

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 14 October 2020

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors Councillor J Mudd (Chair), Councillor R Jeavons, P Cockeram, G Giles, D Harvey, D Mayer, D Davies and M Rahman

In Attendance: Beverly Owen (Strategic Director (Place)), Tracey Brooks (Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing), Rhys Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change), Sally Ann Jenkins (Head of Children & Young Peoples Services), Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation) and Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance)

Apologies: Councillor R Truman

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor R Truman

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

3 Draft Minutes from September Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

Before proceeding on to the next item on the agenda, the Leader took the opportunity to mention the current local lockdown and thanked the people of Newport who are working really well together and following the rules around Covid-19 in order to keep others safe.

4 Corporate Plan Annual Report

The Leader presented the report which is the third Annual Report of the Council's five year Corporate Plan.

The purpose of the report is to reflect back on 2019/20 assessing the achievements the Council has made, areas for improvement and looking forward for the remaining period of the Corporate Plan.

The Leader confirmed that this year's report also reflects back on the Council's Covid-19 response against each of the Council's Well-being Objectives and how these have contributed towards the learning and development of the Council's Strategic Recovery Aims.

The Annual Report was presented in September to the Council's Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee. The Committee's detailed discussions on the Council's Covid-19 response and their feedback on the contents of the Annual Report were welcomed. Also, the

Committee's recommendations have been considered and updated in this final version of the report to Cabinet.

The Leader sought Cabinet's endorsement of the Annual Report so that it can be published, at which time it will also be made available in Welsh.

The Leader recapped to confirm that at the beginning of this Cabinet's term, four Well-being Objectives were set to support the Council's mission of 'Improving People's Lives':

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

The report outlined that in 2019/20, Newport Council has continued to make good progress against its Well-being Objectives, despite the challenging financial pressures that many of the Council's front-line services have experienced.

Despite these financial pressures, the Council was able to report an under-spend in its final accounts of £1.8m which was contributed to by an unexpected grant income to support the Council's Social Services.

However, in the medium term and following the Covid-19 crisis, the Council is now facing new financial challenges which require some difficult decisions to be made going forward.

In 2019/20, Newport Council continued to make significant improvements in the delivery of its services and also delivered key initiatives that will improve people's lives. None of the achievements could have been made without the close partnership working with other organisations, the Health Board and service users.

The report also recognised the areas which need improving and where the Council will make necessary changes in the delivery of its services.

The Leader was pleased to note the following positive improvements:

Well-being Objective 1 (Improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities)

- Newport's Primary Schools continue to improve their performance which has seen year-on-year improvements in the categorisation of schools as 'Green' by Welsh Government.
- The City's School attendance rates have improved for both primary and secondary schools.
- Initiatives to improve the opportunities of disadvantaged children has seen improvements in their academic successes.
- The Council's Adult Learning offer also enables people in Newport to re-skill and re-train which is providing more opportunities in the workplace.
- It is acknowledged more can be done and the Council's Education service and Schools are working hard to reduce digital inequality, to support disadvantaged pupils and young people during this very difficult year.

Well-being Objective 2 (To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment)

- Continuous regeneration of the City through the support and delivery of schemes such as the Chartist Hotel, Indoor Market, Market Arcade, Mill Street Post Office building, Transporter Bridge Visitor Centre and now the Information Station.

- Implementation of the new smaller bins across households in the City, contributing towards improving the Council's recycling rates making Newport one of the best performing Council's in Wales and the UK.
- Introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement has seen over 19,000 tickets issued and improvements to the City's streets and behaviour of motorists.
- Continuous delivery of various bio-diversity and green projects to improve the City's environment. This includes the installation of solar panels across 21 sites to reduce the Council's energy consumption.
- In the Council's response to the Covid-19 crisis, Newport Council has administered over £19 million of rates relief to over 1,000 businesses and over £30 million of business grants to 2,250 eligible businesses.

The Leader stated this is a very difficult and challenging time for the City's economy with Covid-19 restrictions and the uncertainty surrounding the UK's relationship with the EU. This is why it is important that we support the City's economy and ensure Newport continues to attract new investment and opportunities.

Wellbeing Objective 3 (To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient)

- Despite the continuing demand on the Council's Social Services, both Children and Adult Services have continued to innovate and deliver new initiatives. The Leader gave personal thanks to all colleagues across the council in social care for their outstanding commitment and service.
- The Baby & Me initiative demonstrates how collaborative working with organisations such as Barnardos and involvement of service users improve the opportunities and break down barriers for young people.
- The continued success of Rose Cottage to provide stability and safe environments for children can help them build confidence and actively support their development.
- The Council's First Contact team in Adult Services enabling people to signpost and access the services they need to continue to live independent lives.
- The Council's Active Travel schemes delivered at St David's Primary school, Fourteen Locks and Coed Melyn are providing alternative approaches to travelling around Newport.
- Adoption of the Sustainable Travel Strategy by Newport Council and its Public Services Board partners to encourage the move towards alternative/cleaner transport, use of more public transport, support infrastructure changes to enable safe routes and promote engagement across schools and communities.
- The Council's Social Services throughout Covid-19 have continued to deliver their services and the work of Community Connectors and Neighbourhood Hubs have been vital to ensure vulnerable people are able to access food parcels and the support they needed.
- The new funding to support the City's Active Travel schemes across Newport which will contribute towards Newport being a greener and healthier city in the future.

Well-being Objective 4 (To build Cohesive and sustainable communities)

- Providing access to good quality affordable and safe housing remains a priority. During 2019/20 the Council supported the delivery of housing developments at Durham Road, Cot Farm and the former King's Head Public House site. Also the former Hillside Resource Centre, Centurion Public House, Tredegar Court Sheltered Accommodation and Central View.

- Ringland Community Hub renovation and the implementation of the four community hub model in the city to provide multi- community services.
- The role of the Safer Newport group to tackle ASB and provide diversionary activities. Involving local communities and residents to tackle ASB and find solutions.
- Participatory budgeting in Ringland and Alway to help support community activities through grant provision. Local people being involved to decide which bids received funding. Successful bids included Newport Samaritans, Gwent Police Cadets, Ringland Radio and Alway Boxing Club.
- Supporting rough sleepers and homeless into accommodation, collaborating with the Police and other support services. Supporting people presenting at risk of becoming homeless and finding long term solutions.
- Working with Registered Social Landlords to obtain funding to develop more affordable accommodation.
- Supporting BAME and marginalised communities that have been disproportionately impacted by Covid -19. Working with communities and local groups to deliver food packages.
- Undertaking Community Impact Assessment to understand the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown measures on communities in Newport.

The Leader was pleased to provide this overview of the range of activities and progress made as she felt there is a need to highlight this progress against the plan, because in spite of the pandemic, the city has been kept safe and the Council has maintained essential service provision and delivered against the corporate plan. The Leader thanked everyone for this collaborative endeavour.

The Leader invited her Cabinet Members to speak to the report:

Councillor Jeavons referred to Objective 2 and the recycling rates that are being achieved. He thanked the residents of Newport whose efforts mean that Newport may well be the best recycling city in the whole of the UK. He also referred to the recently purchased electric refuse truck, the first of its kind for any local authority, and the ultra-low-emission camera car – all of which is contributing to reducing Newport’s carbon footprint

Councillor Davies referred to Objective 3 and the long term commitment to sustain green spaces – she welcomed the work by the PSB to make sure this happens. She was pleased that Newport has been recognised as a bee friendly city, and the biodiversity officer is working with schools to encourage children’s interest in this. The walk to school campaign is going well and St David’s primary school have shown great results. It is the Council’s intention to be carbon neutral by 2030 and part of that commitment is to work with energy co-op. In addition, she welcomed the electric charging points that are being installed across the city by City Services to help residents to reduce their carbon footprint.

Councillor Giles commended the Education Service for the great achievements made. Secondary schools are performing better than expected, primary schools achieving, reducing the gap between minority groups, raising achievement. She referred to the significant changes since February in particular the huge shift to technology. The council had provided Childcare hubs, meal vouchers, 1300 devices provided for school children. She referred to the recovery aims noted in the report and highlighted the success of schools in maintaining really good attendance rates; secondary schools’ attendance 93.9%, primary schools’ attendance 94.8%, Free School Meal attendance 92.4% and work is ongoing to increase these percentages.

Councillor Mayer welcomed the report – he was proud that a lot of his portfolio covers areas to enable all other services to operate successfully, in particular IT and the community hubs.

The Leader reflected on the digital work within the Council and the commitment that has enabled officers and members to work from home so quickly in order to continue to deliver essential services.

Councillor Harvey welcomed the introduction of electric buses by Newport Transport which will help to reduce emissions and assist with Newport's reduction of its carbon footprint.

Councillor Cockeram applauded social services for everything it has achieved, in particular the Baby and Me initiative – a wonderful initiative started 2/3 years ago in partnership with Barnardos; Welsh Government is now hoping to push this initiative across the whole of Wales. He also referred to Rose Cottage where a social worker had tested positive for Covid-19; that member of staff and other colleagues had agreed to stay at the Cottage to self-isolate for two weeks – selfless action that he applauded.

Councillor Rahman referred to Objective 4, page 64 of the report, Asset Management, in particular the community asset transfer for the Maindee triangle as this is a much needed asset which will benefit the community. As the Council's BAME champion he welcomed the work being done to promote diversity in the work place and equality in the community, although there is still lots more work to be done.

The Leader invited the Chief Executive to say a few words who reiterated the Cabinet Members' comments, and was personally very proud to see what's been achieved in 2019/20 and to see a number of projects and programmes that were started at the beginning of the plan coming to fruition.

The Leader welcomed the comments made by her Cabinet colleagues and for the report to be endorsed for publication.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report and for it to be published at which time it will also be provided in Welsh.

5 Risk Report Quarter 1 (2020/21)

The Leader presented the report that provided Cabinet with an update of the Council's Corporate Risk Register for the end of Quarter 1 (30th June 2020).

The report asked Members to consider the contents of the report and to note the changes to the risk.

The report stated that the Council's Risk Management Policy and Corporate Risk Register enables the administration and officers to effectively identify, manage and monitor those risks which could prevent the Council from achieving its objectives in the Corporate Plan (2017-22) and the statutory duties as a local authority.

The report confirmed the Quarter 1 risk report will also be presented to the Council's Audit Committee in October 2020 to review the Council's risk management process and governance arrangements.

At the end of quarter 1 the corporate risk register included 19 risks requiring monitoring from Cabinet and the Council's Corporate Management Team. All other risks are monitored through the Council's service areas and Corporate Management Team. Mechanisms are in place to escalate any new or existing risk to the Corporate Risk Register.

In quarter 1 there are 13 Severe risks (risk scores 15 to 25); 4 Major risks (risk scores 7 to 14) and 2 Moderate risks (risk scores 1 to 3).

Seven risks had remained at the same risk score as quarter 4.

The Leader referred to the following:

New/Escalated Risks

- In quarter 1, there was one new risk (Ash Die Back Disease) and five escalated risks from service area risk registers.
- **Pressure on Adult & Community Services (Escalated Risk, risk score increase from 16 to 20)** COVID-19 has increased the pressure on the finances and long term sustainability of adult care and services are having to redesign themselves to accommodate the COVID-19 guidelines. These also have an impact on the perception and delivery of services.
- **Pressure on the delivery of Children Services (Escalated Risk, risk score increase from 16 to 20)** COVID-19 has caused the increase in pressure in terms of the quantum of work and nature of the work alongside the impact on staff with the societal changes. Attempts to mitigate the risk are reliant on maintaining communication and minimising tasks which are likely to increase during the year.
- **Cyber Security (Escalated Risk, risk score increase from 12 to 16)** in quarter 1 public sector bodies were notified of the increased threat level to the UK to gain access to data held by central and local government. This vulnerability has also increased due to the number of people working from home.
- **Pressure on Homelessness Service (Escalated Risk, risk score increase from 12 to 16)** The Welsh Government implemented new statutory legislation to support the homeless and rough sleepers into accommodation and provide support. Welsh Government provided phase 1 funding to the Council and has recently received phase 2 funding to continue this support.
- **Pressure on Housing Service (Escalated Risk, risk score increase from 12 to 16)** the delivery of the housing service has been impacted due to the implementation of the statutory legislation for homeless, rough sleepers and the most vulnerable. Furthermore, due to the vulnerable economic position and the furlough scheme ending in October, there could be more pressure to provide assistance for residents that may be at threat of redundancy and/or reduction in pay.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Members to comment:

Councillor Jeavons referred to Ash Die Back Disease (New Risk, Score 20) and confirmed a review by City Services of Council-owned trees identified approximately 8,600 Ash trees that had Ash Die Back or were at risk from it. The risk score reflects the high financial costs and urgency to remove the trees before they fall and cause damage. It was noted that Newport has a lot more of these trees than other authorities.

Councillor Cockeram referred to the enormous pressure on social services especially with an ageing population. Domiciliary care is also a concern with low wages and retention of staff. Residential homes is another concern as, whilst Welsh Government is currently subsidising this sector at the moment, if these homes go into administration this will have an impact on services. He also referred to the financial risk associated with spending on supported living when children become adults. As well as financial pressures within Children's services there is also pressure from Welsh Government for authorities to stop children coming into care. All of these services are statutory duties.

Councillor Mayer reported that the biggest risk in his portfolio is the threat associated with Cyber security.

Councillor Davies referred to agile working and the perceived benefit is the massive impact on the reduction of our carbon footprint; work has to be done now to look at how this can be sustained.

Councillor Rahman mentioned work needed to be done on how the Council utilises its buildings in the future whilst still providing a gold standard of service to Newport's residents.

The report also highlighted the change in direction of some risk scores which are referred to on page 73 of the agenda.

The Leader sought agreement from her Cabinet on the contents of the Quarter 1 Risk Report and to continue to monitor progress of actions taken to reduce the impact of the risks in the report.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report and to continue to monitor progress of actions taken to reduce the impact of the risks in the report.

6 **Pay and Reward Policy**

The Leader introduced the report that confirmed the Council's Pay and Reward Policy for the workforce is an annual report that requires adoption by Council. The policy sets out the internal mechanisms for remunerating Council officers and provides any changes since the last adoption.

Two proposed changes identified in the report are:

- Firstly, the removal of the car block allowance for Chief Officers which will alter the way in which mileage expenses are incurred and will bring Chief Officers in line with the rest of the workforce who are required to claim for the journeys they make as opposed to receiving a fixed payment.
- Secondly, restricting re-employment to those who take voluntary redundancy or settlement agreements. This will mean that public funding towards severance packages is applied appropriately and that due diligence on staffing structures will be thoroughly applied before any decision to agree severance packages is taken.

In addition to these proposals, the Pay and Reward Policy reports on the annual gender pay gap which is also published on the Council's website. The report confirmed the mean gap has decreased to 3.6% from last year's reported 4.8%. The Leader was pleased to report that the median gap has now closed as the analysis of the data shows that the median point of hourly pay is the same for both men and women. The Council's gender pay gap compares favourably with other Councils across Wales and the UK average of 17%.

The Leader confirmed the Council will continue to review and continually monitor its gender pay gap to find ways of closing the mean pay gap through the objectives published in the annual gender pay gap report and by undertaking a second equal pay audit in 2021 to identify any further areas for improvement.

The report sought Cabinet's approval of the policy for recommendation to Council.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Community and Resources to speak to the report and he confirmed that the annual Pay and Reward Policy offers the opportunity to publish the Council's intentions regarding remuneration for its officers and make any appropriate amendments. He confirmed that the Council's Trades Union representatives have been consulted on the two proposed changes noted above, and their feedback is contained within

the report, as is an assessment of the Fairness and Equality impact that the proposal to restrict re-employment may have.

The Cabinet Member also confirmed that Cabinet had previously committed to paying a supplement to the lowest paid employees to ensure that they receive a salary equivalent to the Real Living Wage and the policy confirms that supplement will continue to be made.

The Cabinet Member reiterated the Leader's comments regarding the gender pay gap and the progress made in the 2019 report; he was pleased that the report identifies that there is no pay gap between women and men when comparing the median hourly rate, and a drop from 4.8% to 3.6% when comparing the mean hourly rate. The Cabinet Member believes this shows good progress in eliminating the gap at Newport City Council and commended the policy to Cabinet.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report and for it to be taken to Council for formal adoption.

7 SRS Data Centre

The Leader introduced the report that confirmed that following the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group in 2016, Cabinet agreed to join the Shared Resource Service (SRS) and transfer the Council's IT service into this partnership with Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent local authorities and Gwent Police.

Eleven investment objectives highlighted the important improvements Newport wished to get from this arrangement, at the core of these were the following requirements:

- to develop a responsive, continuously improving IT service;
- the rationalisation of systems across the partnership;
- high quality, continuous staff development;
- an IT infrastructure that delivers resilience and quality of service;
- the development of business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements including out of hours support as appropriate;
- support for the delivery of digital goals as outlined in Newport City Council's Digital Strategy.

The report confirmed that the Council recognised the importance of investing in its IT provision. This meant that when lock down began the Council was already equipped to enable both staff and Members to continue working whilst not attending their usual place of work.

Since joining SRS there have been improvements to both the IT kit and the support systems. The partnership has jointly developed new systems, such as the CRM system, and have rolled out Office 365. Whilst being part of a wider partnership has helped the Council to improve its service, the Leader thanked the Council's in-house Digital Team for the work they have done to ensure a continued improvement in performance and also enabling the Council to maximise its investment.

The report stated that in order to meet the objectives of a resilient IT infrastructure and improvements to business continuity, the plan was to move the current data centre from the Civic Centre to the SRS purpose built data centre in Blaenavon. However, following a further evaluation by SRS of the costs for Newport and the other partners of continued operations within Blaenavon, compared to a move to an even newer purpose built data centre, the

outcome of the evaluation is that it is, overall, cheaper for all partners to move to a new data centre.

The business case developed by SRS is supported by the Finance and Governance Board of the Partnership and a recommendation to proceed then made to the SRS Strategic Board (the Council is represented on both Boards at senior officer and Cabinet Member level). The business case has recently been signed off by the Strategic Board and now each Cabinet of each local authority in the partnership is being asked to give approval.

The report details both the revenue and capital costs of the move. The report noted that moving the data centre to ensure resilience in line with the original Cabinet decision would always have a cost, regardless of whether this was a move to the current SRS data centre or a new location.

The report confirmed that moving all partners to the new premises will take up to three years and at that point there will be an increased revenue cost for Newport. However, this has been anticipated and is within the MTRP. Within this is also a budget for the on-going update of the data centre, which will be required every five or so years. It was noted that this increased revenue cost is partially off-set by a decrease in the energy costs at the Civic Centre. The Leader was pleased to report that this will also support the Council's carbon reduction plans and will see an approximate 92 tonne annual reduction in carbon as a result of less energy consumption at the Civic Centre.

The report confirmed the required Capital expenditure is within the current IT capital refresh plan and does not impact on the ability to ensure the on-going resilience of the remaining core infrastructure that is needed across the estate to operate.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Community and Resources to speak to the report and as the Cabinet representative on the SRS Strategic Board he confirmed he fully supports the agreement of this proposal. He stated that the safeguarding of systems and data and future proofing this is vitally important as we have all become reliant on IT and Digital infrastructure, never more so than since March when we entered lock-down; he confirmed that within four days of lockdown 1200 council staff were enabled to work from home.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Corporate Plan's commitments in relation to this which was to become a Modernised Council, where digital was the default, and to create a Newport Intelligence Hub, so that the Council had better access to intelligence to support its operations. The Cabinet Member believes the way the Council responded to lock-down, in a very short period of time, is absolute proof that we have become a Modernised Council.

The move of the data centre to a modern, purpose built location ensures stability and security. It also gives a rock solid springboard to fulfil the ambition of 'cloud by default' – moving from on-premises solutions to hosted or cloud based solutions. This will make the Council more flexible and will ensure business continuity. That journey has started with some of the biggest systems being either hosted or in the cloud – HR and Payroll, CRM, WCCIS and email as examples.

The Cabinet Member thanked both SRS for the on-going support and the in-house Digital Team who have responded amazingly well to the challenge of supporting a whole range of services now operating virtually.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member and stated that the work of the Newport Intelligence Hub is invaluable; she praised the leadership and expertise of the Newport Intelligence Hub Manager, Shaun Powell, who continues to provide excellent service with regard to the work done in the response to Covid-19.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report.

8 **Forecast Number of Looked After Children (LAC)**

The Leader introduced the report that confirmed that Children's Services continue to work proactively to support children and families. Staff work to ensure children are safely cared for in their families and if this is not possible children are looked after and offered the best possible opportunities.

The report confirmed that Welsh Government has continued to focus on reducing the numbers of looked after children in Wales. In Newport the number of children overall in the care of the Local Authority has remained stable. Children continue to come into care but children are also leaving care, either to return to family, or to be placed for adoption, or because they reach the age of 18. Since reporting to Cabinet in May 2019, officers have continued to provide regular reports as required to Welsh Government. Since March 2020 this has included weekly reporting.

The report stated that staff have worked tirelessly since the onset of Covid-19 and have continued to deliver full services. Referrals have increased and the pressures on families have inevitably heightened.

Several new initiatives introduced by Children's Services and funded by Welsh Government grant and LA resources are working well, for example:

- Family Group Conferencing
- Baby and Me to support families.

It was also noted that staff from a broad swathe of agencies are involved in supporting vulnerable families and Children's Services' staff continue to engage to share practice and work to a culture of safe risk management for children.

The Leader, along with the Cabinet Member for Social Services and officers, was deeply disappointed to receive a letter from the Deputy Minister with such a negative tone as the letter on the back of the past 8 months does not reflect the increasing challenges faced by families or the work across all agencies to try to mitigate some of those pressures. (For reference the letter is attached as an appendix to the report).

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Social Services to speak to the report:

The Cabinet Member referred to the letter received from Welsh Government and whilst understanding their approach confirmed that the Council has a duty of care to ensure children are safe. He referred to page 153 of the report which details numbers of looked after children over the last 18 months; he confirmed that the numbers are presently quite stable.

He commended the hard work of officers within Children's Services who constantly strive to ensure children and families are safe. Whilst setting targets is not always helpful, staff have continued to work across Children's services and other agencies to only bring children into care when it is absolutely necessary.

He was pleased to report that in the past two years the Council has:

- opened Rose Cottage – now nominated for a Social Care Excellence Award,
- significantly increased the support for foster carers,

- are well on the way to opening Rosedale and are moving forward with Windmill Farm.
- In 2019/20 approval of 6 new households as foster carers. Already in 2020/21 approved 13 households with more currently being assessed. This is as a result of increased financial support and a comprehensive recruitment campaign.

He reported that the Minister has made an announcement that more money will be forthcoming for looked after children but the figure has yet to be confirmed.

The Cabinet Member reported that whilst the Welsh Government emphasis is on reduction, the work of Children's Services is safely supporting families and whilst becoming looked after is always a last resort, the Council is ensuring it provides the best possible care when that need does arise.

The Leader invited the Head of Children and Young People Services, Sally Jenkins, to speak to the report; she confirmed that as at today's figure the number of looked after children is 378. She re-emphasised the comments made by the Leader and Cabinet Member that the priority is to keep children safe and to offer them the best level of care possible. She confirmed that bringing children into care is the last resort and will only take this path if no other alternative is available.

The Leader thanked the Head of Service and all officers within social services for their hard work and diligence.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report.

9 LDP Annual Monitoring Report and LDP Review

10 COVID-19 Recovery - Update

The Leader presented the report that provide an update on the progress made by Newport Council and its partners to support the City to comply with the localised lockdown measures and supporting Newport's communities as part of the Council's Strategic Recovery Aims.

In June, Cabinet had endorsed the four Strategic Recovery Aims that support the delivery of the Council's Wellbeing Objectives but also ensure the Council's services can return safely and manage future outbreaks.

The report noted that:

- Since the last report, localised lockdown measures have been put in place to control and further reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the City following a significant increase in cases.
- Since the restrictions have been in place, Newport Council has been using all of its communications to remind residents and businesses to adhere to the new restrictions.
- Throughout this period the Council's emergency response team (Covid Gold) has been overseeing the delivery of operational and strategic activities by the Council and the wider Strategic Co-ordination Group.
- Newport Council has also introduced Incident Management Teams to manage community outbreaks and support the City's Track, Trace and Protect (TTP) system.

- At this point in time, Covid-19 remains prevalent in the City and throughout the remainder of this financial year and this will be a linear process. It is for this reason that we remain vigilant but also flexible to support any necessary measures and to also support the communities across the city.
- The report also highlighted the Council's response across its service areas including the collaborative work with the Council's partners in the Public Services Board, community groups and third sector partners.

The report also identified the progress made by the Council against the Strategic Recovery Aims, identified on pages 326 and 327 of the agenda.

The Deputy Leader thanked all staff for their tremendous work throughout the pandemic.

The Leader took the opportunity to stress to everyone the importance of following the rules. She appealed to the public that, if contacted by the TTP service the importance of following up on that contact, as you will have been in touch with someone who has tested positive for covid-19. The service is confidential and people will not be judged, but it is an important step in trying to stop this disease.

The Leader thanked all staff, partners and councillors for supporting communities and services.

The Leader promised a further update on the Council's progress at the next Cabinet meeting.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report.

11 Brexit Update Report

The Leader presented the report that provided an update on the Council's Brexit preparations and current Trade Negotiations between the UK Government and EU.

The report recapped on information provided to previous Cabinet meetings that on 31st January the UK formally left the European Union and entered into the Transition Period to negotiate future trade arrangements and a future relationship with the EU.

In the last nine months the country's and this Council's focus has been on its Covid-19 response. Throughout this time the trade negotiations have been continuing between the UK Government and the EU. The outcomes of these negotiations remain a significant risk for Wales and Newport.

The UK Government and the EU have until 31st December 2020 to conclude the negotiations and the UK Government have publically stated that there is no intention to extend these negotiations beyond this date.

With less than two months remaining there is now a risk that the UK will fall back onto World Trade Organisation (WTO) Tariffs and new regulatory requirements may need to be implemented to manage ongoing import and export arrangements.

In September the UK Government introduced the Internal Market Bill which sets out the rules for the operation of the UK Internal market between Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland after 31st December 2020.

This Bill will allow greater freedom for devolved nations when setting policies but there are risks of new regulatory barriers. The Welsh Local Government Association have also raised concerns in response to the Bill

The report provided an update on progress made by the Council's Brexit Task and Finish Group – the summary of progress is identified in Appendix 1 of the report.

The report sought agreement from Cabinet to accept the contents of the report and to receive regular updates as progress is made through the transition period.

Decision:

Cabinet voted and unanimously agreed the report and to receive regular updates as progress is made through the transition period.

12 Cabinet Work Programme

The Leader presented the Cabinet Work Programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the updated programme.

13 Live event

The meeting terminated at 5.48 pm