

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 13 July 2022

Subject Newport Council Covid Recovery and External Influences

Purpose To present to Cabinet a final update on the Covid Recovery position and an update on the Council's response to Post EU Transition work.

Author Chief Executive
Director of Transformation and Corporate
Head of People Policy and Transformation

Ward All

Summary In the last two years, Newport City Council has faced unprecedented challenges in responding to the Covid pandemic and the UK leaving the European Union. Recognising the impact that these have had on communities and businesses in Newport, the Council's Cabinet agreed four Strategic Recovery Aims supporting: Education and Skills, Economic and environmental recovery, Health and Wellbeing of citizens, and post Covid recovery. Newport Council also established a Brexit task and finish group to support the preparation of EU/EAA citizens, businesses, and residents to prepare for leaving the EU.

This report summarises the work the Council has undertaken alongside its partners and communities to respond and recover from these events across Newport's services, communities, and businesses.

This will be the final report of the Strategic Recovery Aims to Cabinet. However, ongoing opportunities, challenges and risks that the Council and the City are facing with the cost of living crisis, Ukrainian conflict, post EU transition and a range of local and global challenges, regular updates of progress will be reported to Cabinet against the Council's new Corporate Plan.

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

Over the last two and half years Newport City Council and its partners have been responding to the Covid Pandemic and leaving the EU / single market. The last two years have brought significant challenges to the delivery of services, safeguarding our most vulnerable residents, and supporting our communities that have been impacted by the personal losses in their families and the wider economic, physical and mental wellbeing impacts.

The pandemic and wider Brexit impacts have also provided opportunities for the Council and the City to recover and to build on the strengths of closer partnership and community working which has refocused us to look at how we deliver sustainable services and support communities to thrive.

This report brings together previous Cabinet Reports - Covid Recovery and the Post EU Transition reports. It will also provide an overview of what the Council has delivered over the last two and half years, including an up-to-date position. The report will also outline future reporting to support the Council's response to local and national issues and how the Council's new Corporate Plan priorities support communities and businesses.

Wales and Welsh Government Covid Position

Over the last two and half years, Newport Council and its partners have been responding to several Covid waves which have resulted in restrictions being placed on residents, businesses, and the Council on how we deliver services and live our daily lives. In May, the Welsh Government announced the ending of all legal Covid requirements. Across the population cases have remained low, and majority of services are now operating business as usual as we are now learning to live with Covid. But there remain many vulnerable groups in our community who are more susceptible and therefore have to continue to remain cautious about who they come into contact with and how they access the services they need. The Welsh Government and the NHS will continue to offer the Covid vaccination to vulnerable groups and those who work with vulnerable people e.g. care home staff, NHS workers. It is important to consider those vulnerable groups and to consider that the risk of Covid will remain due to the variants and that many other countries across the world still have restrictions in place.

Newport City Council Overview of response to the Covid Pandemic since 2020

Following the initial outbreak in early 2020, Newport Council has responded, and supported communities and businesses throughout this period to protect the most vulnerable and to minimise the spread of Covid. Following the first outbreak Newport Council recognised that we needed to recover our services and build resilience to support future outbreaks. In July 2020, Cabinet agreed four Strategic Recovery Aims that were aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22 that were focused on: Education and skills, Economy and Environment, health and wellbeing of citizens services, and post Covid recovery.

Over the last two years we have highlighted some of the work that the Council, our partners, and communities have delivered to recover services and support people throughout this time. Some of the highlights are outlined below with a more up to date position provided in table:

- Supporting over 1,000 office-based staff with ICT equipment, office furniture and support to work effectively from home. This has now resulted in the New Normal programme where we will look to develop hybrid working and support flexible working arrangements.
- Supporting Front-line service staff (Waste and Cleansing staff, social care workers, community support staff etc) throughout the last two years protecting and supporting vulnerable, elderly, children, and disadvantaged families to continue to receive services.
- Enabling and supporting community volunteers and organisations to support their most vulnerable residents with food parcels, medicines, and social support.
- Setting up the Test, Trace and Protect service through Regulatory services and staff redeploying to support this initiative. This service has enabled contact tracing and support to people that have been affected by Covid.

- Leading and supporting Welsh Government / NHS in issuing letters across Newport and Wales to the most vulnerable groups enabling them to offer support, advice, guidance to access services.
- Supporting the NHS alongside Newport Live with facilities and staffing with the vaccination programme and mobile contact tracing services throughout Newport.
- Regulatory services have supported businesses to become Covid compliant providing advice and guidance as necessary. The teams have also, as necessary issued necessary enforcement action where non-compliance has been identified.
- In collaboration with housing, ABUHB, Gwent Police, and other third sector support services, we supported homeless people into accommodation and provide the necessary physical / mental health support to find long-term solutions and accommodation. This work has continued through new legislation and additional funding to develop new housing and support service.
- Education Services, schools and community services supporting young learners, families to continue their education at home and providing technology to our most vulnerable learners. In total through the EdTech programme the Council has provided over 9,000 devices as well as devices to access the internet
- Education services and schools also supported Free School Meal pupils with vouchers, lunches, and meals throughout this period.
- The Council's Finance, Revenues and Benefits teams have administered Welsh Government financial support to residents and businesses throughout Covid and now through the cost of living crisis.
- The Council's Regeneration and Investment teams have supported existing and start-up businesses with grant support, advice and guidance enabling the recovery of the City's economy. Newport is also now seeing some of its most key regeneration projects being completed such as Newport Market, Chartist Tower, and Market Arcade.
- Participatory Budgeting with Health enabling community groups and organisations to access funding to support their work in communities and enabling the community to decide where the funding should be spent.

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 30th June 2022
Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment	<p>Schools are no longer operating under Covid restrictions.</p> <p>Welsh Government confirmed on 10th March 2022 that Free School Meal holiday provision would be extended up to the start of the 2022/23 academic year. As a result, the supermarket voucher scheme adopted by Newport was utilised for the recent May half-term and will cover the forthcoming summer holiday period. In addition, at the beginning of April 2022, Welsh Government confirmed that additional funding was available to make provision in lieu of free school meals to eligible pupils who are unable to attend school because guidance advises them to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19, and where schools have had to send pupils home including because of staff shortages related to COVID-19. This extension is in place until 30th June 2022 when it is anticipated that self-isolation payments will come to an end.</p> <p>In line with the end of the Covid hardship scheme, school meals services returned to pre-pandemic arrangements from 1st April 2022. Breakfast club services have also returned to pre-pandemic arrangements on the majority of sites, with the exceptions being those schools with specific staffing or supervision vacancies which have caused temporary capacity issues. As of June 2022, all but two pre-Covid Breakfast Clubs have resumed as normal.</p> <p>The Council continues to engage with partnerships to support residents accessing childcare, play and educational provision across the community hubs. With reparation activities now changed within Youth Justice to be meaningful, educational and of community benefit, the aim is to engage more children with volunteering or employment opportunities. As a result of this, one child has now been offered an apprenticeship with an organisation. This success will be built on as the service engages with more partners to source meaningful opportunities.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 30th June 2022
	<p>Consideration is being given to how we can support social work skills and abilities and offer progression for entry level candidates. We are also hoping to match Restart participants into roles required through Community Renewal Funding projects, particularly in the filming sector.</p> <p>We welcomed 300 attendees at the recent jobs fair and secured 42 employers to showcase their vacancies.</p> <p>We have supported the Celtic Manor in launching a Celtic Collection Job Shop in the City Centre which launched June 16th between 10-12 for partners and colleagues.</p> <p>We are also running a 'Get into the Security Industry Workshop' in Hubs:</p> <p>Mon 27TH June Maesglas Community Centre, Tue 28th June Pill Mill Millennium Centre, Wed 29th June Job Centre, Charles Street, Thur 30th June Ringland Hub Fri 1st July Bettws Community centre,</p> <p>We are also working with Newport Buses on a campaign to recruit new drivers.</p> <p>All employment support has now returned to face to face.</p> <p>An expanded Adult Community Learning (ACL) Programme has been developed for the 2022-23 academic year, which will offer 20% more classes than in 2018-19, the last full academic year before the pandemic. ACL has secured re-engagement funding from the Welsh Government and, working with the corporate PR team has devised a marketing campaign to run over the Summer. The campaign will include an enhanced brochure, billboards and social media to increase public perception of the service and attract new students.</p>
<p>Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy</p>	<p>We continue to process applications for the City of Newport Business Support grant and a further 39 grants have been awarded in 22/23. Cabinet have approved the additional funding required to commence with the Information Station Project and have also endorsed the submission of a bid for UK Government Levelling Up funding to deliver a National Technology Institute in the City Centre.</p> <p>We continue to work with Housing Association partners to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing via the Social Housing Grant Programme. Newport spent its full Social Housing Grant allocation of £12m in 2021/22 plus an additional £4m of slippage. For the financial year 2022/23 Newport has an allocation of £16.3m of Social Housing Grant which it is proposed will support 14 affordable housing developments including two highly energy efficient and low carbon schemes.</p> <p>Officers across Licensing and Trading Standards are now actively assessing compliance of businesses in the post-lockdown trading environment. Key activities in May 2022 include testing retailers on sales of vaping products to children and the safety of the vaping device itself; investigations and seizures of counterfeit tobacco; doorstep crime investigations; multi-agency days of action; festival licensing safety assessments; taxi licensing safety assessments; counterfeit goods investigations; and unlicensed dog breeding investigations. Officers continue to seek improvements in the rented accommodation sector relating to energy efficiency and fuel poverty agendas. Some landlords have responded positively, and others have been served compliance notices.</p> <p>Officers no longer provide advice regarding COVID regulations as the business restrictions have been removed. Managers across Licensing and Trading Standards are now actively returning to business-as-usual activities. While absences linked to COVID still need to be managed, Council services regarding waste and cleansing activities and environment and leisure are also being delivered as business as usual.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 30 th June 2022
	<p>The revenues team have administered the WG Non Domestic Rates relief scheme for eligible retail/hospitality businesses, with 50% reduction in bills as well as the NCC local discretionary scheme within the city centre.</p>
<p>Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens</p>	<p>Adult services continue to operate under significant pressure due to workforce issues internally and externally with commissioned social care services. Statutory duties are covered by ensuring the limited resource is used smartly. Commissioned community resources are struggling to recruit and retain a resilient workforce. This impacts on our ability to support people with eligible needs within their own homes. We prioritise community needs to ensure citizens remain in their own homes and do not deteriorate and require hospital admission. Health pressures to focus on hospital discharges continue to impact on the community resource. Currently we need over 500 hours (49 packages of Care) in the community. We are using block contracts and working with individual providers to ensure maximum services are available.</p> <p>Newport Council's Benefit team is administering the Unpaid Carer's Support scheme from the Welsh Government. A one off £500 payment is available for unpaid carers receiving Carer's Allowance from 16th May. Residents receiving Carer's Allowance need to submit their registration to the Council to access the funding here.</p> <p>Newport Council is still following Welsh Government guidance for staff to work from home unless required by their role. There is ongoing work as part of the New Normal project for staff to work hybrid from their homes, Council offices and other suitable locations. We will continue to work closely with managers and trade union representatives as this work develops. Meeting rooms and other shared locations are now available for use, and we continue to develop hybrid meeting technology.</p> <p>Families First recommissioning continues to progress well. A successful providers day in April saw some interesting ideas being discussed. The new Prevention and Inclusion service area is making positive steps as more services are now being established within the service area. The service area is waiting for some key management posts to be filled and hope to be completed by August. This will then enable further progression with partners and teams on the model of service delivery, ensuring a SMART and integrated programme of support for families and individuals. Early Years has continued to facilitate emergency grants 180 in total allowing families to access fundamental items such as bed etc as a partnership with Save the Children, geographically targeted at Bettws</p> <p>Whilst supporting a blended approach, services are all operating face to face support and interventions across the City.</p> <p>Child Development Funding made available through the WG has continued to be targeted at providing activities that promote delayed development as a result of the pandemic across Newport. Additional resources have been targeted at children with Additional Learning Needs. The % of ALN children has increased</p> <p>Summer Of Fun – Applications from several agencies have been discussed at the CCG Board, with decisions made to support an even distribution of summer activities across the age ranges. Engagement with play, sporting and cultural activities enables children and young people to continue their recovery from the restrictions of the last two years, with the added benefit of supporting families with the costs of activities over the summer holidays.</p> <p>Play – enhanced services have been implemented to mitigate isolation and encourage play opportunities, play provision for children with complex needs has been offered every school holiday to support the negative effect of COVID. Applications are currently being received for summer holiday provisions.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 30 th June 2022
	<p>Flying Start expansion work is progressing well with a clear plan identified. 4 additional areas will receive added FS provision with over 180 additional places for children</p> <p>Families will be supported via a WG cost of living discretionary grant. This will assist in some way to manage the increasing cost of living crisis.</p>
<p>Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19</p>	<p>In 2021/22 the Social Housing Grant Programme funded the development of over 55 new affordable homes. Developments at Coverack Road and Treberth are due to complete shortly with developments at Emlyn Street, Tredegar Court and Hubert Road completing later this year.</p> <p>We have worked with RSL partners to access the newly established Welsh Government Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme funding. This funding supports the return to use of empty housing association properties and the development of housing association owned land and sites. Welsh Government is in the process of confirming successful funding allocations with our RSL partners. We continue to work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation, although supply remains a challenge. Work with key stakeholders is ongoing which will help support vulnerable homeless households to ensure they receive the right support and accommodation. Phase 2 capital funded projects at Hill Street and Central Chambers will provide 24 units of accommodation and a housing support hub. Both are due to complete in June/July 22.</p> <p>The guidance issued by Welsh Government during the pandemic which required all local authorities to house an increased number of homeless households remains and the supply of suitable temporary and move-on accommodation remains much lower than demand.</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grant. The Team Manager is engaging with wider colleagues that sit within the new service area (Prevention and Inclusion) to build on reaching families/individuals earlier to sustain independent living and help to avoid escalation of need, resulting in higher tiers of support. The team have also put a plan together to address the backlog of cases arising from the pandemic, and a presentation was made to CMT at the end of May.</p> <p>Families First teams continue to engage with schools and families to support children returning to education. A high level of referrals have been received following the pandemic with parental/carer mental health issues, impacting on their parenting/caring abilities. This is being discussed with health colleagues to identify a planned and co-ordinated response to support parents/carers.</p> <p>NCC is working in partnership with GAVO funding a fixed term Food Sustainability Co-ordinator to consider preventative work in relation to food poverty. The postholder will work closely with third sector partners and managing a grant programme which will further boost the capacity of food related projects</p> <p>The rapid increase in the cost of living is already proving to be challenging for a number of households many of which are still 'catching up' with arrears accrued during the pandemic. The Council will continue to support those struggling to pay and will be implementing the WG 'cost of Living grant scheme' from April – September which pays £150 to all households in Council Tax Bands A-D and those receiving Council Tax Reduction relief, this also includes a discretionary element of £1.2m which the Council will design and implement over the same period.</p> <p>To date NCC has administered the following grant schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpaid Carers Support Scheme – position on 13.6.22 - 2559 applications received, 1754 approved, 537 declined, 1470 payments made. • Self-Isolation payment scheme – 646 applications still outstanding. Applications for the scheme is due to close on 28 June 2022. • Winter Fuel scheme for 22/23 in the early stages of communication with a proposed start date of 1 September 2022.

Strategic Recovery Aim	Summary of Council's activities to 30 th June 2022
	<p>Preparations are underway for the WG expansion of Flying Start from Sept 23. Successful providers day was held with interested agencies as we progress with the recommissioning of Families First.</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grant now sits in the new Prevention and Inclusion service area. We have identified ways to have a greater and earlier reach to support independent living post Covid.</p>

Post EU Transition and Cost of Living Crisis

Since the UK left the European Union and Single Market on 31st December 2020, there has continued to be positive and negative impacts on the economy, and EU / EAA citizens. There are continuing to be national issues relating to the Trade arrangements with the EU that are predominantly focused on the trading routes between the UK and Northern Ireland. The Welsh Government's position is that Wales will continue to seek positive relationships with the EU across economic, trade, cultural, research and education.

Over the last two years, there have been several global economic impacts due to Covid, increasing consumer demand (technology, food) and disruptive supply chains. In the last six months, the Ukrainian conflict has also impacted global supply of food, energy (gas and electric) and fuel. These issues are now impacting residents and businesses seeing the cost of living (inflation) increasing with costs rising to over 9% and expecting to increase further to 11%, with wages unable to meet these costs. For low to middle income households these costs are forcing households to choose between meals, travelling and heating. In June, the Bank of England also increased interest rates to 1.25% to try to tackle inflation making borrowing more expensive.

On top of the increase to food and general costs of living, current estimates suggest up to 45% of all households in Wales could be in fuel poverty following increases to the energy price cap in April. It is suggested that the situation is set to become worse following the indication from Energy Regulator, Ofgem that the fuel cap will rise in October.

Welsh Government and Newport City Council Response.

The Welsh Government's latest announcement of the [Fuel Voucher Scheme](#) is aimed at providing support to households that have to pay in advance for their energy and are unable to do so. In Wales, households on prepayment meters have been particularly affected by the rise in fuel prices as they pay a higher tariff in comparison to standard credit meters.

The Fuel Voucher Scheme will provide top-up vouchers for customers on prepayment meters and will see the launch of a new crisis service for households which are off the gas grid, and unable to afford to buy gas bottles or fill their oil tank, log store or coal burner. For eligibility of this scheme, households will be referred for support by one of a network of referral partners. Households must be experiencing financial hardship and at immediate risk of self-disconnection. The scheme will be managed by the [Fuel Bank Foundation](#), a national charity that has delivered support to people in Wales since 2015.

Earlier this year, Welsh Government also announced a £150 cost of living payment on [Council Tax](#) costs for households living in bands A to D. Newport Council is encouraging as many households as possible to claim the payment. This also includes a discretionary element of £1.2m which the Council will design and implement over the same period. The unpaid carers financial support scheme is being administered by the Council enabling residents who look after someone for 35 hours or more and have low incomes to receive £500 payment. Further information can be found [here](#).

Additionally, via the Welsh Government a further £15m is available in the form of a [Discretionary Assistance Fund](#) to provide financial support for individuals who are experiencing extreme financial pressures. The fund for additional support will be extended until the end of March 2023. For businesses,

Newport Council announced it will be using its [discretionary powers](#) to support businesses in the city centre in addition to the rate relief from [Welsh Government](#).

Further guidance for households who are struggling as a result of the cost of living crisis can access help through [Advice Link Cymru](#) or the [Claim What's Yours](#) campaign for households and individuals to access benefits to assist them with the help they need.

Newport Council continues to support the city's food banks charities and groups. Earlier in the year £100k was allocated to support food banks and groups to access additional support. NCC is working in partnership with GAVO funding a fixed term Food Sustainability Co-ordinator to consider preventative work in relation to food poverty. GAVO are also enabling food community groups to access £3,000 to support their work. Further information can be found [here](#).

The UK Government recently launched details on the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) that is replacing the EU funding that Wales received prior to leaving the EU. In Wales, the regional groups such as Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Corporate Joint Committee will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of SPF. Each local authority in CCR including Newport, will be developing local investment plans involving local and regional stakeholders to identify interventions that will support the delivery of local priorities across Newport.

EU / EAA Communities living in Newport and Wales

Newport Council recognises the contributions of all our residents and are proud that Newport is a multi-cultural city with a rich, diverse heritage. All our migrant communities continue to play a vital role in our economic and cultural growth. The latest Home Office statistics show that 5.8 million EU and EAA citizens have been granted settled and pre-settled status.

The council's Connected Communities team continue to support and signpost EU/EAA citizens and their family members to specialist support services that can make late applications to the EUSS, challenge negative decisions and provide advice around rights and entitlements. The team co-ordinate a weekly multi-agency drop in at Community House, Eton Road, and over the coming months plan to deliver Rights and Entitlements sessions to communities, using local schools as a base and develop an online information session for professionals.

Ukrainian Refugee Support

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has caused the displacement of many tens of thousands of Ukrainian people from their homes. The UK Government has encouraged Ukrainian nationals to utilise the Family Visa Scheme which allows individuals to safely join family members or extend their stay in the UK. Newport has seen a rise in the number of families arriving in the city through this scheme. The Homes for Ukraine scheme will see further arrivals being placed in local homes as part of the UK Government's sponsorship scheme, whilst the Welsh Government are supporting around 1,000 refugees as a 'super sponsor' working alongside local authorities to place people around Wales.

Following the people of Wales' incredible response to the Welsh Government's Super Sponsor Scheme, which has seen over 2,000 visas issued to date, a temporary operational pause on new applications will commence on the 10th of June 2022. The temporary pause is to ensure Ukrainians who are arriving, and those already here in Wales continue to receive an exceptional level of support. The temporary pause will allow the Welsh Government and partners time to refine arrangements in place to support people and ensure all public services, especially local authorities can continue to deliver a high standard of support. This temporary pause will not affect any current applications. Further information can be found [here](#).

To date through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, 6,572 confirmed applications have been submitted with a sponsor in Wales. Of those 3,613 have confirmed applications have Welsh Government as super sponsor and 2,965 visas have also been issued where Welsh Government is the super sponsor. In total 2,501 people with sponsors in Wales have arrived in the UK. Through the Homes for Ukraine scheme,

Newport currently has 100 approved visa applications issued with 73 active Ukrainian placements across 33 sponsors.

People arriving in the UK and Wales will be granted access to Universal Credit and jobs support immediately; however local authorities will play a vital role in supporting both new arrivals and hosts. The guidance set under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme places a range of expectations on local councils to complete DBS, property and safeguarding checks on host placements, administering the £350 ‘thank you’ payment per month payment to hosts, £200 payment to each Ukrainian individual, integration support and in person visits to check suitability.

The council’s established Operational Response Group who meet on a weekly basis, co-ordinate Newport Council’s approach to welcoming and supporting people arriving in Newport. This group is currently mapping capacity and potential demand across a range of key areas including social care, housing, education, and integration support. The council is working closely with partners and other Gwent authorities to ensure a joined up, cohesive approach to Ukrainian resettlement, taking a regional approach wherever possible to maximise efficiency.

Future Cabinet Reporting

The long-term impacts of Covid pandemic and leaving the EU are expected affect communities and business over the next 5 to 10 years. There remain many challenges and risks that Newport Council and its partners will need to support and prevent. Many of these impacts have yet to be fully realised but we are already seeing impacts in the backlog of health and social care support, cost of living crisis, supporting young learners and improving school attendance, climate change, community cohesion and support for EU/EAA citizens, refugees and Ukrainian families. There will also be emerging challenges and risks that the Council will have to respond and mitigate impact over next five years.

This will be the final report on the Strategic Recovery Aims and the Council will be publishing its annual Wellbeing Self-Assessment report 2021/22 in the Autumn covering what the Council has delivered against the Corporate Plan and Strategic Recovery Aims.

Newport Council will also be publishing its new Corporate Plan 2022-27 in the autumn that will outline the Council’s strategic priorities to support Wales’ Wellbeing Goals, Cabinet’s Manifesto pledges, and prevent long term impacts of the challenges and risks faced by Newport.

With the ongoing opportunities, challenges and risks that the Council and the City are facing with the cost of living crisis, Ukrainian conflict, post EU transition and a range of local and global challenges, regular updates of progress will be reported to Cabinet against the Council’s new Corporate Plan.

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 and Post EU Transition 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 4 (January to March) 2021/22 risk report update.

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	4	4	See Report on action being undertaken by the Executive	Executive Board

			Board, CMT and Gold group to manage the Council's response.	
Post EU Transition	4	3	See Report.	Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Supporting Ukrainian refugees to settle in Newport.	4	2	See this Report on the Council's response to the Ukrainian refugee re-settlement programme.	Corporate Management Team.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Corporate Plan 2017-22

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 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. 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 and this remains the case while restrictions continue to be eased.

The 22/23 budget settlement for local authorities confirmed local authorities are now expected to manage the continuing financial impact of the pandemic from within existing resources, albeit with some continued assistance in certain areas. Therefore, as part of the budget setting and medium-term planning process, consideration was given to the potential ongoing financial impact, both in terms of additional expenditure and loss of income, beyond the 2021/22 financial year. The 2022/23 budget reflects the outcome of those discussions with resources allocated on both a one-off and recurring basis, to be reviewed on an annual basis as clarity regarding the permanent financial impact is achieved.

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 the Post EU Transition work. Any legal issues in relation to the recovery plan and the EU transition work will be picked up at the appropriate time as part of the operational delivery of the individual actions, within service areas

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

There are no HR related issues arising directly from this report, and we continue to work closely with managers and trade union representatives to develop policies for the workforce legislative measures are relaxed.

The Council recognises that many of the ongoing impacts of Covid and the Post EU transition will remain for the Council to respond and address over the next 5 years. The annual Wellbeing Self-Assessment

report will provide an overview of what the Council has delivered in response to the Strategic Recovery Aims in 2021/22 with any ongoing strategic priorities integrated into the new Corporate Plan.

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, challenges and risks to 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.

Consultation

Not Applicable

Background Papers

Cabinet Report (Strategic Recovery Aims) – July 2020

[Corporate Plan 2017-22](#)

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

Dated: 6 July 2022