

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 15 December 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.

Author Chief Executive
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 November, Wales and the region has continued to see high numbers of positive Covid cases and as the city and the Council enter into the autumn and winter period, there is likely to be further impact on hospital admissions and health care services with uncertainty around the new Omnicron variant.

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

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 [10th November](#), 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 (November/December)

Since the last report to Cabinet in November, positive Covid cases has decreased from over 600 per 100,000 to under 500 cases per 100,000 in Wales. The Case rate in Newport remains over 450 per 100,000 ([Public Health Wales Dashboard](#)). The Delta variant remains most prevalent in Wales and in Gwent. However, at the start of December, cases of the Omicron variant were reported across the UK including first cases in Cardiff. At the time of the report, it is still too early to determine if this variant is resistant to the vaccines and how widespread the variant will become across communities. Hospital settings across ABUHB and in Wales are reporting significant pressures in Accident and Emergency departments and this is impacted on other primary care and social care in Gwent and Wales.

In line with Welsh Government guidance, the Council's message is for residents in Newport to remain vigilant and to follow the Covid guidelines around social distancing, testing and self-isolation.

The vaccination programme has seen over 2.4 million people receive their first dose with over 2.2 million receiving 2 doses. Since the vaccination was also rolled out to 12 to 15 year olds over 89,000 have received their Covid vaccine. The vaccination booster programme launched in September has seen over 900,000 people receives a booster. Since the last report, the booster programme has now been extended to all over 18 year olds. The advice from Welsh Government is for residents to wait to be notified by their local health board and not to contact their local GP surgery.

In October, the Welsh Government made it a requirement for people to have [NHS Covid passes](#) to attend large events and nightclubs in Wales. In November, this requirement was extended to cinemas, theatres or a concert hall in Wales. In Newport this will affect many venues and will require people to show a copy of their pass before entering the venue. This 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 we enter the winter period many vulnerable and low-income households will be impacted by the pandemic and wider economic impacts such as inflation. In November, the Welsh Government launched a £51m package to help households with an extra £100 to pay their fuel bills. The money will be offered to Welsh households on Universal Credit and other working-age benefits. Further details on how eligible households will be able to claim funding will be announced in December by the Welsh Government and the Council.

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 are installing technology in a number of rooms that will enable us to provide hybrid meeting facilities. 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 (December 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 December 2021
Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance levels at schools continue to be monitored with ongoing support being provided to schools. • Devices are continuing to be provided to schools to enable pupils to access learning online. • NCC premises and community buildings improving access to the internet and collaborating with communities to provide digital learning. • Supporting businesses with recruitment campaigns.
Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress is being made on key city centre developments opening in the New year. • Newport Council recognised in National Environmental awards winning most outstanding organisation award.
Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monkey Island Active Travel route in Lliswerry opened in November improving pedestrian and cycle access. • Regulatory Services continuing to support businesses and enforcement action where there is non-compliance.
Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing collaboration with Registered Social Landlords with housing and homelessness support. • Youth Justice Service collaborating and support Gwent Police identified as at risk of drifting towards criminality within the city centre to attend a Panel. • Officers recruit volunteers and support workers who will patrol Newport city centre to identify young people who may be at risk or active in ASB and engage with them, suggesting alternative activities and otherwise offering safeguarding support. • Participatory Budgeting collaboration with Health that will enable local organisations and community groups to access NCC and Health funding to deliver projects in their local areas.

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 2 (July to September '21) 2021/22 risk report update. Quarter 2 update to be provided in December.

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 guidance. We are currently scoping options for a longer term workforce delivery model that will provide ongoing flexibility for staff whilst mitigating the number of people in office spaces and this is the subject of a separate 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: 8 December 2021

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

<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.</p>															
<p>Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.</p>															
Strategic Aim Step	December 2021 Update (By Exception)														
Support schools and other educational establishments to safely reopen for staff and pupils.	<p>The supermarket voucher scheme continues to be used to support any free school meal eligible pupils who are unable to attend school after testing positive for Covid. In addition, pupils eligible for free school meals will receive supermarket vouchers to cover the forthcoming two-week Christmas holiday period.</p> <p>A new free Breakfast Club opened at High Cross Primary School during the second half of the autumn term and operates in accordance with local risk assessments undertaken and monitored by the Headteacher.</p> <p>The Commissioning Team continues to work closely with Chartwell’s around issues in relation to supply chains and staff shortages to ensure that the service operates as close to normal as possible. Arrangements are underway to ensure that Christmas Dinner days can be incorporated within the current delivery plan.</p>														
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>During the Autumn term, high levels of pupil absence were being reported across school settings. Education Welfare Officers continue to work closely with schools to support improved individual learner level attendance.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="562 874 1167 1305"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Average % of pupils who were in attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13/09/2021 to 17/09/2021 (r)</td> <td>90.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20/09/2021 to 24/09/2021 (r)</td> <td>86.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27/09/2021 to 01/10/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>85.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>04/10/2021 to 08/10/2021 (r)</td> <td>87.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11/10/2021 to 15/10/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>87.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18/10/2021 to 22/10/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>84.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(r) Revised (p) Provisional</p>	Average % of pupils who were in attendance		13/09/2021 to 17/09/2021 (r)	90.7%	20/09/2021 to 24/09/2021 (r)	86.2%	27/09/2021 to 01/10/2021 (p) (r)	85.2%	04/10/2021 to 08/10/2021 (r)	87.6%	11/10/2021 to 15/10/2021 (p) (r)	87.9%	18/10/2021 to 22/10/2021 (p) (r)	84.0%
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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	December 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>1827 Chromebooks and 336 PCs and Apple devices purchased using the 2021/22 WG Hwb EdTech grant have been delivered to schools as of 09.11.21. We are anticipating delivery of a further 245 devices over the next month along with 86 charging trolleys.</p> <p>The 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>Residents continue to have access to equipment and resources to provide them with a choice of how to engage with us and partners as self isolation is still a requirement under Alert level zero under certain circumstances. We are seeing an increase in requests for devices for younger children needing to access speech and language sessions.</p> <p>SRS and Digital team have been working to improve the internet capability across the Council's estate and public buildings such as Residential Homes and Neighbourhood Hub / Community buildings. The team has also been developing approaches with the community to support digital skills and such as train the trainer sessions and digital ambassadors across the community.</p>
Support people who have been affected by unemployment to access new opportunities through training and re-employment required for post Covid 19 businesses.	The new Mercure Hotel within Chartist Tower is expected to open in February 2022 and the hubs work and skills teams will be leading their recruitment campaign to fill 50 vacancies. Both fixed hour contracts and zero hour contracts will be available. The recruitment drive will take place over four separate days as part of an employment sign up roadshow at our hubs between 13 th to 16 th December.
Ensure our diverse communities are appropriately supported through tailored interventions specific to their needs, including consideration of language, culture and points of access.	<p>In October 2021 a new law was introduced requiring improved labelling for food in relation to allergens. The Trading Standards Service circulated to all relevant food operators a multi-lingual video training tool to help businesses with the changes.</p> <p>There has been an increase of requests from Playgroup settings for digital devices for those with younger children. Families are requesting these in order to access the speech and language sessions being delivered. As a result, the settings have now been given their own allocation of devices to loan out to families so it speeds up the request process and gets the devices directly to the families who need them quickly.</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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.	Planning permission was granted for the new leisure and wellbeing project on 3 rd November and represents a positive step in the delivery of the Newport Knowledge Quarter. The Chartist Tower hotel development is on track to open in February 2022 and work on the Indoor Market and Market Arcade are due for completion in January 2022.
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 nearly £6 million of Newport's funding award has been drawn down this financial year. There remains a challenge in relation to the availability of contractors and building materials but this is being worked through and the programme is being closely monitored.
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.</p> <p>Officers have been required to issue a business with a Premises Improvement Notice for failing to insist on COVID Passes for their customers.</p> <p>Officers continue to carry out business enforcement work; issues under scrutiny; licensed premises adherence to conditions; taxis illegally plying for hire; rogue traders active at people's homes; shops selling illegal tobacco and age restricted products to children and others. Routine food standards work continues; the emerging threat is a high proportion of businesses failing to deploy an adequate allergens protection system.</p> <p>Environmental Health activity continues to be negatively impacted on by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, resources have started to be redirected to 'business as normal' activity. It is noteworthy that 2 no. Food Safety EHOs are still on secondment to the Test Trace Protect team and a Health & Safety EHO is still focussing on supporting Care Settings. Programmed inspections of Food businesses have restarted in order to endeavour to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan using established officers, a newly recruited Food Safety EHO and an agency EHO.</p>
Enable and support businesses to prepare for future trade arrangements resulting from Brexit negotiations.	See EU transition Cabinet Report. Last month we received notification of the UK CRF funding which Newport received £2.8m. This funding will be given to the successful organisations that will deliver various projects to improve employment opportunities, re-skilling and training, improvements to local areas and research and development.
Protect and improve the environment, including air	Last month Newport was awarded Outstanding Organisation Award for its work towards decarbonisation which was accepted by the Leader of the Council. The Council was also nominated for Best Policy and Practice in Public Sector

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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
quality and decarbonisation of the city for its residents, businesses and visitors.	<p>as well. The Council also went out for consultation on its Climate Change Plan to become Net zero Carbon neutral by 2030.</p> <p>Trading Standards continue their work on the Operation Emerald project. An attempt to improve the energy efficiency of housing showing poor and unlawful energy performance.</p> <p>A review of our entire estate is being undertaken in order to understand what would be required to meet our 2030 decarbonisation targets.</p> <p>Low carbon heating works in one school and one nursery are being planned for 2022 as pilot sites.</p>
Continuing support and safe delivery of the Council's City services including waste, cleansing and highways.	All operational services are being delivered as scheduled although driver availability remains a high risk area that is being constantly monitored

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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
Support people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.	<p>The continuing pressure within our provider services to continue to support citizens in their own homes is under significant pressure.</p> <p>Adult services are reviewing all package of care each week to ensure the most vulnerable are provided with services. Commission and brokerage continue to work in partnership with our providers to support them and ensure clear communication is in place. We have utilised covid recovery funds from Welsh Government to directly support providers of Domicillary care and residential homes. We have a number of block placements with providers to ensure provision. Since the beginning of November the number of outstanding Packages of care has reduced from 87 to 31 today (24/11/2021) stringent monitoring continues to support the process within adult services each week.</p> <p>The pressure within the workforce and the inability to recruit continues, this is as a consequence of the hospitality and retail services offering enhanced packages of employment.</p>
Fully restore Children and Adult Services, supporting partners that have been impacted by Covid 19 and ensuring service	The workforce internally and externally is stretched, due to continually working through the pandemic and exhausted staff. The pressures quoted above impact on our ability to recruit to internal posts also. All Covid recovery additional funding from WG is used to target and support services and families that are open to us.

<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</p>	
<p>Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient</p>	
Strategic Aim Step	December'21 Update (By Exception)
users and staff are supported and protected.	
Assess the impact and the long-term sustainability of the social care sector in Newport informing future service requirements.	<p>The assessment of individual need and service pressures is a continual priority for adults and children to ensure we have the right information to plan services and prevent pressures across the services.</p> <p>The sustainable funding for social care going forward will be required to recover from the pandemic and ensure services are focussed towards the greatest need in our communities. Welsh Government specific funding until end of the financial year assists in providing a temporary fix. However the pressures on recruitment is across the whole workforce and will impair how we can support providers internally and externally.</p>
Safeguard and support children and young people to remain safely with their families.	<p>Practitioners continue to carry out risk assessments which are overseen by their line manager in order to continue to respond to children and families that are in need of protection or are eligible for support.</p> <p>Children Services continues to see a high volume of safeguarding referrals entering the front door which requires careful monitoring due to the impact of the delivery of service.</p>
Improve opportunities for Active Travel and work towards improved air quality.	<p>The Active Travel Route for Monkey Island in Lliswerry opened in November and provides a new route with safe crossing link under the Southern Distributor Road for pedestrians and cyclists. There is also a new accessible ramp to connect the pedestrian and cycle path on the northern side.</p> <p>In December, Network Rail plan to install the new pedestrian crossing across the Newport Station connecting Devon Place to Queensway.</p>
Regulate businesses and support consumers / residents to protect and improve their health.	<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. Officers have been required to issue a business with a Premises Improvement Notice for failing to insist on COVID Passes for their customers.</p> <p>Officers continue to carry out health protection enforcement work; issues under scrutiny; illegal fireworks sales; shops selling counterfeit tobacco, shops supplying alcohol and tobacco to children and food operators failing to manage allergenic ingredients professionally or lawfully. Officers plan to commence an operation looking for illegal and unsafe vaping products during November and December. This follows intelligence from across the UK that illegal products are commonplace.</p> <p>Environmental Health activity continues to be negatively impacted on by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, resources have started to be redirected to ‘business as normal’ activity. It is noteworthy that 2 no. Food Safety EHOs are still on secondment to the Test Trace Protect team and a Health & Safety EHO is still focussing on supporting Care Settings. Programmed inspections of Food businesses have restarted in order to endeavour to meet the</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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan using established officers, a newly recruited Food Safety EHO and an agency EHO.</p> <p>The Council's Test Trace Protect/Contact Tracing team continues to provide 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>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>	<p>Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery continue to open on a drop-in basis.</p>
<p>Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.</p>	<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 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 December.</p>

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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
<p>Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our most vulnerable people as a priority.</p>	<p>WG hardship funding continues to be used to support the additional pressures on temporary accommodation due to the extended duty to accommodate anyone presenting as homeless. We continue to work in partnership with RSLs to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation but supply remains a challenge. 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>

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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>The Housing and Homelessness teams are facing challenges with recruitment. This is a sector-wide issue.</p> <p>Material cost increases have resulted in average DFG grant costs increasing significantly with longer contractor/material lead times. This has been evident since Covid-19 and Brexit.</p>
<p>Assess and address the inequalities that Covid 19 has highlighted or contributed to within our communities.</p>	<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. A community engagement session was held in September where representatives of the worst affected groups were invited to talk about their experiences and how they have been and could be supported.</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. Newport Fairness Commission are key participants in the planning of this programme. Funding priorities will be informed by 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 three out of four decision-making sessions have now been completed. Invitations for funding bids will go out in November. It has been agreed that NCC funding will be combined with funding from ABUHB to deliver maximum benefits to the worst affected groups, deprived communities and grass roots groups.</p>
<p>Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.</p>	<p>The Policy, Partnership and Involvement team will be conducting a survey in November 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.</p>
<p>Developing opportunities for people to access suitable and affordable housing.</p>	<p>The Social Housing Grant programme is funding the development of over 500 new affordable housing units with several schemes due to complete within the current financial year. Delivery schedules are impacted by the sector wide issues with materials and labour supply, along with associated increased costs.</p>

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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
Deliver a community cohesion programme that effectively responds to community tensions and creates a shared sense of identity across the city.	The council's Connected Communities Team continues to meet regularly with policing and other partner colleagues to monitor and respond to emerging community tensions, and the first Gwent-wide hate crime forum has met this period, bringing statutory and third sector agencies together to ensure a cohesive, robust approach to hate crime response and support. The council has recently marked a range of key dates including Black History Month, Transgender Remembrance Day and Hate Crime Awareness Week through internal and external awareness campaigns. Funding from the community cohesion work programme has been utilised to support the second round of Participatory Budgeting and the team are engaging minority and marginalised communities across the city to ensure they are able to access and engage with the programme and its funding opportunities. EU and Welsh Language community grant schemes have recently been launched to support grassroots groups to build resilience, cultural awareness and promote positive community relations across the city.
Prevent and address instances of antisocial behaviour (ASB) impacting upon the residents and the business community of Newport.	Youth Justice Service - As identified in the Safer City Centre Group Action Plan Young people and children participate in nuisance activity and ASB in the city centre and drift towards criminality Operation Ashton: Officers consider young people who have been identified as at risk of drifting towards criminality within the city centre to attend a Panel. The purpose of the panel is to identify diversion activities in the form of a plan consented to by the child and parent who both attend the panel. Business partners will be involved. Young people and children are present in the city centre and are at risk themselves or pose a risk to nuisance and criminality and perceptions of safety; and lack support or guidance. Positive Patrols: Officers recruit volunteers and support workers who will patrol Newport city centre to identify young people who may be at risk or active in ASB and engage with them, suggesting alternative activities and otherwise offering safeguarding support. This activity has similarities with Safer Streets plans for ambassadors and for the historical work of the Street Pastors. Young people in the city centre have poor options for recreation so turn to nuisance, criminality or ASB Young People Positive Activities and Experiences: To identify activities that ensure the city centre offers young people valuable and positive experiences and refer them to the Youth Justice Service. Various activities being considered, a meeting took place to consider a diversion multi-sport service with the city centre, will keep group updated. YJS has identified a Community Project Officer to take the lead on this area of work. We are hoping to identify a pop-up shop via the local business community to provide and safe place for children to go for information, advice and support which is intended to allow all agencies to work together and provide a visual support to children in the city centre.

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	December'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>Licensing and Trading Standards are working to reduce alcohol related ASB. Licensing Officers are active in improving the practices of businesses that facilitate drunken misbehaviour in communities and the city centre. The latest under-age-sales test purchasing operation took place on 28 October with Gwent Police. 14 premises were tested; 5 for knives, 2 for vape products, 1 for nitrous oxide and 6 for fireworks. There was one illegal sale. A shop in the Pillgwenlly ward sold a knife to the volunteer. Advice and follow up work will be carried out. Officers also participated in Operation Bang and investigated allegations of illegal fireworks sales.</p> <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.</p> <p>The Community Safety Warden Service will continue to respond to incidents of ASB as it has throughout the pandemic.</p>
<p>Re-establish Community Regeneration facilities and services where it is safe to do so for staff and its service users.</p>	<p>Home visits are undertaken under strict Triage and Risk Assessment procedures, alongside telephone and Teams appointments.</p>
<p>Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.</p>	<p>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. Newport Fairness Commission are key participants in the planning of this programme. Funding priorities will be informed by 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 three out of four decision-making sessions have now been completed. Invitations for funding bids will go out in November. It has been agreed that NCC funding will be combined with funding from ABUHB to deliver maximum benefits to the worst affected groups, deprived communities and grass roots groups.</p> <p>The Council is also out on consultation with its Climate Change Plan and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Both can be accessed here</p>