

Minutes



Cabinet

Date:	13 October 2021
Time:	4.00 pm
Present:	Councillors Councillor J Mudd (Chair), J Hughes, Councillor R Jeavons, P Cockeram, D Harvey, D Mayer, Councillor R Truman and D Davies
Apologies:	Councillors M Rahman

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

2 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting from 8 September 2021 were recorded as a true and accurate record.

3 **Corporate Annual Report 2020/21**

The Leader presented the report to Cabinet.

This was the fourth Annual Report of the Council's five-year Corporate Plan.

The purpose of the report was to reflect on 2020/21 assessing the achievements this Council made, where we could improve and looking forward for the remainder of this Corporate Plan.

2020/21 was one of the most challenging that this Cabinet and officers across the Council had to manage as we responded to the Covid-19 pandemic and supported Newport's communities.

Despite these challenges, Newport's communities came together to support our public services, reaching out to their neighbours and helping our local businesses to recover and thrive again.

The report provided an overview of what Newport Council and its partners have delivered against this Cabinet's mission of 'Improving People's Lives' and the four Wellbeing Objectives

1. Improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities
2. Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment
3. Enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient
4. Build cohesive and sustainable communities

Throughout the pandemic, many Council services were impacted by the restrictions and the Council committed to four Strategic Recovery Aims to support the response and recovery of services, Newport's communities and businesses. The Strategic Recovery Aims were:

1. Understand and respond to the additional challenges which Covid-19 has presented including loss of employment, impact on businesses and on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of both mainstream and vulnerable learners.
2. Understand and respond to the impact of Covid-19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.
3. Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding our most vulnerable and building strong, resilient communities.
4. Provide people with the resources and support they need to move out of the crisis, considering in particular, the impact that Covid-19 has had on our minority and marginalised communities.

The Annual Report was presented in September to the Council's Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee. Detailed discussions on the Council's Covid-19 response and feedback were in the contents of the Annual Report. The Committees recommendations were considered and updated in the final version of this report presented today.

Following the Cabinet's endorsement, the Annual Report would be published and made available in Welsh.

In the last year, Newport Council had to adapt to deliver its services and have had to change long established habits and practices to meet the urgent needs of the crisis. Services switched incredibly quickly wherever possible to remote ways of working, video calls, and wearing protective clothing to minimise the spread of the virus.

From the start of the pandemic, this Council's priority was to protect the most vulnerable across our communities.

This could not have been achieved without the collaborative approach that Newport Council, public and third sector organisations took to achieve this and it was hoped that this was one of the legacies of this experience that could be sustained and built upon for the future.

The Annual Report demonstrated that the Council continued to make good progress against its Well-being Objectives despite the challenge faced and increasing continuing financial pressures faced by the Council's front-line services.

The Council's finance position was in a good position at the end of 2020/21 which was helped by the Welsh Government funding to support the Council's response to the pandemic.

Cabinet was aware that there were new financial challenges as services were seeing increasing demand, which would require the Council to make difficult and bold decisions going forward.

The report also highlighted some of the areas in the Council that would require improvement and where the Council would make necessary changes in the delivery of its services. These being:

Well-being Objective 1 (Improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities) – Education / Regeneration.

- Despite the challenges schools and pupils gained good results in their GCSE and A levels.
- The Council recognised the need to ensure the achievement gap did not widen for the most disadvantaged pupils in the future.

- For schools, pupils and their families it was a challenge with home schooling. The Council was able to provide devices and internet access for many pupils to ensure they did not lose out on their learning.
- Throughout the year schools supported Free School Meals pupils and families by providing supermarket vouchers.
- The Council's 21st Century schools programme was impacted by the pandemic but despite this, existing projects at Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed, Bassaleg School, Caerleon Comprehensive School and a new school at Whiteheads would be delivered throughout 2021/22.
- The Community Regeneration Team were impacted by the pandemic making it difficult to offer face to face programmes. Despite this and working with Digital Communities Wales the Council was able to offer IT equipment and support to people to undertake remote learning.
- The Council also offered online and virtual support through the Reach / Restart programme to refugees in the City which resulted in 95 assessments and supporting 74 people to gain employability skills and qualifications.
- Collaborative working with the DWP, Careers Wales, Coleg Gwent Adult Community Learning was vital to giving opportunities to many people in the City to retrain, gain new qualifications and employment.
- Newport Youth Academy and Aspire enabled young people not in education, employment or training to gain qualifications and entry into employment and further education.
- There were clear signs that Newport as a digital industry hub would continue to thrive, creating first class jobs and opportunities.

Well-being Objective 2 (To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment) – Regeneration Investment & Housing, City Services.

- Supporting businesses was vital, helping 1,000 businesses access £19 million of the financial support available from Welsh and UK Governments and acting as a conduit for national advice and support.
- An incubator space was planned for start-up businesses in the digital, technology and creative sectors in the Information Station which was already home to the National Software Academy.
- The redevelopment of Newport Market and Market Arcade were among the city's most exciting projects.
- Once again, Newport was recognised as one of the best performing authorities on our waste and recycling in Wales and the UK.
- Newport was the first Council in Wales to purchase electric refuse vehicle as part of our ongoing programme to upgrade the Council's fleet to electric vehicles.
- Installed 20 charge points across Newport sites for electric vehicles and upgraded street / parking lighting across car park sites.
- Significant funding was achieved towards repairs of the Transporter Bridge and development of the Heritage Centre.
- Continued work to reduce and respond to fly tipping in the city and worked on a number of projects to improve wildlife and biodiversity in the city, such as No Mow May.

Wellbeing Objective 3 (To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient) – Social Services, City Services, Law & Regulation, Regeneration Investment & Housing

- The social service and community regeneration teams worked tirelessly through the pandemic alongside social care partners and the NHS to support some of our most vulnerable residents.
- Innovative work enabled us to develop a toolkit for children at risk of exploitation which was being adopted across Gwent and shared throughout Wales.

- A new outreach service developed to reduce isolation and loneliness during the pandemic would become a permanent service offer to offer respite in the absence of the former day service for Newport citizens.
- The Community Connector team provided a service to over 2,000 residents providing information, telephone advice and one to one support.
- The Council and Newport Live supported the NHS throughout the vaccination programme, providing buildings, staff and other facilities to ensure as many people as possible were vaccinated in the city.
- Intermediate Care Funding (ICF) enabled the employment of Transitions Occupational Therapist to assist young people's transition into adulthood.
- The pandemic also demonstrated the benefits of not relying on cars to travel around the city. Active Travel projects delivered this year demonstrated the benefits of walking, cycling and using public transport. There was an improvement to the air quality in the city because of people being encouraged to work from home.
- Our work with the Cardiff Capital Region, Gwent Public Services Board and Western Gateway would start to bring significant investment over the next decade to improve our infrastructure making it more integrated across the region.

Well-being Objective 4 (To build Cohesive and sustainable communities) – People & Business Change, Regeneration Investment & Housing.

- Tackling homelessness through the pandemic with accommodation, mental and physical health support through our well-developed relationships with partner organisations and funding from Welsh Government. We are determined to build on our positive achievements.
- Neighbourhood Hub teams supported residents at need, through 5,000 phone calls to shielding residents, delivering 800 food parcels to isolated and vulnerable families, coordinating the Welsh Government Food Parcel scheme and home food growing initiative in Ringland.
- Flying Start settings provided childcare for children of keyworkers through lockdowns and summer holidays.
- Strong partnership work created a Safety and Anti-social behaviour data dashboard to collaboratively focus efforts and find solutions to make greenspace safe and accessible for all.
- Newport had a long history of offering welcome and sanctuary to people who choose to make the city their home and was proud of its diverse communities. Throughout the last year this Council supported and stood alongside its Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities as the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum and the Council remained committed to tackling all forms of hate crime with our partners in Gwent Police.
- Our community cohesion team worked hard alongside third sector partners to ensure that our EU residents and others were supported to continue to live and work in Newport.
- We would also continue to support refugee families that have been displaced due to conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan.
- Undertaking Community Impact Assessment to understand the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown measures on communities in Newport.

Comments from Cabinet Members

- Councillor Cockeram stated that this was the most positive corporate plan that he had seen in his history with the Council. Councillor Cockeram highlighted items that stood out for him within the report. Home First was a reablement service preventing unnecessary admissions and there were savings involved as a result of this initiative. Community Connectors supported residents who engaged their services. Councillor Cockeram was proud to be part of the plan and thanked the Leader who articulated the report well and congratulated all those engaged in the report.

- Councillor Davies referred to the strategic recovery work undertaken in relation to schools, including the implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty. Remote learning for pupils was a challenge and by using the WG funding the Council was able to provide over 6,000 devices in children's homes as well as installing wifi for those pupils with no internet access. Impact on the emotional wellbeing and post covid recovery work was in place to help students and staff. The report also focussed on the success of the Neighbourhood hubs in delivering education programmes such as the Newport Youth Academy and Aspire, providing bespoke training and ensuring young adults were prepared for work and engage within the system. The Reach/Restart programme was delivered across Newport despite pandemic, with many support modules in place to support refugees.
- Councillor Truman echoed councillor Cockeram's comments that the report was the best report to date despite the pandemic. The Track, Trace and Protect (TTP) system was set up quickly and was considered to be one of the best in Wales. The mobile testing unit, community hubs, support for rough sleepers in addition to many other reactive services to the pandemic was testament to the hard work put in place by the Council. Councillor Truman thanked all employees of Newport City Council who pulled together and contributed to the positive content of the report.
- Councillor Hughes mentioned that the officers met the challenges of sustainability and the environment in Newport to meet the Net Zero Carbon Neutral target by 2030. Achievements highlighted were, changing LED lighting to low energy and Newport was the first Council in Wales to introduce electric refuse lorries. Newport City Council also received the prestigious Alan Clarke award for local/community energy at the Solar and Storage Live Awards in December 2020. The success of various projects to improve the environment in the city by Newport was also pointed out by Councillor Hughes.
- Councillor Harvey referred to the continuous regeneration of the city, including the Chartist Towe, Indoor Market, the Market Arcade and the Mill Street Post Office building, Devon Place footbridge, Information Station to name a few. Councillor Harvey congratulated the Leader and Deputy Leader for the report and was proud of the senior team of the council for their hard work and involvement within the report.
- Deputy Leader also was very impressed with the report and said well done to all those involved. The Deputy Leader extended his thanks to the residents, with the introduction of the smaller refuse bins the recycling which had contributed to reducing refuse. The Deputy Leader also echoed the comments of Councillor regarding the regeneration of the City and also referred to the active travel scheme which was increased by 47% this year.
- Councillor Mayer echoed comments of colleagues and highlighted the amount of times that the Neighbourhood and Intelligent hubs were mentioned in the report and that they had progressed during the challenging times. Councillor Mayer referred to page 33 within the report which showed a case study of the hubs was which extremely informative.

The Leader thanked colleagues for their considered comments.

Decision:

That Cabinet endorsed the Annual Report 2020/21 to enable the report to be published by the 31 October 2021.

4 Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP)

The Leader presented the report to Cabinet.

Full Council endorsed the review of Newport's Local Development Plan in May earlier this year. The Council's process for review also received formal approval from Welsh Government.

A call was put out for candidate sites and the Council also consulted on an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This report would help to ensure that sustainability was at the heart of the replacement LDP. It would include assessments on equality, language, health and well-being and would be key to assessing candidate sites and all proposed replacement LDP policies.

The proposed Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report included a framework which focuses on ten themes:

- Economy and employment
- Population and communities
- Health and well-being
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Transport and movement
- Natural Resources
- Biodiversity
- Historic Environment
- Landscape
- Climate Change

Proposed sites and draft policies would all need to be considered against these themes. The themes had a number of assessment questions associated with them which could be viewed in Appendix A of the Cabinet Report. In summary, sites and policies that received positive answers to these assessment questions would have a greater chance of making it into the adopted replacement LDP.

The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and framework was subject to public consultation. Comments received could be viewed in Appendix B along with the changes made following consultation.

Issues covered in the responses included:

- Importance of green infrastructure
- Welsh Government's declaration of a Nature Emergency
- Investment in the City Centre
- Further protection of the Gwent Levels

In summary, Cabinet were being asked to consider the responses received and approve the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Framework which were updated following consultation. If this was approved, the Council was also being asked to agree that officers could move to the next stage of the replacement LDP preparation. This involved engaging with stakeholders in order to prepare a draft vision and proposed objectives for the replacement LDP, plus discussing the level of growth, particularly in terms of housing and employment land that we may wish to deliver in Newport.

All proposals and feedback on this next engagement stage would be returned to Cabinet for further discussion and consideration in the future.

Comments from Cabinet Members

- Councillor Hughes picked up on consultation comments within the report by the Council's partners and stakeholders, such as Friends of the Gwent Levels and many others.

Councillor Hughes welcomed the need to protect rural landscape and that the work being done was recognised more nationally and picked up by the BBC which highlighted that Newport was ahead of the game in several areas regarding conservation.

- Councillor Davies supported Councillor Hughes comments on the Gwent Levels focussing on the biodiversity and birdlife. This was also fundamental to LDP for the future wellbeing for Newport residents and was therefore pleased that LDP was taking this into consideration.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted and considered the consultation comments received on the ISA Report along with the proposed officer responses.
2. Approved the ISA Framework and the ISA Report (updated post consultation).
3. Agreed that officers could start engaging with stakeholders in order to prepare a draft Vision and Objectives for Newport plus growth options for the plan period. (Proposals and feedback would then be returned to Cabinet for consideration).

5 **Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2019/20**

The Leader presented the report to Cabinet.

Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council was required to report annually on the progress it made against the strategic equality objectives contained within its Strategic Equality Plan. The Equality Act also required Local Authorities to publish staff equalities data, which this report also contained. This Annual Report related to the first year of delivery against the Council's new Strategic Equality Objectives, published on 31 March 2020.

The new Objectives were developed in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders and were subject to extensive community engagement. The involvement of grassroots communities ensured that whilst the Plan delivered a strategic vision for equality in Newport, it also ensured tangible outcomes for communities on the ground.

The pandemic presented significant challenges in delivering against some areas of work, for example, in relation to customer services. However, other areas had gained traction as a direct result of the impact of COVID-19. The Council's equality work this year had to be flexible, responding to emerging challenges, particularly around access to information, education and addressing race-based hate crime.

The impacts of the UK leaving the EU was deeply felt by our EU migrant communities this year, and our focus on supporting people to remain in Newport and protect their rights and entitlements continued. The Council had also taken stock of the effectiveness of its monitoring arrangements throughout the year and taken steps to improve them.

Highlights from the past year included:

- The council signed up to Race Council Cymru's Zero Tolerance to Racism Policy for Wales and Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter
- The council Leader has established a Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority community roundtable which meets on a quarterly basis
- Significant dates, including Pride Month, Black History 365, Refugee Week, Holocaust Memorial Day and Hate Crime Awareness Week were recognised and promoted across the city, including within our schools
- Themed delivery groups were established to deliver against each Equality Objective
- The Terms of Reference and membership of the council's Strategic Equalities Group (SEG) was reviewed and updated and the Group now received quarterly progress reports

- Responsibilities under the Socio-economic Duty were embedded in council processes, including strategic decision-making
- The council had a Diversity (ethnic minority) LGBTQ+ and Disability staff network, all of which were now represented at SEG
- £100,000 of funding was distributed to grassroots community projects, overseen by Newport's Fairness Commission and a representative community steering group
- An Accessibility Stakeholder Group was established and was advising on council projects with a focus on access for disabled people
- Equality support has been provided to all Test, Trace, Protect staff to ensure COVID-19 response was culturally and linguistically sensitive
- A review of the council's complaints policy is complete, providing clearer guidance on how the council would respond to complaints relating to discrimination
- Partnership programme delivered with Ffilm Cymru encouraged under-represented groups to learn more about careers in the film sector
- Representative workforce group established and updates made to application forms (removal of personal details) and exit interview process (considers experiences of discrimination)
- Significant support provided to EU citizens ensured high levels of EUSS applications received from Newport residents (currently 10,500)
- Welsh Government's new Anti-Bullying Guidance embedded in local processes
- Youth Council developed LGBTQ+ schools guidance
- New scheme launched for people with learning disabilities to increase opportunities for independent living
- 302 people were supported by the council's ethnic minority Community Connectors
- Online hate crime seminar delivered in partnership with the Centre for Countering Digital Hate and Hope not Hate for professionals and community groups

The analysis of the data for our workforce highlighted key areas for improvement, including improving the levels of recorded equality data, better aligning recording categories with census data, and understanding why our levels of leavers were higher for particular groups (eg people from an ethnic minority background and disabled people).

The Council's ethnic minority representation remained the same this year despite a slight drop in staff numbers and the gender pay gap reduced for this period. The council still had work to do to improve representation of minority ethnic staff at all levels of the organisation, and this would be a focus for our work during 2021/22. The council established specific Recruitment and Representative Workforce working groups to progress this.

The Annual Report was also reviewed by Scrutiny earlier this month and their comments were included in the Cabinet Report.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Community and Resources to address Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Resources advised colleagues that the report was a summary of the work that was undertaken during first year of our new Strategic Equality Plan. It set out the Council's commitment to a workplace culture and approach to service delivery that valued inclusion and diversity.

We would continue to progress this work over the next 12 months, and the Annual Report set out clear priorities for the next period based on a review of our workforce data and progress against our Equality Objectives to date.

Work this year was delivered against a challenging backdrop which resulted in an acute focus on inequalities and scrutiny of public services' response to the pandemic, particularly in supporting minority communities. A key strength this period was the increased engagement of key stakeholders, including both our grassroots communities and minority staff. This had

not only informed the Council's response to COVID-19, but also its priorities during recovery and wider equalities work.

The Council's Strategic Equalities Group was refreshed and now received quarterly highlight reports, was attended by Elected Member Champions and Network Chairs and was notably more outcome focussed in its approach to supporting this work.

The Leader thanked Councillor Mayer for his hard work in relation to his work.

Comments from Cabinet Members

- Councillor Davies stated that this was a statutory piece of legislation which required adherence to the socio economic duty and thanked officers ensuring that this was embedded in the legislation. This also enabled councillors to focus on equality within Newport and supported those and give positive reinforcement to those who were most economically disadvantaged. Councillor Davies welcomed the work undertaken by officers to ensure the training of councillors and staff regarding this legislation.
- Councillor Hughes recently attended Wales Strategic Partnership Meeting, where the work of local authorities was recognised, in particular, Newport by the Home Office and internationally. Councillor Hughes wanted to note the FEIA Comments, and the positive impact Newport had on the ethnic communities and was proud that Newport and Wales was seen as a sanctuary and a welcoming place for people moving into the City.
- Councillor Cockeram made an observation on the complaints and customer service for the Council and that compliments were not included. It was hoped that in future we would look at compliments as well as complaints.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2019/20 for consideration by Council in November.

6 Covid-19 Response and Recovery Update

The Leader presented the report to Cabinet.

The Report provided an update on the Council's and its partners' response to the Covid-19 crisis supporting the City (Residents and Businesses) to comply with the current restrictions and progress in the Council's Strategic Recovery Aims and Corporate Plan.

More up to date information was available from [Public Health Wales Covid-19 Dashboards](#) on the latest figures and also Welsh Government on restriction changes.

Since the last Cabinet meeting in September, case rates for Newport and other areas in Wales remained high as restrictions were eased allowing people to socialise more and undertake more normal routines.

The Leader reminded those present that it remained important for people to continue to adhere to the Welsh Government guidelines wearing face coverings, maintaining social distancing (where possible) and being aware of people whether that was friends or family, that there are still vulnerable people who are susceptible to the virus.

Hospitals in Newport and Gwent were continuing to see people being treated for Covid and while the numbers were not as high as those experienced during the last winter, they remained significant enough to impact on other NHS services. To reiterate the Welsh Government's position, additional restrictions could be reimposed if the NHS and new variants of concern emerged.

For people over 50 and the most vulnerable, boosters were now being offered as well as the seasonal flu jab.

12 to 15 year olds were being offered to receive the vaccination.

It remained very important for residents to take up these offers and for those still unvaccinated in the other age groups, they too could still receive the vaccine.

Communities were also facing wider economic impacts as the economy was recovering from Covid. As highlighted in the Brexit report to this Cabinet, this winter period would be seeing increasing household costs due to food and energy prices increasing as well as supply issues. This would impact many low income households in Newport and place further demand on Council and third sector support.

Newport City Council Update

Front line services continued to be delivered and the Council continued to follow the Welsh Government's advice for staff (where they could) to continue to work from home.

This equally applied to Members and access to the Civic Centre and democratic functions would continue to be undertaken virtually.

The Council has also been finalising the technology requirements and the necessary protocols for hybrid meetings to take place in the Council.

The Council's New Normal report would be reporting back to this Cabinet in November regarding the policy changes, building utilisation along with the associated benefits, risks and impacts.

Schools returned in September and the rate of attendance was lower than anticipated due to positive covid cases, asymptomatic pupils kept at home and parents not sending pupils into school due to Covid-19

All Community Hub and libraries were open and available for people to access services, training and other council services.

Newport Council launched £300,000 Newport Business Fund for new and emerging start-up businesses to grow.

The Council's regulatory teams continued to ensure business premises are complying with covid restrictions.

The Council's trading standards team continued to deliver enforcement work to ensure businesses were not delivering underage sales.

The Council was making preparations to launch its next participatory budget to community groups to support the Covid recovery of the City.

The Leader reiterated the importance of adhering to the Welsh Government guidance, encouraging people from all communities to take up the vaccine.

Further updates on the Council's progress would be provided next month.

Comments from Cabinet Members

- Councillor Davies referred to the rise in numbers of cases since the return to school and that Newport was at amber level to ensure that children stayed safe and to sustain measures such as staggered start/leave times, break and movement in corridors being one way to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Councillor Davies was delighted that there was a vaccination programme in place for 12-15 year olds and it was vital that appointments for vaccines were taken up to help with learning. Councillor Davies was also receiving twice weekly briefings with officers on infection and attendance levels within schools. We could not have attendance falling and there was a high level of anxiety with parents however with vaccinations being undertaken anxiety levels should reduce. Nonattendance other than for covid reasons was also being closely monitored and children were entitled to the best opportunity in terms of education and this would happen if they attended school.
- Deputy Leader referred to supply issues and front-line staff who did not have safety of working from home. The Deputy Leader also mentioned fuel shortage and lack of HGV drivers highlighting that Newport City Council was not immune from this and that planning was put in place swiftly by the Council to address this and therefore thanked staff for their hard work.
- Councillor Harvey raised her concern in light of the recent cut in Universal Credit and the inequalities this would lead to in young children regarding poverty and food shortage as well as the imminent price hike in fuel as winter approached. There was a potential dilemma being faced by struggling families on whether to feed the family or fuel their homes.
- Councillor Truman stated that the lifting of restrictions meant Enforcement staff were working closely with business owners of retail and licensed premises, giving advice and guidance as well as helping them with risk assessments.
- Councillor Cockeram supported Councillor Harvey's comments and highlighted that every service area was directly impacted by covid and across Gwent there were 540 places in care and residential homes. This was because of covid restrictions and this was putting pressure on hospital discharge and the council providing domiciliary care packages. There was however a change for the positive with individual care home managers making decisions on filling these spaces.

The Leader advised that it was essential to keep this item on the Cabinet Agenda considering the comments made by Cabinet Members.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the progress being made to date and the risks that were still faced by the Council and the city.

7 **Post Brexit Update**

The Leader presented the report to Cabinet.

The next Cabinet Report was an update on the post EU Transition arrangements since the UK left the EU in December 2020.

Progress to Date

- Since the previous report in September, Wales and the wider UK economy encountered several disruptions which impacted households and businesses across Newport.
- We have seen the impact that the labour market was having across different sectors such as logistics disrupting food and fuel supply, social care, construction, farming and hospitality.

- This was also impacting Council services with disruptions to City Services and social care.
- The cost of energy (electric and gas) had increased which would see households on standard and pre-payment tariffs see an increase in the energy costs. For low income households in Newport this would have a significant impact and would put further pressure on those vulnerable households.
- Food prices were increasing as well as disruptions in supply resulting in certain foods not reaching supermarkets and impacting on food banks across Newport and Wales.
- Whilst these issues were solely attributed to the UK leaving the EU and the impact of Covid was a significant contributor, it was becoming clearer about the impact that Brexit was having on businesses to be able to function as effectively prior to leaving.
- The Council's Civil Contingencies team, were supporting the Council's Gold team to respond to these issues and collaborating with other local authorities as part of its wider Local Resilience Forum.
- The Council's Finance teams were also monitoring the situation as part of its monthly monitoring and revenue planning.
- It was over three months since the deadline passed for EU/EAA citizens to apply for EU Settled Status.
- In Newport 10,990 applications were received since this process started.
- 5,410 EU/EAA citizens received full Settled Status while 3,620 citizens received Pre-settled status.
- There were however over 1,000 residents still awaiting a decision.
- Cabinet wanted to reiterate its support for EU/EAA citizens living and working in Newport and that they all had a part to play in making Newport a great city to live and work in. The Leader encouraged anyone who was still awaiting a decision or having difficulties to conclude their application to contact the Council and other organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Newport Council was continuing to work with community groups and third sector organisations to ensure EU citizens had access to the services and support they need.
- The Council was working with GAVO to make arrangements to support further food poverty work.
- Community Cohesion officers were now focusing on post Brexit rights and making sure EU citizens, businesses and services understand their obligations to access services.

Comments from Cabinet Members

- Councillor Harvey reiterated her previous comments as mentioned on the previous agenda item.
- Councillor Davies agreed with Councillor Harvey's comments and expressed concern regarding winter fuel crisis and the impact of main Newport employers such as the local steel plant. With a potential lack of fuel in the supply chain this could have a significant impact on jobs and redundancies.
- Councillor Truman echoed comments of the Leader and colleagues and referred to possible dilemma faced by as mentioned before on families that were struggling financially to pay for food or their energy bills this winter.
- Councillor Hughes sat on board of trustees for one of Newport's food banks and shared colleagues concerns but also highlighted that volunteers in Newport were working very hard during the pandemic. Councillor Hughes expressed his gratitude for the wealth of volunteers that worked at food banks, it was unfortunate that they were needed but their work was important.
- Councillor Mayer also expressed his concerns about unfairness and inequality and agreed with his colleagues.

- Councillor Jeavons reiterated his previous comments regarding HGV drivers and referred to the 20 foreign lorry drivers who were granted a visa to work in Britain and hoped more would come forward.
- Councillor Cockeram also shared the concern of his colleagues regarding food banks.

As mentioned in the previous agenda item, the Leader advised that it was essential to keep this item on the Cabinet Agenda considering the comments received by Cabinet Members.

Decision:

That Cabinet noted the Council's Brexit response.

8 PSB Summary of Business

The link to the summary of business was noted by Cabinet.

9 Work Programme

This was the regular monthly report on the work programme.

Decision:

Cabinet noted and accepted the updated programme.