Breathing Space.	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	<b>30%</b>	
4	Work with partner agencies and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector to provide advice and assistance to those with debts and financial problems.	Hold regular liaison meetings with partner organisations such as CAB to establish a joined-up approach to assisting those with arrears to find a sympathetic and sustainable way collect the debt.	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	<b>C</b>	As part of the Breathing space Initiative this work was undertaken to identify all areas across the Council where debt is managed or collected, this was necessary to ensure that the records were accurate and ensure that the single point of contact required under the scheme was properly managed.

## Performance Measures (30<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

This is an update on the quarterly and half yearly performance measures for the service area to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The end of year performance and previous year's Mid-year update is also included for comparative purposes. Annual measures are excluded and will be reported in March 2022. Commentary reported by exception for Amber and Red measures.

### Key

Green	Green – Performance is above Target
Amber	Amber RAG – Performance is below Target (0-15%)
Red	Red RAG – Performance is Under achieving (+15%)
?	Unknown RAG (Data missing)

Mid-year = 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September

End of Year = 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March

Performance Measure	Mid-year 21/22 Actual Performance	Mid-year Target / (End of Year Target) 21/22	End of Year 20/21 Actual Performance	Mid-year 20/21 Actual Performance	Mid-year 19/20 Actual Performance	Commentary
<b>National</b> Percentage Non-Domestic Rates Collected	58.5%	65% (96.5%)	94.4%	47.1%	59.8%	Collection of business rates has improved compared to 2020-21, however many businesses are still finding it difficult to keep up with payments despite the lifting of the majority of covid-19 restrictions.
<b>National</b> Percentage Council Tax Collection	53.12%	60% (96.5%)	95.4%	51.94%	53.8%	Collection of council tax has improved but is still challenging, additional staff have been engaged to target arrears collection and provide help and advice to vulnerable council tax payers.
<b>Local</b> Percentage total Council Tax Collected as a percentage of annual budgeted amount.	54.9%	100%	101%	53.81%	56.6%	Collection is slightly down on the target set, but it is anticipated that the annual target should be met by Q4.

Performance Measure	Mid-year 21/22 Actual Performance	Mid-year Target / (End of Year Target) 21/22	End of Year 20/21 Actual Performance	Mid-year 20/21 Actual Performance	Mid-year 19/20 Actual Performance	Commentary
<b>Management Information</b> Percentage of Council Tax arrears collected	17.6%	16% (30%)	25.4%	13.1%	18.7%	Additional staff resources have had a positive effect on the reduction of arrears.
<b>Management Information</b> Percentage of NNDR arrears collected	19.2%	15% (30%)	22.8%	-1.53%	11.8%	
<b>Local</b> Percentage of Internal Audit Plan completed	30%	30% (85%)	78%	24.4%	33.3%	
<b>Management Information</b> Number of days to issue a draft report	6 days	10 days	8 days	7 days	4.2 days	
<b>Management Information</b> Number of days to issue a final report	4 days	5 days	3 days	1.4 days	2 days	
<b>Local</b> Percentage Payment of Invoices within timescales	92%	90%	91.9%	93.2%	93.3%	
<b>Local</b> Total value of spend through the procurement card	£2.95M	£2.4M (£4.8M)	£5,285,000	£2.883M	£2.384M	