

# Agenda



## Cabinet

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Date: Wednesday, 15 December 2021

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Via Teams

To: Councillors Councillor J Mudd (Chair), J Hughes, Councillor R Jeavons, P Cockeram, D Harvey, D Mayer, Councillor R Truman and D Davies

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Item		Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
3	<u>Minutes of the Last Meeting</u> (Pages 3 - 12)	
4	<u>Treasury Management Report for the Period to 30 September 2021</u> (Pages 13 - 30)	All Wards
5	<u>Corporate Risk Register</u> (Pages 31 - 82)	All Wards
6	<u>Audit Wales - Audit of Newport City Council Certificate of Compliance</u> (Pages 83 - 90)	All Wards
7	<u>New Normal Report</u> (Pages 91 - 110)	
8	<u>Director of Social Services Annual Report</u> (Pages 111 - 164)	All Wards
9	<u>Covid Update Report</u> (Pages 165 - 180)	All Wards
10	<u>Brexit Update Report</u> (Pages 181 - 186)	All Wards
11	<u>Work Programme</u> (Pages 187 - 194)	
12	<u>Live Event</u> <a href="#">Cabinet Meeting, 15 December 2021 - YouTube</a>	

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Date of Issue: 9 December 2021

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# Minutes



## Cabinet

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Date: 10 November 2021

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors Councillor J Mudd (Chair), J Hughes, Councillor R Jeavons, P Cockeram, D Harvey, Councillor R Truman and D Davies

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### 1 Apologies

Councillor Mayer. The Chief Executive left the meeting early to attend another meeting.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

### 3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes from 13 October were recorded as a true record.

### 4 Revenue Budget Monitor

The Leader presented the report, which highlighted the forecast position on the Councils revenue budget and the financial risks and opportunities that presented themselves as at September 2021.

Against a net budget of £316million, the September revenue position currently forecasted an underspend of almost £8million, representing a 2.5% variance against budget. This position was inclusive of the continued financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and assumes full reimbursement of all significant costs and lost income for the remainder of the year. Whilst Welsh Government confirmed the availability of the Hardship Fund for the remainder of the year, revisions were being made to the terms of the Fund as there was an expectation that local authorities and partners would start to move away from reliance upon additional financial support. As there was a possibility that the terms of the Fund continued to change in the coming months, dependent on the Covid position through the Autumn / Winter, this might require forecasts to change accordingly as and when these changes were known.

As shown in the report and its Appendices, the position was explained in the following way:

- Whilst service areas were reporting an underspend against budget resulting from difficulties/ delays in recruitment and covid related activities being reimbursed by the Hardship Fund, much of the underspend originated from non-service budgets.
- The non-service underspend came from savings against the (i) capital financing budget (ii) Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax collection (iii) the revenue contingency budget which was currently not needed and (vi) some other non-service budgets which were not committed currently. These together produced the £6m underspend.

Despite service areas reporting an overall underspend, there were some individual areas which continued to overspend against specific activities, details of which were set out within the report. In previous years, these overspends related to demand-led activity areas, such as Social Services, however the last couple of years were not a true representation of the challenges faced in these areas due to the pandemic and the reimbursement of additional costs that was received from the Hardship Fund. Given the volatility and uncertainty in these areas, there was an inherent risk that in year demand levels might change from current forecasts.

The key areas contributing to the £8million forecast position included:

- In addition to continued social care risks, there were issues that emerged during the year and would continue to be closely monitored. These included, but were not restricted to, increased costs in respect of dealing with 'ash die-back' and the remedial works required across the commercial and industrial estate. The anticipated overspend in areas of emerging risk was expected to be more than £600k by the end of the financial year.
- There was an anticipated shortfall against the delivery of 2021/22 and prior year savings of almost £600k, which was largely due to delays in progressing the necessary actions, some of which was a result of the pandemic. Whilst the level of unachieved savings in relation to the current financial year was lower than in previous years, there remained a need to ensure that all savings were delivered, in full, as soon as possible and officers continued to take action to ensure these were delivered from the earliest opportunity.
- Underspending against non-service budgets explained the key elements of the forecast. Firstly, there was a forecast underspend of £2.7million in relation to the Capital Financing budget. As part of the budget setting for 2021/22, the capital financing costs of the current capital programme, which ended in 2022/23, were funded up front. This resulted in a saving within the Minimum Revenue Provision budget and the interest payable costs, as this budget was not yet required. This underspend was known and understood at the point at which the budget was agreed in March of this year.
- Savings in the region of £900k were also expected against the council tax reduction scheme budget due to a lower number of council tax benefit claimants than expected and council tax collection. Clearly, there remained an element of uncertainty in this area surrounding the number of claimants and the impact on collection rates in future given that the furlough scheme had ended.
- Furthermore, given that an underspend position was anticipated at this stage of the year there was no requirement to utilise the council's general revenue budget contingency of £1.3million therefore adding to the non-service underspend.

The report also highlighted that, overall, schools were anticipating a net overspend of £2.2million, after allowing for reimbursement of eligible expenditure and lost income from the Hardship Fund.

Whilst schools were expecting to overspend against budget, it was noted that schools carried forward significantly higher balances at the end of the 2020/21 financial year, compared with previous years. This higher level of balances was primarily the product of Welsh Government grants issued towards the end of the last financial year, which offset spending that schools had already budgeted for. As a result, schools carried forward higher than anticipated balances, which, in most individual cases, would be more than sufficient in offsetting the overspends being reported.

In comparison to previous years, only three schools were projecting to hold deficit balances, totalling £879k, with two of those expecting to be smaller than the previous year.

The current position on school balances represented a significant change from the concerns evident in previous financial years. Now that an overall surplus position, projected to total £7.5million, was anticipated, and appeared set to continue for at least the next financial year,

it was important that there remained a focus on school budgets, to ensure that, as much as possible, a return to the previous position was avoided. This needed to be balanced with trying to avoid a situation whereby balances could be considered excessive and would, therefore, be a key consideration when setting future revenue budgets and reviewing the medium-term financial plan.

#### Comments from Cabinet Members:

Councillor Davies considered that Newport City Council should continue to take a supportive approach to its schools with regard to setting a budget framework in place to help them as well as providing additional funding to ensure teachers had a better understanding of the budget and monitor any potential deficits for the coming years.

There were only two schools in a deficit and it was felt that schools were in a good place, which was as a result of the officers at the council providing that additional support to school staff.

Councillor Cockeram referred to the social services underspend, although the funding from WG was paying for core services. The Council was not able to progress some packages of care because of the pandemic.

Looked after children showed a decrease, however there was the potential rise in mental health issues with children and families.

#### Decision:

That Cabinet:

- Noted the overall budget forecast position and the potential for an underspend position to exist at the end of the financial year.
- Noted the continued financial challenges being experienced by certain, demand-led, services and the need for robust financial management in these areas, as well as the level of currently unachieved budget savings.
- Noted the risks identified throughout the report and in the HoF comments, particularly in relation to future years and the lasting impacts of the pandemic.
- Noted the forecast movements in reserves.
- Noted the improved overall position in relation to schools, when compared to previous years, but also noted the remaining deficit positions for some schools and the risk of past issues re-emerging if good financial planning and management was not undertaken.

## **5 Capital Budget Monitor and Additions**

The Leader presented the report, which provided the capital monitoring position as at September 2021.

The Council set an extensive capital programme that reflected seven years commitments. Table one in the report showed how that changed over the financial year and how the Council's capital commitments and spend in the city totalled £285m over the life of the programme, across all service areas.

The Council was also being asked to approve, as usual, new, or extended, capital projects to be added to the overall programme. Table two within the report detailed these new capital projects, which totalled £1.931m, and how each of the projects were funded.

Table three in the report showed the forecast position as at September 2021 which was the focus of this report. The current position showed a small, expected underspend of £216k and Appendix C within the report showed the details of this.

The table also highlighted that there was reprofiling undertaken since the last report totalling £6.550m. Details of where this reprofiling occurred was also contained within the report. However, when combining this and new additions/amendments to the programme, this still left a capital programme of £65.985m for 2021/22, which was extremely high, when compared with previous years. Further work on forecasting and reprofiling would continue throughout the remainder of the year to ensure that the capital programme reflected a more realistic timescale for the projects to be delivered and officers were asked to continuously review projects and update the project profile as schemes progressed.

In terms of monitoring spend, the report confirmed low spending of £16.465 million against a budget of £65.985m (25% to date). This pattern was not uncommon, as usually a lot of the cost was profiled for the last half of the year. However, this brought with it the risk of slippage, hence the need for robust monitoring throughout the rest of the year. In saying this, progress was being made on a number of projects, details of which were noted in the report.

The reported capital headroom (budget for which there was currently no committed expenditure), was £6.1m, which included £1.2m of unallocated Joint Venture monies. The demand for capital expenditure in Newport exceeded the level of resource and the Council needed to prioritise carefully where it would spend this capital resource accordingly

The report referenced a piece of work that the Leader requested in relation to the financial and delivery risks arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit. Whilst work in this regard continued, it was apparent that there was uncertainty within the construction industry at this time, with particular challenges being experienced in relation to the price of materials such as steel and wood, which were currently in high demand and short supply. Project and budget managers were requested to closely monitor the ongoing impact of this and manage their schemes robustly.

The report asked Cabinet to note and approve:

- the changes to the programme which occurred since the position was last reported. This included approval of the new capital projects and amendments, which totalled £1.931m and £132k respectively.
- the current available capital resources ('headroom') and prioritise future capital expenditure in order to maintain expenditure within the current affordability envelope.

#### Comments from Cabinet Members:

Councillor Harvey, important services such as flying start and violence against women came under this budget. There was a lot of services the council provided across the Newport, which residents might not be aware of and Councillor Harvey was pleased with the report and that the Council was still supplying and providing services to over 140,000 residents within Newport.

Councillor Cockeram, also referred to the cost of raw materials in terms of trade and the effect on the building projects within Newport, this may have caused delay in some works, however this was out of our control. The cost of wood and steel was on the increase but projects would continue to be delivered.

Councillor Jeavons referred to page 47 and the City Services Grants. Managers would have to work robustly work harder to get this in place by the end of the year. The reverse slippage against the new order of vehicles, which often took time to be in place.

Councillor Hughes mentioned the sheer scale of work carried out by the council in terms of supporting the environment and listed the many environmental projects within the city as well

as the recent Environmental award received, which was recognised nationally. The Cabinet Member also thanked officers for their contribution and hard work.

Decision:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the additions and amendments to the capital programme (Appendix A), including the use of reserves and capital receipts requested in the report
2. Approved re-profiling of £6,550k into future years
3. Noted the update on the remaining capital resources ('headroom') up to and including 2022/23
4. Noted the capital expenditure forecast position as at September 2021

**6 Annual Report: Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2020**

The Leader advised Cabinet that this report was an update on the Council's performance on Compliments, Comments and Complaints during 2020/2021.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Assets and Resources to present the report.

The Cabinet Member outlined the purpose of this report, which was to provide Cabinet with an overview of all Corporate and Social Services Compliments, Comments & Complaints received during 2020/2021. It provided a summary of complaints received and recommendations for improvement and an update of the statutory duties conducted in line with Public Services Ombudsman Act 2019, that received Royal Assent in July 2019. The report also shared the Ombudsman's 2020/2021 Annual Letter to Newport City Council.

Since the last annual report, Cabinet approved the amended Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy which was aligned to guidance issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman now had new powers under the Act which included accepting complaints verbally, not just in writing, the ability to undertake 'own initiative investigations' when the Ombudsman considered them to be in the public interest and gathering complaints data from public services in Wales on a quarterly basis for complaints only

During 2020/2021, a total of 162 compliments were recorded for Corporate complaints and 12 for Social Services. A total of 3104 Comments were received for Corporate services and 7 for Social Services. Comments were where an expression of dissatisfaction with a policy or decision made by the Council had been implemented or applied correctly. This was the highest number of comments recorded as a significant amount of quick decision making needed to happen during the pandemic to keep both the public and staff safe, such as introducing a booking system for waste and recycling. The Council received a total of 202 complaints, 14 of which went to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman intervened with five cases. The Complaints team analysed all Comments and Complaints to identify trends and opportunities for further improvement and liaised with the relevant service areas. The Complaints Team continued to develop the service provided, to meet legislation and expectations of residents. The objectives of the team over the following 12 months would focus on continuing to raise the profile and understanding of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales throughout Newport Council and their partners and continue to work with service areas in their continuous improvement plans.

Comments from Cabinet Members:

Councillor Cockeram was disappointed that children services did not have compliments and hoped that the three strategic directors would reiterate to senior managers the importance of recording compliments. The Cabinet Member considered that it was a very good report and thanked City Services for their hard work. The five complaints to the

ombudsman was also broken down by the Cabinet Member who explained that two of which were duplicate.

Councillor Hughes mentioned that the report highlighted that some staff were under pressure. The Cabinet Member thanked and acknowledged staff for their hard work.

Councillor Jeavons mentioned the importance of acknowledging the compliments as staff put themselves at risk working during to the pandemic, particularly the front line staff in City Services.

Councillor Harvey echoed the comments of colleagues adding that no one was infallible and staff acknowledged and rectified their mistakes. Staff worked hard during the pandemic and refuse collection had not been delayed. Staff had stepped up to the mark.

Councillor Truman also agreed with the previous comments and stressed that it was important to report the positive actions of staff. The Cabinet Member also mentioned that it was good to see what was being done well within the Council and it was right that the Council was being scrutinised .

Leader also thanked the public for their comments.

#### Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the report regarding the process and performance of the Council's corporate compliments, comments and complaints annual report 2020/21.

## **7 Covid Update Report**

The Leader presented the report, which was 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.

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

It remained, however, 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 were still vulnerable people who were 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 being offered as well as the seasonal flu jab.

12 to 15 year olds were also 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.

Front line services still continued to be delivered and the Council has continued to follow the Welsh Government's advice for staff (where they can) 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.

Attendance rates across school settings were low due to Covid outbreaks. School catering services were reporting issues with supply chains to obtain food products. Schools across Newport were experiencing high levels of pupil absence due to Covid.

The Council's school meals provider reported challenges within supply chains and were experiencing difficulties obtaining certain food products and catering equipment.

Social services (Adults and Children) were also experiencing higher levels of demand and staff shortages.

The Council has been promoting and supporting organisations with employment opportunities in hospitality and HGV and carers, as well as supporting several job fairs in the City. Work on supporting businesses in their recovery also continued and housing development programmes and were continuing to be delivered.

#### Comments from Cabinet Members:

Councillor Davies referred to the Covid impact on education since the beginning of October when numbers were rising. There was a recent closure of a year group in Llanwern, fortunately there was technical support in place to provide blended learning. The Cabinet Member thanked teachers who worked so hard over the past weeks to ensure that lessons were still taking place as well as their looking after pupils' wellbeing. The school staff had provided an excellent calm atmosphere for children in the schools. Credit should therefore be given to all staff within Education Services.

Councillor Truman pointed out since last report, restrictions had reduced and contract tracing was concentrating on closed care settings such as schools, and enforcement officers were giving advice and assistance to hospitality settings. The Newport Centre vaccination facility was excellent and compliments had been received regarding NHS staff was very positive as they were doing outstanding work.

Leader thanked Councillor Truman and stressed that it was important to highlight work of partners such as Newport Live.

#### Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and noted the progress being made to date, the risks that were still faced by the Council and the city.

## 8 **Brexit Update Report**

The Leader presented the report on the update of the post EU Transition arrangements since the UK left the EU in December 2020.

Since the previous report in October, Wales and the wider UK economy encountered several disruptions which impacted on households and businesses across Newport.

The Council had seen 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 now impacting Council services, with disruptions to City Services, social care and other services.

The cost of energy (electric and gas) and fuel had increased which meant households on standard and pre-payment tariffs would see an increase in the energy costs. For low-income

households in Newport this would have a significant impact and put further pressure on those vulnerable households.

Food prices were also increasing as well as disruptions in supply resulting in certain foods were not reaching supermarkets but also impacting on food banks across Newport and Wales.

It was becoming clearer that the issues being experienced were a combination of Brexit, Covid and the wider global economic factors. These global and national factors were now impacting the residents and businesses of Newport.

In response, the Council's services were monitoring the financial and non-financial issues escalating any immediate areas of concern to the Council's Gold team. Working collaboratively with other public sector bodies as part of the local resilience forum had been effective managing and responding to the emerging issues.

There was a possibility that this winter could be tough for some of Newport's most vulnerable residents, businesses and services delivered by the Council and our Partners. It was important for residents and businesses to contact the Council and our Partners if they were concerned or required assistance, whether this was responding to any severe weather incidents, debt advice, housing, business support or other matters that the Council could assist or at least signpost to the correct service.

A couple of weeks ago, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the outcome of the Levelling Up Fund that was aimed at Levelling Up communities across the UK. Newport's bid was unsuccessful and the Council would be reviewing the proposals to see if alternative funding could be sourced.

The Council recently received confirmation that seven out of the eight projects were successful in obtaining over £2.8 million from the UK Community Renewal Fund. The Council contacted the relevant organisations and would be working with them to ensure their successful delivery.

For the City's EU/EAA citizens it was over four months since the deadline passed.

For a significant proportion of residents (over 10,000 applications) in the City they would have received either full Settled Status or Pre-settled status. The Council were aware that there was still over 1,000 residents awaiting a decision.

This 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 and 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 needed.

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 understood their obligations to access services.

Comments from Cabinet Members:

Councillor Harvey expressed her sadness that Newport residents had to use food banks as highlighted by the Leader.

Councillor Cockeram referred to the one million job shortages in certain areas such as domiciliary care and HGV drivers which was a worrying trend.

Councillor Hughes also mentioned the increase in usage of food banks, which was an issue that could get worse unless changes were made. The Cabinet Member thanked everyone that supported food banks and the volunteers.

Councillor Jeavons referred to HGV drivers and thanked the Council's HGV drivers and employees' loyalty as some were being offered better pay in the private sector.

Decision:

That Cabinet considered the contents of the report and note the Council's Brexit response.

9 **Work Programme**

The Leader advised colleagues on their regular monthly report on the work programme.

Please move acceptance of the updated programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the Cabinet Work Programme.

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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** Report on Treasury Management for the period to 30 September 2021

**Purpose** This report is to inform Cabinet Committee of treasury activities undertaken during the period to 30 September 2021 and confirms that all treasury and prudential indicators have been adhered to in the first half of the financial year. The report has been considered by Governance and Audit Committee, who provided no reservations or adverse feedback. The Committee is asked to make any comments or observations, as needed, which will be included in this report when subsequently sent to Council.

**Author** Head of Finance / Assistant Head of Finance

**Ward** All

**Summary** In line with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy, the Council continues to be both a short-term investor of cash and borrower to manage day-to-day cash flows. Current forecasts indicate that in the future, temporary borrowing will continue to be required to fund normal day-to-day cash flow activities and longer-term borrowing will increase to fund new commitments in the current capital programme as well as the impact of reduced capacity for 'internal borrowing'. During the first half of this year, last year's and this year's underspend alongside the normal up-front loading of RSG has created a positive cash-flow situation.

During the first half of the financial year the Council's net borrowing decreased by £13.2m from £128.3m at 31 March 2021 to £115.1m at 30 September 2021.

All borrowing and investments undertaken during the first half of the year was expected and within the Council's agreed limits

**Proposal** To note the report on treasury management activities for the period to 30 September 2021 and provide comments to Council.

**Action by** Head of Finance / Assistant Head of Finance

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Treasury Advisors
- Head of Finance

**Signed**

## Background

1. In June 2009 the Authority adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2011 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management annual report after the end of each financial year.
2. Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year and, as a minimum, a semi-annual and annual treasury outturn report. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
3. The Authority has borrowed substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.
4. The 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy was approved by the Council as part of the Capital Strategy in March 2021 and can be viewed via the following link

<https://democracy.newport.gov.uk/documents/s19160/06%20Capital%20Strategy%20and%20Treasury%20Strategy%202021.pdf?LLL=0>

5. This report presented the following information:
  - details of capital financing, borrowing, debt rescheduling and investment transactions
  - reports on the risk implications of treasury decisions and transactions
  - details the half year monitoring position on treasury management transactions in
  - confirms compliance with treasury limits set and Prudential code
6. This report was considered by Governance & Audit Committee on 28th October 2021. No contrary feedback or need for revision was volunteered, and it was endorsed for onward circulation to Cabinet and subsequently Council.

## BORROWING STRATEGY / ACTIVITY

### Short and Long Term Borrowing

1. Whilst the Council has significant long-term borrowing requirements, the Council's current strategy of funding capital expenditure is through reducing investments ('internal borrowing') rather than undertaking new borrowing where it can i.e. we defer taking out new long term borrowing and fund capital expenditure from the Council's own cash resources – which it has because of its 'cash-backed' reserves and, to a lesser extent, day to day positive cash-flows, for as long as we can. The Council may undertake borrowing early if, there is the need for future borrowing and it feels it can minimise risk of future interest rate rises while providing value for money, this will be in line with advice from our treasury advisors. This may prove the case during second half year of 2021/22 as indications suggest a rise to base rate presumptions by Bank of England to mitigate inflationary pressures.
2. By using this strategy the Council can also minimise cash holding at a time when counterparty risk remains relatively high, especially with the current economic implications during Covid-19. The interest rates achievable on the Council's investments are also significantly lower than the current rates payable on long-term borrowing and this remains the main reason for our current 'internally borrowed' strategy.

At 31 March, the level of internal borrowing was about £107m, mainly in relation to the Council's level of cash backed reserves. When added to external borrowing, the Council's borrowings are c£222m – split between 'actual external borrowing taken up' at c£115m and 'committed but not yet taken up' at £107m. At current rates, using internal borrowing where possible saves about £2.4m in interest costs annually compared to physically borrowing this level of cash. As the Council spends its reserves over the medium to long term (PFI reserves, Capital reserves, Invest to Save reserves in particular), then the internal borrowing will have to be replaced with actual external borrowing and this interest cost will be unavoidably incurred. Given the extent of underspending and subsequent transfer of this to reserves experienced at 2020/21 year end, internal borrowing is likely to remain a useful mitigating factor for longer than originally anticipated.

3. Whilst the strategy minimises investment counterparty risk, the risk of interest rate exposure is increased as the current low longer term borrowing rates may rise in the future. The market position is being constantly monitored in order to minimise this risk.
4. As shown in Appendix A, as at 30 September 2021 the level of borrowing has decreased by £9.1m to £144m. This decrease is in relation to;
  - The repayment of a PWLB loan which matured in the first half of 2021/22, as at 30<sup>th</sup> September further borrowing to replenish this loan has not been required. This may be needed to be covered by temporary borrowing before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
  - We have a number of loans which are Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP), which pays back principal over the life of the loan, and the interest associated with the loan goes down as the principal outstanding reduces.

The level of investments has increased by £4.1m to £28.9m, meaning a decrease in net borrowing of £13.3m during the first half of financial year to £115.1m. Therefore, no new long-term borrowing was required to be taken out in the first half of the financial year. However, it is anticipated that the Council will need to undertake additional borrowing on a short term basis for the remainder of the year in order to cover normal day to day cash flow activity. With current estimates it is expected that there will be no requirement to undertake long-term borrowing this financial year, although as mentioned above, external borrowing may be taken up to manage interest rate risks and fund the Council's longer term borrowing commitment .

5. In regards to LOBOs, no loans were called during the period. All £30m outstanding is subject to potential change of interest rates by the lender (which would automatically trigger a right to the Council to repay these loans) prior to the end of this financial year. Should a change of interest rate be requested, then it will be considered in detail and a decision on how we proceed will be made in conjunction with our treasury advisors.

## **INVESTMENTS ACTIVITY / POSITION**

6. The Council's strategies in this area of Treasury Management are (i) to be a short term and relatively low value investor, consistent with the pursuit of an 'internal borrowing strategy' and (ii) investment priorities should follow the priorities of security, liquidity and yield, in that order.

Included within the investment figure of £28.9m on the 30 September 2021, is £13.9m held in the form of cash. This is circa £6m less than year-end but due to the continuing pandemic the Authority has continued to keep more cash available at very short notice than is normal to cover any unexpected calls on cash flow. Currently there is not much demand for very short term borrowing within the market place, and in September rates on deposits below 14 days with the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) are still very low at 0.01%. The Authority has its investment with other local authorities of £15m with slightly better, but still low interest rates. It is anticipated that investments will reduce during 2021/22 as an alternative to borrowing until we reach the balance of £10m, which will remain invested for compliance with MiFIDII.

7. January 2018 saw the implementation in the UK of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), where firms will be obliged to treat all local authorities as retail clients unless they opt up to professional client status and meet certain criteria. These criteria include holding a minimum of £10m investment balance and employing knowledgeable and experienced staff to carry out investment transactions. It is anticipated that our investment balances will remain at or above the minimum £10m.
8. To retain its classification as 'professional clients', the Council currently invests its funds over short-term, low-risk instruments such as other local authorities and central government and because of the low risk nature of these – income from these are also very low. As part of the 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Plan and the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy it was approved that the Council could undertake larger, long-term investments in riskier financial instruments such as pooled funds, and other instruments. Essentially, investments in stock market and property funds to generate additional interest receivable income. However, due to Covid 19, investment in approved Property Funds was suspended. Due to the financial risk and the impact the ongoing pandemic could have on the economic global market, the Council has chosen not to actively use such instruments subsequently during the first half of 2021/22 until it is more confident of market stabilisation.
9. The Authority has concluded administration to be able to invest in specific Money Market Funds. This will enable the Authority to invest in short term funds if required, which attracts a higher rate of return than currently received on its investments but which is still deemed low risk due to its very short term nature. The use of these funds is already approved within the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
10. The Council does not hold any long-term (more than 364 days) treasury investments as at 30 September 2021.

#### **IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

11. Since the early days of the pandemic the Council has been monitoring the impact on cash flow closely. In addition to the business grants, the Council has seen an increase in Covid related expenditure, a reduction in income across services, and a decrease in the collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) and the Council has also implemented the NDR Relief Scheme for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses who receive 100% relief.
12. All of the above would have had a significant impact on cash flow, however, WG continue to have mitigated the impact by reimbursing increased expenditure through the hardship fund and through loss of income claims. WG have also repaid the business grants in a timely manner, as well as providing a grant to support the cash flow of the 100% rate reliefs. Up to this point this has certainly assisted with cash flow and the Council has not been required to undertake additional borrowing in the first half of the year.

#### **NON-TREASURY INVESTMENTS**

13. The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the Investment Guidance issued by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) and Welsh Government, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return.

The Authority also held such investments in:

- directly owned property such as office and commercial units of £12.7m
- loans to local businesses and landlords £7.6m
- shareholding in subsidiaries £0.3m

These investments generated £0.2m of investment income for the Authority after taking account of direct costs from April to September. In terms of the financial valuations of these assets, the outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted global financial markets and as at the valuation date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, less weight can be attached to previous market evidence for comparison purposes, to inform opinions of value. There is an unprecedented set of circumstances on which to base a judgement. Therefore, the valuations were therefore reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty'. Consequently, less certainty and a higher degree of caution should be attached to the valuation for the Council's properties than would normally be the case.

**OTHER MID YEAR TREASURY MATTERS**

**Economic background and Counter Party Update**

- 14. Appendix A outlines the underlying economic environment during the first half of the financial year, as provided by the Council's Treasury Management Advisors Arlingclose.
- 15. As discussed previously in this report, the Council does not have any long-term treasury investments, and the investments that it currently undertakes is mainly with other local authorities which are deemed very secure, therefore the risk is currently 'low'. At the end of September 2021 our treasury management advisors Arlingclose had completed its full review of its credit advice on unsecured deposits. The outcome of this review included the addition of NatWest Markets plc to the counterparty list together with the removal of the suspension of Handelsbanken plc. In addition, the maximum duration for all recommended counterparties was extended to 100 days. The long-term rating of Santander UK, the Council's bankers, remains at A+; above the Council's minimum level of A-.

**Compliance with Prudential Indicators approved by Council**

- 16. The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using various indicators which can be found in Appendix B. The Authority has complied with the Prudential Indicators for 2021/22, set in March 2021 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy. Details of treasury-related Prudential Indicators can be found in Appendix B.

**PWLB future lending terms**

- 17. Members will be aware that the PWLB increased interest rates on loans in the autumn of 2019 following concerns about the level of Local Government debt, in particular for commercial activities.

These have manifested themselves in enhanced PWLB rules being adopted in the first half of 2021/22, to preclude advantageous PWLB borrowing rates being used to fund investments primarily for yield. These checks are anticipated to add 2 days to the approval mechanism. The guidelines also allow for sanctions being applied to any counterparty using this funding source erroneously, varying from no longer being able to use PWLB for any of its borrowing, having to unwind specified transactions and/or the application of fines and penalties depending upon the severity of the breach.

**Risks**

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Investment counterparty not repaying investments	High but depending on investment value	Low	The Council only invests with Institutions with very high credit scores. It employs advisors to monitor money market movements and	Members, Head of Finance, Treasury staff, based

			changes to credit scores and acts immediately should things change adversely. The lower levels of funds available for investment will also alleviate the risk.	on advice from treasury advisors
Interest Rates moving adversely against expectations	Low	Low	Future expectations for higher short term rates are subdued. The Treasury strategy approved allows for the use of short term borrowing once investment funds are exhausted to take advantage of these low rates.	Head of Finance, Treasury staff, treasury advisors

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

**Links to Council Policies and Priorities**

It is the Council’s policy to ensure that the security of the capital sums invested is fully recognised and has absolute priority. The Council follows the advice of the Welsh Governments that any investment decisions take account of security, liquidity and yield in that order.

**Options Available and considered**

The Prudential Code and statute requires that, during and at the end of each financial year, reports on these matters are presented to Council for approval. Thus the only option available is consider the report and provide comments to the Council.

**Preferred Option and Why**

Note the contents of the report in relation to Treasury activities and all Treasury Indicators met for the first half of the 2020/21 financial year.

Provide any comments necessary to Cabinet on the contents of the report.

**Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

Decisions made on treasury matters will be made with a view to comply with the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators, taking advice, where needed, from our Treasury Advisers.

**Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no legal implications. The in year and annual treasury management report is consistent with relevant Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Guidance, Treasury Management principles and the Council’s investment Strategy.

**Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

There are no direct HR implications associated with the report.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to balance short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs. As stated in this report, the Council continues to be both a short-term investor of cash and borrower to manage day-to-day cash flows but current forecasts indicate that in future temporary borrowing will continue to be required and longer-term borrowing will increase to fund the capital programme. Sound financial management by the Council aligns with the well-being goal of a Prosperous Wales.

## **Comments of Cabinet Member**

N/A

## **Local issues**

N/A

## **Scrutiny Committees**

N/A

## **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

For this report, a full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. This is because this report is not seeking any strategic decisions or policy changes, with its purpose being to update Cabinet on the treasury management activities for the first six months of the year. However, fairness and equality are considered as part of service delivery and will feature in annual finance reports, such as the Treasury and Capital Strategy.

In terms of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, and the five ways of working contained within it, this report highlights examples of these being supported. This report is a backwards looking report of the treasury management activities of the Council. It shows that we followed the treasury management strategy and the compliance with prudential code and treasury management indicators. This links into the long-term objectives of the authorities and ensures that the councils' activities are carried out in an affordable, prudent and sustainable manner.

The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 06 April 2011. The Act identifies a number of 'protected characteristics', namely age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership. The new single duty aims to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the regular business of public authorities. Compliance with the duty is a legal obligation and is intended to result in better-informed decision-making and policy development and services that are more effective for users. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

In the case of the Welsh Language, the service will continue to ensure that, wherever possible, services or information is available in the medium of Welsh.

## **Consultation**

N/A

## **Background Papers**

Report to Council March 2021: Capital Strategy and Treasury Strategy.

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## APPENDIX A

### External Context

**Economic background:** The economic recovery from coronavirus pandemic continued to dominate the first half of the financial year. By the end of the period over 48 million people in the UK had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and almost 45 million their second dose.

The Bank of England (BoE) held Bank Rate at 0.1% throughout the period and maintained its Quantitative Easing programme at £895 billion, unchanged since the November 2020 meeting. In its September 2021 policy announcement, the BoE noted it now expected the UK economy to grow at a slower pace than was predicted in August, as the pace of the global recovery had shown signs of slowing and there were concerns inflationary pressures may be more persistent. Within the announcement, Bank expectations for GDP growth for the third (calendar) quarter were revised down to 2.1% (from 2.9%), in part reflecting tighter supply conditions. The path of CPI inflation is now expected to rise slightly above 4% in the last three months of 2021, due to higher energy prices and core goods inflation. While the Monetary Policy Committee meeting ended with policy rates unchanged, the tone was more hawkish.

Government initiatives continued to support the economy over the quarter but came to an end on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, with businesses required to either take back the 1.6 million workers on the furlough scheme or make them redundant.

The latest labour market data showed that in the three months to July 2021 the unemployment rate fell to 4.6%. The employment rate increased, and economic activity rates decreased, suggesting an improving labour market picture. Latest data showed growth in average total pay (including bonuses) and regular pay (excluding bonuses) among employees was 8.3% and 6.3% respectively over the period. However, part of the robust growth figures is due to a base effect from a decline in average pay in the spring of last year associated with the furlough scheme.

Annual CPI inflation rose to 3.2% in August, exceeding expectations for 2.9%, with the largest upward contribution coming from restaurants and hotels. The Bank of England now expects inflation to exceed 4% by the end of the calendar year owing largely to developments in energy and goods prices. The Office of National Statistics' (ONS') preferred measure of CPIH which includes owner-occupied housing was 3.0% year/year, marginally higher than expectations for 2.7%.

The easing of restrictions boosted activity in the second quarter of calendar year, helping push GDP up by 5.5% q/q (final estimate vs 4.8% q/q initial estimate). Household consumption was the largest contributor. Within the sector breakdown production contributed 1.0% q/q, construction 3.8% q/q and services 6.5% q/q, taking all of these close to their pre-pandemic levels.

The US economy grew by 6.3% in Q1 2021 (Jan-Mar) and then by an even stronger 6.6% in Q2 as the recovery continued. The Federal Reserve maintained its main interest rate at between 0% and 0.25% over the period but in its most recent meeting made suggestion that monetary policy may start to be tightened soon.

The European Central Bank maintained its base rate at 0%, deposit rate at -0.5%, and asset purchase scheme at €1.85 trillion.

**Financial markets:** Monetary and fiscal stimulus together with rising economic growth and the ongoing vaccine rollout programmes continued to support equity markets over most of the period, albeit with a bumpy ride towards the end. The Dow Jones hit another record high while the UK-focused FTSE 250 index continued making gains over pre-pandemic levels. The more internationally focused FTSE 100 saw more modest gains over the period and remains below its pre-crisis peak.

Inflation worries continued during the period. Declines in bond yields in the first quarter of the financial year suggested bond markets were expecting any general price increases to be less severe, or more transitory, that was previously thought. However, an increase in gas prices in the UK and EU, supply shortages and a dearth of

HGV and lorry drivers with companies willing to pay more to secure their services, has caused problems for a range of industries and, in some instance, lead to higher prices.

The 5-year UK benchmark gilt yield began the financial year at 0.36% before declining to 0.33% by the end of June 2021 and then climbing to 0.64% on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Over the same period the 10-year gilt yield fell from 0.80% to 0.71% before rising to 1.03% and the 20-year yield declined from 1.31% to 1.21% and then increased to 1.37%.

The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 0.05% over the quarter.

**Credit review:** Credit default swap spreads were flat over most of period and are broadly in line with their pre-pandemic levels. In late September spreads rose by a few basis points due to concerns around Chinese property developer Evergrande defaulting but are now falling back. The gap in spreads between UK ringfenced and non-ringfenced entities continued to narrow, but Santander UK remained an outlier compared to the other ringfenced/retail banks. At the end of the period Santander UK was trading the highest at 53bps and Lloyds Banks Plc the lowest at 32bps. The other ringfenced banks were trading between 37-39bps and Nationwide Building Society was 39bps.

Over the period Fitch and Moody's upwardly revised to stable the outlook on a number of UK banks and building societies on our counterparty list, recognising their improved capital positions compared to last year and better economic growth prospects in the UK.

Fitch also revised the outlooks for Nordea, Svenska Handelsbanken and Handelsbanken plc to stable from negative. The rating agency considered the improved economic prospects in the Nordic region to have reduced the baseline downside risks it previously assigned to the lenders.

The successful vaccine rollout programme is credit positive for the financial services sector in general and the improved economic outlook has meant some institutions have been able to reduce provisions for bad loans. While there is still uncertainty around the full extent of the losses banks and building societies will suffer due to the pandemic-related economic slowdown, the sector is in a generally better position now compared to earlier this year and 2020.

At the end of the period Arlingclose had completed its full review of its credit advice on unsecured deposits. The outcome of this review included the addition of NatWest Markets plc to the counterparty list together with the removal of the suspension of Handelsbanken plc. In addition, the maximum duration for all recommended counterparties was extended to 100 days.

As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by treasury management advisors Arlingclose remain under constant review.

## Appendix B - 2020-21 Treasury Activities

### Local Context

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the Authority had net borrowing of £128.3m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.21 Actual £m
General Fund CFR	281
Less: *Other debt liabilities	-41
<b>Loans CFR</b>	<b>240</b>
Less: Usable reserves	-108
Less: Working capital	-4
<b>Net borrowing</b>	<b>128</b>

\* finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

Lower official interest rates have lowered the cost of short-term, temporary loans and investment returns from cash assets that can be used in lieu of borrowing. The Authority pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk.

The treasury management position on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and the change over the six months is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.21 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.9.21 Balance £m	30.9.21 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	147.5	-3.5	144.0	3.6
Short-term borrowing	5.6	-5.6		
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>153.1</b>	<b>-9.1</b>	<b>144.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Long-term investments				
Short-term investments	-5.0	-10.0	-15.0	0.0
Cash and cash equivalents	-19.8	5.9	-13.9	0.2
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>-24.8</b>	<b>-4.1</b>	<b>-28.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Net borrowing</b>	<b>128.3</b>	<b>-13.2</b>	<b>115.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>

### Borrowing Update

Local authorities can borrow from the PWLB provided they can confirm they are not planning to purchase 'investment assets primarily for yield' in the current or next two financial years, with confirmation of the purpose of capital expenditure from the Section 151 Officer. Authorities that are purchasing or intending to purchase investment assets primarily for yield will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing.

Acceptable use of PWLB borrowing includes service delivery, housing, regeneration, preventative action, refinancing and treasury management.

Competitive market alternatives may be available for authorities with or without access to the PWLB. However, the financial strength of the individual authority and borrowing purpose will be scrutinised by commercial lenders. Further changes to the CIPFA Prudential Code expected in December 2021 are likely to prohibit borrowing for the primary purpose of commercial return even where the source of borrowing is not the PWLB.

The Authority is not planning to purchase any investment assets primarily for yield within the next three years and so is able fully access the PWLB

### Revised PWLB Guidance

HM Treasury published further guidance on PWLB borrowing in August 2021 providing additional detail and clarifications predominantly around the definition of an 'investment asset primarily for yield'. The principal aspects of the new guidance are:

- Capital expenditure incurred or committed to before 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 is allowable even for an 'investment asset primarily for yield'.
- Capital plans should be submitted by local authorities via a DELTA return. These open for the new financial year on 1<sup>st</sup> March and remain open all year. Returns must be updated if there is a change of more than 10%.
- An asset held primarily to generate yield that serves no direct policy purpose should not be categorised as service delivery.
- Further detail on how local authorities purchasing investment assets primarily for yield can access the PWLB for the purposes of refinancing existing loans or externalising internal borrowing.
- Additional detail on the sanctions which can be imposed for inappropriate use of the PWLB loan. These can include a request to cancel projects, restrictions to accessing the PLWB and requests for information on further plans.

### Changes to PWLB Terms and Conditions from 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021

The settlement time for a PWLB loan has been extended from two working days (T+2) to five working days (T+5). In a move to protect the PWLB against negative interest rates, the minimum interest rate for PWLB loans has also been set at 0.01% and the interest charged on late repayments will be the higher of Bank of England Base Rate or 0.1%.

Municipal Bonds Agency (MBA): The MBA is working to deliver a new short-term loan solution, available in the first instance to principal local authorities in England, allowing them access to short-dated, low rate, flexible debt. The minimum loan size is expected to be £25 million. Importantly, local authorities will borrow in their own name and will not cross guarantee any other authorities.

If the Authority intends future borrowing through the MBA, it will first ensure that it has thoroughly scrutinised the legal terms and conditions of the arrangement and is satisfied with them.

UK Infrastructure Bank: £4bn has been earmarked for of lending to local authorities by the UK Infrastructure Bank which is wholly owned and backed by HM Treasury. The availability of this lending to local authorities, for which there will be a bidding process, is yet to commence. Loans will be available for qualifying projects at gilt yields plus 0.6%, which is 0.2% lower than the PWLB certainty rate.

### Borrowing Strategy during the period

At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 the Authority held £144m of loans, (a decrease of £9.2m from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 30<sup>th</sup> September are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.21 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.21 Balance £m	30.9.21 Weighted Average Rate %	30.9.21 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	102.0	-3.2	98.8	3.7	18.9
Banks (LOBO)	30.0		30.0	4.4	32.7
Banks (fixed-term)	5.0		5.0	3.8	56.4
Local authorities (long-term)	0				
Local authorities (short-term)	5.0	-5.0			
Other WG loans	10.6	-0.3	10.3		6.9
Accrued interest	0.6	-0.6			
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>153.1</b>	<b>-9.1</b>	<b>144.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>22.2</b>

The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.

In keeping with these objectives, no new borrowing was undertaken, while £2m of existing loans allowed to mature without replacement. This strategy enabled the Authority to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk.

With short-term interest rates remaining much lower than long-term rates and with surplus of liquidity continuing to feature in the LA to LA market, the Authority considered it to be more cost effective in the near term to use internal resources or borrowed rolling temporary / short-term loans instead. The net movement in temporary / short-term loans is shown in table 3 above.

LOBO loans: The Authority continues to hold £30m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate as set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. No banks exercised their option during the quarter.

#### **Other Debt Activity**

After £0.9m repayment of prior years' Private Finance Initiative and finance leases liabilities, total debt other than borrowing stood at £41m on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, taking total debt to £281m.

#### **Treasury Investment Activity**

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £17.9 and £58.2 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

**Table 4: Treasury Investment Position**

	31.3.21 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.21 Balance £m	30.9.21 Income Return %	30.9.21 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	9.8	(5.9)	3.9	0.1	-
Government (incl. local authorities)	15.0	10.0	25.0	0.2	-
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-</b>

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

Ultra low short-dated cash rates which have been a feature since March 2020 when Bank Rate was cut to 0.1% have resulted in the return on sterling low volatility net asset value money market funds (LVNAV MMFs) being close to zero even after some managers have temporarily waived or lowered their fees. At this stage net negative returns are not the central case of most MMF managers over the short-term, and fee cuts or waivers should result in MMF net yields having a floor of zero, but the possibility cannot be ruled out.

Deposit rates with the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) are also largely around zero.

In the Treasury Management Strategy it was agreed that the Authority will move into higher risk/higher yield investments such as pooled funds. However, this has been delayed while the Authority reviewed its risk appetite. While an increased income target was been included in the 2021/22 budget, due to the current economic uncertainty surrounding Covid-19, the Authority has invested into secure institutions such as local authorities and Central Government.

The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose's quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 5 below.

### **Non-Treasury Investments**

The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the Investment Guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Welsh Government, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return.

The Authority also held investments in

- directly owned property £12.7m
- loans to local businesses and landlords £7.6m
- shareholding in subsidiaries £0.3m

These investments generated £0.08m of investment income for the Authority after taking account of direct costs,

### **Treasury Performance**

The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 6 below.

## Compliance

The Head of Finance reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Authority's approved Treasury Management. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 5 below.

Compliance with the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 7 below.

Table 5: Debt Limits

	H1 Maximum	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Operational Boundary	2021/22 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	187	144.0	187	255	Y
PFI and Finance Leases	42	42	42	42	Y
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>234.8</b>	<b>208.3</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>297</b>	Y

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Table 8: Investment Limits

Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£20m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	20 years	£10m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	£10m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£5m	£25m
Money market funds *	n/a	£10m	Unlimited
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£10 m	£25m
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£10m	£25m
Other investments *	5 years	£5m	£5m

Credit rating	Banks unsecured	Banks secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£5m 5 years	£10m 20 years	£10m 50 years	£5m 20 years	£5m 20 years
AA+	£5m 5 years	£10m 10 years	£10m 25 years	£5m 10 years	£5m 10 years
AA	£5m 4 years	£10m 5 years	£10m 15 years	£5m 5 years	£5m 10 years
AA-	£5m 3 years	£10m 4 years	£10m 10 years	£5m 4 years	£5m 10 years

A+	£5m 2 years	£10m 3 years	£5m 5 years	£5m 3 years	£5m 5 years
A	£5m 13 months	£10m 2 years	£5m 5 years	£5m 2 years	£5m 5 years
A-	£5m 6 months	£5m 13 months	£5m 5 years	£5m 13 months	£5m 5 years
None	£1m 6 months	n/a	£10m 25 years	Not Applicable	£5m 5 years
<b>Pooled funds and real estate investment trusts</b>		£10m per fund or trust			

### Treasury Management Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

**Interest Rate Exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interests was:

Interest rate risk indicator	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Limit	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	100%	£200k	
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	0	£50k	

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at current rates.

**Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	30.9.21 Actual	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Complied?
Under 12 months	2%	60%	0%	Y
12 months and within 24 months	1%	40%	0%	Y
24 months and within 5 years	20%	40%	0%	Y
5 years and within 10 years	5%	40%	0%	Y
10 years and within 20 years	18%	30%	0%	Y
20 years and within 30 years	14%	20%	0%	Y
30 years and within 40 years	20%	20%	0%	Y
40 years and within 50 years	8%	20%	0%	Y
50 years and above	7%	20%	0%	Y

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment. *For presentational purposes LOBO option dates are treated as potential repayment dates.*

**Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Actual principal invested beyond year end	0	0	0
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£10m	£10m	£10m
Complied?	Y	Y	Y

### Revisions to CIPFA Codes

In February 2021 CIPFA launched two consultations on changes to its Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice. These followed the Public Accounts Committee’s recommendation that the prudential framework should be further tightened following continued borrowing by some authorities for investment purposes. In June, CIPFA provided feedback from this consultation.

In September CIPFA issued the revised Codes and Guidance Notes in draft form and opened the latest consultation process on their proposed changes. The changes include:

- Clarification that (a) local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return (b) it is not prudent for authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the Capital Financing Requirement, and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the authority.
- Categorising investments as those (a) for treasury management purposes, (b) for service purposes and (c) for commercial purposes.
- Defining acceptable reasons to borrow money: (i) financing capital expenditure primarily related to delivering a local authority’s functions, (ii) temporary management of cash flow within the context of a balanced budget, (iii) securing affordability by removing exposure to future interest rate rises and (iv) refinancing current borrowing, including replacing internal borrowing.
- For service and commercial investments, in addition to assessments of affordability and prudence, an assessment of proportionality in respect of the authority’s overall financial capacity (i.e. whether plausible losses could be absorbed in budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services).
- Prudential Indicators
  - New indicator for net income from commercial and service investments to the budgeted net revenue stream.
  - Inclusion of the liability benchmark as a mandatory treasury management prudential indicator. CIPFA recommends this is presented as a chart of four balances - existing loan debt outstanding; loans CFR, net loans requirement, liability benchmark - over at least 10 years and ideally cover the authority’s full debt maturity profile.
  - Excluding investment income from the definition of financing costs.
- Incorporating ESG issues as a consideration within TMP 1 Risk Management.
- Additional focus on the knowledge and skills of officers and elected members involved in decision making

**Arlingclose's Economic Outlook for the remainder of 2021/22 (based on the October 2021 interest rate forecast)**

	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Arlingclose Central Case	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40

Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise in Q2 2022. We believe this is driven as much by the Bank of England's desire to move from emergency levels as by fears of inflationary pressure.

Investors have priced in multiple rises in Bank Rate to 1% by 2024. While Arlingclose believes Bank Rate will rise, it is by a lesser extent than expected by markets.

The global economy continues to recover from the pandemic but has entered a more challenging phase. The resurgence of demand has led to the expected rise in inflationary pressure, but disrupted factors of supply are amplifying the effects, increasing the likelihood of lower growth rates ahead. This is particularly apparent in the UK due to the impact of Brexit.

While Q2 UK GDP expanded more quickly than initially thought, the 'pingdemic' and more latterly supply disruption will leave Q3 GDP broadly stagnant. The outlook also appears weaker. Household spending, the driver of the recovery to date, is under pressure from a combination of retail energy price rises, the end of government support programmes and soon, tax rises. Government spending, the other driver of recovery, will slow considerably as the economy is taken off life support.

Inflation rose to 3.2% in August. A combination of factors will drive this to over 4% in the near term. While the transitory factors affecting inflation, including the low base effect of 2020, are expected to unwind over time, the MPC has recently communicated fears that these transitory factors will feed longer-term inflation expectations that require tighter monetary policy to control. This has driven interest rate expectations substantially higher.

The supply imbalances are apparent in the labour market. While wage growth is currently elevated due to compositional and base factors, stories abound of higher wages for certain sectors, driving inflation expectations. It is uncertain whether a broad-based increased in wages is possible given the pressures on businesses.

Government bond yields increased sharply following the September FOMC and MPC minutes, in which both central banks communicated a lower tolerance for higher inflation than previously thought. The MPC in particular has doubled down on these signals in spite of softer economic data. Bond investors expect higher near-term interest rates but are also clearly uncertain about central bank policy.

The MPC appears to be playing both sides, but has made clear its intentions to tighten policy, possibly driven by a desire to move away from emergency levels. While the economic outlook will be challenging, the signals from policymakers suggest Bank Rate will rise unless data indicates a more severe slowdown.

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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** **Quarter 2 2021/22 Corporate Risk Register Update**

**Purpose** To present the Council's Corporate Risk Register for the end of quarter 2 (1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021).

**Author** Head of People and Business Change

**Ward** All

**Summary** The Council's Corporate Risk Register monitors those risks that may prevent the Council from achieving its Corporate Plan or delivering services to its communities and service users in Newport.

At the end of quarter two, there were 18 risks recorded in the Corporate Risk Register that are considered to have a significant impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and legal obligations. At the end of the quarter there were no corporate risks closed or risks escalated to the Corporate Risk Register. There are 11 Severe risks (risk scores 15 to 25); 5 Major risks (risk scores 7 to 14); 1 Moderate risks (risk scores 4 to 6); and 1 low risk (1-3) that are outlined in the report.

As set out in the Council's Risk Management Policy, Cabinet are responsible for review of the Corporate Risk Register on a quarterly basis ensuring procedures are in place to monitor the management of significant risks.

**Proposal** To consider the contents of the Corporate Risk Register and to continue monitoring of these risks and the progress of actions being taken to address the risks identified in the report.

**Action by** Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team

**Signed**

## Background

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires Newport City Council to set Well-being Objectives in its Corporate Plan 2017-22. In the delivery of the Corporate Plan and Council services there will be risks that may prevent, disrupt, or impact on the Council's objectives. The Council's Risk Management Policy and Corporate Risk Register enables the Council to identify, manage and monitor those risks to ensure effective mitigation action is taken to minimise or prevent the risk from impacting on services, communities, and citizens. The current Risk Management Policy was approved in July 2020.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak, service areas were asked to review their service plans and consider any new and/or emerging risks that could impact on the delivery of their services. Additionally, as part of the Council's quarterly monitoring process, service areas have reviewed their risks considering the impact of Covid-19.

In accordance with the Council's Risk Management Policy, any new, escalated / de-escalated and closed risks in the Corporate Risk Register are presented to the Council's Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team for decision.

## Summary of NCC risks for Quarter 2 2021/22

At the end of quarter two, across the Council's eight service areas there were 46 risks recorded in their risk registers. The table below provides a summary of all risks and changes to risk scores between quarter 1 (Reported to Cabinet in June 2021) and quarter 2.

Service Area	Q2 Risks	Risk Scores Increased since Q1	Risk Scores Decreased since Q1	No Change since Q1	New Risks (Since Q1)	Closed Risks (Since Q1)
Adult & Community Service	3	1	1	1	0	0
Children & Young People Service	3	0	1	2	0	0
City Services	6	0	0	6	0	0
Education	7	1	0	6	0	0
Finance	5	0	0	5	0	0
Law & Regulation	3	0	0	3	0	0
People & Business Change	12	2	0	10	0	0
Regeneration, Investment & Housing	7	2	0	4	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

At the end of quarter two, the Council's Corporate Risk Register included 18 of the 46 risks that are considered to pose the most risk to the delivery of Council services and achievement of its Corporate Objectives. The 18 Corporate Risks consisted of:

- 11 Severe risks (15 to 25)
- 5 Major Risks (7 to 14)
- 1 Moderate Risk (4 to 6)
- 1 Low Risk (1 to 3).

At the end of quarter two a review was undertaken of the Highways Network risk by the Council's Corporate Management Team. Following the review, it was agreed to increase the Target risk score from 9 to 15 to reflect the Council's tolerance and management of the risk within existing resources and highways risk management approaches.

In comparison to the quarter one Corporate risk register, 13 risks had remained at the same risk score. Four risks had increased, and one risk decreased. The table below highlights those risks where there has been a change in direction between quarter one and two

### Change in direction of risk score (Quarter Two)

Risk	Service Area Cabinet Member	Q1 Risk Score	Q2 Risk Score	Commentary
<b>Covid 19 Pandemic Outbreak</b>	Corporate (People & Business Change lead) Leader of the Council	15	20	Following return to schools we have seen increased case rates, whilst government restrictions have eased. The vaccination programme seems to be alleviating the most severe of illnesses, but high rates of infection are prevalent in our communities and are impacting on staffing levels and school attendance.
<b>Pressure on Adult &amp; Community Services</b>	Adult & Community / Cabinet Member for Social Services	20	25	Demand continues to outstrip supply as the major issue affecting service provision is the inability to recruit and retain staff. There are huge numbers of job vacancies and all providers are experiencing difficult in attracting new entrants whilst existing staff are being attracted to retail and hospitality sectors with the offer of immediate financial incentives and better rates of pay. National, regional and local discussions are taking place in an effort to address the issues that are being felt across the whole spectrum of social care services.
<b>Climate Change</b>	Regeneration, Investment & Housing / Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development	9	12	Good progress has been made. A NCC organisational Climate Change Plan has been drafted and is out to public consultation currently. The next stage is to work with Public Service Board partners to develop a Newport wide climate plan.
<b>Brexit</b>	People & Business Change (Lead) / Leader of the Council and Cabinet	8	12	Following the implementation of an agreement with the EU we are beginning to see pressures developing around the supply of labour (most notably HGV drivers and care staff) which is partly affected by Brexit and Covid 19. We are monitoring increasing costs of supplies and services.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Children Services (Lead), Adult Services, Education	6	4	Due to the completion of the whole council self-assessment safeguarding audit, the risk has reduced due to all areas having completed the self-assessment audit tool and are clear on service responsibilities and processes.

**Appendix 1** - Quarter 2 Corporate Risk Heat Map and Risk Profile

**Appendix 2** – Newport Council’s Corporate Risk Register for Quarter 2.

### Risks

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	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?
The Council does not achieve its objectives as corporate level risks are not adequately managed and monitored.	M	L	Risk Management Strategy has been adopted and mechanisms are in place to identify, manage and escalate emerging and new risks / mitigation strategies.  Audit Committee oversight of risk management process.	Directors, Heads of Service and Performance Team

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

### **Links to Council Policies and Priorities**

Corporate Plan 2017-22

Service Plans 2021/22

### **Options Available and considered**

1. To consider the contents of the Corporate Risk Register and to continue monitoring of these risks and the actions being taken to address the risks identified in the report.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of the risk register

### **Preferred Option and Why**

To consider the contents of the Corporate Risk Register and monitor the progress of actions taken to address the risks identified in the report. This will give the Cabinet sufficient assurance and oversight of the main overarching risks that the council faces in delivering the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

### **Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The corporate risk register forms an important part of the governance and budget setting arrangements for the council and the risk register is used to guide the internal audit plan.

It is noted that overall, the corporate risk register remains largely unchanged since quarter 1 but will continue to be monitored closely and any increasing risk cores that may lead to financial pressures without mitigation will be reflected in established ongoing monitoring and MTFP arrangements.

### **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal issues arising from the report. As part of the Council's risk management strategy, the corporate risk register identifies those high-level risks that could impact upon the Council's ability to deliver its corporate plan objectives and essential public services. The identification of corporate risks within the risk register and monitoring the effectiveness of the mitigation measures are matters for Cabinet. The report confirms that there have been no significant changes in the risk profile during the second quarter of this year, with no additional risks being added to the corporate risk register and no risks being de-escalated back to the service areas. Some individual risk scores have been re-assessed in the light of changing circumstances, and increased or decreased as appropriate, but the overall risks remain the same.

### **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

Effective monitoring and reporting against the Council's Corporate Risk Register is essential in minimising and preventing the likelihood and impact of risks against our objectives. The Council's risk management is a key area in the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

The recent changes made to our risk management processes and system ensure officers at all levels of the organisation have greater control and oversight of their risks taking the necessary action to mitigate their impact and escalate where necessary to senior management.

There are no specific HR issues arising from the report.

### **Comments of Cabinet Member**

The Chair of Cabinet is consulted on the corporate risk register and has agreed that this report goes forward to Cabinet for consideration.

### **Local issues**

None.

## **Scrutiny Committees (Governance and Audit Committee)**

The quarter one Corporate Risk Register was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in November 2021. No recommendations or feedback by the Committee was made in relation to this report.

The Council's Audit and Governance Committee will receive an update on the Council's Quarter 2 Corporate Risk Register in January 2022. Feedback on the report will be provided to the Cabinet in the next risk update in quarter 4.

## **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

For this report, a full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. This is because this report is not seeking any strategic decisions or policy changes, with its purpose being to update Cabinet on the current risk register.

## **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

Under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and its 5 ways of working principles this report supports:

Long Term – Having effective risk management arrangements will ensure that the opportunities and risks that will emerge consider the long term impact on service users and communities.

Preventative – Identifying opportunities and risks will ensure the Council is able to implement necessary mitigations to prevent or minimise their impact on Council services and service users.

Collaborative – The management of risk is undertaken throughout the Council and officers collaborate together within service areas, Corporate Management Team and the Council's Cabinet to ensure decisions are made in a timely manner and are evidence based.

Involvement – The Council's Risk Management process involves officers across the Council's service areas and Cabinet Members.

Integration – Risk Management is being integrated throughout the Council and supports the integrated Planning, Performance and Risk Management Framework. The Framework ensures that planning activities consider the opportunities and risks to their implementation and overall supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and legislative duties.

## **Consultation**

As above, the Risk Register is also considered by Audit Committee.

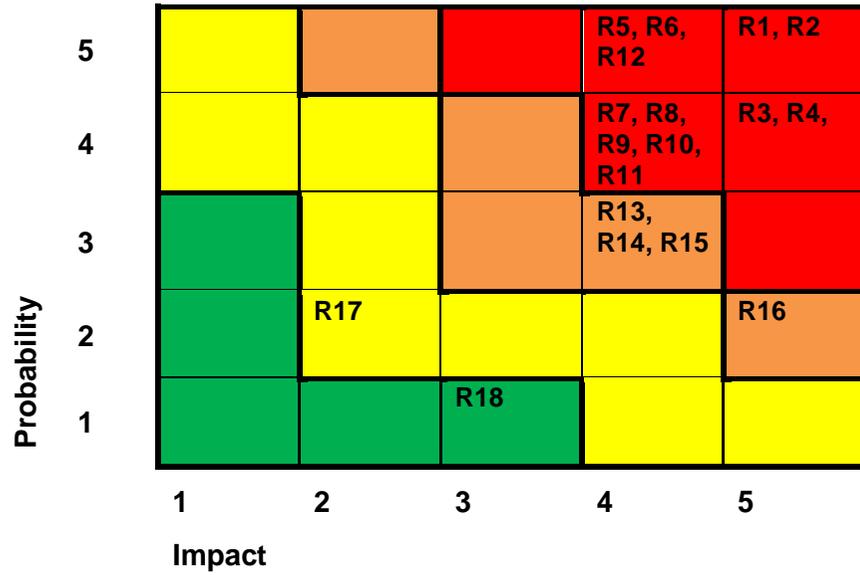
## **Background Papers**

[Q1 Corporate Risk Register, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021](#)

[Risk Management Policy 2020-22](#)

**Dated: 8 December 2021**

Appendix 1 – Quarter 2 2021/22 Risk Heat Map



Corporate Risk Heat Map Key (Quarter 2 2020/21)	
R1 – Stability of Social Services Providers	R10 - Pressure on Housing & Homelessness Service
R2 – Pressure on Adult & Community Services	R11 - Newport Council's Property Estate
R3 – Highways Network	R12 – Climate Change
R4 – Covid-19 Outbreak	R13 – Schools Finance / Cost Pressures
R5 – Ash Die Back Disease	R14 – Educational Out of County Placements
R6 – Pressure on the delivery of Children Services	R15 – Brexit & Trade Agreement
R7 – Demand for ALN and SEN support	R16 – City Centre Security and Safety
R8 – Balancing the Council's Medium Term Budget	R17 – Safeguarding
R9 – Cyber Security	R18 - In year financial management

## Risk Score Profile between Quarter 3 2020/21 and Quarter 2 2021/22

The table below shows the risk scores reported between the period 1<sup>st</sup> October (Quarter 3 2020/21) to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (Quarter 2 2021/22)

\* Information on Cabinet portfolios added to the report to improve alignment with portfolios.

Risk Reference	Risk	Lead Cabinet Member(s) *	Risk Score Quarter 3 2020/21	Risk Score Quarter 4 2020/21	Risk Score Quarter 1 2021/22	(Current) Quarter 2 2021/22	Target Risk Score
R1	Stability of Social Services Providers	Cabinet Member for Social Services	25	25	25	25	6
R2	Pressure on Adult & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Social Services	20	20	20	25	10
R3	Highways Network	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Services & Member Development	20	20	20	20	15
R4	COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak	Leader of the Council /Cabinet	25	20	15	20	6
R5	Ash Die Back Disease	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for City Services & Member Development	20	20	20	20	6
R6	Pressure on the delivery of Children Services	Cabinet Member for Social Services	20	20	20	20	6
R7	Demand for ALN and SEN support	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	16	16	16	16	6
R8	Balancing the Council's Medium-Term budget	Leader of the Council / Cabinet	16	16	16	16	10
R9	Cyber Security	Cabinet Member for Assets and Community	16	16	16	16	10
R10	Pressure on Housing and Homelessness Service	Leader of the Council	16	16	16	16	6
R11	Newport Council's Property Estate	Cabinet Member for Assets and Community	12	16	16	16	9

Risk Reference	Risk	Lead Cabinet Member(s) *	Risk Score Quarter 3 2020/21	Risk Score Quarter 4 2020/21	Risk Score Quarter 1 2021/22	(Current) Quarter 2 2021/22	Target Risk Score
R12	Climate Change	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development	9	9	9	12	10
R13	Schools Finance / Cost Pressures	Leader of the Council /Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	12	12	12	12	6
R14	Educational Out of County Placements	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	9	12	12	12	5
R15	Brexit & Trade Agreement	Leader of the Council / Cabinet	12	8	8	12	10
R16	City Centre Security and Safety	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Services and Member Development	10	10	10	10	8
R17	Safeguarding	Cabinet Member for Social Services	6	6	6	4	4
R18	In year financial management	Leader of the Council / Cabinet	6	3	3	3	6

## **Glossary**

This document provides an explanation of terminology used in this report and supporting documents.

**Risk Appetite** – the amount of risk that Newport City Council is willing to seek or accept in the pursuit of the Council's long term objectives.

**Inherent Risk Score** – The level of risk in the absence of any existing controls and management action taken to alter the risk's impact or probability of occurring.

**Residual Risk Score** – The level of risk where risk responses i.e. existing controls or risk mitigation actions have been taken to manage the risk's impact and probability.

**Target Risk Score** – The level of risk (risk score) that Newport City Council is willing to accept / tolerate in managing the risk. This is set in line with the Council's overall risk appetite.

**Risk Mitigation Action** – Actions identified by the Risk Owner to respond to the risk and reduce the impact and probability of the risk of occurring.

**Risk Mitigation Action (Red Progress Score)** – Significant issue(s) have been identified with the action which could impact on the ability of the action meeting its completion date. Immediate action / response is required resolve its status.

**Risk Mitigation Action (Amber Progress Score)** – issue(s) have been identified that could have a negative impact on the action achieving its completion date. Appropriate line manager(s) should be informed and where necessary action taken.

**Risk Mitigation Action (Green Progress Score)** – The action is on course for delivering to the agreed completion date and within the agreed tolerances.

### **How the Council Assesses Risk**

An assessment of the likelihood and impact of risk is important to measure, compare and monitor risks to ensure efficient use of resources and effective decision making. This assessment is carried out using the risk matrix as described below.

### **Risk Assessment Matrix**

A Corporate Risk Register will contain the high level risks for the whole authority. In order to differentiate between these high level risks a 5x5 risk assessment matrix will be applied. The matrix is shown below and further detail is included in appendix 3.

Risks are scored using the scoring system for probability and impact and assigned a rating based on the tolerances set out in the matrix below

Score	Description	Impact Measures						
		Strategic / Policy	Operational / Business Continuity	Financial	Governance / Legal / Regulatory	Health & Safety	Reputational	Project Delivery / Savings / Benefits
5  Page 40	<b>Severe</b>	Failure of a key strategic objective	Serious organisational / service failure that has direct impact on stakeholders including vulnerable groups.  Service disruption over 5+ days.	<b><u>Corporate / Project</u></b>  Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance.  Capital > £1M Revenue >£1M	Legislative / Regulatory breach resulting in multiple litigation / legal action taken on the Council (linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts).	Multiple major irreversible injuries or deaths of staff, students or members of public.  (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Severe and persistent National media coverage. Adverse central government response, involving (threat of) removal of delegated powers. Officer(s) and / or Members forced to Resign.	Project status is over 12 months from anticipated implementation date.  Project(s) do not deliver the major benefits / savings identified in business case.  This is linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts
4	<b>Major</b>	Severe constraint on achievement of a key strategic objective	Loss of an important service(s) for a short period that could impact on stakeholders.  Service disruption between 3-5 days.	<b><u>Corporate / Project</u></b>  Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance. Capital > £0.5M - £1.0M Revenue >£0.5M-£1M	Serious legislative breach resulting in intervention, sanctions and legal action. (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Major irreversible injury or death of staff, student or member of public. (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Adverse publicity in professional / municipal press, affecting perception / standing in professional /local government community  Adverse local and social media publicity of a significant and persistent nature.	Project status is 6 to 12 months over from anticipated implementation date.  Project(s) do not deliver major benefits / savings identified in business case.  This is linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts

Score	Description	Impact Measures						
		Strategic / Policy	Operational / Business Continuity	Financial	Governance / Legal / Regulatory	Health & Safety	Reputational	Project Delivery / Savings / Benefits
3  Page 41	<b>Moderate</b>	Noticeable constraint on achievement of a key strategic objective / Service Plan objective.	Loss and/or intermittent disruption of a service between 2-3 days.	<u><b>Corporate / Project</b></u>  Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance.  Capital = £0.25M - £0.5M Revenue = £0.25M to £0.5M Revenue = £0.25M to £0.5M	Significant legislative breach resulting in investigation. (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Major reversible injury to staff, student or member of public. Not life threatening.  (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Adverse local publicity / local public opinion including social media. Statutory prosecution of a non-serious nature.	Project status is 1 to 6 months over from anticipated implementation date.  There is significant reduction on delivery of benefits / savings identified in business case.  This is linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational impacts.
2	<b>Low</b>	Constraint on achievement of Service Plan objective that does not impact on Corporate Strategy	Brief disruption of service that has a minor impact on the delivery of a service.  Service disruption 1 day.	<u><b>Corporate / Project</b></u>  Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance.  Capital = £0.1M - £0.25M Revenue = £0.1M – £0.25M	Moderate impact leading to warning and recommendations.	Some minor reversible injuries.  (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Contained within Directorate Complaint from individual / small group, of arguable merit	Project status is 1 to 4 weeks over from anticipated implementation date.  There is minor reduction on delivery of benefits / savings identified in business case.  This is linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational impacts.

Score	Description	Impact Measures						
		Strategic / Policy	Operational / Business Continuity	Financial	Governance / Legal / Regulatory	Health & Safety	Reputational	Project Delivery / Savings / Benefits
1	Very Low	Constraint on achievement of Service / Team Plan objective	Minor disruption of a non-critical service.	<u>Corporate / Project</u>  Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance.  Capital < £100k Revenue <£100k	No reprimand, sanction or legal action.	Some superficial injuries.  (Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)	Isolated complaint(s) that are managed through the corporate complaints process and service area.	Project status is 1 week over from anticipated implementation date.  There is insignificant / no impact on delivery of benefits / savings identified in business case.  This is linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational impacts.

Score	Probability	Criteria
5	<b>Very likely</b> 75% +	<p><b>Systematic Risks</b> – Local evidence indicating <b>very high</b> probability of occurrence if no action / controls are in place. Risk is highly likely to occur daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly.</p> <p><b>Emerging Risks</b> – National and Global evidence indicating <b>very high</b> probability of occurrence on local communities if no action / controls are taken. Risks are highly likely to occur within the next 5 years.</p>
4	<b>Likely</b> 51-75%	<p><b>Systematic Risks</b> – Local evidence indicating <b>high</b> probability occur in most circumstances with near misses regularly encountered e.g. once or twice a year.</p> <p><b>Emerging Risks</b> – National and Global evidence indicating <b>high</b> probability of occurrence on local communities if no action / controls are taken. Risks are likely to occur within the next 5-10 years.</p>
3	<b>Possible</b> 26-50%	<p><b>Systematic Risks</b> – Local evidence indicating <b>distinct</b> possibility with circumstances regularly encountered and near misses experienced every 1-3 years.</p> <p><b>Emerging Risks</b> – National and Global evidence indicating <b>distinct</b> probability of occurrence on local communities if no action / controls are taken. Risks are likely to occur within the next 10-15 years.</p>
2	<b>Unlikely</b> 6-25%	<p><b>Systematic Risks</b> – Local evidence indicating <b>low</b> to infrequent near misses experienced every 3 + years.</p> <p><b>Emerging Risks</b> – National evidence indicating <b>low</b> probability of occurrence on local communities if no action / controls are taken. Risks are likely to occur within the next 16-25 years.</p>
1	<b>Very Unlikely</b>	<p><b>Systematic Risks</b> – Local evidence indicating risk has rarely / never happened or in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>Emerging Risks</b> – National evidence indicating very low probability of occurrence on local communities if no action / controls are taken. Risks are likely to occur within the next 16-25 years.</p>

**Systematic Risks** – Risks that are known or are becoming part of social, cultural, economic and environmental systems that govern our lives.

**Emerging Risks** – Risks that are further away, less defined and early stage of being known about.

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# Corporate Risk Register

## 2021/22 Quarter 2 Update



# Ash Die Back Disease

<b>Short Description</b>	Ash Die back disease will affect tree population in Newport. The disease has already been identified in Newport and could kill the majority of Ash trees in the authority. The impact of no action will be significant numbers of tree failures that could see an increase in the number of people harmed by trees and property claims.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Joanne Gossage
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	Head of Streetscene and City Services
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for City Services & Member Development
<b>Linked Theme</b>	Theme : Thriving City
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>WBO 4. Cohesive &amp; Sustainable Communities</li> </ul>

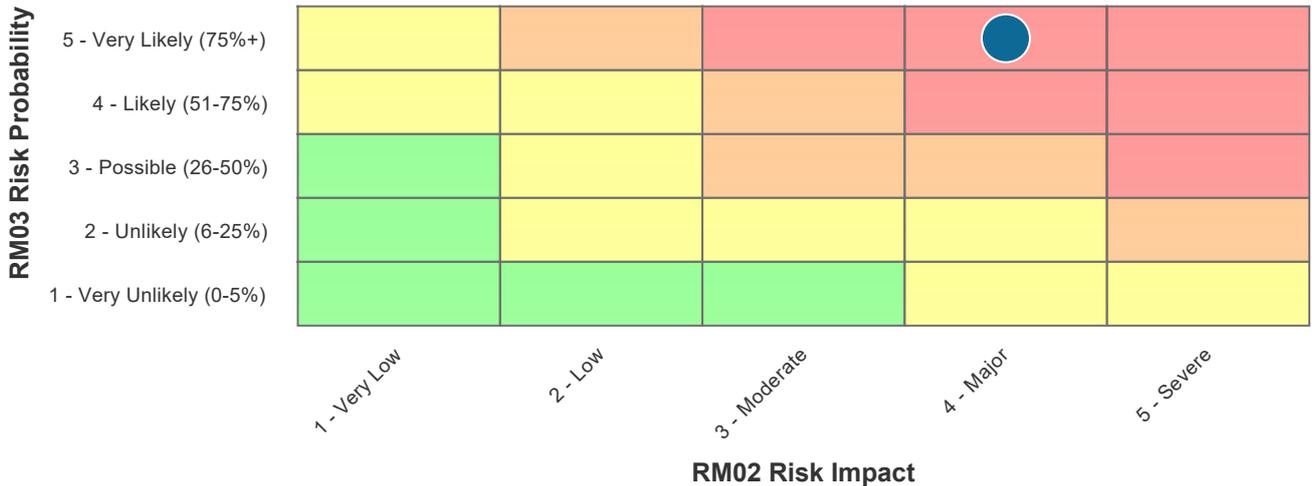


20

Inherent Risk Score

6

Target Risk Score



### Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Ash Die Back Disease	➔	Ongoing removal works across the city following survey findings

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase & Improve Newport's Urban Tree Coverage	Increase and improve Newport's urban tree coverage.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undertake works removing Ash trees owned by NCC	To undertake works removing diseased Ash trees that are owned by NCC.	★

# Balancing the Council's Medium Term Budget

<b>Short Description</b>	To meet the Council's requirement of reducing the gap between Council spend and Budget allocation over the next 3-5 years
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Robert Green
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Chief Executive</li> <li>■ Head of Finance</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Investment
<b>Linked Theme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Theme : Aspirational People</li> <li>■ Theme : Modernised Council</li> <li>■ Theme : Thriving City</li> <li>■ Theme: Resilient Communities (Community)</li> <li>■ Theme: Resilient Communities (Social Care)</li> </ul>
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ WBO 1. Skills, Education &amp; Employment</li> <li>■ WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>■ WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>■ WBO 4. Cohesive &amp; Sustainable Communities</li> </ul>

16



**Balancing the Council's Medium Term Budget**

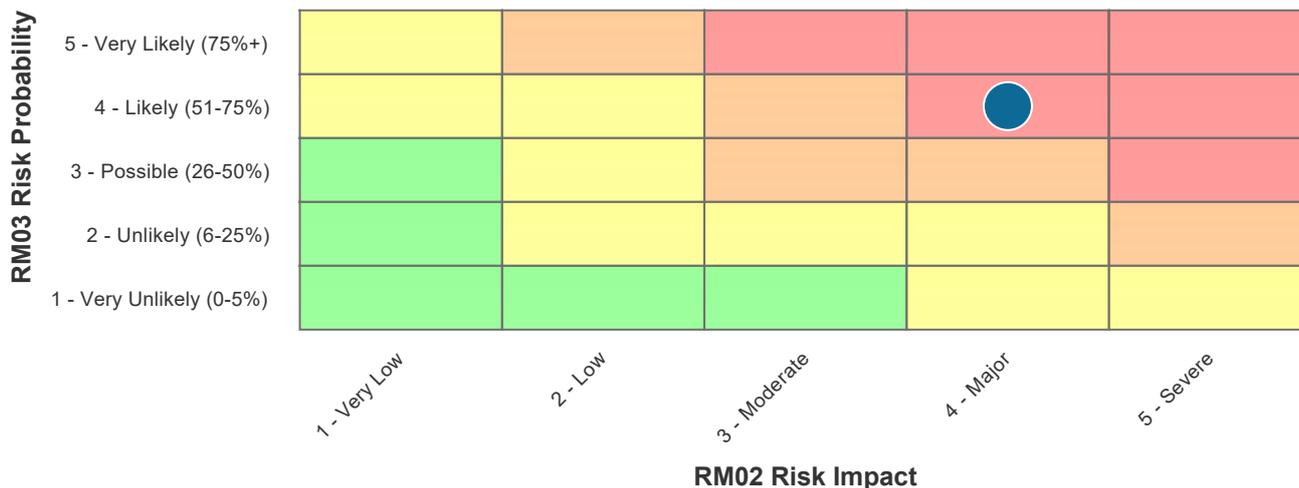
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16

**Inherent Risk Score**

10

**Target Risk Score**



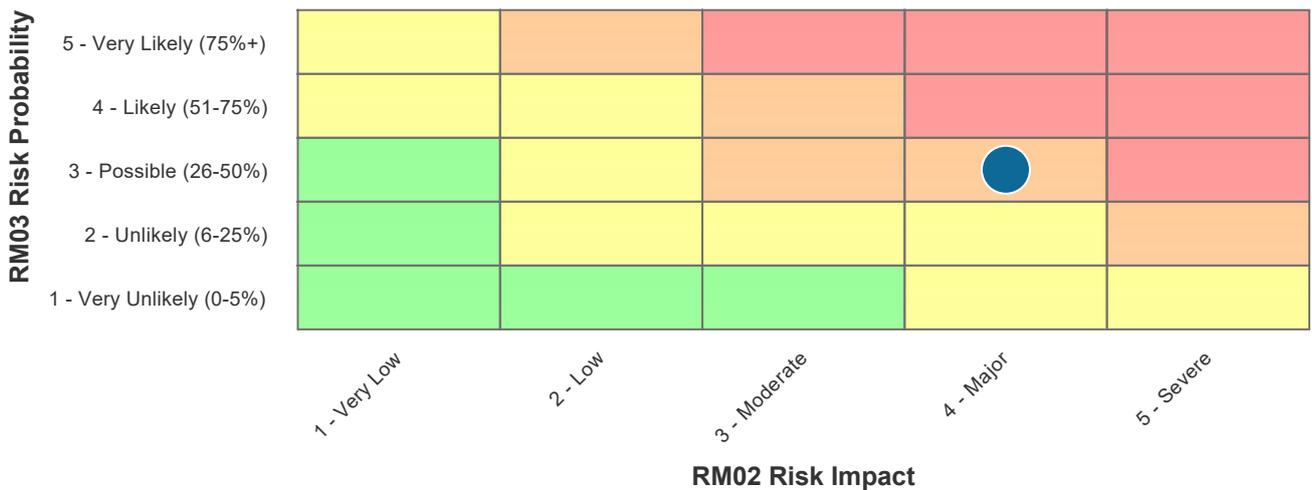
### Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Balancing the Council's Medium Term Budget	➔	No change to the risk score for this quarter.

There are no actions associated with this Risk

# Brexit

Short Description	The UK Government and EU have now agreed an agreement following the UK withdrawal from the EU on December 31st 2020. There are potential impacts on supplies and services in the short to medium term due to new trade and immigration rules, which may result in an impact on supply of good/services and could have a business/economic impact. There are also potential and on-going community cohesion issues.
Risk Owner	Rhys Cornwall
Overseeing Officer	Chief Executive
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Investment
Linked Theme	
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SRA 2. Supporting the Environment &amp; the Economy</li> <li>▪ WBO 1. Skills, Education &amp; Employment</li> <li>▪ WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>▪ WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>▪ WBO 4. Cohesive &amp; Sustainable Communities</li> </ul>



## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Brexit		Following the implementation of an agreement with the EU we are beginning to see pressures developing around the supply of labour (most notably HGV drivers and care staff) which is partly affected by Brexit and Covid 19. We are monitoring increasing costs of supplies and services.

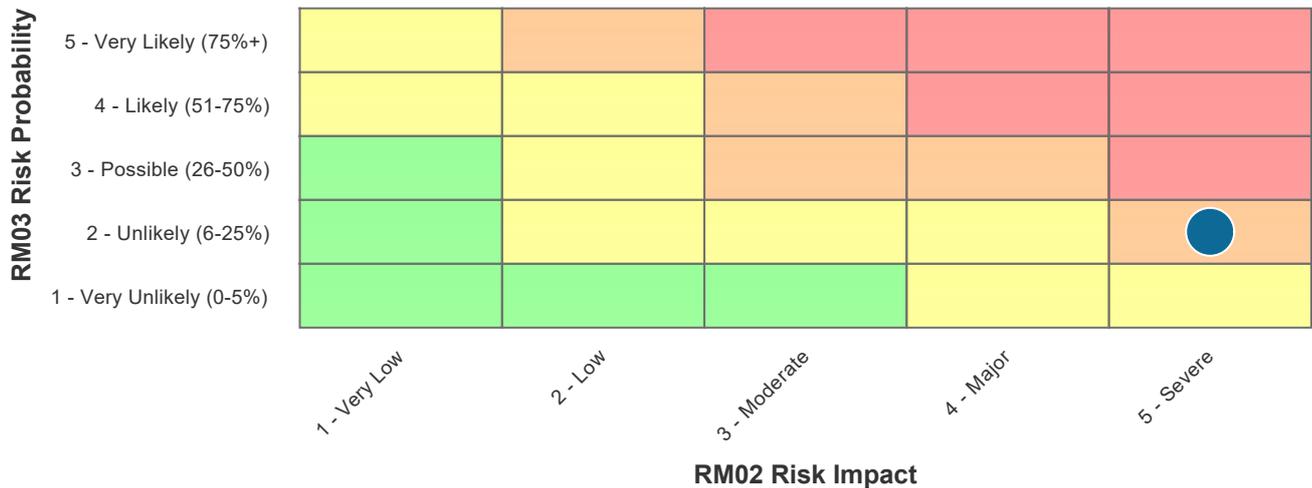
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contribute towards Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary Plan.	To develop an Integration Strategy for Newport, focusing on our approach to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and contributing to Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary Plan.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a follow up to the Community Impact Assessment	Develop a follow up to the community impact assessment to understand the impact that Covid 19 pandemic and further lockdown restrictions has had on Newport's Communities.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the Council's Brexit Task and Finish Group 2021-22	Support the Council's Brexit Task and Finish Group in making preparations for post European Union arrangements for the Council and Newport.	

# City Centre Security & Safety

Short Description	Significant incidents of deliberate acts that pose hazards to people in surrounding areas; structural damage; business continuity; damage/disruption to infrastructure and utilities; and reputational and economic impact.
Risk Owner	Rhys Cornwall
Overseeing Officer	Strategic Director - Place
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for City Services & Member Development
Linked Theme	Theme : Thriving City
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>SRA 2. Supporting the Environment &amp; the Economy</li> </ul>



**20** **8**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



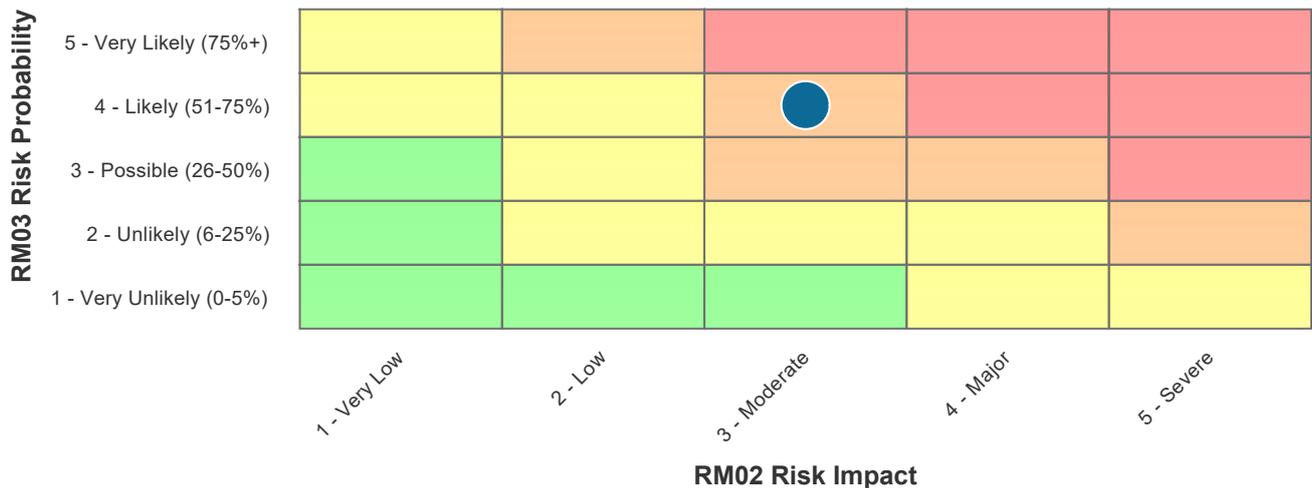
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
City Centre Security & Safety	➔	No change reported.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Centre Training to Businesses	Training for those businesses operating within the city centre that may be affected by significant incidents – Gwent Police will lead on the training with the use of NCC channels to promote and raise initial awareness of the scheme.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-ordinated evac arrangements	Co-ordinated evacuation arrangements for the city centre – NCC will be working with all partner organisations such as the emergency services and private business within the city centre to construct a co-ordinated evacuation system.	

# Climate Change

<b>Short Description</b>	Scientific evidence indicates that the global climate is warming and is changing the environment that we live in Wales and in Newport. The cause of this change is through emissions produced by industry, vehicles, households and businesses. Newport has 11 Air Quality Management Areas which monitor air quality and since they were in place we have been in breach.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Ross Cudlipp
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development
<b>Linked Theme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme : Modernised Council</li> <li>Theme: Resilient Communities (Community)</li> <li>Theme : Thriving City</li> </ul>
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> </ul>



## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Climate Change		Good progress has been made. A NCC organisational Climate Change Plan has been drafted and is out to public consultation currently. The next stage is to work with Public Service Board partners to develop a Newport wide climate plan.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Long Term Fleet Strategy	Development of a long term Fleet Strategy that will support the Council's Carbon Management Plan to be net carbon neutral.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Localised Air Quality Management Plans	Local Air Quality Management - develop localised plans under the Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy to meet statutory requirements for Action Plans. Actions to be generated by the Sustainable Travel Group.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ebbw West Solar Farm Development	Ebbw West Solar Farm Development	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Select Building Decarbonisation Partner & Complete Phase of Works on NCC Estate	Select a building decarbonisation delivery partner (Via RE:Fit) and complete a phase of decarbonisation works on the NCC estate.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support LAEP Pilot and decarbonisation action plan for Newport	Support the completion of the Welsh Government supported Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) pilot to develop a decarbonisation action plan for the City of Newport in collaboration with NCC Policy, Partnership and Involvement team and external stakeholders.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support NCC Climate Change Group and development of Climate Strategy	Support the NCC Climate Change Group in the development of an organisation climate strategy	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support NCC Fleet decarbonisation	Support NCC Fleet Decarbonisation via the correct implementation of charging infrastructure and associated energy systems.	★

# Covid 19 Pandemic Outbreak

<b>Short Description</b>	The Corona Virus (COVID 19) pandemic has put at risk the operational ability of the Council to deliver its services, support vulnerable people across Newport and the economic impact to the local and wider economy. Potential mitigations carried out in line with the Chief Medical Officer's advice and Welsh/UK Government guidance.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Rhys Cornwall
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Investment
<b>Linked Theme</b>	
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ WBO 1. Skills, Education &amp; Employment</li> <li>■ WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>■ WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>■ WBO 4. Cohesive &amp; Sustainable Communities</li> <li>■ SRA 1. Supporting Education and Employment</li> <li>■ SRA 2. Supporting the Environment &amp; the Economy</li> <li>■ SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> <li>■ SRA 4. Supporting Citizens post Covid-19</li> </ul>

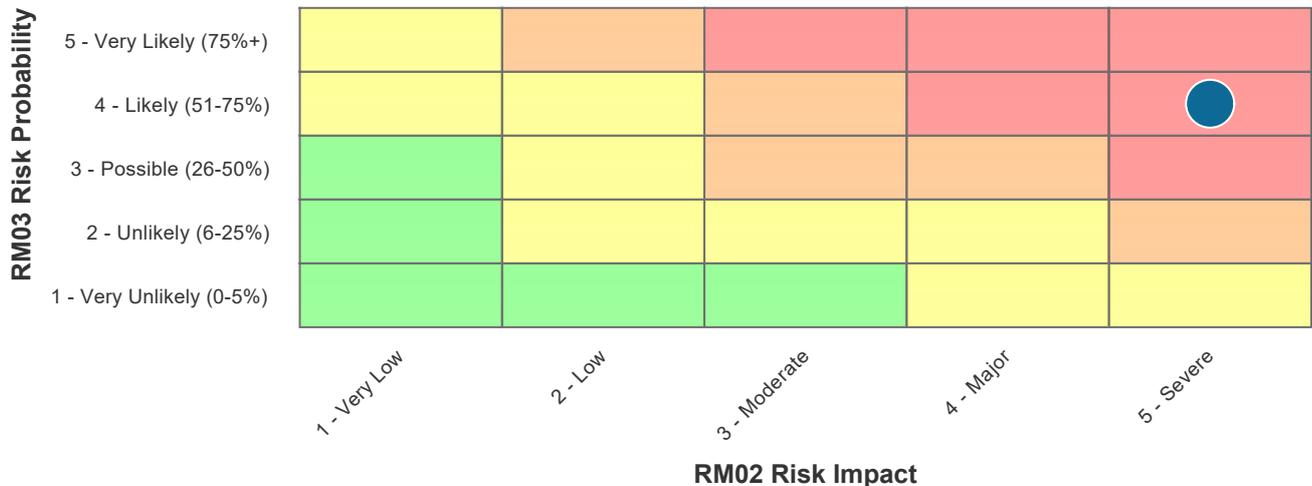


**25**

Inherent Risk Score

**6**

Target Risk Score



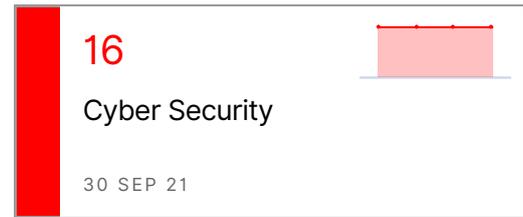
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Covid 19 Pandemic Outbreak		Following return to schools we have seen increased case rates, whilst government restrictions have eased. The vaccination programme seems to be alleviating the most severe of illnesses but high rates of infection are prevalent in our communities and are impacting on staffing levels and school attendance.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil Contingencies Response to COVID-19 Pandemic	Manage and deliver the Civil Contingencies response to the COVID-19 pandemic	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Community Impact Assessment	Develop a community impact assessment to understand the impact that Covid 19 pandemic and resultant lockdown has had on Newport's Communities	✔
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a follow up to the Community Impact Assessment	Develop a follow up to the community impact assessment to understand the impact that Covid 19 pandemic and further lockdown restrictions has had on Newport's Communities.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Normal Project - RAG	Building on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 crisis undertake further work to enable the workforce to able to work more flexibly from Council offices, home and other locations securely and safely. Collaborating with Newport Norse, Facilities and Health & Safety to ensure Council offices meet the necessary WG and Covid secure requirements. Collaborating with SRS to ensure officers and Members are able to work remotely using digital solutions and appropriate equipment. Developing HR policies and procedures that will support the wellbeing and development of the organisation's staff.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undertake Analysis of Future Demands Post Covid	To ensure that PBC has an efficient, effective structure to meet future demands.	●

# Cyber Security

Short Description	Management and security of the Council's ICT systems to protect personal and sensitive data from theft and loss whilst also maintaining business continuity and integrity of our systems.
Risk Owner	Mark Bleazard
Overseeing Officer	Chief Executive
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Community and Resources
Linked Theme	Theme : Modernised Council
Linked Corporate Objective	

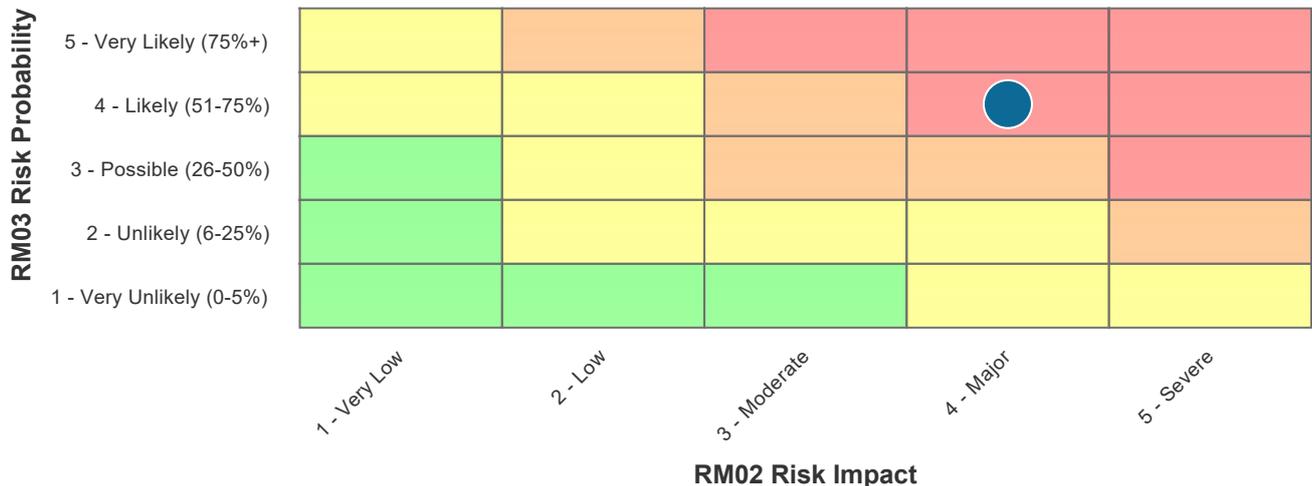


20

Inherent Risk Score

10

Target Risk Score



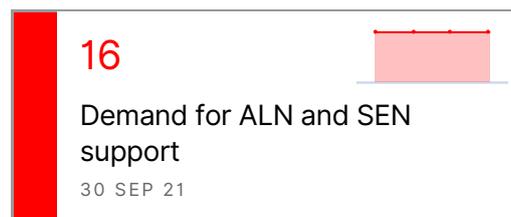
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Cyber Security	➔	Cyber security risks should be reduced to some extent in future as a result of the implementation of a Security Operation Centre (SOC) and a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system. However, even with the measures the council has in place in partnership with the Shared Resource Service (SRS), significant risks remain around cyber security.

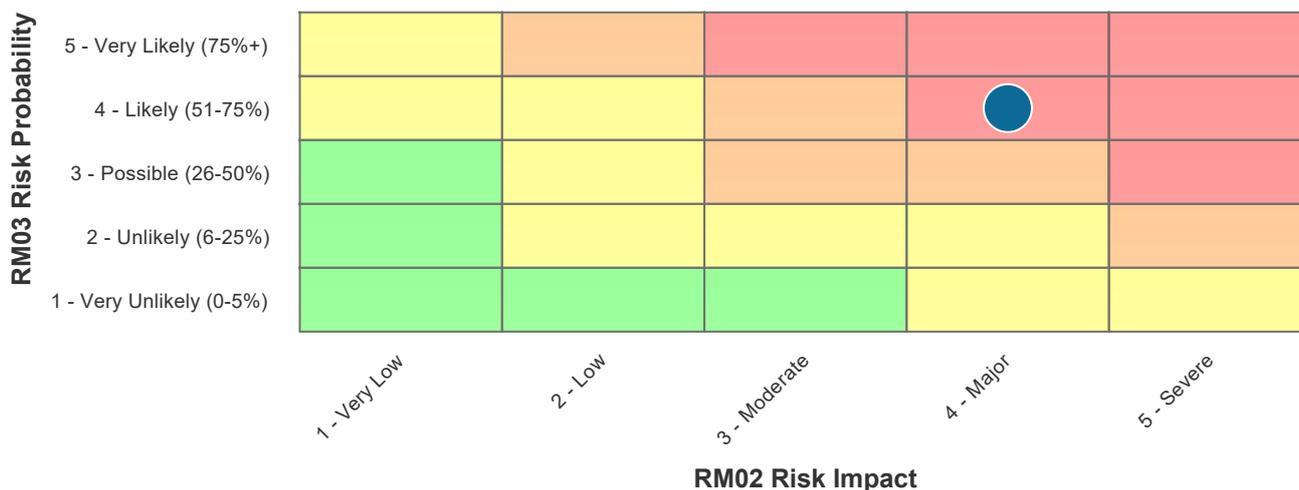
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Digital Strategy	Development of a new Digital Strategy that supports the future direction of IT services and infrastructure of the Council.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation of a Policy Management System	To explore and purchase a Policy Management System that will ensure staff across the business undertake necessary training before being able to access IT systems.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SRS / NCC Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery	Disaster Recovery and business continuity processes between the Council and SRS will be reviewed and updated. These processes will be subject to regular testing with findings and recommendations fed back to the Council's Information Governance Group to ensure the necessary action(s) are completed.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Using and Securing Data in line with the Digital Strategy 2021-22	Using and Securing Data in line with the Digital Strategy by ensuring effective use of data and information governance processes.	★

# Demand for ALN and SEN support

Short Description	Funding to cover Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Special Education Needs (SEN) provision across the city is insufficient and does not meet the demand of increasing need.
Risk Owner	Katy Rees
Overseeing Officer	Chief Education Officer
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Linked Theme	Theme : Aspirational People
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 1. Skills, Education &amp; Employment</li> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>SRA 1. Supporting Education and Employment</li> </ul>



**20** **6**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Demand for ALN and SEN support	➔	Meetings of the ALN Implementation Group have been on-going and modelling of potential funding formula options have been discussed and devised between Inclusion and Finance colleagues. These have been presented to Head teacher / School Business Managers with a view to finalising options during the Autumn Term 2021 for presentation at the Schools Finance Forum. The new Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice began implementation on 1st September 2021. There is an expectation the majority of pupils additional needs should be met within mainstream Schools through universal and targeted provision.

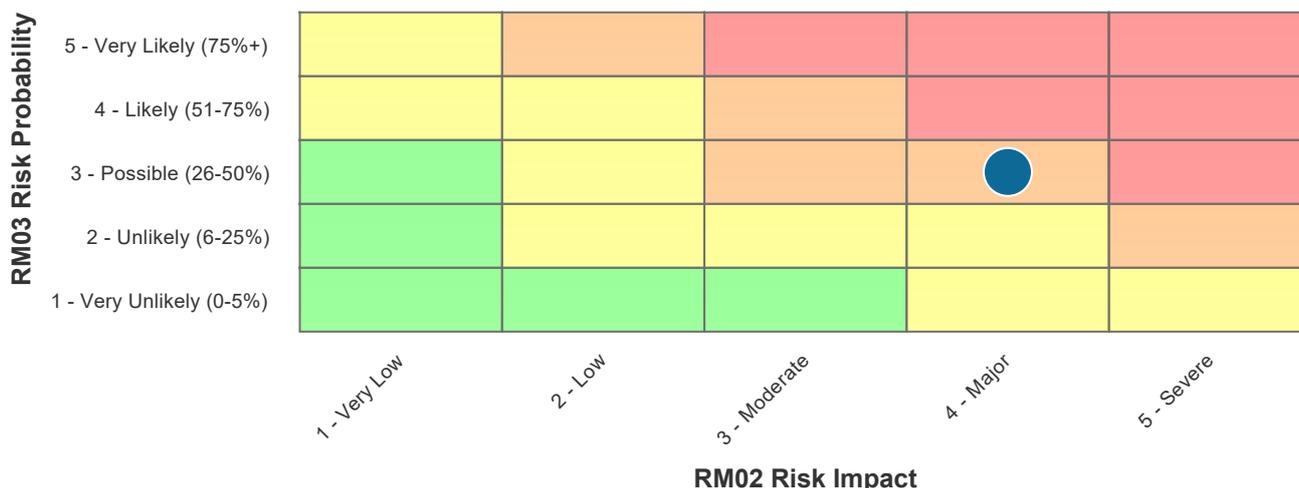
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create a sustainable model of delivery for children with ALN provided with timely intervention	In liaison with finance, partners and schools create a sustainable model of delivery to ensure children with ALN are provided with timely intervention within a prescribed budget without year on year fluctuation.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement a joint ALN and Admissions process	To develop and implement a joint ALN and Admissions process regarding allocation of school placements based on parental preference to safeguard and minimise appeals processes.	✔
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estyn Rec 2 - Work with Partners to Embed the Learn Well Plan	(Estyn Rec 2) Work with partners to embed the priorities of the Learn Well Plan which focuses on improving the attainment of vulnerable groups.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estyn Rec 5 - Ensure Appropriate Welsh Medium Provision is in Place for ALN Pupils	(Estyn Rec 5) Ensure that Welsh Medium (WM) provision is established to support pupils with Additional Learning Needs	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review availability of provision for all pupils with Additional Learning Needs.	Review with relevant regional partners what provision is available and required to ensure all pupils with ALN have the opportunities to return to study up to age 25.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review the staffing resources to implement the demands of ALN & Educational Tribunal Act.	To review the staffing resources needed to implement the demands of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal Act 2018.	★

# Educational Out of County Placements

Short Description	Limited access to Newport City Council (NCC) provision for pupils who require complex and specialist placements which results on a reliance on Out of County (OOC) placements both day and residential.
Risk Owner	Katy Rees
Overseeing Officer	Chief Education Officer
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Linked Theme	Theme : Aspirational People
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 1. Skills, Education &amp; Employment</li> <li>SRA 1. Supporting Education and Employment</li> </ul>



**20** **5**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Educational Out of County Placements	➔	There continues to be a reduction of Out of County (OOC) placements annually. In April 2021, there were 106 OOC placements which reduced to 75 by the end of August 2021. This included 13 students who left placement due to their formal education ceasing. There have been 8 new starters in OOC placements from September 2021 taking the total number of current placements to 83. The reduction is largely attributed to returning pupils from OOC Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) settings to more local Independent settings within Newport which has also contributed to reduced costs, travel time and pupil satisfaction. The expansion of Ysgol Bryn Derw (YBD) has enabled a continued reduction in pupils with Autism being placed outside of Newport and with consultation concluding on the proposed expansion of YBD from Easter 2022, this will aid future pupils with complex Autism being maintained at LA provision within the City in the majority of cases.

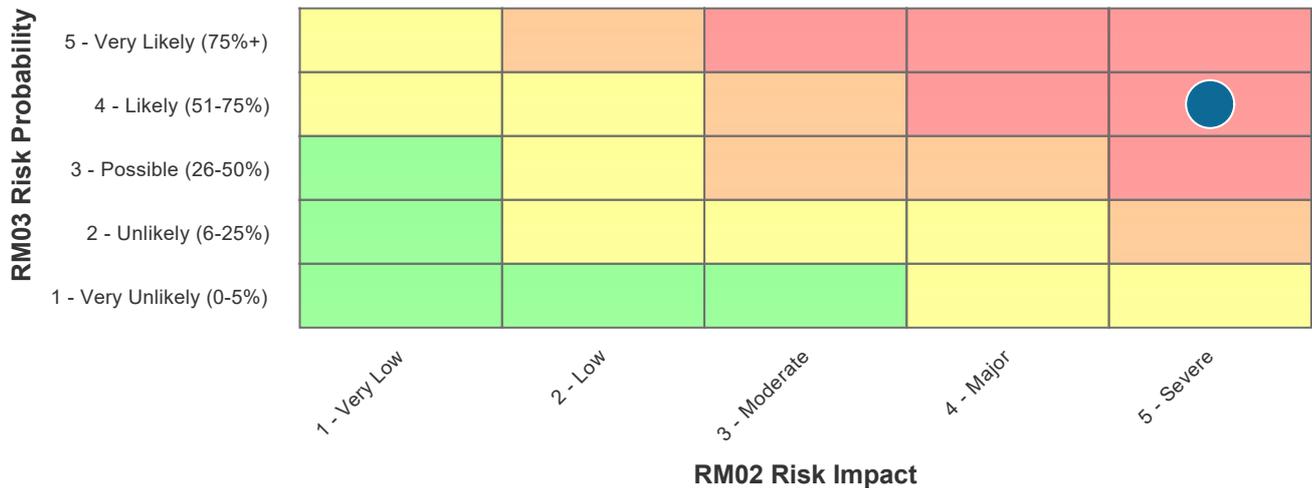
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create a sustainable model of delivery for children with ALN provided with timely intervention	In liaison with finance, partners and schools create a sustainable model of delivery to ensure children with ALN are provided with timely intervention within a prescribed budget without year on year fluctuation.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extend Provision Within the City to Accommodate a Greater Range of Needs	To extend specialist provision within the city to accommodate needs identified through data trend analysis, ensuring that pupils are placed where their learning is best supported which will reduce the need for Out of County placements. To continue to redevelop and extend provision within the city to accommodate a greater range of needs, ensuring that pupils are placed where their learning is best supported which will reduce the need for Out of County placements.	

# Highways Networks

<b>Short Description</b>	Failure to recognise current levels of under investment in the whole life of the city's highway network assets in the medium to long term will continue to compound existing maintenance backlog figures.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Steve Davies
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	Head of Streetscene and City Services
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for City Services & Member Development
<b>Linked Theme</b>	Theme : Thriving City
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>■ WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>■ SRA 2. Supporting the Environment &amp; the Economy</li> <li>■ SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> </ul>



**20** **15**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



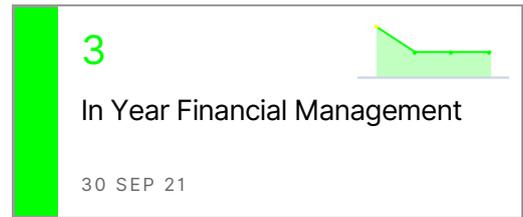
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Highways Networks	➔	No change from previous period. Following last periods "deep dive" into this risk, officers will be undertaking a review of the impact and probability for the next period.

There are no actions associated with this Risk

# In Year Financial Management

Short Description	This relates to the in year management of budgets and risk profiling of service areas / activities that are forecasting end of year overspends.
Risk Owner	Robert Green
Overseeing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Executive</li> <li>Head of Finance</li> </ul>
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Investment
Linked Theme	
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 1. Skills, Education &amp; Employment</li> <li>WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>WBO 4. Cohesive &amp; Sustainable Communities</li> </ul>

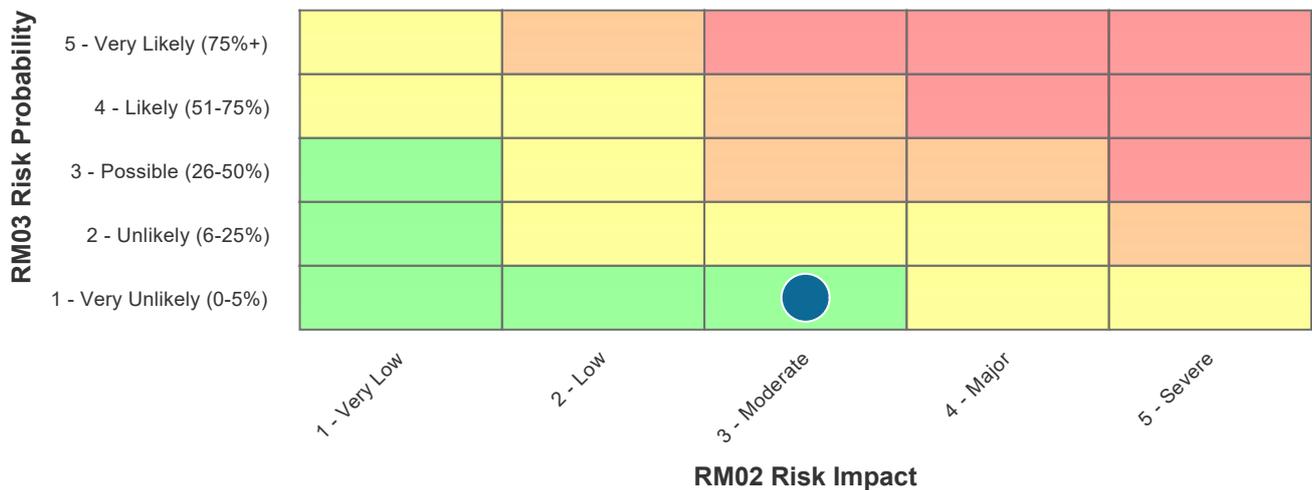


**20**

Inherent Risk Score

**6**

Target Risk Score



## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
In Year Financial Management	➔	The current monitoring position reflects an overall underspend and the probability of an underspend at the end of the financial year 2021/22 emerging is relatively high.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cabinet Member and Senior Officers to reduce overspending in Social Care	There continue to be overspends reported in Social Care in 2020/21, Cabinet Members and Senior Officers to address these.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve the Council's Ability to Complete Processes Within Timescales	Ongoing challenge of existing processes and timetables. Requires 'buy-in' from senior management and service areas. Timetable updated with processes completed in shorter timescales with some year-end tasks being completed in year.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work with Audit Wales to Assess Which Accountancy Audits can be Completed in 2020-21	Work alongside Audit Wales to assess which areas of work accountancy can complete early in the year and can be audited before draft stage.	

# Newport Council's Property Estate

<b>Short Description</b>	NCC has a significant property estate covering over 170 buildings (circa) such as the Civic Centre, Telford Depot, schools etc. The Council has to ensure the estate is maintained to required standards to enable access, safety, security and in the long term sustainable for staff and residents to use.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Daniel Cooke
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chief Executive</li> <li>▪ Head of People &amp; Business Change</li> <li>▪ Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Cabinet Member for Assets
<b>Linked Theme</b>	Theme : Modernised Council
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SRA 2. Supporting the Environment &amp; the Economy</li> <li>▪ SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> <li>▪ WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>▪ WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> </ul>

16



**Newport Council's Property Estate**

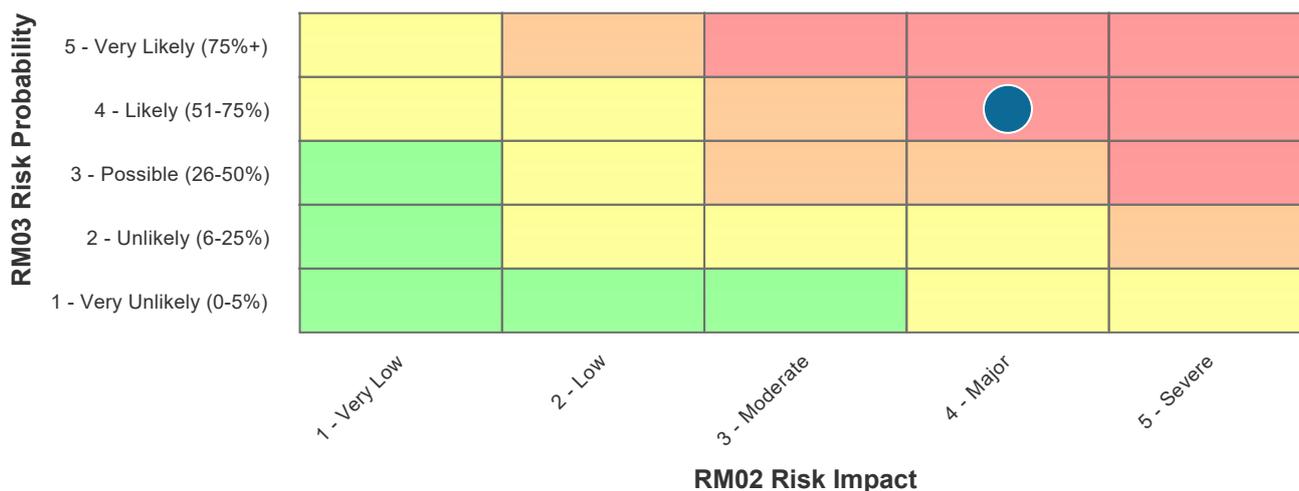
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16

**Inherent Risk Score**

9

**Target Risk Score**



### Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Newport Council's Property Estate	➔	There have been no changes in the estate or Councils actions to result in a change to this risk score.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create and Develop the Civic Centre Operational Groups	Create and develop the Civic Centre Operational Groups	✔
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivery of the Annual Capital Maintenance Programme	The delivery of the Council's annual Capital maintenance programme to maintain and improve the Council's property estate.	✔
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a balanced strategy for the future of the Civic Centre	In response to financial, environmental, legal sustainability and social pressures we need to develop a balanced strategy for the future preservation and transformation of the Civic Centre.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Contract Management Arrangements with Newport Norse	Develop contract management arrangements with Newport Norse.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop The Civic Centre Maintenance Backlog Prioritisation Schedule	Develop and update a Civic Centre maintenance backlog prioritisation schedule.	✔
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure NCC Properties & Assets are of Strategic Value	Ensure that the property and assets held by NCC sustain and support the corporate plan through the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP).	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure there are Accountable & Responsible Premise Managers in all NCC premises	Adherence to the Corporate Landlord Policy and ensuring that all Premises Managers are accountable and responsible.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish the Civic Centre Investment Requirements for NCCs 'New Normal'	Establish the Civic Centre investment requirements to provide a suitable office environment for NCCs "new normal".	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estate Rationalisation Programme	A programme of estate rationalisation to see which properties and assets are of strategic value to the Council and those that can be designated for alternative use.	★

# Pressure on Adult & Community Services

<b>Short Description</b>	<p>There is increased pressure on Adult Services to deliver services to adults with complex and long lasting needs.</p> <p>With an increase in demand / volume of referrals and care packages the Council has seen an increase in costs whilst in the context of tightening budgets.</p> <p>There are also additional statutory requirements to safeguard adults in our care and prevent risk of harm, injury or a loss of life.</p>
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Jenny Jenkins
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	Head of Adult and Community Services
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Cabinet Member for Social Services
<b>Linked Theme</b>	Theme: Resilient Communities (Social Care)
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>■ SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> </ul>

25



**Pressure on Adult & Community Services**

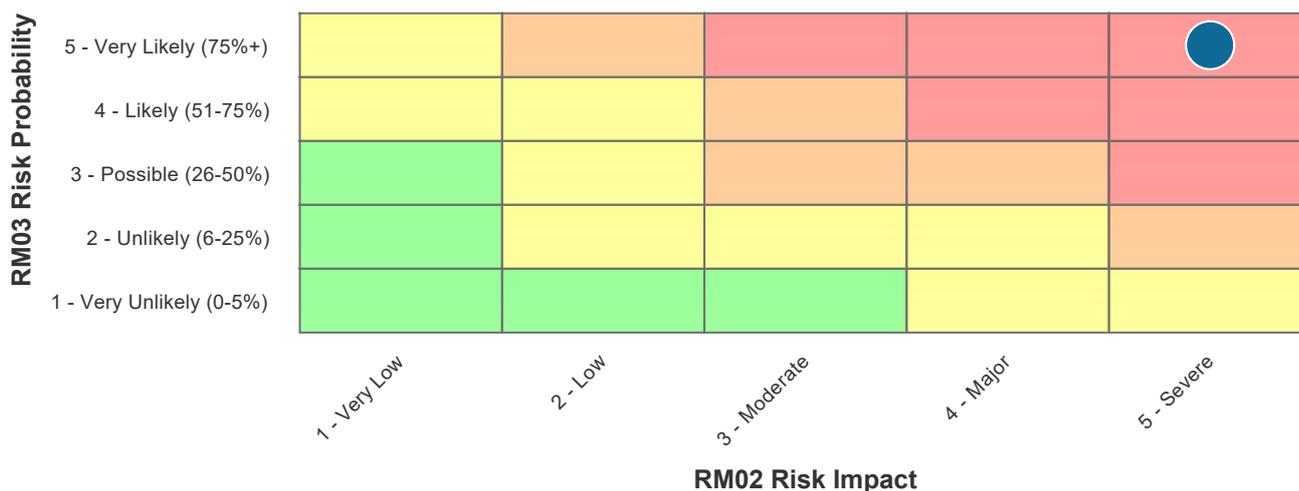
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**Inherent Risk Score**

10

**Target Risk Score**



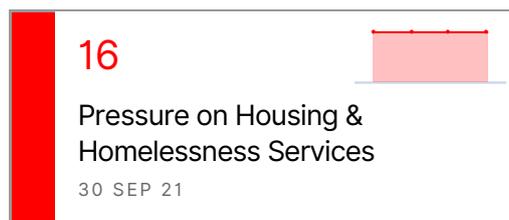
### Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Pressure on Adult & Community Services	🔴	The Pandemic has created new risks for providers and the delivery of services. The full impact is not yet known but will continue to be monitored.

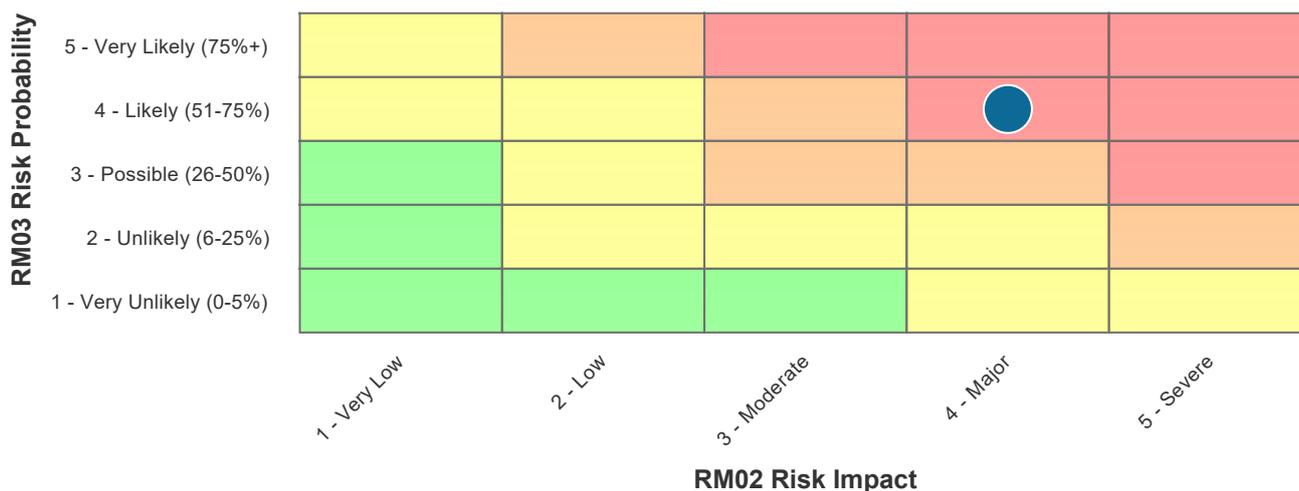
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assess Impact of Covid 19 on Long Term Sustainability of Service Providers	Assess the impact of Covid 19 on the long term future sustainability of service providers ensuring that the market is able to offer sufficient market capacity and diversity.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue to Develop First Contact as a Multi-Agency & Disciplinary Team	To continue to develop First Contact as a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team effectively managing demand. This includes the integration of the Frailty service into the First Contact Team.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve Support Available for Young People with Learning Disabilities	To improve the support available for young people with learning disabilities to transition from Children Services into Adults Services.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrate Regional Home First Initiative into Hospital Pathway	To develop and effectively integrate the Regional Home First initiative into the hospital pathway and to further align patient flow processes within hospital discharge.	

# Pressure on Housing & Homelessness Services

<b>Short Description</b>	Increased pressures being faced by the Council's housing service during the Covid-19 pandemic to support people that are presenting at risk of becoming homeless, those persons sleeping rough and those experiencing difficulties in their accommodation.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Katherine Howells
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Executive</li> <li>Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Investment
<b>Linked Theme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme: Resilient Communities (Community)</li> <li>Theme : Thriving City</li> </ul>
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 4. Cohesive &amp; Sustainable Communities</li> <li>SRA 2. Supporting the Environment &amp; the Economy</li> <li>SRA 4. Supporting Citizens post Covid-19</li> <li>WBO 2. Economic Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> </ul>



**20** **6**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



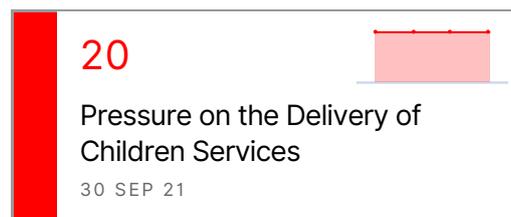
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Pressure on Housing & Homelessness Services	➔	The authority is still following WG guidance in relation to accommodating homeless persons. Currently over 350 households accommodated in temporary accommodation.

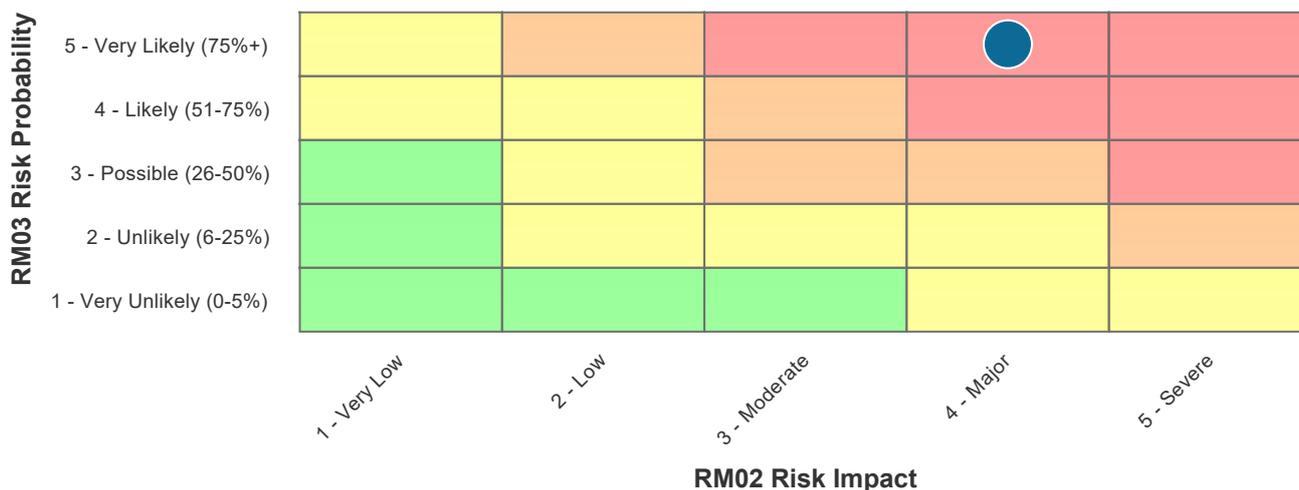
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carry Out Research Into Extent & Nature of Private Rented Sector Accommodation	Carry out further research into the extent and nature of private rented sector accommodation in Newport.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Strategy Framework for Private Sector Housing	Develop a strategy framework for private sector housing, bringing together the Adaptations Policy, Private Sector Leasing scheme, Housing Loans Policy	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manage & Maintain Common Housing Register & Housing Options Service 2021-22	Manage and maintain the Common Housing Register and Newport Housing Options service in 2021/22.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce a Housing Prospectus for Newport	Produce a housing prospectus for Newport in line with Welsh Government guidance.	✔
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce Updated Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment	Produce an updated Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review Gwent Homelessness Strategy	Review of Gwent Homelessness Strategy.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review the Community Housing Protocol	Review of the Community Housing Protocol to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and delivers the expected outcomes.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undertake a review of the Housing Allocation Policy	Undertake a review of the Housing Allocation Policy.	★

# Pressure on the Delivery of Children Services

Short Description	Increased pressure on Children Services to manage increase in volume of referrals / cases of children with complex needs. This is in the context of budgets not being able to meet increase in costs to provide the necessary care and front-line staff being able to manage high volume and complex caseloads.
Risk Owner	Sally Jenkins
Overseeing Officer	Chief Executive
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Linked Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme : Aspirational People</li> <li>Theme: Resilient Communities (Social Care)</li> </ul>
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> </ul>



**20** **6**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



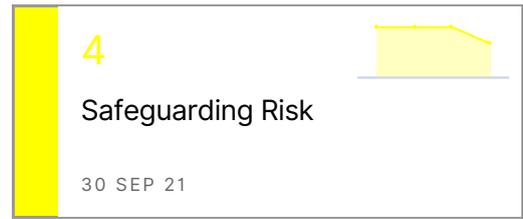
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Pressure on the Delivery of Children Services	➔	Referrals in September were at the highest level recorded. There were particular pressure points after weekend resulting in considerable pressure at the beginning of each week. In addition work from private court cases is increasing. The complexity of the presenting work is immensely challenging. Moving cases through and to the world of earlier interventions is proving challenges because of the waiting lists in these areas and the number of referrals being received for mental health support for children and families.

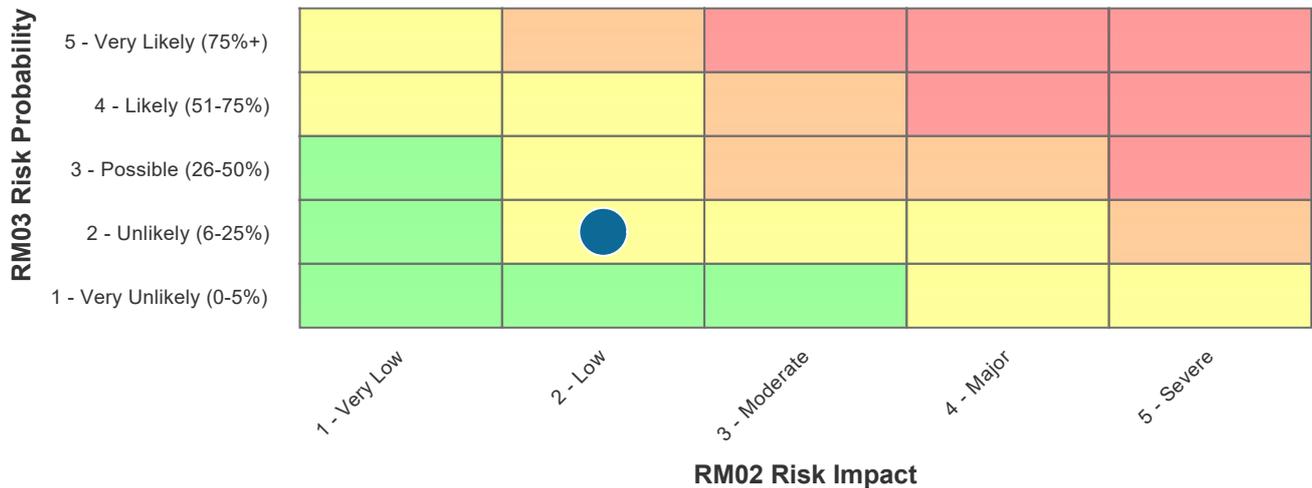
Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete & Implement Welsh Government Recommendations for LAC Reduction	Completion and implementation of Welsh Government action plan to work towards reducing the numbers of looked after children	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Development of Residential Provision	Continue with the development of the residential provision (including Windmill Farm) across Newport in order to increase the number of children who can be cared for safely in Newport	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue the Work Started with GDAS to Base Multi-agency Staff in Front line Teams	Continue the Work Started with GDAS to Base Multi-agency Staff in Front line Teams	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuing to Increase Housing Options for Care Leavers	Increased housing options for care leavers. Currently Newport has a limited range of choices for housing for care leavers especially with a range of suitable support. This action will seek to address this gap. Work has already commenced and will continue.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Sustainable Model to Deliver Local and Multi-Agency Response to All Age Safeguarding	To develop a sustainable model to deliver a consistent, coordinated, local and multi-agency response to all age safeguarding, early intervention and prevention at the front door of CS. This work will involve the consideration of systems, processes and resources of partner agencies to develop a model that reflects contributions from key agencies.	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Explore Sustainability Options for the Early Intervention Project within the Prevention' Team 21/20	Explore sustainability options for the Early Intervention Project within the Preventions Team for post March 2021.	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review our Existing Arrangements for Family Time to Improve the Offer for Children & Families	In light of the learning during lockdown we will review our existing arrangements for family time to improve the offer for children and families: i) To develop a comprehensive framework of all aspects of family time; ii) Continue to deliver family time virtually as a positive for families.	★

# Safeguarding Risk

Short Description	To ensure the Council safeguards adults, children and carers as part of its statutory duty.
Risk Owner	Mary Ryan
Overseeing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Education Officer</li> <li>Chief Executive</li> <li>Head of Adult and Community Services</li> <li>Head of Children and Family Services</li> <li>Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing</li> </ul>
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Linked Theme	Theme: Resilient Communities (Social Care)
Linked Corporate Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> </ul>



**20** **4**  
Inherent Risk Score Target Risk Score



## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Safeguarding Risk	↓	Due to the completion of the whole council self assessment safeguarding audit, the risk has reduced due to all areas having completed the self-assessment audit tool and are clear on service responsibilities and processes.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Build on Contextual Safeguarding Research	Build on work on Contextual harm and exploitation, safeguarding research, and embed new approaches to understanding, and responding to young people's experiences of significance.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete & Deliver Actions Agreed in Post Safeguarding Joint Inspection Action Plan	Complete and deliver actions agreed in the post safeguarding joint inspection action plan	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivery of Safeguarding Programmes 2020-22	Deliver safeguarding programmes and measures that protect citizens from victimisation and to measure the impact of regulatory interventions.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embed the implementation of the new national 'safeguarding toolkit' for schools.	Embed the implementation of the new national 'safeguarding toolkit' for schools.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empower Citizens Through the Adult Safeguarding Process	To continue to support and empower citizens through the adult safeguarding process.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To implement new processes for Liberty Protection Safeguards.	Mental capacity Act requires the authority to implement the deprivation and liberty safeguards for citizens of Newport. We have an established regional and local process to delivery on DoLS. However, the legislation changes in October 2020 requiring the Council to have processes in place for the new LPS Liberty Protection Safeguards. This action is to implement the new process for the Council.	

# Schools Finance / Cost Pressures

Short Description	In year cost pressures of schools are not met resulting in increased deficit budgets
Risk Owner	Sarah Morgan
Overseeing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Education Officer</li> <li>Chief Executive</li> </ul>
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet Member for Education and Skills</li> <li>Leader of the Council &amp; Cabinet Member for Economic Growth &amp; Investment</li> </ul>
Linked Theme	Theme : Aspirational People
Linked Corporate Objective	WBO 1. Skills, Education & Employment

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Schools Finance / Cost Pressures

30 SEP 21

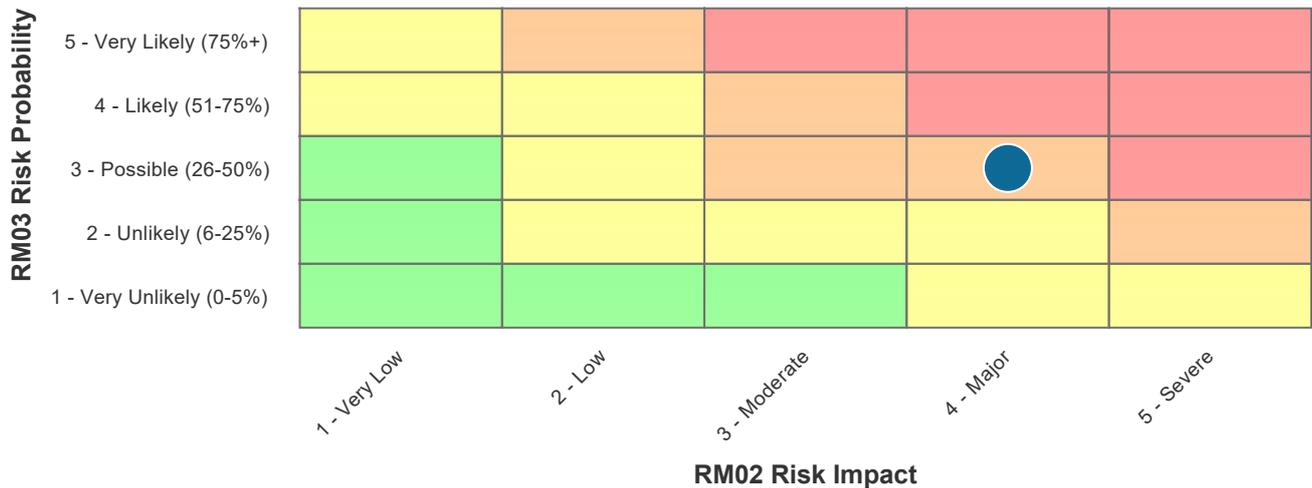


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Inherent Risk Score

6

Target Risk Score



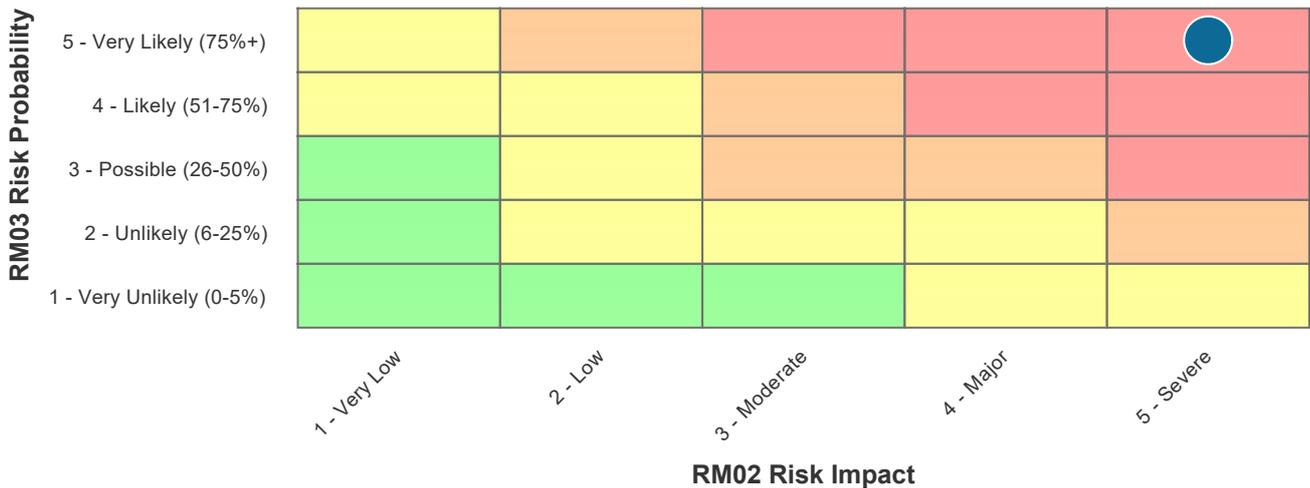
## Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Schools Finance / Cost Pressures	➔	<p>Deborah Weston:</p> <p>There are now only three schools with a licenced deficit agreed for the 2021/22 financial year. Two of these schools are projecting an in-year surplus and a return to a closing surplus position by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. In terms of other schools, Headteachers have been asked to outline reasons for any in-year overspends in the current financial year, with a view to identifying whether these costs are recurrent or one-off, and using this as an early warning around schools who may project closing deficits in future financial years. Detailed analysis will continue over the autumn term.</p>

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Managing School Budget	The local authority will monitor school budgets to ensure that Headteachers and Governing Bodies are: a) Maintaining a balanced budget; b) Addressing in year overspends to reduce the risk of moving in to deficit positions; c) Where deficit budgets occur, deficits are licensed with full recovery plans. d) Where in year deficits are still arising following substantial review, further mitigation may be through the medium term financial plan.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitor In-Year School Budgets to Ensure Budgets are Managed Effectively	Monitor In-year School budgets to ensure budgets are: • Managed effectively and taking necessary actions to prevent overspending. Effectively taking necessary actions to prevent overspending. Schools that have deficit budget recovery plans are implementing the necessary actions to reduce their overall budget deficits.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of Primary, Secondary & Special Schools In-Year Budgets	Monitoring of primary, secondary and special schools in-year budgets: • To prevent overspending and take necessary mitigating action(s). Schools with deficit budget recovery plans are implementing the necessary actions to reduce their budget deficits	

# Stability of Social Services Providers

<b>Short Description</b>	The Council requires support from external providers to deliver care packages for children and adults (residential / Non Residential). The current marketplace for external providers is volatile due to the increasing costs to provide care, maintain homes, staffing meeting legislative and regulatory requirements.
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Jenny Jenkins
<b>Overseeing Officer</b>	Head of Adult and Community Services
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Cabinet Member for Social Services
<b>Linked Theme</b>	Theme: Resilient Communities (Social Care)
<b>Linked Corporate Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBO 3. Healthy, Independent &amp; Resilient</li> <li>SRA 3. Supporting Health &amp; Well-being of Citizens</li> </ul>



### Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Stability of Social Services Providers	➔	The Pandemic has created new risks for providers and the delivery of services. The full impact is not yet known but will continue to be monitored.

Action Name	Action Description	Sep 2021
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assess Impact of Covid 19 on Long Term Sustainability of Service Providers	Assess the impact of Covid 19 on the long term future sustainability of service providers ensuring that the market is able to offer sufficient market capacity and diversity.	

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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** **Audit Wales – Audit of Newport City Council’s Assessment of 2020/21 performance**

**Purpose** To present Cabinet with the Audit Wales assessment of 2020/21 performance certificate. The certificate confirms that the Council has discharged its duties under sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

**Author** Director of Transformation and Corporate Centre

**Ward** All

**Summary** As part of the programme of regulatory activity in accordance with the Local Government Measure 2009, the Auditor General is required to issue Certificate of Compliance to demonstrate that Council is discharging its duties under the Measure. This is the second certificate following the publication of the Council’s Annual Report 2020/21 by 31<sup>st</sup> October.

This will be the final Certificate of Compliance issued by Audit Wales following the introduction of the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Further confirmation is due to be provided by Audit Wales on how they will assess the Council’s performance and governance under the new Act.

**Proposal** Cabinet is requested to note the positive outcome of the Certificate of Compliance in relation to meeting its statutory duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

**Action by** Cabinet

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Audit Wales

**Signed**

## Background

As part of the programme of regulatory activity in accordance with the Local Government Measure 2009, the Auditor General is required to issue a certificate of compliance to demonstrate that Council is discharging its duties under the Measure.

As part of the certificate of compliance, the Council is required to publish its Annual Report of performance for 2020/21 before the 31<sup>st</sup> October in accordance with sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. At the Cabinet meeting dated 13<sup>th</sup> October, the Council's Annual Report was approved and subsequently published on the [Council's website](#) on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

As a result of this action completed by the Council, Audit Wales has published its Certificate of Compliance (Appendix 1), with the Auditor General for Wales certifying that:

*For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.*

*For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information. My audit of the Council's assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publication to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the assessment complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing it.*

*The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.*

This will be the final Certificate of Compliance issued by Audit Wales following the introduction of the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Further confirmation is due to be provided by Audit Wales on how they will assess the Council's performance and governance under the new Act.

## Certificate

The certificate is attached as Appendix A (English) and Appendix B (Welsh) to this report.

## Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no Financial impacts in relation to this report.

## Risks

There are no direct impacts of this report to the risks identified in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

## Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Continuous improvement is central to the Council's ambitions for itself, organisationally, and in terms of its role in advancing the City's reputation and the quality of life for its citizens. A range of core priorities and programmes are influenced by this agenda, including:

- The Corporate Plan 2017-22
- Newport Public Services Board 'One Newport' Well-being Plan.
- Annual reporting arrangements

## Options Available and considered

Cabinet are asked to:

- (a) Consider and accept the conclusion contained in the Auditor General's Certificate of Compliance Report; or
- (b) Disregard the findings of the report.

### **Preferred Option and Why**

The preferred option is (a) as the Certificate of Compliance is positive and confirms that the council has discharged its duties under the Local Government Measure 2009 with regards to Improvement Planning.

### **Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

There is no financial impact in presenting the Audit Wales Certificate to Cabinet. The report confirms that Audit Wales has issued the Assessment of Performance Certificate confirming the Council has discharged its duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

### **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. The Council has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 ("the Measure") to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services and to publish an assessment of its performance. The Assessment of Performance Certificate issued by the Audit Wales confirms that the Council has discharged its duties in accordance with section 15 of the Measure and statutory guidance.

This will be the final Certificate of Compliance issued by Audit Wales, as the continuous improvement duty under the 2009 Measure has now been replaced by the new performance self-assessment and peer-review process under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Audit Wales will no longer be required to certify compliance with the new legislation, but the process of reviewing performance and governance arrangements under the new framework has yet to be finalised.

### **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

The certificate verifies that the Council has met its obligation of publishing its Annual Report 2020/21 under the Local Government Measure 2009. This is an on-going aim for the Council and this also contributes to the Council's adherence to the Sustainable Development Principle of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. There are no direct staffing implications contained in this report.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

Not Applicable as this report is not required to be presented to Scrutiny Committee.

### **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

#### **• Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

The Auditor General helps to ensure that public bodies are held to account for their performance in relation to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government Measure (2009). Audit Wales consider the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in the planning and implementation of their work. The issue of the Certificate of Compliance demonstrates that the council is meeting its obligations under both Acts.

#### **• Equality Act 2010**

FEIA is not required for this report as it is an information only report for the Council's Cabinet to consider and accept under the Local Government Measure 2009

#### **• Socio-economic Duty**

Consideration of the Socio-economic Duty is not required for this report as it is an information only report for the Council's Cabinet to consider and accept under the Local Government Measure 2009.

#### **• Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The Certificate of Compliance has been published in Welsh (Appendix 2) and English (Appendix 1) to meet Welsh Language requirements.

### **Consultation**

Not Applicable as this is an information only report for Cabinet

## **Background Papers**

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22

Audit Wales Assessment of Performance Certificate

Audit Wales Assessment of Performance Certificate (Welsh)

Cabinet Minutes 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Annual Report 2020/21

**Dated: 8 December 2021**

**Reference:** 2676A2021-22

**Date issued:** October 2021

## Audit of Newport City Council's assessment of 2020-21 performance

### Certificate

I certify that I have audited Newport City Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance in 2020-21 in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

### Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to annually publish an assessment which describes its performance:

- in discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- in meeting the improvement objectives it has set itself;
- by reference to performance indicators specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance indicators; and
- in meeting any performance standards specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance standards.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its assessment before 31 October in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in publishing its assessment.

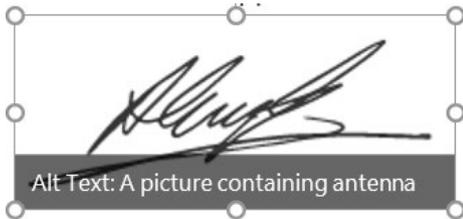
As the Council's auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit to determine whether the Council has discharged its duty to publish an assessment of performance, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

## Scope of the audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information. My audit of the Council's assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publication to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the assessment complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing it.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.



**Adrian Crompton**

**Auditor General for Wales**

CC: Rebecca Evans MS – Minister for Finance and Local Government  
Gareth Lucey, Audit Manager  
Martin Gibson, Audit Lead

**Cyfeirnod:** 2676A2021-22

**Dyddiad cyhoeddi:** Hydref 2021

## Archwiliad o asesiad Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd o berfformiad 2020-21

### Tystysgrif

Rwy'n ardystio fy mod wedi archwilio asesiad Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd (y Cyngor) o'i berfformiad yn 2020-21 yn unol ag adran 17 o Fesur Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) 2009 (y Mesur) a'm Cod Ymarfer Archwilio.

O ganlyniad i'm harchwiliad, credaf fod y Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswyddau o dan adrannau 15(2), (3), (8) a (9) o'r Mesur ac wedi gweithredu yn unol â chanllawiau Llywodraeth Cymru yn ddigonol i gyflawni ei ddyletswyddau.

### Priod gyfrifoldebau'r Cyngor a'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol

O dan y Mesur, mae'n ofynnol i'r Cyngor gyhoeddi asesiad bob blwyddyn sy'n disgrifio ei berfformiad:

- wrth gyflawni ei ddyletswydd i wneud trefniadau i sicrhau gwelliant parhaus wrth arfer ei swyddogaethau;
- wrth gyflawni'r amcanion gwella y mae wedi'u gosod ei hun;
- drwy gyfeirio at ddangosyddion perfformiad a bennir gan Weinidogion Cymru, a dangosyddion perfformiad hunanosodedig; ac
- wrth fodloni unrhyw safonau perfformiad a bennir gan Weinidogion Cymru, a safonau perfformiad hunanosodedig.

Mae'r Mesur yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor gyhoeddi ei asesiad cyn 31 Hydref yn y flwyddyn ariannol yn dilyn yr un o dan sylw y mae'r wybodaeth yn ymwneud â hi, neu erbyn unrhyw ddyddiad arall y caiff Gweinidogion Cymru ei bennu drwy orchymyn.

Mae'r Mesur yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor roi sylw i ganllawiau a gyhoeddir gan Weinidogion Cymru wrth gyhoeddi ei asesiad.

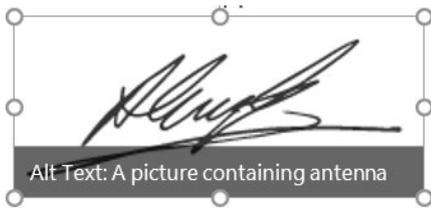
Fel archwilydd y Cyngor, mae'n ofynnol i mi o dan adrannau 17 a 19 o'r Mesur gynnal archwiliad i benderfynu a yw'r Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswydd i gyhoeddi asesiad o berfformiad, i ardystio fy mod wedi gwneud hynny, ac i adrodd a wyf yn credu bod y Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswyddau yn unol â'r gofynion statudol a nodir yn adran 15 a chanllawiau statudol.

## Cwmpas yr archwiliad

At ddibenion fy ngwaith archwilio, byddaf yn derbyn, ar yr amod bod awdurdod yn bodloni ei ofynion statudol, y bydd hefyd wedi cydymffurfio â chanllawiau statudol Llywodraeth Cymru yn ddigonol i gyflawni ei ddyletswyddau.

Ar gyfer yr archwiliad hwn, nid yw'n ofynnol i mi lunio barn ar gyflawnrwydd na chywirdeb gwybodaeth. Roedd fy archwiliad o asesiad perfformiad y Cyngor, felly, yn cynnwys adolygiad o gyhoeddiad y Cyngor i ganfod a oedd yn cynnwys elfennau a ragnodir mewn deddfwriaeth. Asesais hefyd a oedd y trefniadau ar gyfer cyhoeddi'r asesiad yn cydymffurfio â gofynion y ddeddfwriaeth, a bod y Cyngor wedi rhoi sylw i ganllawiau statudol wrth ei baratoi a'i gyhoeddi.

Ni ellir dibynnu ar y gwaith yr wyf wedi'i wneud er mwyn adrodd a gwneud argymhellion yn unol ag adrannau 17 a 19 o'r Mesur er mwyn nodi'r holl wendidau neu gyfleoedd i wella.



**Adrian Crompton**

**Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru**

COPI: Rebecca Evans AS – Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol

Gareth Lucey, Rheolwr Archwilio

Martin Gibson, Archwilydd Arweiniol



# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** The New Normal - Newport City Council Operating Model

**Purpose** Discussions have been on-going regarding a new operating model for Newport City Council. In order to progress this work Cabinet will need to reach a decision on a series of options and policy areas in relation to our staff and the use of our assets. These decisions are detailed within this report.

**Author** Director of Transformation and Corporate Services

**Ward** N/A

**Summary** Newport City Council has adapted and developed the way in which it operates in order to maintain services and protect the safety of residents and members and staff. The organisation, its staff and Elected Members have adapted to many challenges and have overcome these. There is an opportunity to realise many benefits associated with how we utilised our assets, how we support the climate-change agenda and how we support and enhance the well-being of our staff through a smart working model.

This report sets out the next stages of moving to a new operating model in line with our Strategic Recovery Aims, which focuses on increased workforce flexibility, the wellbeing of our staff and enabling modern working practices to be implemented to a greater degree, whilst being mindful of our environmental impact.

**Proposal** The proposal is for Cabinet to agree to the recommendations within the report and allow the Director of Transformation and Corporate Services to consult with relevant Trade Union representatives and staff on changes to terms and conditions of employment.

**Action by** Chief Executive  
Strategic Director – Transformation and Corporate Services

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Recognised Trade Unions
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Head of Law and Regulatory Services
- Head of Finance

**Signed**

## Background

The Covid 19 health emergency has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to the way in which we deliver our services and our way of life. Since March 2020, the Council's focus has been to preserve life, minimise the spread of the virus, and support our communities and the vulnerable. The impact of the virus has brought about systemic change, pervading every aspect of society. At Newport City Council, material changes to where and how we work have been swift. From day one of the health emergency, Council staff have shown enormous resilience. Those delivering front line services, often to the city's most vulnerable people and communities, have been altruistic in their dedication. Whilst others have quickly adapted to a remote and dispersed way of working using technology to work from home to minimise the spread of the virus.

Elected Members have also had to adapt, blending their work within their communities with the remote meeting arrangements that have been put in place to ensure the on-going functioning of the democratic process, whilst adhering to Covid regulations and keeping individuals safe. Whilst the on-going response to the pandemic remains the number one priority for the Council, it is also an opportunity to consider the changes that have been made and consider the long-term impacts on the Council's operating model.

Cabinet agreed our **Strategic Recovery Aims** in June 2020. This includes **Strategic Recovery Aim 3, to Sustain a Safe, Healthy and Productive Workforce**. Cabinet also agreed that operational services would need to be able to safely engage with its service users, work safely in Council buildings, offices and to work remotely both in the short term and long term.

Within the current **Corporate Plan, Building on Success, Building a Better Newport**, the Council made several pledges under the banner of a Modernised Council. We committed to developing a modern, capable workforce, where the use of agile working would be explored and implemented wherever possible. We recognised that this could lead to improvements in staff wellbeing, better and more efficient services and contribute to a reduction in pollution caused by vehicles on our roads. We committed to freeing up 20% of our Civic Centre to save money and create space for commercial and social innovation.

This report sets out the next stages of moving to a new operating model in line with our Strategic Recovery Aims, which focuses on increased workforce flexibility, the wellbeing of our staff and enabling modern working practices to be implemented to a greater degree, whilst being mindful of our environmental impact and our intention to be carbon neutral by 2030. **It is important to remember that under the current circumstances, the requirement for staff and Members is to work from home where possible. Opportunities for staff and Members to make more use of the Civic Centre, and other buildings, will only be realised once it is safe to do so.**

## Current Position

As a result of the first lock-down in March 2020 the Council has had to adapt the way it operates. Whilst front line services have been protected and enhanced for the most vulnerable, office based functions and the staff who support them have been asked to do this from home, wherever possible. The Council's investment in IT in recent years, as it develops the Modernised Council agenda, has enabled the Council to continue functioning.

Home working station assessments have been undertaken and additional kit provided to support a safe working environment. As a result, many services have been able to develop remote operational models. There are some very clear benefits to continuing with this approach – work/life balance, carbon reduction, reduced congestion on our roads, opportunities for utilising our buildings. However, there are challenges. For staff working from home there may be isolation, increased energy costs and a lack of team development, for example. There is also a challenge around visibility.

The principles of agile or remote working were established in the Council's Digital Strategy, which is also referenced in the Corporate Plan. The Council will need to weigh up the opportunities but also potential

impacts when determining how it will proceed beyond the current situation into a longer-term operating model.

## Climate Change

Newport City Council has committed to work towards being a net zero organisation by 2030 as part of the Welsh public sector. This includes carbon emissions from our:

- Buildings
- land use
- transport (fleet and business mileage)
- procured goods and services

However, as a Council we also have a wider role, to support the decarbonisation of our city. The Welsh Government has committed to a net zero Wales by 2050 and reducing staff commuting will support that commitment for the Newport area. 45% of all carbon emissions in Newport originate from transport. This is the third highest in Wales after Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Prior to the pandemic whilst other sectors such as energy had seen a marked decarbonisation the transport sector had shown little or no improvement.

## Approach

We have identified four areas of focus, detailed within this report. They are:

1. Democratic Function
2. Technology
3. Employment policies
4. Building (Civic Centre) and Public

### 1. Democratic Function

**Objective: To ensure that Members and the Democratic Process are catered for within this process and that NCC is able to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act.**

As previously reported to Cabinet, under Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections Act we have a duty to Promote Access to Local Government. This requires us not only to ensure an electronic broadcast of Council meetings but also to make provision for remote access to those meetings. By doing this it is hoped that a wider and more diverse group will come forward for Civic Duty. **This is independent of any decision as a result of the New Normal work.** Work is underway to ensure that we will be compliant with the requirements of the Act.

At the July Cabinet meeting it was agreed that a review by Democratic Services Committee would be sought into the impacts of dispersed working on members' well-being and support. This was discussed in the October Democratic Services Committee as part of the draft IRP report. The committee felt the increase basic allowance payment would sufficiently cover the financial impact.

We also need to consider Member's needs in relation to access to the Civic Centre. Having full, face to face Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings still remains an unnecessary risk. However, Cabinet are asked to consider the following:

1. Trialling hybrid Cabinet and Committee meetings, based on a thorough risk assessment and strict management of numbers within Committee rooms
2. Allowing Members to use the Civic Centre for informal meetings and undertaking business in relation to their representative role. This would require individual risk assessments and we would need to agree the parameters to limit this activity.

### 2. Technology

**Objective: To ensure that our IT provision is appropriate to the needs of the organisation. To look at new opportunities/innovations that can support our development as an organisation and for this to influence the development of the new Digital Strategy. To implement the Cabinet decision to move IT infrastructure from the Civic Centre**

The council has continued to function effectively through the pandemic as a result of its previous strategy for increased staff mobility and improved IT system facilities. Increased funding has provided opportunities to improve capability and capacity further. We have previously reported on the opportunities, impacts and challenges of this hugely increased reliance on our IT infrastructure.

If the decision is taken to move to an interim position where we utilise one part of the Civic Centre as part of our Covid Recovery work and prior to a final New Normal position, we will need to undertake an IT audit to ensure we can meet the requirements of this way of operating. This will include:

- Telephony
- Wifi and Network capacity
- Hardware requirements – monitors, keyboards, docking stations, etc.
- Utilisation of current systems
- Hybrid meeting facilities

### **Challenges**

One of the main challenges is to ensure that even greater reliance on technology is supported by suitably accessible and resilient IT systems with sufficient capacity in this new working environment. A specific challenge also exists around cyber resilience in the current environment with an increased threat level highlighted by a large number of cyber incidents in the UK and globally. The council has implemented a specific solution to mitigate this risk but there are still significant risks. These challenges should be reduced as a result of the council's increased investment in digital technology over the last three financial years but the costs associated with these greater demands have not been quantified.

### **Priorities**

Cabinet has previously agreed an increased investment within our digital and IT infrastructures. Therefore there are no specific requirements for approval from Cabinet. However, below are our priorities that we will need to progress over the coming months:

1. Ensure that we continue to implement the hybrid meeting facilities for both Member and officer usage
2. Match up the current IT capital programme with the requirements of any reconfiguration of the Civic Centre for both our interim and future needs
3. Continue to progress our work to maximise our O365 enterprise agreement to facilitate flexible and smart working practices
4. Proceed with the data centre move (previously agreed by Cabinet), increasing resilience and reducing our carbon footprint
5. Where opportunities arise make decisions in line with our digital aspirations to move systems to the cloud, reducing in-house infrastructure needs and future capital expenditure

### **3. Employment policies**

**Objective: To consider the redesign of, and consultation on, new employment policies for our staff, including:**

- **Agile Working Policy**
- **Work/life Balance Policy**
- **Flexi time Scheme**
- **Travel and Subsistence Policy**
- **Parking at the Civic Centre**

## **Agile Working Policy**

The move to remote working for many has created an increased interest in flexible working and has led to greater expectation around provision being made by employers for increased flexibility. The remote workforce has identified the benefits to be gained from homeworking - a better work-life balance, greater ability to focus with fewer distractions, more time for family and friends, saved commuting time and costs, access to IT and digital technology and higher levels of motivation. Organisations who choose to disregard these perceived benefits and revert to pre-pandemic arrangements may be in the position of having increased employee turnover, higher levels of sickness absence, reduced employee engagement and limits to attracting future talent to join the workforce. Newport City Council will need to be mindful of the increasing number of organisations that are moving towards an agile culture and that this will increase competition in the labour market at a time when employment vacancies are at a significantly high level.

Whilst the Council does not have an existing Homeworking policy, it has an Agile Working policy which was introduced as a result of changes in IT infrastructure enabling greater levels of connectivity to the Council's network and systems. However, the Agile Working policy is geared towards an ad hoc homeworking position and was written in a time pre-video conferencing which has been the key driver in homeworking being more effective. This report proposes a replacement of the Agile Working policy with a new Homeworking Policy, clearly setting out the organisational expectations around homeworking, the responsibilities on employees and managers in supporting wellbeing whilst homeworking, and the Health and Safety implications of a formal homeworking agreement.

In addition to homeworking considerations, supporting staff to choose alternative workplace locations such as public sector remote working hubs will need to be factored into how remote working can be safe for the individual, maintain confidentiality and be effective.

## **Work/Life Balance Policy**

The existing Work/life balance policy allows for employees to make a formal request to vary their contractual working pattern, usually by reducing the standard working week to a number of hours that better suits their work/life balance. There is no provision for homeworking as a flexible working option. Amending this policy to include homeworking as an option will give greater opportunity for flexible working to be explored, particularly if it is promoted by the organisation to demonstrate that applications are likely to be supported. Our recent survey to staff showed that nearly 60% of those who have worked from home during the pandemic would consider making a voluntary application to vary their employment contracts, and over 80% of respondents indicated that they would prefer the option to work from home for three days per week or more (Appendix 2).

Should this addition to the policy be included and applications received, it would not mean a change from the current position where staff are advised to work from home wherever possible as per the Welsh Government guidance. During the period where this advice remains in place, any application for homeworking on a part time basis would not signal a return to the workplace on the remainder of the working week.

Managers would need to start considering the long term implications of including homeworking as a flexible working option and how to appropriately balance the spread of cover amongst teams when a return to Council buildings is available to all, balancing individual requests for specific working patterns with business need.

## **Flexi time Scheme**

Whilst the flexi time scheme is used by a minority of the workforce (circa 1200 staff) it is seen as a much valued benefit of employment by staff. Having the ability to balance start and finish times with occasional peaks in workload and take time off at a later point is a popular term and condition. The scheme has been suspended since March 2020 and staff have been supported to work flexibly without the confines of a formal clocking system yet have not been able to accrue time to take off at a later point. A review of

the scheme would be required to determine the best way to manage operational workload whilst allowing staff to have as much flexibility as possible.

### **Travel and Subsistence Policy**

A consequential step will also be to revise the existing Travel and Subsistence Policy which treats all claimable mileage as needing to be from a designated Council workplace, and not from a home as a place of work. If contracts of employment are varied to include home as a work base, consideration should be given to the parameters contained within the existing Travel and Subsistence policy and whether they are appropriate for the long term with a significant number of employees working from a range of work sites, both at home and at alternatives such as a geographically local public sector hub.

### **Engagement**

It will be vital to engage with not only our trade union representatives but with our workforce who will be affected by any decision to continue to work remotely. Their views and feedback on any proposal will be essential to understanding the likely future culture of the organisation, their thoughts on how the Council can make hybrid working a success and the likely challenges that they might perceive in implementing it for the good of the individual person, but also their team and the overall workforce. Since the July Cabinet report a New Normal staff survey was issued and over 700 responses were received, 58% of the potentially eligible staff group. The results of the survey have been discussed with trade union representatives and shared with the workforce. As per the preferences indicated by the respondents, the fortnightly Council newsletter will provide updates on progress with the New Normal project.

As an employer with a responsibility to collectively bargain with recognised trade unions on terms and conditions for the workforce, any proposed employment policy change would be fully consulted upon prior to adoption at the Council's Employment Partnership Forum. Newport City Council strives to work in social partnership with our trade union representatives and it is anticipated that review of the above policies would be undertaken jointly with the trade unions.

### **Parking at the Civic Centre**

In line with our aspiration to become carbon zero by 2030 the Council will promote Active Travel amongst its workforce as the primary method of commuting to a workplace. With a large proportion of Civic Centre based staff currently working from home, and potentially continuing to do so with any variation to the Family Friendly policy, a review of the parking arrangements would be appropriate.

The available parking capacity, circa 150 spaces, will need to be prioritised to meet business need in the first instance. Electric fleet vehicles that can be used by employees who are required to make home/site visits to residents and service users could be an example of a high priority area. Similarly, the Council's responsibility towards those employees who have need of a disabled parking bay (3% of respondents in the staff survey) should be considered for greater priority, as should space for bicycles and associated storage, external visitors and members. The general staff parking provision scheme is unlikely to continue given the high demand for priority groups.

## **4. Building (Civic Centre) and Public**

It is recommended to Cabinet that we focus our utilisation of the Civic Centre on the East Wing. Analysis shows that this is the most conducive to enabling larger numbers of staff to operate within, both during Covid restrictions and when these are lifted. This will still enable the use of the central core of the Civic Centre (for meeting use during the pandemic and to fulfil the democratic functions of the Council when safety allows). This opens up opportunities for the creation of a Cultural Hub and Public Sector Hub in the other parts of the building, and it gives us the option of exploring other third-party usage in order to off-set the on-going costs of running and maintaining the building.

The proposal at this stage would be to occupy the current floor plans and furniture available. This is low/no cost but is a sub-optimal position. However, it does retain the flexibility and adaptability that we

will need as we develop our position further and we remain open to future opportunities. We should remember that this hybrid way of working is very new and we are not yet aware of the medium and long term challenges we may face. It therefore seems sensible not to commit resource to a particular option at this point.

## **Conclusion**

Previously when we reported to Cabinet, we highlighted the following drivers for change:

### **1. Expectation**

Covid 19 and the response to it has changed the expectations for both our staff and our service users. There are undoubtedly those who would prefer to the way things were in early 2020. However, there are many (staff and public included) who now have a level of expectation regarding remote accessing of services, work-life balance and flexibility.

### **2. Carbon reduction**

We have very challenging targets and will become carbon neutral by 2030. We will struggle with this target (and the ensuing and on-going environmental impacts) if we don't reduce both commuting and grey mileage, encourage and make possible active travel options and be smarter about how we use our buildings.

### **3. Maximisation of our assets**

There is a commitment to maximise the assets we have. This is better financially and better for the environment. We will not do this unless we adapt and change the way we do things. Going back to pre-Covid occupation levels is inefficient and removes any opportunity to look at how we use our assets differently (and in the case of the Civic Centre, bring it back in to full usage).

Cabinet has committed to Strategic Recovery Aim 3, to Sustain a Safe, Healthy and Productive Workforce. The report describes how we can continue to meet this Strategic Recovery Aim, take in to account the drivers for change and respond to the ever changing pressures created by Covid 19. The options within this paper show an interim position that acknowledges change but also allows a full range of options to be explored when we exit pandemic conditions.

## **Financial Summary**

This report signals the next steps the Council will take in terms of moving towards a new way of working. In the initial phase, the focus will be on creating an environment that facilitates a gradual return of staff to the building, without the need for significant building adaptations or acquisition of new furniture or technology. As a consequence, the cost of this phase will be low or even zero and, should any costs arise, these will need to be absorbed as part of the revenue outturn position for 2021/22.

In terms of the longer term solution, the potential cost implications will be driven by the chosen solutions in terms of office layout and required technology and facilities. Indicative costs are not yet available, as there are currently a number of factors that could influence the cost, with further detailed work required. Whilst a definitive costs are not currently available, it is anticipated that costs could be incurred in relation to:

1. One off costs associated with replacement furniture to enable maximum utilisation of the reduced footprint within the Civic Centre
2. One off costs associated with any building adaptations required to accommodate the desired number of employees and ensure accessibility
3. One off costs associated with any reconfiguration of facilities within the Civic Centre (such as power and network access)
4. Ongoing revenue costs associated with the new ways of working

A funding solution has not yet been identified for any revenue or capital costs that may be incurred and this will not be possible until such costs have been quantified. Currently, there are no specific capital or

revenue allocations for any of the work required. Therefore, any costs arising will either need to be met from existing revenue budgets or earmarked reserves, available capital headroom, or from existing Capital Programme allocations connected, for example, with the upkeep of the Civic Centre or ICT Infrastructure. Should costs arise that cannot be met from within existing resources, it will be necessary to factor this into the ongoing budget planning process for 2022/23 or set aside funding from any overall revenue underspend, as part of the 2021/22 closure of accounts process, subject to the necessary approvals.

However, before any additional Council funds are allocated to the project, it would be appropriate to ensure that any external sources of funding have been explored, as well as maximising the financial savings arising from the change in operating model. Examples of these are outlined below:

1. Reduction in costs associated with other assets
2. Use of external grant funding
3. Capital receipts from the disposal of other assets
4. Income generated by third parties' use of our unused space

## Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure of IT infrastructure	H	L	Business Continuity Arrangement  System prioritisation with SRS  System back up and fail safe	Head of Service  SRS
Information Security	M	L	Information Governance arrangements  Staff and member training  Multi-factor authentication	Digital Services Manager
Health & Safety – Fire Risk	M	L	Update fire risk assessments, building management processes and staff training within the new work-space	Head of Service
Service Delivery	L	L	Ensuring service areas are engaged within the planning process so that customer needs are at the forefront	Heads of Service
Staff Retention	L	L	Policy review is likely to make NCC a more attractive place to work	HR Manager

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

## Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- The main Corporate Plan focus is on the Modernised Council theme but, dependant on decisions taken, will also positively impact on Thriving City and Aspirational People.

<b>Well-being Objectives</b>	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst	Improve skills, educational outcomes &	Enable people to be healthy,	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
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	protecting the environment	employment opportunities	independent & resilient	
<b>Corporate Plan Commitments</b>	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
<b>Supporting Function</b>	Modernised Council			

Other council strategies and plans that link closely with this work are the Carbon Management Plan 2018-22 and the Sustainable Travel Strategy (Air, Noise & Sustainability Action Plan). Both of these plans are looking to reduce business and staff travel. The Council is also signed up to the Gwent Travel Charter (below).

### Options Available and considered

1. Accept a new operating model, in principle and pending consultation with Trade Unions and staff that builds on our experiences of operating during Covid.
  - a. Consult on the introduction of a Homeworking policy and the inclusion of homeworking as a flexible working option in the Work/Life Balance policy.
  - b. Review the Flexi Time scheme and the appropriateness of this going forward.
  - c. Develop a review of the Travel and Subsistence policy to reflect increased homeworking and associated travel for business purposes
  - d. A review of the parking provision at the Civic Centre will be required to effectively prioritise key groups
2. To meet our Strategic Recovery aims and to manage the interim position dealing with Covid 19 and implementing the New Normal
  - a. Agree to designate the East Wing as the primary area of occupation of the Civic Centre.
  - b. Zone the East Wing by Directorate so that staff are able to work together in their professional groups when in the building.
  - c. Develop technological solutions to support this (booking system, etc.)
3. Once Covid restrictions allow, return to the Civic Centre and operate in the way that we had previously

### Preferred Option and Why

Options 1 and 2 are the preferred options. They enable us to meet the changing expectations of the workforce, reduce our carbon footprint and open up the Civic Centre for increased utilisation by other organisations.

### Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Currently, there are no specific financial details, with the report seeking to recommend consultation on various policies and set out an overarching way forward. The report does, however, outline a plan for the ongoing utilisation of the Civic Centre. Clearly, as outlined in the report, this will give rise to certain financial impacts, notably the costs associated with adapting and fitting out the area to be used. Before any costs are committed to, it will be necessary to identify the required funding sources and seek the necessary authorisation. Capital resources are likely to be required and, whilst there remains available capital headroom, there are a number of competing priorities for this. Therefore, the capital works connected with this project will need to be set against other Council aspirations and prioritised accordingly.

Should additional Council resources be required, this should only be after having exhausted all other funding avenues. This will include, but not be limited to, external funding sources and internal efficiency

savings. Any other funding requirements will need to be considered as part of the medium term budget planning process, for both revenue and capital, as well as the process of closing the 2021/22 accounts. As a number of the likely costs to be incurred will be one-off in nature, it may be appropriate to consider setting aside an amount of revenue underspend at the end of this financial year, to be held in earmarked reserves and used over the course of the project, as and when costs arise.

### **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal issues arising from the report at this stage. Any legal implications will be addressed as part of the implementation process and the individual work-streams. The new operating model previously agreed by Cabinet is consistent with the Council's Covid-19 strategic recovery aims, the Corporate Plan objectives relating to a modernised Council and workforce and also strategic sustainability objectives. In terms of staffing implications, the new operating model will require changes to working culture and terms and conditions of employment, particularly in relation to the current Homeworking, Flexi-time and travel and subsistence policies. The Council is able to change terms and conditions in accordance with its general staffing and employment powers under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, but in making these changes it has to comply with the requirements of the Employment Rights legislation and, in particular, the requirement for meaningful consultation with the staff and recognised trade unions. Therefore, it is recommended that this collective bargaining process is commenced as soon as possible, so there is meaningful engagement and consultation with the staff and trade unions regarding the proposals. The re-use or re-purposing of Council premises is also consistent with asset rationalisation policies and the Council's general powers of property management under sections 122 and 123 of the 1972 Act. The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to introduce the technology to hold "hybrid" meetings as from May 2022, as part of its democratic decision-making processes, and this requirement will apply regardless of any new operating model. This is intended to allow greater flexibility for elected members to participate remotely in meetings, as part of the equalities agenda to encourage more diversity among Council membership. Democratic Services Committee have considered the potential impact of the new operating model on elected members and are satisfied that there are no specific issues that need to be addressed in terms of members well-being. They were also satisfied that the remuneration packages being recommended by the IRP are sufficient to cover the new ways of working. However, the costs of members IT are additional to any basic and senior salaries, and there will need to be a review of member IT provision, including devices and broadband, to ensure that they remain fit for purpose under the new operating model.

### **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

Covid 19 and the response to the pandemic has introduced systemic change at incredible pace. There have been many benefits to this but it has also created challenges and these have been highlighted in previous reports. Cabinet have previously approved moving towards more detailed planning and this report details the requirements of the interim phase that enables us to respond to the changing requirements of the pandemic and keep open opportunities for future decisions.

Union comments received are within Annex A (to complete once comments in).

As an organisation we have a key and positive role to play as a leader in the climate change agenda and the report highlights the benefits for current and future generations.

### **Local issues**

Not Applicable

### **Scrutiny Committees**

An original discussion paper on the New Normal was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in February 2021.

An update was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in June 2021. Recommendations and comments from that Committee are below:

- The Committee would like further exploration on how mentors for Active Travel could work, for people who would like to cycle but do not have the experience or confidence. It was also requested that rewarding active travel could be reviewed as a part of the Travel and Subsistence Policy review.
- Members spoke of the importance of face-to-face contact and it shouldn't be neglected. Both from a staff perspective and a citizen perspective, it is very important for people to be able to interact in person. The Council need to pay important attention to this, as it is at the heart of local engagement and democracy.
- The Committee were pleased with the assurance that the Council is able to cope and have facilities in place with cyber-attacks.
- Members requested if there can be additional information included in the report about the potential future usage of the Civic Centre building.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010**

A fairness and equalities impact assessment has been drafted and will be updated following further stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholders, especially those with protected characteristics should be involved in a meaningful and effective way to help shape working models as they are developed.

## **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The "New Normal" Programme will have long-term and preventative benefits to the health and well-being of staff and the wider community by contributing to the improvement of air quality and the reduction of carbon emissions in the area. Stakeholders including staff should be involved in a meaningful and effective way to help shape the programme as it is developed.

As stated above the programme takes an integrated approach by supporting many of the well-being goals namely: A Prosperous Wales; A Resilient Wales; A Healthier Wales; and A Globally Responsible Wales and does not adversely affect any of the others. The programme also support three of the council's Corporate Plan well-being objectives:

2. To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.
3. To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
4. To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

In addition, the council is working with partners in a collaborative way through the One Newport Public Services Board (PSB) and the implementation of the Local Well-being Plan Well-being Objectives. The PSB as a whole has pledged to "become champions of sustainable travel, leading by example and reducing the public sector's contribution to air pollution".

To support this work the council along with 22 other public and third sector organisations across Gwent has signed up to the Travel Charter.

The Charter commits to supporting and encouraging staff to reduce travel and travel in a sustainable way. Through 15 ambitious commitments, the charter promotes walking, cycling, agile working and the use of public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles.

The public sector in Gwent employs almost one in three working adults. By working together, public sector organisations across Gwent aim to increase sustainable journeys made to and from workplaces, reducing the impact on the environment and improving health in Gwent for current and future generations.

The "New Normal" Programme supports this work along with the following Local Well-being Plan well-being objectives:

1. Everyone feels good about living, working, visiting and investing in our unique city.

2. Everyone has the skills and opportunities to develop, prosper and contribute to a sustainable, thriving city.
3. Everyone belongs to friendly, connected resilient communities and feels confident and empowered to improve their well-being.
4. Newport has healthy, safe and resilient environments with an integrated sustainable travel network.

## **Consultation**

Trade Union Comments are at Annex A

## **Background Papers**

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Carbon Management Plan](#)
- [Sustainable Travel Strategy \(Air, Noise & Sustainability Action Plan\)](#)
- [Gwent Healthy Travel Charter](#)

Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Appendix 1

### Trade Union Comments

No new trade Union comments have been received on this updated report. Previous Comments received are below for information.

#### **Unison**

Whilst no one can pretend that Covid has been a positive experience in any way, it has shown that many more staff can work flexibly from home.

Many staff have embraced working from home with flexible hours during this very traumatic period. Some service areas who have previously been very traditional in working methods have had to embrace agile working and flexible hours. I can think of many examples where staff on long term sickness could have been able to continue working if the service areas had been more open to staff home working. I would argue that with covid stats removed from sickness figures there would be significant drop in overall sickness levels. But I would also suggest that there may be a rise in stress and anxiety illness amongst some staff.

Whilst we believe that Newport should be using this opportunity to embrace new working practices any move to remote working will mean there needs to be additional support for staff to access. Work is not just work it's a safe place to be for staff in abusive or controlling relationships. It's a place to meet new people, a support network of colleagues and friends a routine to build a life around. This needs to be acknowledged and sufficient support be put in place for staff.

There needs to be a new work ethos that balances what's best for NCC and its workforce. There are financial savings to be made but this decision should not be seen purely as a savings or cost cutting exercise. Staff working from home have had to incur greater costs heating, electricity, upgrades to internet etc. whilst these costs have been picked up by staff in the short term if this model of working were to continue this does need to be addressed.

Working spaces within homes are not always practical and work station assessments will need to continue to be undertaken to support individuals and this would need to continue as a long term plan. There also needs to be clear demarcation between somebody working flexibly and a manager wanting/expecting responses or work completed on demand or having their team work flexibly around their needs.

There are massive advantages to be gained from continuing to work as we are and to continue to move in this direction and we recognise this. The gains for the environment, easing congestion and parking issues around the civic and other council buildings all need to be considered but the points mentioned above need to be considered too and a supportive balanced approach must be taken.

For this to continue successfully there needs to be a coordinated plan in place which is appropriately funded to ensure that all staff are supported. Supervision and management needs to be done supportively and be a two way process. All too many times when we are supporting members we find that support is a tick box exercise or supervision becomes a one way communication with managers using those opportunity's to highlight perceived problems or issues without listening or seeing what is happening with that individual.

Staff across the council are doing more with less now after years of austerity. Staff consistently work over their hours to complete tasks and to meet deadlines "because it has to be done" and this is difficult to monitor when staff work remotely.

Staff working remotely need to still feel like they are part of a team and supported.

There is a financial impact to consider on staff.

How mileage is calculated needs to be considered when staff are working from home but having to visit sites sometimes several per day. Where is classed as a base home or former work location.

Flexi time if it is to be removed due to home working what if anything takes its place.

Screen fatigue long use of screens has a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing this can be worse when considering potential poor lighting and lack of natural light in spare rooms and house spaces being used by staff.

Monitoring of screen time meetings and real world meetings to ensure a balanced approach to the new ways of working.

Peter Garland Branch Secretary Unison City Branch

### **GMB comments to New Normal cabinet Report - Newport City Council**

The GMB is seeking clarity as to who defines who is regarded as a non-frontline employee and therefore able to work from home - with home as their start base of work? Do you expect disparity across departments with regards to this?

This has obvious benefits to non-frontline employees, should they feel happy to continue to work from home on some kind of flexible basis. GMB also acknowledges that continuously working from home can have a detrimental impact on individuals' health and wellbeing.

Whilst GMB sees this as a positive opportunity for many employees, it could (if not implemented correctly) lead to further, tangible divisions between groups of workers who will not have the same flexibility to their working practices - frontline/operational staff. We are therefore seeking clarification from the Council as to how they will mitigate the potential for employees to feel excluded.

Whilst the reduction in carbon emissions is welcome, it should be noted that services for such items as household waste will increase with individuals working from home, and these operational resources should reflect the increase from business waste to personal waste.

GMB welcomes the opportunity to work with the Council on this initiative, however it must be emphasised that managers/supervisors are properly trained and subscribe to the principle of inclusivity, fairness and transparency when considering the implementation of the New Normal.

Yours sincerely

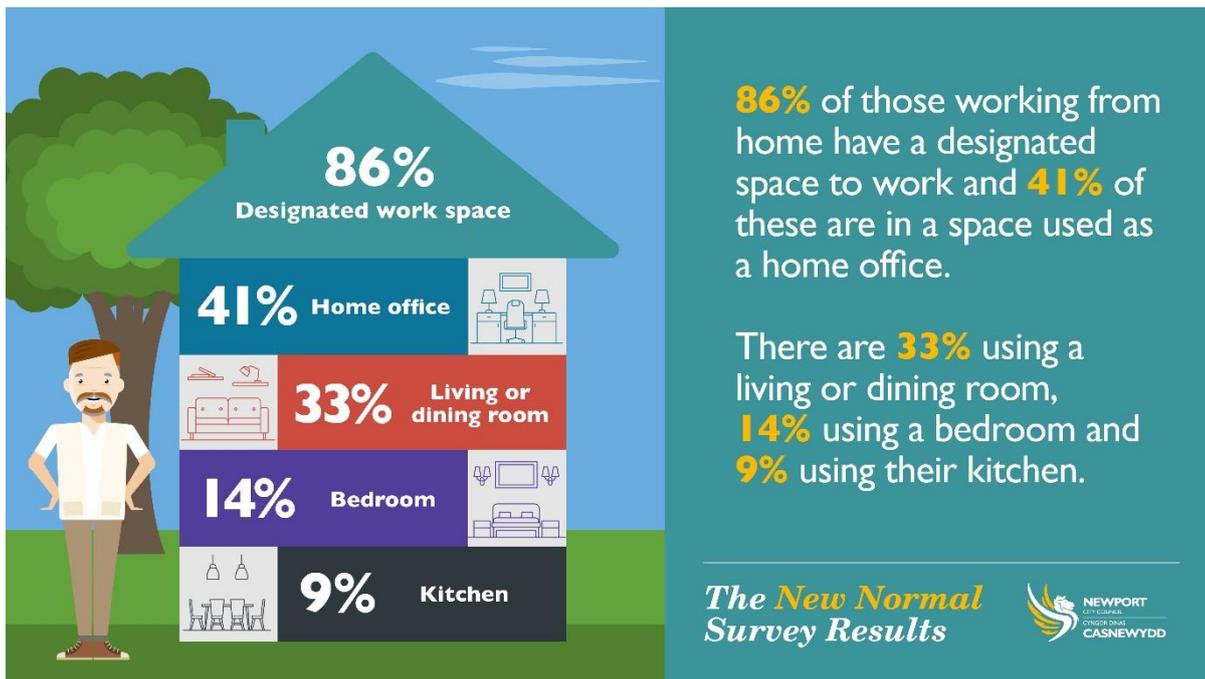
*Rowena Hayward*

Rowena Hayward  
Senior Organiser

## The New Normal Survey Results

**Thank you to everyone who contributed to the New Normal survey over August and September – a total of 710 responses were received with an equal proportion across all service areas, giving a valuable and representative insight into the collective views of the workforce.**

62% of respondents were working their contracted hours from home, with 21% working some of the time at home and some of the time from the Civic Centre. Only 3% of respondents were working their contracted hours from a workplace.



Over 70% responded to say that their working environment at home had appropriate lighting, ventilation and was a space free from noise and interruption, with fewer individuals having appropriate work station set up – 30% of people say their workstation set up is average or poor. This matches up with the responses seen to the question about DSE assessments – 75% of respondents confirmed that they had undertaken a DSE assessment and as result, 88% felt they had the right equipment to carry out their role from home.

Whilst the expected equipment was available in over 70% of responses (laptop, chair, desk, monitor, keyboard and mouse), fewer people are making use of risers or wrist rests (30%). 9% of respondents confirmed that they have specialist equipment at home, with chairs being the most common item.

99% of respondents have access to broadband at home, 97% of which had it prior to the Covid pandemic, and say that it is reliable – 83% have good coverage.



**76%**  
more flexibility

**8%** of respondents have not enjoyed working from home and the same percentage feel that they have had less flexibility in their working hours.

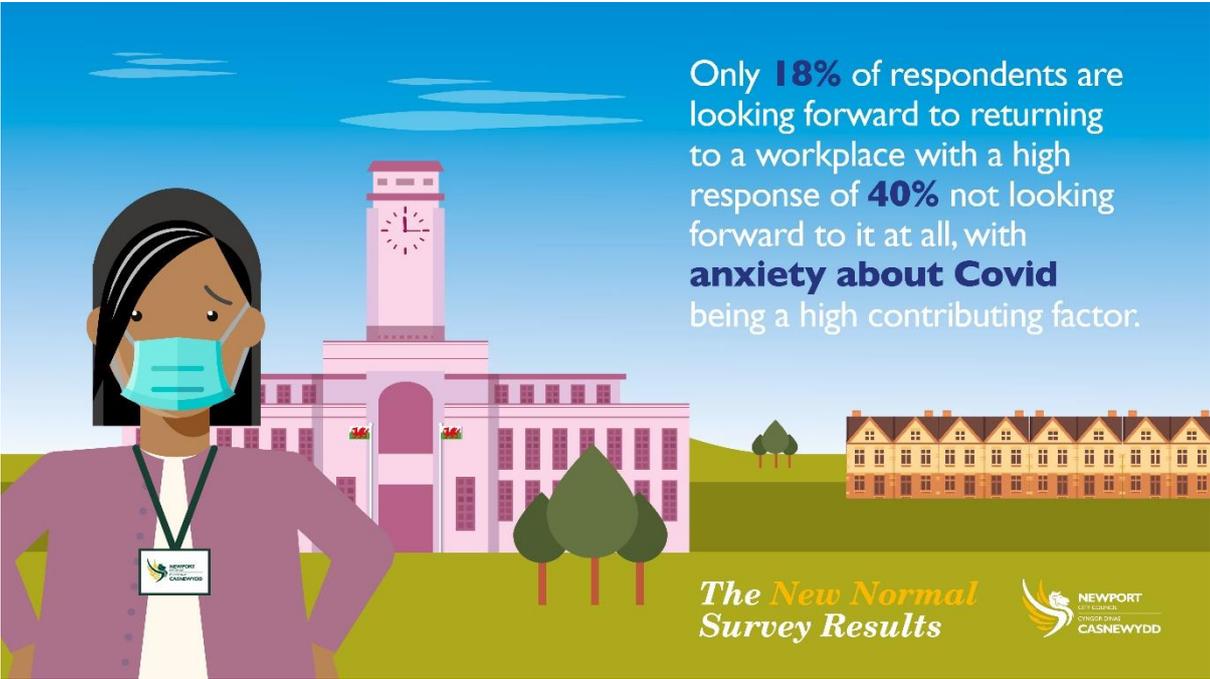
However, **68%** have enjoyed working from home and **76%** feel that they have had more flexibility in their working hours.

*The New Normal Survey Results*



NEWPORT  
CITY COUNCIL  
CIBODDOR ONS  
CASNEWYDD

13% of the workforce have visited a Council office to work in order to have quiet time away from home, with 4% not having suitable work space at home and 1% needing a safe working environment due to domestic issues at home impacting on work.



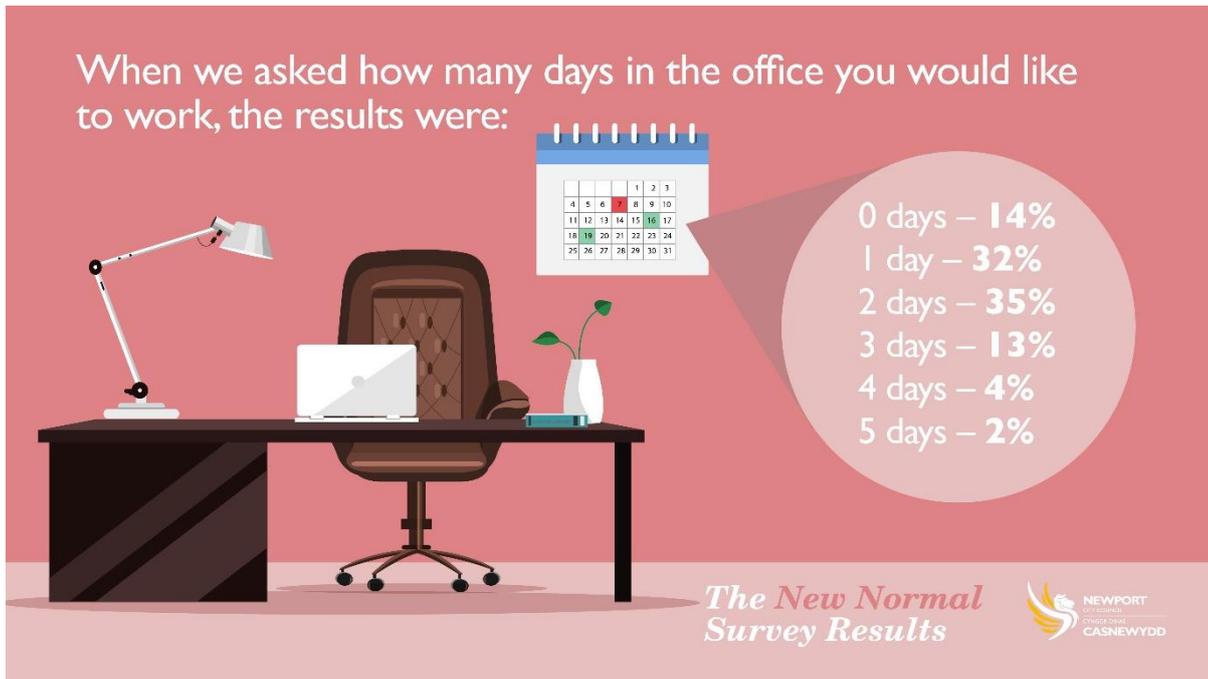
Only **18%** of respondents are looking forward to returning to a workplace with a high response of **40%** not looking forward to it at all, with **anxiety about Covid** being a high contributing factor.

*The New Normal Survey Results*



NEWPORT  
CITY COUNCIL  
CIBODDOR ONS  
CASNEWYDD

The top three measures that would make staff feel less anxious about a return to the workplace were restrictions on the number of people in the building, a strong focus on cleaning and the use of face coverings.



We also asked how important it is for you to have a designated area to work and 50% of respondents felt that it was very important. Slightly fewer (45%) felt that it was also very important to have the same desk and office when returning to the workplace.

When we asked about what facilities you value the most, the top 3 were the ability to make tea and coffee, having fridges and microwaves and drinking water dispensers with the bottom 3 being shower facilities, reflection rooms and vending machines.

61% of respondents were not aware of the Welsh Government’s pilot project to launch public sector remote working hubs but 48% would be willing to work from one if available and close to home.

With regards to commuting to a workplace, 83% of respondents drove by car with only 7% car sharing. Even fewer walk (10%), use a bus (8%), train (2%) or cycle (8%). Of the car users, 66% have petrol powered vehicles, 32% have diesel and less than 1% have an electric vehicle. If parking was restricted, 68% of respondents would consider an alternative means of transport to work, and would be encouraged by access to discounted public transport and better connectivity of public transport times/routes. An increase of those cycling to work could be achieved if lockers, showers and bike storage was made available (12%)

23% of respondents use their car every day for work purposes, 28% use it 2-3 times per week but 34% only use their car on an ad hoc basis.

3% of respondents are blue badge holders and would require access to a disabled parking space to attend a workplace.

**57%** of respondents would be **willing** to consider varying their employment contract to include their home as a work location, but **33%** are **unsure**.

*The New Normal Survey Results*

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL  
CIBORDDI CASNEWYDD

The most valuable factor of the flexi time scheme was chosen as being able to have time to balance work/life responsibilities e.g. caring responsibilities (49%), closely followed by the ability to accrue time, whereas the 7am-7pm bandwidth was the least popular response as being the most valuable factor of the scheme.

**Staff emails** and **newsletters** were the preferred method of communication and **fortnightly** was the preferred frequency level.

Whilst **84%** have regular team meetings on a weekly or monthly basis, **62%** of respondents said that they did not have service area meetings.

*The New Normal Survey Results*

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL  
CIBORDDI CASNEWYDD

What happens next?

A report will be taken to Cabinet in December proposing some options for the future. These will include considerations about HR policies, the Civic Centre usage as a building, how the democratic process could adapt and the impact of technology. If Cabinet approve the report we will be in a position to start consulting with trade unions on the proposals and communicate with the workforce on what changes are likely to be made. The report has been drafted with your views taken into account and the results of the survey will be included for Cabinet to reflect upon. The Chief Executive will provide further detail nearer to the time of publication.

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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2020/21

**Purpose** To present to Cabinet the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.2020/21

**Author** Chris Humphrey Director of Social Services

**Ward** Citywide

**Summary** This report is the Director's evaluation of 2020/21 performance for Social Services. It conforms in format and content with the statutory requirements for the Director's Report as set out in the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

**Proposal** To receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, 2020/21

**Action by** Director of Social Services

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Social Services staff
- Cabinet Member for Social Services
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

**Signed**

## Background

The purpose of this annual report is to set out the local authority's continued delivery of its statutory duties in providing services to people in Newport in terms of information, advice and assistance, and those individuals and carers who need care and support. This report demonstrates how Newport Social Services has responded to the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and how we have promoted and accounted for the delivery of well-being and care and support to the citizens of Newport.

***The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016*** (RISCA) and the ***Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB)*** sets out the requirement for the Director to produce an annual report setting out the performance of Social Services, following the format prescribed by the Local Authority Social Services Annual reports (Wales) Regulations 2016 and is intended for a range of audiences as set out in the Local Authority Annual Social Services Report guidance document.

The intention of the report is not to detail process but to focus on the activities and outcomes achieved and the impact this has had on citizens in Newport. The evidence of our citizens has been used throughout the report as has the contribution of our partner agencies and commissioned services.

### Director's Summary of Performance

2020/21 was another demanding year characterised by the maintenance of quality and standards of service delivery within the context of the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic.

The delivery of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act continues to drive the provision of early intervention and preventative services and the ongoing work to manage the increasing demands placed upon Social Services. The well-being objectives are wound through all Social Services operations and tie closely to the Newport City Council (NCC) Corporate Plan, notably:-

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
- To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
- To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

The new performance framework implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 has changed the way we are required to measure data so comparison with last year is problematic.

This new set of metrics and recording processes along with the enforced working from home arrangements and the shift in demand as a result of the Pandemic means that it is sensible to treat this period as a baseline set of figures.

There is a continuous striving to maximise the efficient use of resources both financial and resources whilst identifying savings. In Children's Services efforts have continued to address the shortage of placement options with another 4 bed residential home opened in Jan 2021. The preventative work to minimise the number of children becoming Looked After continues to develop with new and innovative practices such as Baby & Me, MyST and Family Group Conferencing.

Work in Adult and Community Services continues to focus on working across the interface of health and social care through the use of the Integrated Care Fund. The collaborative work to minimise the number of delayed hospital discharges has further developed with the combined impact of Home First and the Reablement service now fully integrated into the new Grange Hospital that opened at a very challenging time in December 2020.

At the time of writing significant changes to the way services are being delivered has been implemented in order to maintain levels of essential support. New priorities and pressures have emerged such as the intensive and complex work with street homeless the systems required to allocate additional funding made available by Welsh Government to support the social care sector.

Across adults and children's services, we are now experiencing higher than usual levels of complexity and increasing referral numbers. Social care services have not had sufficient time to recover and there are concerning signs of a significant staffing shortage. We expect ongoing budget constraints but at this stage, we are still in the midst of a crisis and uncertain about how the medium to long-term impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic will affect the community and how we deliver our services.

### **Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)**

The 2020/21 revenue out-turn for the Council produced a net underspend, after core budget contributions to/from reserves, of £14m against the £300.2m budget (4.6% variance). This variance has arisen for several reasons.

At a high level, the following explains the position:

- Receipt of one-off Welsh Government (WG) funds to compensate Council services to support its enhanced service delivery to Newport's communities in response to Covid; and lost income from Covid restrictions; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Funding for the direct costs of, and delivery' of the WG support programs to businesses; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Underspends across all services in relation to (i) costs of general administration and service provision due to changes in working practices and (ii) not undertaking planned/normal services, as they were not required or unable to be carried out due to Covid response work being prioritised;
- Resulting directly and indirectly from all of the above, the Councils budget underspent on its general revenue contingency budget, council tax reduction scheme and council tax income, which they would ordinarily do in a 'normal year'. These are all non-service budget areas.

Across Social Services, the overall outturn was a £2.824m underspend for both areas. £221k overspend in Children services and £3.045m underspend in adult services.

- Adults social care - community care – (£1.5m) underspend
- Adult In-House residential homes – (£500k) underspend
- Adult Staffing – (£290k) underspend
- Children's in-house residential and respite – £752k overspend
- Childrens Emergency Placements - £638k overspend
- Children's out of area placements – (£330k) underspend
- Youth Offending/Child Protection and Family Support Teams – (537k) underspend

The global pandemic, which lasted throughout 2020/21, had an unprecedented financial impact. Whilst Adult Services was expecting pressures due to increased demand from adults living longer with complex needs, COVID-19 caused a decrease in numbers. Numbers are expected to rise back up to normal levels, however the timeline is uncertain. Welsh Government compensated the additional cost, as a direct result of COVID-19.

However, within Children Services, the pandemic did not affect the numbers of looked after children. Therefore, Children services faced the normal pressures but with the added complication of not being able to carry out as much preventative work. There was also a lack of availability of certain placements/fostering options due to covid-19 restrictions.

The in-house residential services suffered from an unexpected high level of non-covid sickness across all homes. The issues have been addressed and this was hopefully an in year issue only. The alternative residential services project is progressing well which should in time reduce the reliance on external provision. Newport will continue to monitor this in 2021/22.

The council continues to work collaboratively with regional partners to maximise the use of regional resources to develop services within Newport.

The annual budget in 2020/21 for social services was £75.1m. There is a well-developed financial management process in place across service areas that supports the medium term financial plan and enables the identification and management of budget risks.

## Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
That the continuing and increasing demand for Social Services will bring unsustainable financial pressures.	H	M	We are maintaining strong financial controls on day to day decision making in the service and also develop services both in-house and in partnership which provide effective options to meet the increasing demand.	Sally Jenkins Director of Social Services/ Mary Ryan Head of Adult and Community Services and the Head of Children and Family Services (post currently vacant)
That users and carers will not continue to have the opportunity to engage and contribute further to our understanding of their experience to inform the development of services in future years	H	L	The plan will be to continue to hold regular and frequent service user and carer forum meetings, as well as making use of a wide variety of other consultative mechanisms that we have put in place for users and carers. We will continue to develop imaginative ways of capturing people's views, comments and experiences	Sally Jenkins Director of Social Services/ Mary Ryan Head of Adult and Community Services and the Head of Children and Family Services (post currently vacant)
That we will need to recruit and retain staff with the skills and experience to deliver on our statutory responsibilities and support the independent and voluntary sector to do the same.	H	M	We continue to invest in our workforce in terms of training and development and work regionally to support the care sector.	Sally Jenkins Director of Social Services/ Mary Ryan Head of Adult and Community Services and the Head of Children and Family Services (post currently vacant)

## **Links to Council Policies and Priorities**

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2017 - 22

## **Options Available and considered**

**Option 1** - Cabinet endorses the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2020/21

**Option 2** – Cabinet does not endorse the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2020/21 and sets out specific reasons and recommendations for action.

## **Preferred Option and Why**

Option 1 as the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services is a statutory requirement whereby the Director provides their assessment of performance to the Council.

## **Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

The Director of Social Services annual report gives an overview of the performance of Social Services in 2020/21. There are no financial implications arising specifically from this report

Social Care has been subject to significant challenges over the last 18 months and which are not necessarily manifested in their financial positions outlined in this report. The services have worked, in conjunction with WG to support the care sector and the challenge continue to be significant, stemming from a number of issues, such as recruitment and retention.

The Council has a well-developed process to update and agree its MTFP and annual budget and this ensures that budget issues are identified and considered appropriately.

## **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

The Director of Social Services has a statutory duty under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (as amended by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016) to produce an annual report to the Council, setting out a personal assessment of the performance of Social Services in delivering its social care functions during the preceding 12 months. This Annual report covers the financial year 2020/21 and has been prepared in accordance the Local Authority Social Services Annual Reports (Prescribed Form) (Wales) Regulations 2016 and statutory guidance, as set out in the Local Authority Annual Social Services Report guidance document. The Report also sets the Director's assessment of how well the Council has promoted and delivered well-being standards for service users and carers in need of care and support, in accordance with the six well-being outcomes. The Report confirms that the Director of Social Services is satisfied that the Council continues to make good progress in implementing the Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, in a structured and programmed manner, and is meeting the requirements of the Future Generations and Well Being Act and the corporate well-being objectives. This statutory Annual Report reflects the Director's personal assessment of the performance of Social Services and is, therefore, being presented to Cabinet for information purposes and not for comment or amendment.

## **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

This report sets out the Director of Social Services' own assessment of the performance of Social Services in 2020/21 as part of the statutory role. Whilst there are no direct staffing implications that arise specifically from the report there are potentially implications in the future, either as a result of on-going financial uncertainty or the further implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act or Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. These will need to be considered as they arise and are not the purpose of this report.

## **Scrutiny Committees**

Performance Scrutiny

## **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

- The importance of having a workforce up to date with all mandatory training courses and understanding the role and influence their services have in the ongoing work to ensure the community is strong and resilient.
- The Social Services and Well-Being Act (2014) ensures that the prevention element that is required within the legislation supports communities to access early intervention for support that offers advice and assistance to maintain independence, improve well being and prevent unnecessary escalation to statutory services.
- Integration: The ongoing work to integrate health and social care service to provide a coherent service response to those in need of support. A strong example of this is the further development of social care within the hospital pathway, now expanded to prevent admission as well as facilitate timely and safe discharge back to independent living
- Collaboration: The work with partners, specialist providers, independent, third sector and nationals who have rallied together throughout the Pandemic to ensure support continues to be available. Supported by the Local Authority in terms of co-ordination of services and distribution of Wels Government funding to ensure they remain sustainable and responsive to changing needs
- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the City we serve.

## **Equality Act 2010 and Socio Economic Duty**

This report does not reflect a policy change or decision which would impact disproportionately on staff or communities because of protected characteristics or inequalities arising as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, a formal Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However, fairness and equality are considered in service delivery.

## **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The service area is mandated by Welsh Government to collect data around this measure to illustrate and monitor need. Information is contained within the report.

## **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Not applicable to this report

## **Consultation**

There is a continuing programme throughout the year of meeting with users and carers to help people make their contribution to the intelligence that informs the Director's Annual Report.

## **Background Papers**

Directors Report 2020/21

**Report of the  
Director of Social Services  
2020/2021**



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## Introduction

2020/21 was a particularly demanding year characterised by the maintenance of quality and standards of service delivery in the midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic. In April 2020 we had no idea of how long the situation would last or of the impact it would have on services, citizens and staff.

This report will document how services responded and maintained and where we find ourselves at the end of a 12 month period characterised by some unique challenges that will inevitably lead to some permanent changes in the way we support citizens in the future.

The task of embedding the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 continues to influence the provision of Early Intervention and Preventative services and in the ongoing work to manage demand. The well-being objectives tie closely to the Newport City Council (NCC) Corporate Plan, notably:

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
- To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
- To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

In Childrens Services, efforts have continued to address the shortage of placement options with a new 4 bed residential home now in operation with 2 more services planned for 2021/22. The preventative work to minimise the number of children becoming Looked After continues to develop with new and innovative practices such as Baby & Me, Family Group Conferencing and Rapid Response.

Work in Adult and Community Services continues to focus on improving and developing integrated working between health and social care with the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) and the Transformation Fund being key enablers. The collaborative work to minimise the number of delayed hospital discharges has continued with pathways including Reablement and Home First fully integrated into the new Grange Hospital that opened during this year

The Coronavirus Pandemic brought unprecedented challenge across the range of services and older persons residential homes were impacted early on as Newport experienced high numbers of cases before preventative measures were in place. Although I have referenced the way we responded to the Pandemic throughout the report I thought it would be helpful to summarise here some of the themes of the past year to establish the context.

In April, May and December of 2020 there was a spike in deaths of citizens known to us and people have been fearful of going into hospital and into long-term care. Our domiciliary care providers have worked with us and with GP's District Nurses and Community Psychiatric Nurses to keep people safe in the community and to ensure they have access to the right care

We have adopted new ways of working, as have our partners, utilising technology where possible. We have supported our providers, ensuring PPE is available and working collaboratively with colleagues in Environmental Health, Public Health Wales, ABUHB and Welsh Government to offer practical and financial support.

People receiving some services and their carers had to deal with the fact that their care had to be delivered in a different way e.g. support at home and in the community rather than attending a building. Social Workers continued to undertake urgent assessments and maintained contact with others to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place offering telephone support and arranging welfare visits when necessary. Volunteers did shopping, collected prescriptions and delivered food parcels.

We developed a new outreach service and successfully embedded our hospital discharge processes into the new Grange Hospital that opened in September 2020. The Hospital and Reablement teams have been present at hospital sites throughout.

Considerable and impressive effort was made to house 70 street homeless people in temporary accommodation and to ensure they have ongoing access to specialist substance misuse and mental health support.

In Children's services we have continued to work in partnership with Barnardo's to prevent children coming into care, to work with children with additional needs and to support young carers.

Referral rates for safeguarding have remained high throughout the Pandemic, increasing the pressure on statutory services due to the restrictions on other community based provision. The new Rapid Response service started in October 2020 and aims to help families de-escalate and manage their crisis to prevent children coming into care.

The number of Looked After Children has remained constant (378 at 31<sup>st</sup> March) which indicates the effectiveness of prevention given the high rates of referral. Family Group Conferencing, Baby & Me, Rapid Response and MyST are all proving effective tools in supporting families. We maintained family contact sessions using technology and continued with face-to-face engagement where necessary.

Despite the restrictions, we progressed 26 adoptions, approved 23 new foster households and opened a new 4 bed residential home.

The year end financial position mirrors the operational experience, the adult underspend reflects not only the loss of life as a result of Covid 19 but also the reluctance of citizens to access services. Lockdown and furlough meant that more informal networks were available. We also had access to a significant amount of additional Welsh Government funding the future of which is not yet confirmed.

The Children's services overspend is reflective of the increased pressure on services that was already high but further exacerbated by the Pandemic. The prevention services continue to mitigate rising costs.

Across adults and children's services, we are now experiencing higher than usual levels of complexity and increasing referral numbers. Social care services have not had sufficient time to recover and there are concerning signs of a staffing crisis. We expect ongoing budget constraints but at this stage, we are still in the midst of a crisis and uncertain about how the medium to long-term impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic will affect the community and how we deliver our services.

### **Summary of Performance 2020/21**

A new performance framework was planned for implementation during 2018/19 but it was delayed until April 2020. Unfortunately, the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic in March 2020 led to a further delay until April 2021

NCC have developed the WCCIS system and new reporting and recording processes are now in place.

The data contained in this report represents the new performance framework but not all of the figures are for the full 12 month period. It is unavoidable that this year has been a period of transition but our systems are now complete and ready to go from April 2021 in accordance with Welsh Government timescales and the draft guidance that is yet to be finalised.

### **End of Year Performance Figures for Adult and Community Services**

**The new performance framework has changed the way we are required to measure the data so comparison with last year is problematic. This new set of metrics and recording processes coupled with the enforced working from home arrangements and the shift in demand as a result of the Pandemic means that it is sensible to treat this period as a baseline set of figures upon which to build future datasets to support evidence of future success, good practice and service pressures.**

For example, last year (2019/20) **the number of people receiving assessments was 4038**, an increase of 891 from 2018/19.

During 20/21 the figure is **1538** that appears to be considerably less but this is because the metric is now restricted to **'new' assessments**

Another example of this is the change in the way the provision of **advice and assistance** is measured. In 2019/20 the figure of **4,588** was recorded but in 20/21 this has **reduced to 1,718** as we have been required to remove the numbers where only information was provided. This must be considered in the context of the **5,597 contacts recorded in 20/21** that demonstrates an overall increased level of activity

Hospital discharge figures have not been provided as they are no longer a statutory reporting requirement. However, In Reach, Reablement and Home First continue to be effective integrated service approaches to manage the flow of patients through the hospital and ensure they return home with the right level of support to maximise and maintain independence.

**NB: No targets have yet been established, a full year of data is required to establish a benchmark for future performance**

Adults Measures	Figure 20/21	Results & Comments
Total No. of Adults Who Have Received Advice & Assistance	1718	5,597 contact in total that includes when information only was provided
No. of New Assessments Completed During the Year	1538	Only represents new people 1 <sup>st</sup> time assessments
Active Offer of Welsh Accepted	0	
No. with a Care & Support Package at 31st March 2021	1861	
No. with Eligible Needs for Care & Support Maintained by Direct Payments at 31st March	93	over 18's only
Total no. of Adult Protection Enquiries Completed in the Year	648	doesn't represent individuals - could be multiple enquiries for same person
No. of Adult Protection Enquiries Completed Within Timescales	636 Within 7 working days	98.1%
Total No. of Packages of Reablement Completed During the Year	584	
Outcome of Reablement - Reduced Package of Care & Support	43	7.4%

Outcome of Reablement - No. of Packages of Reablement That Maintained the Need For Support	95	16.3%
Outcome of Reablement – No further Package of Care & Support	409	70%
Increased package of support	37	6.3%

**End of Year Performance Figures for Children and Young People’s Services**

**The new performance framework has changed the way we are required to measure data so a comparison with last year is problematic. This new set of metrics and recording processes coupled with the enforced working from home arrangements and the shift in demand as a result of the Pandemic means that it is sensible to treat this period as a baseline set of figures upon which to build future datasets to support evidence of future success, good practice and service pressures**

Notwithstanding the above it must be noted that children’s services has experienced significant additional demand during 2020/21

The continuing development of **additional residential placements** and the ongoing efforts to **recruit Foster Carers** will improve capacity and enable more children to remain within the City.

Preventions services including **Family Group Conferencing, Baby & Me** and the new **Rapid Response service** are enabling families to stay together and preventing new entrants to the care system.

**NB: No targets have yet been established, a full year of data is required to establish a benchmark for future performance**

<b>Children’s Measures</b>	<b>Figure 20/21</b>	<b>Comments</b>
No. of referrals where advice and assistance was provided	5,424	10104 contacts in total that includes where information only was provided

No. Where Physical Punishment was the Only Factor	144	New law coming April 2022 about physical punishment by the parent or care – this is a new measure to start to gather data to measure the impact
Active Offer of Welsh Accepted During Assessment	0	
No. of Children With a Care & Support Plan (CASP) at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	978	This figure includes children with a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and includes children receiving finance only support
No. of Children who are LAC at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	378	
No. of Children Becoming Looked After During the Year	91	
No. of Children Who Ceased Being Looked After During the Year	92	
No. of LAC Who have had 3 or More Placements	26	* Note this may change once we receive final notification from WG improved figure since 19/20
No. of LAC Returned Home During the Year	36	
No. of Children in Care Proceedings During the Year	44	
No. of Foster Carers Registered with the LA	159	
No. of Childrens Residential Beds as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	21	
Total Number of Children on Child Protection Register (CPR) as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March	158	
Total No. of Registrations on the CPR During the Year	179	

No. of Children Who Were Removed from the CPR	148	
No. of Reports of Child Exploitation Received During the Year	62	*Note this only covers the 6 month period 01 Oct 2020 to 31 March 2021
No. of Contacts by Young Carers or Professionals During the Year	74	<p>Provided by Barnardo's and relates to new contacts.</p> <p>50 received advice and assistance and progressed to a formal care plan</p> <p>At 31<sup>st</sup> March there were 84 on a formal care plan</p> <p>Reviews are conducted every 6 months</p>

### **Youth Justice Service**

By continuing to shape the service in line with the Welsh Government's **Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales**, we have seen a dramatic increase in our preventative cases, which is promoting positive outcomes for children.

We adopt a "**Child-first**" practice approach and continue to develop community partnerships to improve diversionary opportunities for children. We work with key agencies under an Anti-Social Behaviour umbrella to ensure there is a multi-agency approach to planning.

We have engaged a **Speech and Language Therapist** to aid communication and understanding and ensure each child has a plan that is individual to them.

We have just started a Restorative Justice Clinic that will provide specific restorative justice sessions for the child we are working with. These sessions will include victim empathy work

We are reviewing how we work with **victims** including providing various ways of communicating and using a "cooling-off period" to ensure they can access support at a later date if needed. We are developing a process to help us reach out to the victims of children who have been diverted away from criminal justice to ensure they are not forgotten and have the option to access a service

We have set up an **allocation pathway with the Safeguarding Hub** to ensure that those coming through the Children's Services front door can access the Youth Justice Service without delay.

We are working with the **Preventions Team**, to ensure that where possible, we work with the children and the parent/carers or siblings, so that each has their own personal support plan. This is designed to provide a family-based approach

to prevention support and to ensure any younger children can benefit from the service provided to the older children.

The Youth Justice Service Workers have been trained in **Trauma Informed Practice** which is used throughout assessment and case management.

We have monthly **psychology input** and use that for case formulation sessions where children with complex situations and adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) are considered in a multi-agency forum and a **case formulation document** completed. This document will travel with the child throughout their involvement with children's services and is available to explain their particular needs and vulnerabilities from a psychological perspective,

We continue to work closely with our **specialist services**; CAMHS, Speech and Language Therapy, Education, Probation, Police and Barod (Substance Use) These services are currently under review to ensure they are fit for purpose as the YJS goes through this period of transition. We have introduced monthly performance reporting for specialist service provision.

We have re-organised the structure and recording of **Risk Management Panels**. These have become an integral part of partnership working and are well attended by all key agencies, the outcome being that an accurate and multi-agency risk plan is completed.

<b>Children's Measures</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Results &amp; Comments (2020/21)</b>
Number of young people sentenced to custody	25	<p>1 child was sentenced to Custody in November 2020. (0 in 2019/20)</p> <p>The YJS proposed a community order as an alternative to custody in the pre-sentence report</p> <p>5 other local authorities in Wales had more than one child sentenced to custody in 2020/21</p>
Number of first time entrants into the youth justice system	40	<p>37 (Within target but 12 more than last year)</p> <p>YJS identified that the outcomes from Bureau were often a Youth Caution or Conditional Caution resulting in the child becoming a first time entrant.</p> <p>YJS have reviewed processes to deliver more child focussed bureau outcomes and there was a reduction in first time entrants in the latter part of the year</p> <p>Additionally, 9 children were sentenced to a statutory court order because of the nature and seriousness of their offending.</p>

Young people out of court disposals re-offend within 12 months	30%	<p>30% (On target but an increase of 16%)</p> <p><b>NB: This figure is 12 months behind as reoffending rates are tracked over a 12 month period and covers 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020)</b></p> <p>Based on a cohort of 116 young people with 35 re-offending.</p> <p>The numbers of children re-offending have more than doubled.</p> <p>YJS have commissioned an audit to inform future practice.</p>
Young people statutory orders who re-offend within 12 months	50%	<p>27.5% (Strong and Improving performance)</p> <p><b>NB: This figure is 12 months behind as reoffending rates are tracked over a 12 month period and covers 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020)</b></p> <p>Based on a cohort of 29 young people with 8 re-offending.</p> <p>This improvement has been strongly influenced by the information provided to the bench on Trauma Informed Practice and engagement with the Court User Group whose support for diverting young people away from the criminal justice system is resulting in a decrease in the amount of court disposals</p>

### How Are People Shaping Our Services?

Newport City Council is committed to ensuring that people are able to have a say in how they receive support and how services will be developed and delivered in the future.

Some examples of how we do this are:

- Co-production in the assessment process to enable citizens to express their preferences around how support will be delivered.
- Contract monitoring processes where the views of citizens who receive services are sought and providers are contractually required to gather feedback and comments to inform service development.
- Citizen engagement/involvement in the commissioning process
- Complaints and compliments.
- Consultation events and citizen forums

- Provider Forums and engagement processes
- Feedback from inspections.
- Engagement with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
- Active promotion of voice of the child

### **Consultation events in 2020/21**

These included:

- Carers Week – virtual event
- Annual public budget consultation process in December 2020.
- Regular feedback obtained from children and adults living in NCC residential homes at house meetings.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Services is very active at community level

**Welsh Government agreed that Local Authorities were not required to undertake a citizens survey during 2020/21. The statutory reporting requirement is currently under review.**

### **Adult – Residential & Reablement Services**

Due to Covid the Care Inspectorate Wales inspections did not take place as planned. However, 3 monthly visits by the Responsible Individual (RI) were completed.

Common themes identified for improvement by the RI across the residential care homes at Blaen-y-Pant, Spring Gardens and Parklands were as follows:

- Ensure staff receive mandatory training within specified timescales
- Ensure vehicles have sufficient fuel, and journey logs are completed
- Ensure staff are regularly tested for Covid
- Ensure regular supervisions are completed
- Ensure photographs are placed on Mars charts of residents

Reablement were required to provide better information to citizens about what the service could achieve and to prepare them properly for the fact that it is a time limited programme

### **Children's Residential Services**

Common themes identified by the RI across Forest Lodge, Rosedale, Oaklands, Rose Cottage and Brynglas Bungalow were as follows:

- Improve Health and Safety risk assessments
- Improve information provided at shift handover
- Ensure staff are up to date with mandatory training
- Progress outstanding environmental improvements i.e garden/decoration

## Care Inspectorate Wales Inspections 2020/21

### **Brynglas Bungalow unannounced visit - 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

- *There is a full staff team but there were high levels of staff absences.*
- *Staff were positive and their comments indicated that they are motivated and committed to the young people and their roles.*
- *Robust referral and admission arrangements are in place with systems in place to ensure only children whose needs can be met live at the home.*
- *Systems for engaging children in seeking their views about the day to day life at the home and their personal goals and outcomes are in place.*
- *The group of young people are well established with feedback from young people, staff and a social worker describing each of the young people making good progress.*
- *Young people are generally satisfied with living at the home*

### **Cambridge House unannounced inspection – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

- *The home is a large detached property and not well suited for such use and although changes have been made in order to meet the needs of the placement the premises are in poor condition.*

**Cambridge House closed in May 2021 as the Council develops new residential services that meet the needs of children and young people. Rose Cottage and Rosedale already provide an additional 8 beds over 2 sites and Windmill Farm is scheduled to open in 21/22**

## Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance Check Newport City Council - May 2021

**NB Whilst this inspection took place outside of the 2020/21 reporting timeframe the focus of the check was very much on our service delivery during the Pandemic. As the findings are available at the time of writing they have been included to add further depth and context to the period of time covered by this report.**

To determine:

- *How well is the local authority discharging its statutory functions to keep people who need care and support and carers who need support, safe and promote their well-being during the pandemic.*
- *What is the Local Authority doing to prevent the need for children to come into care and are children returning home to their families quickly enough where safe to do so*

***"We considered the safety and well-being of people who use or may need to use services, the safety of services they access and the safety and well-being of people who work in services"***

The findings identified culture of improvement and mutual support and a recognition of positive leadership. It was noted that staff morale was generally good.

***"Partnerships were in the main working well at all levels and delivering an integrated sustainable approach to meeting need and promoting well-being"***

Innovative responses to the Pandemic were noted in adult services and also that there was evidence that carers had been identified as requiring additional support and that efforts had been made to ensure that information and advice was available.

***"Mostly evident at an individual level, we found support was underpinned by a relationship of openness and honesty about the options available for people who need care and support and carers who need support"***

In Children's Services the preventative interventions such as the Rapid Response service, Family Group Conferencing MyST and Baby & Me were identified as being effective at preventing needs escalating and it was noted that parents and carers were positive about the support they received.

***"many staff were exhausted with complex case work and high volume evident. Children's services were experiencing unprecedented demand and increase in referrals. In adult services we found services working under significant pressure"***

### **Areas for improvement - Overview**

- Supervision – need to improve recording to evidence shared thinking and rationale in decision making
- Timeliness needs to be improved in supporting the well-being of the workforce to manage demand and for those waiting for assessments and care and support
- It was acknowledged that the Pandemic had restricted the ability of preventative services to operate thereby creating additional demand.
- Inter-agency responses could be improved with better understanding

A full copy of the report can be found at:

<https://careinspectorate.wales/our-reports/local-authority-inspection-and-review-reports>

### **Overview of complaints 2020/21**

A Stage 1 complaint is for local resolution within 10 working days.

Following Stage 1, if the complainant remains dissatisfied they can request to proceed to Stage 2. This involves a formal investigation conducted by an independent investigator and if a child or vulnerable adult and Independent Person is also appointed, at a cost to the Local Authority.

Following Stage 2, if the complainant remains dissatisfied they are advised to proceed to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

During 2020/21, the Complaints Service received **130** Social Services complaints, **11 less than last year**

Adults' Services –

- **52** total complaints received
- **26** were **not progressed** to a complaint
- **22** were **resolved** at stage 1
- **2** were **discontinued** (This is where a resolution has not been mutually met but the complaint does not progress to a stage 2)
- **2** proceeded to **stage 2**
- Stage 2 outcome – **part upheld** and **not upheld**
- 

Children's Services –

- **78** complaints
- **50** were **not progressed** to a complaint
- **20** were **resolved** at stage 1
- **6** were discontinued (This is where a resolution has not been mutually met but the complaint does not progress to a stage 2)
- **2** proceeded to **stage 2**
- Stage 2 outcome – **part upheld** and **upheld**

The decrease in the number of stage 2 complaints has been noted again for this financial year with a total of 4 stage 2 complaints. This continues is a result of the number of complaints being resolved at stage 1.

4 complaints (2 Children Services and 2 Adults Services) were assessed by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW). The outcome of each were as follows:

1 Adults complaint - premature and referred back to the Council to complete their complaints procedure

1 Adults complaint- early settlement, progress complaint to a stage 2

1 Childrens complaints - refused as a matter for the courts

1 Childrens complaint- investigation completed by the Ombudsman – resulting in financial redress and actions to be taken forward

### **Recommendations for service improvement as a consequence of complaints management.**

- Improvements to information provided to customers on viability assessments
- Improvements to information sharing and communication to families of children in their guardianship
- Improvements to recording and transition practices within Children's residential settings

## **Overview of compliments 2020/21**

Adults' Services                      **15**   -   **2 more than last year**

### Occupational Therapy Team

*"Everything I wanted and needed you got for him without hesitation and that made his daily life a lot easier and that meant the world to me. I can't thank you enough."*

Children's Services                      **4**   -   **4 more than last year**

### Children's Team

*"I just wanted to personally thank you for being so supportive and understanding. I'm hopeful with the help you've put in place, and support from everyone at the meeting today we'll get there."*

## **Promoting & Improving the Well-being of Those We Help**

### **Quality Standard 1 – Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve**

In order to respond appropriately to the wide range of adult enquiries, our First Contact Service is a multi-disciplinary team with co-located specialist officers who offer on-the-spot information, advice and assistance to citizens in the following areas:

- Safeguarding;
- Occupational Therapy;
- Housing advice (funded by Housing Support Grant)
- Sensory impairment;
- Independent living – Direct Payments;
- Financial advice.
- Community Connectors

There are plans to extend the services available within First Contact to strengthen the preventative focus of IAA by ensuring citizens get the right advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Physiotherapy, Falls and Reablement is scheduled to join the First Contact team.

In 2020/21 **1538 citizens received advice and assistance** from the First Contact Team (this figure does not include those who only received information)

IAA has been successfully extended to the hospital environment and is an integral part of the following 2 components of hospital discharge that contributes to effective patient flow:

- **In Reach** - Targeted engagement with patients and families whilst still on the ward ensures safe discharge arrangements are co-produced to maximise independence.
- **Home First** - The offer of IAA is a critical feature of this regional service, hosted by Newport City Council. It offers IAA to patients within the hospital with the aim of preventing admission.

Where the First Contact Team are unable to meet the needs of adults through the provision of **Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA)** via a proportionate assessment, an integrated assessment is offered that further explores the person's eligible needs and works with the individual on how best to meet them.

*"In adult services, proportionate assessments were undertaken in a timely manner. Although variable, people's voices were mostly heard, their choices respected and people achieve self-identified outcomes"*

*(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)*

Every young person who is involved in the child protection process or who are Looked After has the opportunity to speak with an advocate.

**The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)** provides a regional advocacy service. Every Newport child who is involved in the child protection process or who is Looked After has access to the **statutory active offer** and has the opportunity to speak to an advocate to ensure their voice is heard.

- **139 active offers of advocacy were made in 2020/21**

**Dewis** is commissioned to provide an independent advocacy service to adults. In 2020/21 they supported **135 adults** with a range of issues by adopting new ways of working, blending virtual contact with face to face based on individual risk assessments.

Dewis advocates supported the consultation process in relation to the closure of Brynglas Day Centre and also ensured that the views and wishes of residents and their families were independently represented during 2 care home closure processes that occurred during the year.

This was a challenging time both in terms of the stress of upheaval for the residents and for the multi agency team who had to manage the transfer of clinically vulnerable people in the midst of a Pandemic. All were successfully moved and are now settled in their new homes.

During 20/21 Newport Childrens Services and Barnardos undertook a **Review of families and professional agencies experiences of Child Protection Case**

**Conferences** as part of a commitment to hear the voice of the child and family in child protection processes

- We spoke to **12 family members** and **30 agencies**
- Responses were used to shape the redesign of CP processes and a greater focus on parental collaboration and ensuring the children understand what has been agreed is now at the forefront.
- This work is due to continue in 21/22

**The Community Connector team** offers support to citizens who may be socially isolated to help them gain independence and improve their well-being.

- Newport's team of **six Connectors** provided a service to a total number of **2,136 citizens** during 2020/21 with information, telephone advice and 1:1 support
- **4,427** outcomes were recorded at closure thereby highlighting the complexity of enquiries that resulted in multiple solutions.
- This year saw an increase in those requesting a support service and volunteer shopping due to shielding, isolating or ill-health. Food bank support continued to rise highlighting those in food poverty.
- There was a decline in those asking for social activities and skills or training but a rise in those seeking information and support regarding their health, mental wellbeing and financial assistance.
- The Connectors offer specialist support to BAME communities including work with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to enable access to social activities, volunteering and learning and employment opportunities.
- **302 BAME citizens were supported during 2020/21** this represents a reduction as engagement is usually centered around community events that did not take place this year
- Information about Covid Support Grants were shared with community groups

The Community Connectors and our Third Sector partners continue to update the **DEWIS** database that contains local and national information. Newport has **509** live resources on the site, a decrease of 20 from last year but still high when viewed in the context of many services and groups being unable to operate throughout the year

There has been an increase in database use during 2020/21 that indicates continued trust in DEWIS as a reliable source of community information

- **Average of 7,144 views per month compared to 4,904 in 2019/20**

**Occupational Therapists (OT)** provide assessments to support people to remain physically independent within the home environment. An OT is based within our First Contact team to ensure appropriate advice is available for citizens at the earliest opportunity.



Over **200** urgent visits were carried out by the OT's during the Pandemic. Citizens on the non-urgent waiting list were contacted and offered advice and assistance to help with daily activities during lockdown

The OT team currently co-ordinate the telecare service that was established in 2019/20 in partnership with Monmouthshire and Caerphilly Local Authorities.

**At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 87 Newport citizens were using telecare equipment to help them remain independent at home**

**Ask SARA** - an easy to use online self-help guide providing information about equipment for independent living. The site provides an overview of what is available and how to obtain it and is available throughout Gwent.

## **CARERS**

**The Newport Carers Network** has **540 members** and offers information, advice and support for Newport citizens in a way that suits their individual requirements.

Newsletters and updates are distributed via post and email and available on the NCC website.

### **The Newport Carers Offer – launched in 2020**

Information around what is available to anyone in a caring role living in Newport – all this information is available on the NCC website and is regularly publicised via established communication channels.

- **132** adult carer's assessments were undertaken in 2020/21
- **689** carers received information, advice and assistance from the Connector team.
- **2,241** people accessed digital support information from the Carers Support Webpage and My Newport Online Portal (**1,330 in 2019/20**)

***"We found recognition of the need to support carers during the Pandemic. Information and advice was given to carers and service provided to support their needs"***

***(CIW Assurance Check May 2021)***

The Pandemic presented particular challenges for carers who were not only unable to access their normal support networks such as the established Carers Café, but community based services for the cared for were also unavailable thereby placing additional strain on informal arrangements. NCC recognised this and took the following steps:

- **A revised edition of the Newport City Council Carers Handbook was provided to every known adult carer with an outline of the Newport Carers Offer**
- **Information was shared on social media**
- **A new online request form was added to My Newport Council page in February 2021.**

### **Carers Week 8 - 12 June 2020**

- **Information campaign launched with support of Public Relations colleagues**
- **Daily emails for network members and social media posts to reach a wider audience**

*"Well done for all your efforts for Carers Week. I think it was really positive. Thank you for all the info, links and resources in the daily emails "*

*"It was helpful to see the post online and to find out that there is so much information and support out there"*

### **Priorities for 2021/22**

- To further develop the **First Contact** team into an **Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) hub** consisting of co-located Social Care, Health and partner organisations
- **Carers** - to engage and support more adult unpaid carers
- **Telecare** - to continue to expand and improve the service
- To continue to proactively **manage demand and reduce waiting times** as the community starts to recover from the Pandemic
- To **improve digital access** to the information and advice service by developing the website
- To launch an **NCC Young Carers offer** in partnership with Barnardo's
- To develop a **single entry point for adult safeguarding** issues

### **Quality Standard 2 – Working with people & partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being**

Covid has had a significant impact upon our foster carers and residential homes. It has caused issues in placing children with new carers due to the risks of spreading the infection and the young people in our care have experienced isolation from friends, a reduction in family time and less time in education.

The staff have had to cope with homes going into isolation, PPE and children frustrated at being unable to leave. This was overcome by finding new

entertainment and staff organised activities such as baking competitions and karaoke evenings.

A key priority since 2018/19 has been to open new residential services for children in Newport to reduce the number of out of county placements and keep children close to their family and community networks. The Pandemic has caused delays but the current position is as follows:

- **Rose Cottage**, a 4-bedroom residential home opened in January 2019
- **Rosedale**, a 4 bed property opened in January 2021
- **Windmill Cottage** a 4 bed property, joint project with health to support crisis placements on a regional basis is due to open in March 2022

Newport are active partners in the Gwent-wide Children and Families Strategic Partnership and has a positive working relationship South East Wales Regional Adoption Collaborative.

- In 2020/21 permanent and stable futures were secured for **26 children through adoption**. (6 more than last year)

Newport has more children placed with in house foster carers than with foster placements purchased from independent Fostering Agencies and this is an ongoing trend. Fostering offers a family environment and is often preferable to a residential placement. In house provision also means that children can remain close to their networks and NCC are committed to recruiting more foster carers who are based within the local authority area and to offer specialist support to prevent placement breakdown.

- At year end there were **378 Looked After Children in** Newport
- **256** are in fostering arrangements
- **207** are in NCC fostering arrangements
- **159** foster carers were registered with NCC at year end
- **75%** of the independent foster agency (IFA's) carers used by NCC are out of county placements
- **23** new NCC fostering households were approved during 2020/21

**NCC Corporate Plan 2017-2022:**

"We will reduce out of county children's social care placements by 25%."

- **MyST** was launched in 2020/21 (My Support Team). This multi agency approach to the provision of a therapeutic service for children with complex needs will better support foster carers and prevent placement breakdown. The central purpose of MyST is to improve the psychological wellbeing of

children/young people, their relationships with birth family members, their attachments with safe adults, reduce placement disruptions and particularly the risk of out-of-county placement for young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

- **When I Am Ready** – a scheme to enable care leavers to stay with their foster carers post 18 and up to the age of 25 – this is now available to looked after children in Newport and will continue to be monitored.
- During 2020/21 Barnardo's **Family Support Service (FSS)** provided support to **580 children (a reduction of 17% from last year)**
- **94%** of FFS cases closed during the year did not escalate or reduced the initial risk status

### **NB: the number of referrals reduced at the height of the Pandemic**

It has been a challenge during lockdown to provide support to families using virtual platforms and only conducting visits in the most urgent of cases. Feedback has been positive but a clear preference for face-to-face sessions has been expressed and they have increased as restrictions have eased.

**The Rapid Response Team** is a new early intervention service offered to families in crisis as a result of a referral to the safeguarding hub.

The service commenced in October 2020 and is funded by the **Intermediate Care Fund (ICF)** with 3 workers employed by **Barnardo's** who work closely with the Social Worker using a range of trauma informed approaches. Support is offered for **6 weeks** and the intention is to de escalate risk and **keep families together.**

During the first quarter the team worked with 12 families

- **4** children returned home
- **4** children remained with their family

**The Disabled Children's Team** has been working in collaboration with adult services, commissioning and the education department to:

- Develop 2 transition supported living services & 1 residential service
- Develop a new outreach and day service provision for young people with complex behaviours
- Develop alternative post 16 education options for young people with special educational needs
- Continue to deliver sessional support for children and their cares

**The Young Carers' Service** is delivered by **Barnardo's** to ensure young people who care for family members have an opportunity to engage with their peers, achieve their personal development goals and get appropriate respite from their role as primary carer.

- Barnardo's offer **time out activities for young carers aged 8 - 25** who often face social isolation and low self esteem.
- During the Pandemic the service diversified to offer virtual groups and activities as well as phone calls and video chats with young carers
- **422** young carers were supported in 2020/21 ( 73 new referrals and an increase of 123 since 2019/20)
- **Young Carers ID Card** was launched in Newport to provide young carers with the opportunity and confidence to highlight their caring role to teachers, medical professionals and retailers.
- **Newport Young Carers** ran a virtual awareness raising campaign and held a poster competition **Carers Week**

## Hospital Discharge & Community Based Services

Throughout the Pandemic services have maintained a full presence on the hospital wards and in the community, often working with people who are Covid positive.

**Reablement** operates as a fully integrated health and social care service to support hospital discharge in St Woolos, the Royal Gwent and the Grange

It is a short term focussed support package where people are encouraged and supported to do as much as they can for themselves, which has a positive impact on their physical and mental wellbeing.

During 20/21 at the end of the Reablement programme **70% of people required no ongoing support** (409 out of a total of 584)

**The Dementia Reablement Service.** A regionally funded project that began in October 2020

The Service will provide planned, time limited and goal orientated approaches that support people with memory problems or with dementia to maintain their daily living skills and remain independent for as long as possible.

- **Dementia Reablement Service supported 94 people** between October 2020 and March 2021
- **11 people reduced their package of care** at the end of the programme
- **36 people remained independent** at the end of the programme
- **82 people required no change** to their support at the end of the programme

During the Pandemic people were reluctant to go into hospital due to the risk of becoming infected with the virus. In order to respond to the increased number of community based referrals the Reablement staff worked in partnership with GP's District Nurses and Social Workers to keep people safe at home.

**Dementia Service Development** – the specialist Reablement service is part of a suite of interventions that will offer citizens options to remain in the community for as long as possible.

- **Spring Gardens** offers daily respite for people with dementia and this also supports the carer to have a break.
- **Outreach Service** newly established as a result of the closure of Brynglas Day Centre that offers flexible support to carers both in the home and in the community

**Home First** - Newport City Council host this regional service. The Grange University Hospital opened in December 2020 and Home First is fully operational on that sit in addition to the Royal Gwent and Neville Hall Hospitals. It involves the offer of information, advice and assistance (IAA) through a proportionate assessment for patients within pre-admission wards, regardless of where they live in Gwent.

- **Home First** received **840 referrals** between 01/10/2020 and 31/03/21
- Home First **safely discharged 475 (60%)** people between 01/10/20 and 31/03/21

**NB Home First stats were not formally recorded at the beginning of the year due to the Pandemic and the re-alignment of services to support the regional Covid 19 requirements for hospital discharge**

**Domiciliary Care.** Newport City Council commissions services from approximately 30 independent providers. Despite a relatively stable market, recruitment of staff has been an ongoing problem across the region.

NCC Commissioners negotiate annual fees with providers that reflect the true cost of care to support the retention of a skilled and committed social care workforce but the Pandemic has exacerbated the staffing shortage and the post lockdown increase in the number and complexity of referrals means that care is having to be prioritised in a way that hasn't previously been necessary.

**Staff shortages are affecting all social care services with recruitment processes often failing to identify any suitable candidates. This is a national problem that will require ongoing local, regional and national oversight to manage the risks and find sustainable solutions.**

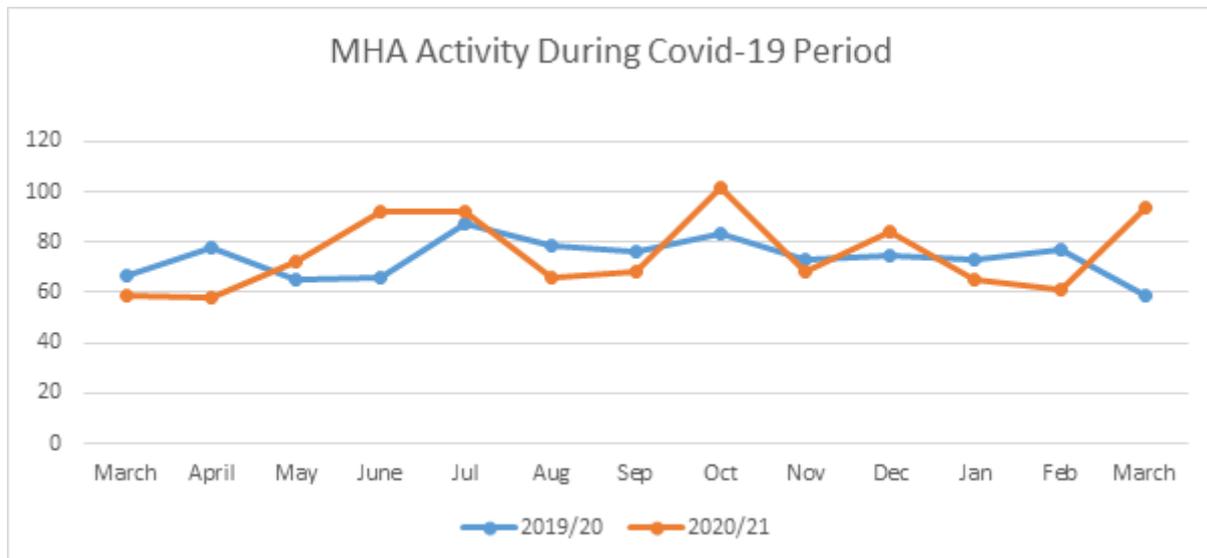
Providers worked tirelessly throughout the lockdowns with carers going into homes that are unregulated environments often knowing that individuals were Covid 19 positive. The number of cases among community based staff remained relatively low as infection control procedures were implemented.

The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on services will continue to be monitored throughout 2021.

**Mental Health.** There is increasing pressure on mental health services and the Coronavirus Pandemic has created further immediate demand with an expectation that resources will continue to be challenged

The Pandemic has further highlighted increases in mental ill health and there has been an acknowledgement nationally that citizens and services are under pressure. Newport experienced 30% more referrals than usual during the period and this was replicated across Gwent.

The graph below shows a data comparison of completed assessments for the Gwent area between 20/21 and 19/20



**Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)** - the procedure prescribed in law when it is necessary to deprive a person of their liberty who lacks capacity to consent to the care that is required to keep them safe.

It requires Social Services to undertake a mental capacity and best interest assessment for each person where this applies

- 423 full DoLS assessments were undertaken in 2020/21

Due to Covid restrictions, the majority were completed via video conferences but the more complex cases were completed face to face using the appropriate PPE.

***"We saw examples of best interest and mental capacity assessments with clear decision making; we also found capacity assessment reviewed over time to consider fluctuating capacity and changing circumstances"***

***(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)***

A new model for authorising the Deprivation of Liberty for those receiving care was due to come into effect in 2020 but this has now been delayed until March 2022 – **Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)** are included in the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 and will place additional responsibilities onto Local Authorities. A **key priority** for NCC is to ensure full implementation of the new **Code of Practice**

NCC commissions a service from **Mind** that offers support to prevent a deterioration in mental health. The service offers practical advice and signposting to other agencies and self management courses to help with stress and anxiety.

During the lockdown Mind have undertaken active monitoring with their service users. Groups have continued to run via Zoom and activity packs and food parcels have been delivered.

**Growing Space** as an NCC commissioned mental health service provider has also kept services running throughout lockdown with zoom calls and outreach visits to monitor well being and offer ongoing practical support.

**NCC are working closely with partners to understand the impact of the Pandemic. Some service initiatives such as virtual groups and zoom calls will continue to be available as they have become established as a valuable alternative method of engagement**

### **Priorities for 2021/22**

- **Reablement** – to further develop the **specialist dementia service** with links to the memory clinic, older persons mental health teams, step down facilities, the dementia respite service and outreach support.
- To establish **Windmill Farm** in accordance with planned timescale
- To continue to increase capacity within the **in-house foster care service**, improve training and support for carers and reduce pressure on external foster and/or residential placements
- To continue to realise the benefits of the **MyST** service to support children with complex needs and their Foster carers and prevent placement breakdown.
- To continue to provide the **Rapid Response** service to families in crisis
- To progress the new **accommodation projects** for disabled children in transition to adulthood
- To develop the **outreach and day service for disabled children** and young people
- To continue to identify and support **young carers** in partnership with Barnardo's
- To ensure our staff are sufficiently trained and prepared for the introduction of the **Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019** by implementing the new **Code of Practice** ready for implementation in April 2022
- To work with our mental health partners in both the statutory and independent sector to establish a clear pathway into preventative services.

### **Quality Standard 3 – Taking Steps to Protect & Safeguard People from Abuse, Neglect or Harm**

A full report on **Corporate Safeguarding** was presented to Scrutiny in June 2021. Safeguarding is intrinsically embedded within the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015, with the requirement for public bodies to ensure citizens are safe. The Social Services and Well Being Act 2014 strengthens the statutory safeguarding requirements for the Council with regard to the protection of both adults and children. Prevention and early intervention prior to statutory intervention is a key message within the legislation.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is a corporate priority and Newport is an active member of each of the two Regional Safeguarding Boards that have amalgamated under the umbrella of "Gwent Safeguarding".

Newport City Council host the regional **Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership, (VAWDASV)** and are active members of the Board. Representatives from both adult and children social services within Newport attend all the subgroups for each Boards work plans.

The VAWDASV Team operate on a regional basis to develop and implement the Welsh Government's legislation across all relevant public services. This ensures that workplace policies are developed; that the **National Training Framework (NTF)** is operational for all staff; and the '**Ask and Act**' Welsh Government mandated training continues to be rolled out to all front line staff so that they can recognise signs of domestic abuse.

All employees complete basic VAWDASV level 1 e-Learning as part of the NCC induction process. The six NTF training levels are required to be completed depending on specific roles within the Council.

Newport City Council host the regional **IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor)** team, ensuring resources in Newport are available for our citizens at high risk of domestic abuse. The IDVA regional Manager is employed by Newport City Council (funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office) and based within the Regional VAWDASV Team (Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence). The progression and development of the regional IDVA service has required an increase in sustainable funding to ensure citizens with protected characteristics have no barriers accessing the IDVA service. Regional requirements for the service development will be seeking to tender the service for Gwent in 2021.

During 2020 the roll out of the mandatory safeguarding Elearning training was successfully launched and is a part of the recruitment process.

Newport Childrens Services have continued to develop an effective multi-agency response to child exploitation over 20/21 working in partnership and collaboration with colleagues across Health, Police, Education and specialist 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector agencies.

Our work has led to the creation of an **Exploitation Toolkit and Practice Framework** for identifying and responding to risk, which is rooted in research and Welsh Government guidance on keeping children safe within our communities. Our model was trialled across the region in 20/21 and is now adopted regionally as a model of good practice and approved by the Gwent Safeguarding Board. Interest in our approach has also extended to other Local Authorities across the United Kingdom with some now using the approaches pioneered by Newport. An evaluation of the Toolkit and strategy will be a priority for 21/22 with a dedicated Exploitation Social Worker..

During 20/21 the Child Protection teams remained committed to **keeping children with families** where safe to do so. The focus on work to redesign child protection conferences, was completed across children services and the inclusion of additional services such as **Family Group Conferencing** increases the partnership with parents and wider families to ensure the needs of the child are central to all decision making and plans to safeguard the child. Raising the prevention and intervention possibilities for families with social workers, the legal department and the judiciary to align on this objective has resulted in a **reduction in the number of children entering care proceedings in Newport** as well as a reduction in the number of children waiting to be adopted.

Child protection conferences have continued throughout 2020/21, when children are deemed at risk of significant harm. During the Pandemic conferences have been held virtually.

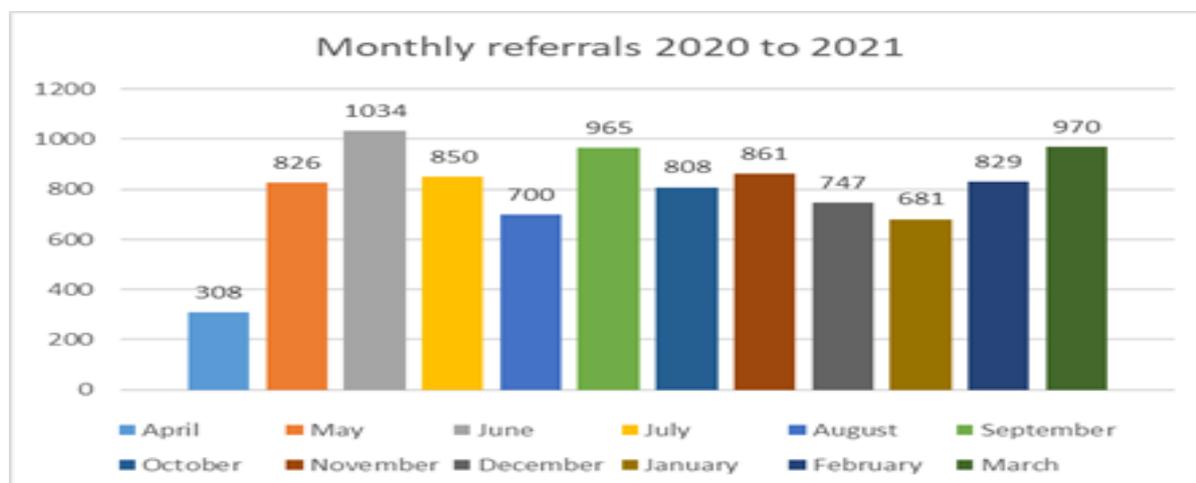
The number of children **Looked After as at 31.3.21 was 376**. The number of children who **ceased to be Looked After** during the course of the year was **92**.

The **Newport Safeguarding hub** and its success has resulted in the model being adopted across the region and the Police have restructured their resources to accommodate this way of working.

The "adult at risk" safeguarding process is still presenting through two referral pathways, the Safeguarding Hub and First Contact Team. This compromises the reliability of the data and leads to inconsistencies in the management of the process. A single pathway is the preferred option but requires further work.

There are safeguarding performance measures captured within the Safeguarding Hub

- Adults at Risk (duty to enquire) as follows:



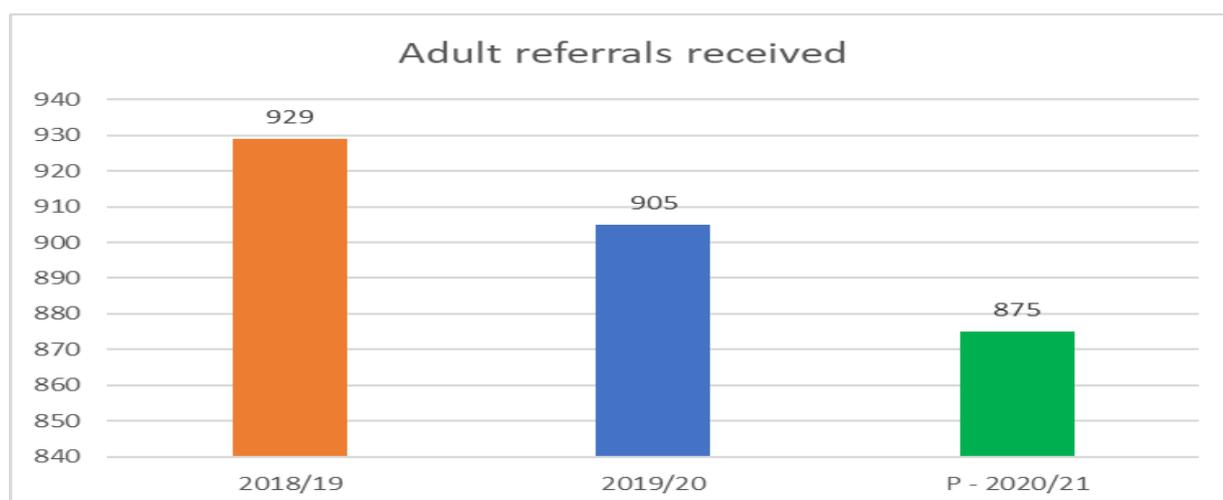
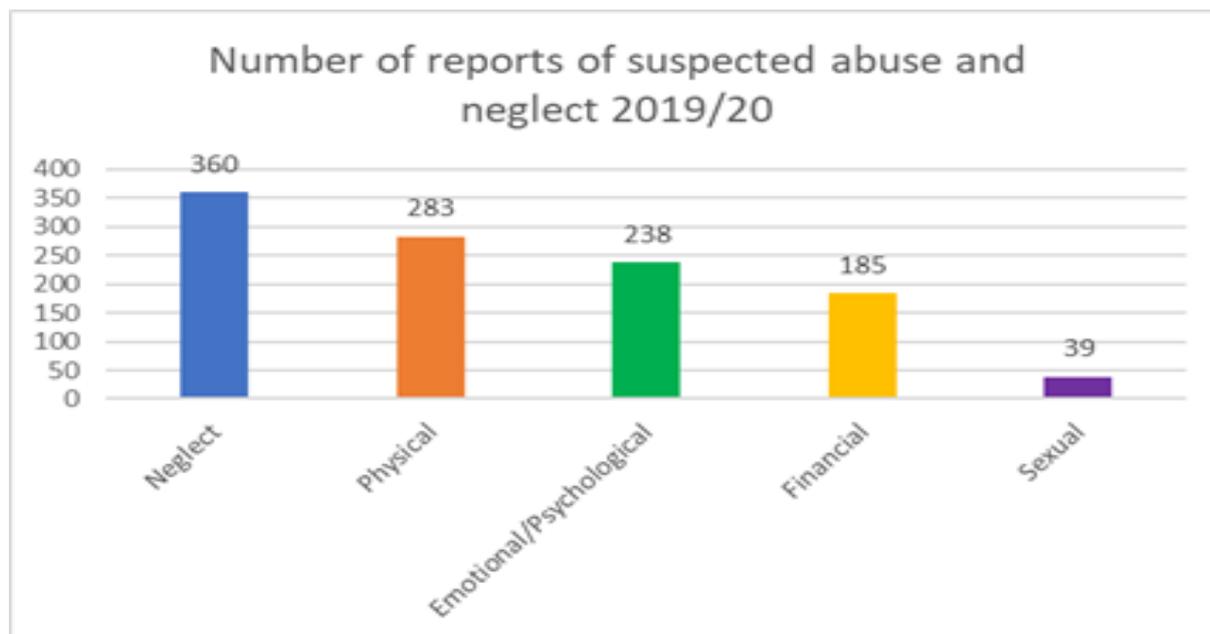
- Children’s safeguarding processes (contacts/strategy discussions/initial conferences);

There was a significant downturn in referrals (Children’s Services) in April 2020 due to the initial pandemic lockdown, however, since this time the number of referrals that have progressed through the Hub has since accelerated.

- **Referrals** to the **Safeguarding Hub (Children’s Services)** have overall **increased by 9.1%** compared to 2019/20.
- **Abuse or Neglect** continues to be the **most frequent** referral category.
- **Referrals** attributed to **Family in Acute Stress** category has **increased 55%** during the pandemic (1248 average to 2262).
- The **prevention service** and children’s duty team is the model in place to address the needs of families in acute stress, responding to need and **escalating only** those families where **thresholds are appropriate**.

The data suggests that there are effective controls within the safeguarding HUB, that there is compliancy and effective safeguarding arrangements in terms of children’s decision making and the statutory responsibilities for timely decision making.

The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received in 2019/20 was 905. This represents a drop of 24 referrals and a percentage drop of 3%. The projected figure for this year 2020/21 for the total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk is 875 referrals, a further 3% drop.



The Council continues to prepare for the **change in practice** from Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards **to Liberty Protection Safeguards** which will now occur in 2022. More training on the new legislation/ practice to increase knowledge and skill will be on-going and is clearly identified both within the Annual Corporate plan (2021/2022) and in the social services training plans.

**Achievements 20/21**

- A **self- assessment safeguarding audit tool** was completed across the council.
- **E-learning** safeguarding module for all Members, Officers and volunteers is operational and formal recording is in place on completion.

- The **safeguarding champion's** cohort continued to meet virtually throughout the pandemic restrictions.
- Completion of a **volunteers/chaperones register** is centrally held within People and Organisation service. This assures **training and recruitment** for all volunteers.
- **Safeguarding Hub for children and adults** confirmed and extended across the region.
- A **child exploitation strategy** and toolkit for Newport has been accepted by the regional Safeguarding Board and parts of the UK and is now established practice.

### **Priorities for 2021/22**

- To work with each service on the outcome of **the safeguarding self-assessment audit** for continual development.
- **Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)** Newport leading on the Policy and Process part of the Welsh Government and Home Office project to align all case reviews for children, adults and domestic homicides under Safeguarding Boards.
- Embed the change in legislation from Deprivation of Liberty to **Liberty Protection Safeguards (Mental Capacity Act)** and ensure a robust process is introduced for Newport citizens where this is applicable.
- Tender of the **regional IDVA service** and develop the service to ensure all citizens with protected characteristics access services.

### **Quality Standard 4 – Encouraging & Supporting People to learn, develop and participate in society**

Supporting children who are looked after and young people leaving care to reach their full potential and achieve positive outcomes is a key priority for Children's Services. Targeted support is provided to children and young people at key stages in their education. In addition, tuition and extra-curricular activities are funded to provide further support.

**The Child Protection service in partnership with Barnardo's** have committed to improving collaboration and participation across Children's Services in 2021/22 by establishing the following:

- **Parent Advocacy and Mentoring Support Programme** to enable parents to receive direct support to meet the needs of their children. The model will also offer peer mentors and advocate training to encourage and facilitate meaningful participation in the development and evaluation of services
- **Young Persons Participation Board** to recruit young people who have experience of children's services and are able to help us shape what we provide in the future

**The Career College Consortium** (previously known as the Gwent Care Academy) is a regional initiative

- The Pandemic has both highlighted and aggravated the issues of staff shortages in social care. Carers have worked tirelessly throughout and better paid jobs in hospitality and retail are an understandably attractive option that will continue to diminish the workforce.

The Consortium is working hard to improve **recruitment and retention** by establishing a

- **Gwent Care Career Pathway**

Partners include:

- Coleg Gwent – ABUHB - Local Authorities - Care Forum Wales
- Regional employability projects - Mirus (as a provider representative)

### **Career College Consortium Main Objectives**

- To create a seamless pathway from college into health and social care by developing relationships with statutory bodies and employers
- Add value to current courses while developing new, innovative courses that meet the future recruitment needs of the sector.
- To create more opportunities for work experience placements/internships across the sector

**NB: The Pandemic has led to a reduction in the numbers of placements offered by employers and the motivation and focus of students has suffered. This is being addressed and priorities for 2021/22 are:**

- To develop new approaches to **apprenticeships**
- To continue to **add value to courses** by working with practitioners and providers to develop 'service insights'
- To develop **data collection processes** to understand the impact of the work of the consortium on the student cohort and the care sector.

The Council has an apprenticeship scheme – but no placements were offered during 2020/21 as a result of the Pandemic.

Newport City Council is committed to ensure that people with **dementia** are not socially excluded.

#### **NCC Corporate Plan 2017-2022:**

“We will use best practice materials from the Alzheimer’s Society to create an online training module for staff and businesses”

The Pandemic made it difficult to deliver dementia awareness sessions but in May 2021

- **Newport Transport**, become the first bus company in Wales to be accredited as **Dementia Friendly**. The company has worked with the Regional Partnership Board, Newport City Council and Alzheimer's Society to make all staff dementia aware and highlight how drivers can support people living with dementia and their carers to use transport around the city.

In March 2020 adult services established a contract with **Volunteering Matters** to specifically address the needs of the community for low level support during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

- NCC, in partnership with Volunteering Matters established a range of essential support services such as shopping, medication/prescription collection for those shielding or with caring responsibilities who were unable to access services during the Pandemic.
- **58 volunteers** were recruited and trained and although some were on furlough and have now returned to work it has offered an opportunity build on the service and establish a meaningful volunteer programme to enhance the ongoing low level support needs of the community with funding remaining in place during 2021/22
- NCC provides funding and works in partnership with **Growing Space** who offer accredited training programmes for people recovering from **mental ill health**.

The service is based at Tredegar Park in Newport where they have established a gardening project and a shop selling plants and handcrafted items, offering participants horticultural, organisational and retail experience.

### **Priorities for 2021/22**

- To continue to identify and source **additional educational support** for children who are looked after to improve choices for work experience, training, apprenticeships and wider employment options
- To develop the **Parent Mentoring and Advocacy Programme** and establish the **Young Persons Participation Board**
- To continue to support the health and social care sector through the **Career College Consortium**
- To further develop the **volunteer service** and establish a sustainable model.

## **Quality Standard 5 – Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships**

NCC supports children to feel they can make decisions for themselves and maintain important relationships. It is recognised that people having fulfilling relationships with those they are close to is important for their well-being. Children who are looked after maintain contact with their families through facilitated sessions.

the **Cwtch centre** who are responsible for facilitating family contact time worked tirelessly throughout the Pandemic using virtual and face to face methods to ensure parents were still able to see their children. This hybrid model successfully addressed the needs of the family and kept staff and participants safe.

- In 2020/21 **36 children returned home from care**

Barnardo's currently deliver an **Integrated Family Support Service** in partnership with NCC.

The partnership has developed innovative approaches to prevent children coming into care:

**Family Group Conferencing Service. (FGC)** encourages families to find their own solutions with appropriate support. The aim is to build resilience, develop problem-solving skills and reduce dependency on statutory provision. Whilst the Pandemic resulted in fewer FGC's the results still remain strong

- During 2020/21 there were **98 Family Group Conferences**
- **30% of families reduced risks** following FGC engagement
- **20% reduction in Looked After numbers** following FGC engagement

The success of this model has resulted in funding being made available by Welsh Government to deliver the **Later Life Links Model**, which uses the Family Group Conference approach for Care Leavers. This will be developed in the NCC Pathway Teams as a priority in 2021/22

**Baby & Me** went live in November 2019 and works with pregnant women whose children are at risk of being removed. The service includes a Social Worker, Midwife and Health Visitor.

- In 2020/21 **12 out of 18 babies** at risk of being removed **went home with their family**

**Family and Friend Team** This team aims to enable kinship Foster Carers to become Special Guardians. A panel has been established to consider **Special Guardianship** plans to ensure the Court is provided with sufficient reassurance of viable and safe alternative arrangements to **reduce the number of care orders** and enable children to remain within their family.

***"We found a positive approach to developing creative services, such as Baby and Me and productive relationships with Families First, Barnardos and youth justice"***

***(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)***

**Respite** offers an important opportunity for family members and the cared for person to have time for themselves. It supports the caring role and ensures the maintenance of healthy relationships. Newport offers **residential respite services for adults and children**.

Residential respite for **adults** with disabilities is available at the **Centrica Lodge** in the Gaer area of the city. Occupancy was reduced during the Pandemic but the service remained open. Discussions are currently underway to improve day time activities for those attending.

**Oaklands** residential **respite centre for disabled children** also remained open throughout the Pandemic offering much needed support for families.

**The Carers Sitting Service** was not available during lockdown but staff continued to offer support over the telephone and with practical issues such as shopping and prescription collection.

**Brynglas Day Centre** – After a long period of closure during the Pandemic it was agreed that it would not re-open and all those who previously used the services were offered alternative provision in full consultation with them, their families and carers.

During the period of closure **Social Work teams maintained regular contact** to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place.

- **Mental health** –
  - **Growing Space** based at Tredegar Park
- **Learning Disability** –
  - new **day service** at Ringland developed by an independent provider
- **Older People** –
  - new **outreach service** developed by NCC
  - new **Dementia Respite Service** developed by NCC based at Spring Gardens Residential Home

**These services are in the early stages of development and some people are not yet confident enough to return. The situation is being monitored and will form part of the ongoing evaluation to determine how the Pandemic will impact in the longer term on service demand and models of delivery.**



**Shared Lives** offers shorter periods of respite to enable carers to have a break in addition to long-term placements. It gives older people, adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and people with mental health support needs including older persons with dementia the opportunity to experience family-based support settings, rather than in residential environments.

The service is managed regionally with Caerphilly County Borough Council as the host. The service experienced reduced numbers during the year but placements did continue to be made in accordance with guidelines and Covid safe practice.

- At the end of 2020/21, there were **41 people** from Newport in long-term placements."
- In the Newport area there are **69 registered shared lives carers** and **68 service beneficiaries**
- In August and September 2020 there were **3 virtual open days** to **promote awareness** of the scheme and **encourage carer recruitment.**

Relationships can also be harmful and as outlined under Quality Standard 3, work is carried out through the Safeguarding Boards and Regional services such as IDVA and VAWDASV to support and protect those who are at risk of harm.

### **Priorities for 2021/22**

- To further develop the **preventions work** in Children's Services to support families, placements and develop sustainable alternatives to care
- To develop the **Later Life Links** Model for Care Leavers
- To develop the **domiciliary care service for children with disabilities;**
- To monitor and review the new arrangements for **day services provision** for mental health, learning disabilities and older people to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the community
- To continue to educate and inform people about the dangers of **unsafe relationships** and support those at risk of harm.

### **Quality Standard 6 – Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.**

As outlined in Quality Standard 4, Children's Services support children and young people to access education and training and provide individualised additional support where necessary.

In 2020/21 we recorded that **17** Care Leavers had completed **3 consecutive months of employment, education and training** within 12 months of leaving care and **26** within 24 months

**This is a new measure and will continue to be monitored during 2021/22**

In 2020/21 we recorded that **28** care leavers **experienced homelessness** within 12 months of leaving care

**This is a new measure and will continue to be monitored during 2021/22**

**NCC works with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the Housing Department** to ensure we can provide an appropriate response to young people facing homelessness. We have access to supported accommodation and lodgings for young people who need extra help during the transition from care to independent living and are currently working with a private landlord to increase the accommodation and support options available.

- We currently have the use of **10 properties** – 8 private and 2 NCC
- Funding has been sourced from the **Housing Support Grant to employ 2 workers** to help the young people develop independent living skills.

### **3 ICF capital bids approved**

- 2 supported accommodation provisions for 18+ and 1 for 16-18 yr olds for development during 2021/22

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC)**

- The National Transfer Scheme has been developed in order to support the dispersal of unaccompanied minors. Newport and Cardiff Children Services will be acting as the region for Wales and has agreed to accept up to 30 young people per annum.
- Collaboration is ongoing with stakeholders to ensure there is an infrastructure to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of young people.

***"There has been productive working with Cardiff City Council as lead local authorities in Wales for the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and the safe transfer of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) from one authority to another"***

***(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)***

**Disabled Facilities Grants** (DFG's) are available to citizens to make their homes safe and enable them to remain independent

Covid 19 has significantly disrupted the service .Suspension of onsite work from March to July.

- **86 DFG's** were completed (135 in 2019/20)- including ramps, stairlifts, and accessible showers to enable people to remain safe and independent. The total spend was £784,307 (£1,092,123 in 2019/20)
- **780 1130 Safety at Home Grants** were allocated (1130 in 2019/20) with a total spend of £242,445 (£374,931 in 2019/20)
- A further £343,425 was unspent but committed so will continue into 2021/22

The service is adapting by introducing new safe onsite working practices and the removal of paper based systems to enable staff to work from home.

**Residential Care** - NCC has **3 residential homes**, offering **94 beds** for older people and those with specialist dementia care needs. Parklands offers 15 specialist beds for those who are ready to be discharged from hospital but who need support to return to independent living.

- At the end of 2019/20 Newport was badly affected by the virus and the impact on care home settings was significant and devastating for residents, families and the staff.
- The ongoing work with care homes includes the continued distribution of PPE and the allocation of additional funding from Welsh Government.
- Close partnerships have been forged between Commissioning Teams, Environmental Health, Public Health Wales and ABUHB in order to provide support and guidance to providers, to ensure service continuity for citizens and to ensure oversight of the regional position.

Care homes have suffered **significant harm** throughout the Pandemic and although the vaccination roll out has reduced the number of infections cases, the relaxing of restrictions means that cases are still being recorded. This, along with the challenges of **staff shortages** is affecting the number of placements that can be made when increasing levels of need are presenting to adult services.

**Regular testing** is in place and close collaboration between ABUHB, Public Health Wales and Environmental Health to monitor the situation and offer support to providers.

Changes to the financial support later in 2021 by the Welsh Government may result in some homes becoming **financially unsustainable**

- During 2020/21 **2 care homes closed** in Newport with the loss of over **60 beds**

The situation will continue to be monitored, we **work closely with providers** and with ABUHB to ensure residential care provision is sufficient for the community both in terms of capacity and quality.

NCC has developed an **Independent Living Strategy** to identify the future accommodation needs for adults with **Learning Disabilities**. Discussions are ongoing with **Housing Strategy** to identify opportunities for the development of

new self-contained accommodation units where people can access support but live more independently.

- During 2020/21 a **new development** in Newport offered **5 adults** with learning disabilities improved opportunities for independent living
- More schemes are planned in 2022/21

### **Housing Support Grant (formerly Supporting People)**

2020/21 has been a challenging year for the supported housing sector but the housing support team together with partners have found new ways of working to continue to support some of our most vulnerable citizens.

- **Hostels, refuges and supported accommodation** settings were fully operational
- **Floating support workers** quickly adapted their working practices using technology where possible to minimise the need for face to face contact.

During 20/21, the Housing Support Team

- received over **2,500 new referrals**, approximately **48 per week**, slightly less than in 2019/20 when 3,000 referrals were recorded.
- Over **5,000 people** were supported during the 12 month reporting period but in a different way. The **new ways of working** enabled more contact with service users

**Homelessness** - A major challenge for the Council was implementing the directive from Welsh Government and Public Health to ensure all homeless people were able to access suitable temporary accommodation during the Pandemic.

In order to respond to the complex needs of this group of people we established a **new floating support service** in partnership with three specialist providers. Working with colleagues in the Housing Needs Unit and the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS)

- Over **70 verified street homeless** were accommodated and supported in a variety of settings in the City.
- **Substance misuse services** were offered on an outreach basis

### **Housing Support Grant - Finance**

- **2020/21 £6.3m** of Housing Support Grant funding was invested in a wide range of accommodation-based and community support services for Newport citizens.
- Welsh Government announced a major uplift in funding for the Housing Support Programme in 21/22 with Newport confirmed as receiving an **additional £2.57m** per annum.

A list of project proposals is currently being developed and presents a unique opportunity to further develop services that prevent crisis, keep people safe,

prevent homelessness and reduce the need for more expensive accommodation options.

Housing Support grant also funds a

- **Financial Inclusion Team** who, in 2020/21 increased income for vulnerable citizens by over **£300,000**, despite the constraints of the Pandemic.

**The Citizens Advice Bureau** is funded to provide financial advice and assistance. This service continued to be available by phone throughout the Pandemic.

**The Appointee Team** – NCC acts as an appointee for those who lack the capacity or capability to look after their own finances. This requires the oversight and management of income, general financial management to ensure bills are paid and that money is available for everyday expenses. Many of these cases are as a result of **safeguarding issues**.

This is a **critical service** and was maintained throughout lockdown by modifying systems to reduce the number of people requiring weekly cash collection. This included new bank account set ups to facilitate electronic transfer and working with providers to agree advance payments for individual allowances.

The team assisted Children's services by providing cash for care leavers utilising their established agreements with a local Post Office.

- At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 the Appointee Team were managing **109 cases** providing a service to individuals to protect their finances and maintain financial solvency.
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **recovered £57k in care fee arrears**
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **recovered £33k in Housing Benefit and Council Tax debt**
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **recovered £9k in rent arrears** therefore protecting tenancies and preventing homelessness
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **generated revenue of £50k** as service charges.

### **Priorities for 2021/22**

- Continue to work with the RSL's to develop **sustainable accommodation** options for all client groups
- To continue to develop innovative services for people with **dementia**
- To continue to support Newport citizens of all ages to **manage their own tenancies and maintain their independence** through services funded by the Housing Support Grant
- To improve the support available to **care leavers** in order to address homelessness and assist in the transition to education, training and employment;

- Increase the range of accommodation and support options available for **young people leaving care.**

## **How We Do What We Do**

### **Our workforce and how we support their professional roles**

The workforce is a dynamically changing asset that supports service delivery to some of the most vulnerable people in the city. NCC faces many challenges, not least as a result of complex social issues associated with city centre living.

Under Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, regional finance, governance and workforce priorities for action are agreed through the Regional Workforce Development Board and reflect alignment to Social Care Wales' National Priorities in partnership with transformation and health services.

### **The Social Care Wales Workforce development Programme (SCWWDP) Board regionally agreed priorities for 2020/21 are as follows:**

- Support the continued implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act.
- Support the training, development and qualification of social care managers.
- Support the ongoing development of approaches to outcome-focused care and support practice.
- Support for both Social Work qualifying training and post qualifying training in Wales.
- Support frontline social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and the revised induction framework.
- Enable the workforce to meet regulatory requirements for qualification and/or registration using guidance available in the Qualification Framework.
- Provide learning and development to equip the workforce to work effectively alongside carers.
- key priorities included support for digital solutions for workforce development and the implementation of welsh language standards, and the active offer.

### **Local Key achievements in 2020/21 focussed on immediate and responsive workforce initiatives required as a response to the Coronavirus Pandemic**

- Resources and facilities redesigned to meet increased assessment of risk (eg continuation of personal training in buildings was risk assessed and managed )

- Continuation of face to face essential training to enable the workforce to remain competent within job roles e.g. by providing access to essential generic/ non-qualifying courses of core learning and development opportunities, delivered across the sector. Within this context we still delivered 2485 course places in a variety of formats.
- Implementation of digital formats for training (e- learning platform and licences, use of workbooks and paper-based formats to support learning, use of web -based meeting platforms to deliver training)
- Social Work Qualifying Training –5 trainee SW students from NCC workforce with 2 qualifying .
- Social Work Practice Learning Opportunities adjusted to meet COVID -19 requirements, and extended liaison with university partnerships to establish and implement *adjusted* programmes and PLO assessment requirements for SW students . This is with four universities and 30 teams /placements during the new academic year
- Similar adjustments made for our Post Qualifying Social work programmes with programmes offered via virtual formats with partner universities. 5 NQSW supported in their 1<sup>st</sup> 3 years. 3 Enabling practice learning. 9 CPEL Consolidation.
- Roll out of the new CORE vocational qualification in addition to other vocational qualification routes. The team continued to work with 85 learners across 9 vocational care and management based courses.
- Continued to work with Awarding Organisations at national level (City and Guilds and WJEC), to mitigate COVID -19 impact upon learners and qualifications, and introduce amended assessment arrangements
- Implementation of the new All Wales Induction Framework, support for SCW registration of the sector and delivery of online registration support sessions- with the Regional Transformation Team.
- Emergency training support for the sector/ Covid related resources using our networks, partners, and accessible formats such as Facebook and You Tube videos, to share knowledge and resources to the sector

The approach of workforce development to meet individual learning needs as a responsiveness to the challenges faced by teams, and practitioners managing frontline practice.

Between April 2020 and August 2020 the workforce team also responded with some front facing/care support and back office support functions that sat outside of their immediate roles (e.g. working in residential homes and supporting external sector data collection for Covid -19 data information requests). But even as supportive within these care roles, workforce staff were still completing learning activities such as assessment, observation, competency checks etc. ).

## Financial Resources & How We Plan for the Future

The 2020/21 revenue out-turn produced a net underspend, after core budget contributions to/from reserves, of £14m against the £300.2m budget (4.6% variance). This variance has arisen for several reasons.

At a high level, the following explains the position:

- Receipt of one-off Welsh Government (WG) funds to compensate Council services to support its enhanced service delivery to Newport's communities in response to Covid; and lost income from Covid restrictions; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Funding for the direct costs of, and delivery' of the WG support programs to businesses; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Underspends across all services in relation to (i) costs of general administration and service provision due to changes in working practices and (ii) not undertaking planned/normal services, as they were not required or unable to be carried out due to Covid response work being prioritised;
- Resulting directly and indirectly from all of the above, the Councils budget underspent on its general revenue contingency budget, council tax reduction scheme and council tax income, which they would ordinarily do in a 'normal year'. These are all non-service budget areas.

Across Social Services, the overall outturn was a £2.824m underspend for both areas. £221k overspend in Children services and £3.045m underspend in adult services.

- Adults social care - community care – (£1.5m) underspend
- Adult In-House residential homes – (£500k) underspend
- Adult Staffing – (£290k) underspend
- Children's in-house residential and respite – £752k overspend
- Childrens Emergency Placements - £638k overspend
- Children's out of area placements – (£330k) underspend
- Youth Offending/Child Protection and Family Support Teams – (537k) underspend

The global pandemic, which lasted throughout 2020/21, had an unprecedented financial impact.

Whilst Adult Services was expecting pressures due to increased demand from adults living longer with complex needs, COVID-19 caused a decrease in numbers. Numbers are expected to rise back up to normal levels, however the timeline is uncertain. Welsh Government compensated the additional cost, as a direct result of COVID-19.

However, within Children Services, the pandemic did not affect the numbers of looked after children. Therefore, Children services faced the normal pressures but with the added complication of not being able to carry out as much preventative work. There was also a lack of availability of certain placements/fostering options due to covid-19 restrictions.

The in-house residential services suffered from an unexpected high level of non-covid sickness across all homes. The issues have been addressed and this was hopefully an in year issue only. The alternative residential services project is progressing well which should in time reduce the reliance on external provision. Newport will continue to monitor this in 2021/22.

The council continues to work collaboratively with regional partners to maximise the use of regional resources to develop services within Newport.

The annual budget in 2020/21 for social services was £75.1m. There is a well-developed financial management process in place across service areas that supports the medium term financial plan and enables the identification and management of budget risks.

### **Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance & Accountability**

The features of partnership working have become more deeply embedded in the activities of both Children's and Adults with Heads of Service, the Strategic Director and Cabinet Member regularly engaged. NCC is a very active participant in the Regional Partnership Board.

Bids have, and will continue to be, made successfully to the WG Transformation Fund and the Integrated Care Fund, both capital and revenue. The former is a key mechanism for prompting and facilitating integrated working. The Newport Integrated Partnership (NIP), incorporating the third sector, ABUHB, Housing Associations and NCC continues to be the group that determines and drives the practical implementation of any regional approach to integration. The NCC Strategic Director is joint Chair of the NIP.

The Cabinet Member, Cllr Cockeram has been the Chair of the Regional Partnership Board since October 2020, he actively engages with numerous service user groups and with the Minister. In addition, Cllr Cockeram provides significant challenge to NCC officers.

The Cabinet Member, along with the Strategic Director and Heads of Service, regularly attend scrutiny. Cllr Cockeram presents reports on social services matters to Cabinet and responds to questions from Cabinet colleagues in addition to his appropriate provision of social services context within Cabinet discussion.

Heads of Service regularly brief the Corporate Management Team (CMT) on social services matters with safeguarding and Domestic Homicide, Child Practice and Adult Practice Reviews standard items on the CMT agenda. Safeguarding is a standard item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), chaired by the Chief Executive. There are monthly reviews of the service finances involving the Senior Finance Partner with the Heads of Service and again with the Strategic Director. Budget proposals and annual budget determination follow the NCC budget setting process with Heads of Service discussing these in detail with the SLT before the proposals are considered by the Cabinet Member and then by the Cabinet. Complementing the above there are clear lines of decision making and accountability to the Heads of Service and onward to the statutory Director of Social Services, the Strategic Director with the Cabinet Member providing the strategic direction.

August 2021

**Chris Humphrey**

**Director of Social Services**



## Glossary of Terms

<b>ABUHB</b>	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
<b>AMHP</b>	Approved Mental Health Professional
<b>BAME</b>	Black and Minority Ethnic
<b>CIW</b>	Care Inspectorate Wales
<b>CSE</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation
<b>DFG's</b>	Disabled Facilities Grants
<b>DOLS</b>	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
<b>DTOC</b>	Delayed Transfer of Care
<b>IAA</b>	Information, Advice and Assistance Service
<b>IDVA's</b>	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors
<b>LAC</b>	Looked after Children
<b>NCC</b>	Newport City Council
<b>NFF</b>	National Fostering Framework
<b>NSP</b>	Newport Support Partnership
<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapy/Therapist
<b>PSOW</b>	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
<b>RISCA</b>	Regulation and Inspection of Social Care legislation
<b>RSL's</b>	Registered Social Landlords
<b>SCWWDP</b>	Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme
<b>UASCA</b>	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
<b>VAWDASV</b>	Violence against women, domestic abuse and violence Team
<b>WCCIS</b>	Welsh Community Care & Information System
<b>WG</b>	Welsh Government
<b>YJS</b>	Youth Justice Service



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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** Newport City Council Covid-19 Response and Recovery Update

**Purpose** To present to Cabinet an update on the Council's progress being made towards recovering services and supporting Newport's communities as part of its Strategic Recovery Aims.

**Author** Chief Executive  
Head of People and Business Change

**Ward** All

**Summary** The UK and Wales is now into its 20th month (since February 2020) of the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, the crisis has impacted all communities, businesses and services delivered by the Council and partners across Newport. Newport as a city has had to adapt and respond as necessary to the restrictions to minimise the spread of the virus. The Council's priority has been to ensure the continuity of services with our strategic partners, supporting the most vulnerable residents, support businesses and ensure the safety of staff and customers. This report provides an overview of what action the Council has taken to date progress against its Strategic Recovery aims and Wellbeing Objectives.

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

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

**Action by** Corporate Management Team

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Gold Recovery Group
- Corporate Management Team

**Signed**

## Background

Since the last Cabinet Report on [10<sup>th</sup> November](#), Newport Council and its partners have continued to monitor the Covid-19 cases in the city through its role at the multi-agency Gwent Incident Management Team the Council's Emergency Response and Recovery Group (Covid Gold) and liaison with Welsh Government (WG), Public Health Wales (PHW) and ABUHB partners.

### Wales Covid-19 Update (November/December)

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

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

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

In October, the Welsh Government made it a requirement for people to have [NHS Covid passes](#) to attend large events and nightclubs in Wales. In November, this requirement was extended to cinemas, theatres or a concert hall in Wales. In Newport this will affect many venues and will require people to show a copy of their pass before entering the venue. This requirement is in addition to the existing measures from WG who still require people to socially distance wherever possible, and to continue to wear face coverings indoors except for hospitality premises. It will also be important for people and businesses (where they can) to continue to work from home.

As we enter the winter period many vulnerable and low-income households will be impacted by the pandemic and wider economic impacts such as inflation. In November, the Welsh Government launched a £51m package to help households with an extra £100 to pay their fuel bills. The money will be offered to Welsh households on Universal Credit and other working-age benefits. Further details on how eligible households will be able to claim funding will be announced in December by the Welsh Government and the Council.

### Newport City Council Update

To date the vast majority of Newport City Council staff have continued to deliver front line services and the Council has continued to follow WG advice for staff (where they can) to continue to work from home. This message has been relayed to staff via regular staff communications. This equally applies to Members and access to the Civic Centre and the democratic functions of the Council continue to be undertaken virtually.

Risk assessments are in place for all work that we do, and these take into consideration work environment and task, health and safety legislation and current Government guidance. In this way we can ensure that staff can safely undertake their duties, protecting both themselves and people they are working with. For the 5,500 staff employed by Newport City Council (including schools) approximately 1200 have been regularly working from locations other than their usual place of work (including home working). The remaining staff and the services that they deliver have continued in line with the risk assessments in place and Government guidance during the Pandemic.

Where appropriate we have enabled teams to resume activity previously being undertaken from home as and when required. This has been possible because of the work done with service areas, Health and Safety, staff and Trade Unions to put in place robust risk assessment arrangements. We will continue this process over the coming months, whilst monitoring and responding to changes in the infection rates within the population. Services such as libraries and face to face customer services are again operational and are providing in-person activity.

We have also been working to undertake more face to face and hybrid meetings within the Council. Currently, due to restrictions in our Civic Centre, it is not possible to undertake face to face meetings for many activities. However, we are installing technology in a number of rooms that will enable us to provide hybrid meeting facilities. Work is on-going to ensure we can meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act regarding hybrid meetings.

Key for us is maintaining the benefits achieved by working flexibly to this point (these benefits are set out in the New Normal report previously discussed at Cabinet). A separate report to Cabinet (December 2021) will outline a series of decisions regarding policy changes and building utilisation, along with the associated benefits, risks and impacts. Once agreed we will develop necessary policies and implement a detailed building utilisation plan which will also address usage during the current and future restrictions.

A summary of the Council's activity since the last Cabinet Report is outlined below with a full update provided in appendix 1.

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

### Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The Council's financial (revenue and capital) update is reported separately as part of the Council's regular budget reports to Cabinet. The Covid-19 impact(s) are considered in the finance reports and are closely monitored as part of the Council's financial management processes.

## Risks

Through the Council's Risk Management process, the Covid risk has been monitored every quarter to the Council's Cabinet and Audit and Governance Committee. Below is the latest update taken from Quarter 2 (July to September '21) 2021/22 risk report update. Quarter 2 update to be provided in December.

<b>Risk Title / Description</b>	<b>Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (1-5)</b>	<b>Risk Probability of risk occurring (1-5)</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation Action(s)</b> What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	<b>Risk Owner</b> Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Covid 19 Pandemic Risk (Corporate Risk)	5	4	Mitigation actions outlined in the report and managed by the Council's Covid Gold Group.	Head of People & Business Change

## Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Corporate Plan 2017-22  
Strategic Recovery Aims

## Options Available and considered

1. To consider and note the contents of the report and for Cabinet / Cabinet Members to receive updates from officers as part of their portfolio.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of the report

## Preferred Option and Why

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

## Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Welsh Government have been supporting local authorities through the pandemic with a Hardship Fund intended to reimburse for all Covid related spend over and above existing budgets and within a set criteria. The fund also includes loss of income compensation; again, within a set criteria. The fund ran for the entire 20/21 financial year and will continue until the end of March 2022, albeit with a reduced scope for the second half of this financial year. In addition, where relevant, Welsh Government have provided specific grant funding to fund particular costs arising. This means that, overall, the financial impact of the pandemic upon the Council has been largely mitigated.

Close monitoring of the financial issues arising, as a result of Covid, will continue throughout the year and will be reported as part of the regular monitoring process. All activities up to November detailed in this report have either been funded via core budgets, specific grants or the Hardship Fund. To date, and in a similar vein to 2020/21, an overall underspend against the revenue budget is being projected. However, the underlying reasons for the underspend are not solely due to the effects of the pandemic and are largely one-off in nature. Also, there are a number of service pressures contained within the position and, therefore, this means that the medium term outlook remains challenging. Because of this, it will be important to identify and quantify any lasting financial impact of the pandemic, particularly in light of the Hardship Fund ending in March 2022. Consideration will need to be given as to whether any of the issues require funding as part of next year's budget and it will also be necessary to continue discussions with Welsh Government regarding the need for financial support for pressures specifically linked to the pandemic.

## Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report, which provides an update on the actions taken to deliver the Council's Covid-19 Response and Strategic Recovery Aims and progress since the previous report.

Any legal issues will be picked up at the appropriate time as part of the operational delivery of the individual actions, within service areas. The move the alert level zero and the relaxation of most restrictions have changed the nature of both the TTP contact tracing work and the work of the Environmental Health officers in managing clusters and containing transmission. The TTP team have taken on more of a “warning and informing” role with the reduction in requirements for self-isolation of contact cases and Environmental Health are focussing on closed care setting and support for schools, given the removal of strict social distancing requirements and the opening-up of community contacts. Enforcement staff are also focussing on providing advice and assistance in relation to the individual risk assessments that are now required for businesses and also monitoring compliance with the Covid-passes required for night-clubs and larger events. As the Covid response work is gradually scaling-down, then regulatory staff are able to resume other priority inspection and enforcement work, in accordance with the Covid-recovery aims.

### **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

As part of the Council’s New Normal project, we will continue to encourage as many office based staff that are not required to work either on the frontline or in Council buildings to work from home in line with the Welsh Government guidance. We are currently scoping options for a longer term workforce delivery model that will provide ongoing flexibility for staff whilst mitigating the number of people in office spaces and this is the subject of a separate Cabinet Report.

Building on what we have learned over the last 18 months, the Council’s Human Resource team is developing new approaches to manage staff’s wellbeing and delivery of services.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

Not Applicable

### **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

The areas covered in this report demonstrate the progress being made against the Strategic Recovery Aims which also support the Council’s Corporate Plan 2017-22.

In consideration of the sustainable development principle, 5 ways of working:

**Long Term** – The progress reported against the Strategic Aims support the long term aims of the Council to improve people’s lives.

**Preventative** – The preventative work outlined in the report support the Council’s approach to minimising future Covid 19 outbreaks and as necessary provide targeted support to those that need it. Re-establishing services in line with necessary legislation and regulation enables the Council to operate in the new normal.

**Integration** – The Strategic Recovery Aims have been integrated with the Council’s Wellbeing Objectives set in the Corporate Plan as well as Service Plans. Recommendations from the Community Impact Assessment will also shape how the Council can improve the delivery of services across communities.

**Involvement** – Included in this report are actions to involve Newport’s communities to provide assurance and shape the way in which services are being delivered by the Council. Their feedback and involvement in the process will enable the Council to consider how services are delivered in the long term.

**Collaboration** - The actions in the report are being undertaken in collaboration with partners from the Council’s Public Services Board but also strategic partners within each service area. The collaborative work enables the Council to share resources and build expertise and knowledge.

### **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Not applicable

### **Consultation**

Not Applicable

## **Background Papers**

Cabinet Report (Strategic Recovery Aims) – July 2020

Corporate Plan 2017-22

Strategic Recovery Aims

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

**Dated: 8 December 2021**

## Appendix 1 – Progress of Delivery against Strategic Recovery Aims (to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021)

<p><b>Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education &amp; Employment.</b> Understand, and respond to, the additional challenges, which Covid19 has presented, including loss of employment, impact on business and on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of both mainstream and vulnerable learners.</p> <p><b>Supports Wellbeing Objective 1</b> – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.</p>															
<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>December 2021 Update (By Exception)</b>														
Support schools and other educational establishments to safely reopen for staff and pupils.	<p>The supermarket voucher scheme continues to be used to support any free school meal eligible pupils who are unable to attend school after testing positive for Covid. In addition, pupils eligible for free school meals will receive supermarket vouchers to cover the forthcoming two-week Christmas holiday period.</p> <p>A new free Breakfast Club opened at High Cross Primary School during the second half of the autumn term and operates in accordance with local risk assessments undertaken and monitored by the Headteacher.</p> <p>The Commissioning Team continues to work closely with Chartwell’s around issues in relation to supply chains and staff shortages to ensure that the service operates as close to normal as possible. Arrangements are underway to ensure that Christmas Dinner days can be incorporated within the current delivery plan.</p>														
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>During the Autumn term, high levels of pupil absence were being reported across school settings. Education Welfare Officers continue to work closely with schools to support improved individual learner level attendance.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="560 874 1169 1305"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Average % of pupils who were in attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13/09/2021 to 17/09/2021 (r)</td> <td>90.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20/09/2021 to 24/09/2021 (r)</td> <td>86.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27/09/2021 to 01/10/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>85.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>04/10/2021 to 08/10/2021 (r)</td> <td>87.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11/10/2021 to 15/10/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>87.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18/10/2021 to 22/10/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>84.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(r) Revised (p) Provisional</p>	Average % of pupils who were in attendance		13/09/2021 to 17/09/2021 (r)	90.7%	20/09/2021 to 24/09/2021 (r)	86.2%	27/09/2021 to 01/10/2021 (p) (r)	85.2%	04/10/2021 to 08/10/2021 (r)	87.6%	11/10/2021 to 15/10/2021 (p) (r)	87.9%	18/10/2021 to 22/10/2021 (p) (r)	84.0%
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**Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment.**

Understand, and respond to, the additional challenges, which Covid19 has presented, including loss of employment, impact on business and on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of both mainstream and vulnerable learners.

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>December 2021 Update (By Exception)</b>
Support schools to enhance and develop digital skills; digital teaching and learning platforms; and enhanced support for digitally excluded learners.	1827 Chromebooks and 336 PCs and Apple devices purchased using the 2021/22 WG Hwb EdTech grant have been delivered to schools as of 09.11.21. We are anticipating delivery of a further 245 devices over the next month along with 86 charging trolleys.  The project to migrate school users of @newport.gov.uk emails to Hwb using the @newportschools.wales domain is ongoing.
Support and enable people that are digitally excluded to access community IT programmes, Council services and other public services.	Residents continue to have access to equipment and resources to provide them with a choice of how to engage with us and partners as self isolation is still a requirement under Alert level zero under certain circumstances. We are seeing an increase in requests for devices for younger children needing to access speech and language sessions.  SRS and Digital team have been working to improve the internet capability across the Council's estate and public buildings such as Residential Homes and Neighbourhood Hub / Community buildings. The team has also been developing approaches with the community to support digital skills and such as train the trainer sessions and digital ambassadors across the community.
Support people who have been affected by unemployment to access new opportunities through training and re-employment required for post Covid 19 businesses.	The new Mercure Hotel within Chartist Tower is expected to open in February 2022 and the hubs work and skills teams will be leading their recruitment campaign to fill 50 vacancies. Both fixed hour contracts and zero hour contracts will be available. The recruitment drive will take place over four separate days as part of an employment sign up roadshow at our hubs between 13 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup> December.
Ensure our diverse communities are appropriately supported through tailored interventions specific to their needs, including consideration of language, culture and points of access.	In October 2021 a new law was introduced requiring improved labelling for food in relation to allergens. The Trading Standards Service circulated to all relevant food operators a multi-lingual video training tool to help businesses with the changes.  There has been an increase of requests from Playgroup settings for digital devices for those with younger children. Families are requesting these in order to access the speech and language sessions being delivered. As a result, the settings have now been given their own allocation of devices to loan out to families so it speeds up the request process and gets the devices directly to the families who need them quickly.

## Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 2** – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

Strategic Aim Step	December'21 Update (By Exception)
Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.	Planning permission was granted for the new leisure and wellbeing project on 3 <sup>rd</sup> November and represents a positive step in the delivery of the Newport Knowledge Quarter. The Chartist Tower hotel development is on track to open in February 2022 and work on the Indoor Market and Market Arcade are due for completion in January 2022.
Enable and support the construction industry to re-establish the supply of new and affordable housing.	The affordable housing development programme continues to be delivered in partnership with RSLs operating in Newport. To date nearly £6 million of Newport's funding award has been drawn down this financial year. There remains a challenge in relation to the availability of contractors and building materials but this is being worked through and the programme is being closely monitored.
Enable and support businesses to re-establish normal operations whilst maintaining the health and safety of their workers and customers.	<p>Officers continue to carry out interventions to assess compliance with risk assessment requirements related to Level Zero controls. Officers are now integrating these compliance checks into general working. Each regulatory intervention will now have at least two purposes; the COVID check and the "business as usual" check.</p> <p>Officers have been required to issue a business with a Premises Improvement Notice for failing to insist on COVID Passes for their customers.</p> <p>Officers continue to carry out business enforcement work; issues under scrutiny; licensed premises adherence to conditions; taxis illegally plying for hire; rogue traders active at people's homes; shops selling illegal tobacco and age restricted products to children and others. Routine food standards work continues; the emerging threat is a high proportion of businesses failing to deploy an adequate allergens protection system.</p> <p>Environmental Health activity continues to be negatively impacted on by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, resources have started to be redirected to 'business as normal' activity. It is noteworthy that 2 no. Food Safety EHOs are still on secondment to the Test Trace Protect team and a Health &amp; Safety EHO is still focussing on supporting Care Settings. Programmed inspections of Food businesses have restarted in order to endeavour to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan using established officers, a newly recruited Food Safety EHO and an agency EHO.</p>
Enable and support businesses to prepare for future trade arrangements resulting from Brexit negotiations.	See EU transition Cabinet Report. Last month we received notification of the UK CRF funding which Newport received £2.8m. This funding will be given to the successful organisations that will deliver various projects to improve employment opportunities, re-skilling and training, improvements to local areas and research and development.
Protect and improve the environment, including air	Last month Newport was awarded Outstanding Organisation Award for its work towards decarbonisation which was accepted by the Leader of the Council. The Council was also nominated for Best Policy and Practice in Public Sector

**Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy**

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 2** – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

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

**Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens**

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 3** – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

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

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

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**Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens**

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient**

Strategic Aim Step	December'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan using established officers, a newly recruited Food Safety EHO and an agency EHO.</p> <p>The Council's Test Trace Protect/Contact Tracing team continues to provide advice and support to citizens who have contracted Covid-19 and are still required to self-isolate i.e. the 'Protect' element of 'Test, Trace Protect'. The support also ensures that citizens are aware of the financial support to self-isolate which they may be eligible to claim.</p>
<p>Work with key partners to safely re-open cultural and leisure facilities including the promotion of the city's parks, open spaces and coastal paths.</p>	<p>Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery continue to open on a drop-in basis.</p>
<p>Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.</p>	<p>With the relaxation of restrictions as confirmed by Welsh Government in early August, the Council is reviewing the Civic Centre risk assessment to reflect any possible adaptations, whilst being mindful that as an employer we are accountable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and will continue to be required to protect the workforce from any infectious disease transmission wherever possible. The removal of the legislative requirement for social distancing does not remove our obligation to seek to prevent transmission of infectious disease and our mitigation measures may alter as a result. In the meantime the Council continues to advise staff to work from home wherever possible, which remains in line with Welsh Government guidance. Separate Cabinet Report is being presented on the new ways of working options in December.</p>

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**Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19**

Provide people with the resources and support that they need to move out of the crisis, considering in particular the impact that Covid 19 has had on our minority and marginalised communities.

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities**

Strategic Aim Step	December'21 Update (By Exception)
<p>Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our most vulnerable people as a priority.</p>	<p>WG hardship funding continues to be used to support the additional pressures on temporary accommodation due to the extended duty to accommodate anyone presenting as homeless. We continue to work in partnership with RSLs to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation but supply remains a challenge. Additional funding has been provided by WG to prevent homelessness for those living in the private rented sector who have rent arrears because of the pandemic.</p>

**Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19**

Provide people with the resources and support that they need to move out of the crisis, considering in particular the impact that Covid 19 has had on our minority and marginalised communities.

**Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities**

Strategic Aim Step	December'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>The Housing and Homelessness teams are facing challenges with recruitment. This is a sector-wide issue.</p> <p>Material cost increases have resulted in average DFG grant costs increasing significantly with longer contractor/material lead times. This has been evident since Covid-19 and Brexit.</p>
<p>Assess and address the inequalities that Covid 19 has highlighted or contributed to within our communities.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 177</p>	<p>Inequalities highlighted by COVID-19 are included in the focus of work ongoing to embed the Socio-economic Duty in council decision-making processes. This will ensure longer term planning and policy aims to reduce inequalities that have arisen as a result of both socio-economic disadvantage and for minority/marginalised communities and encourage more effective engagement with those groups who are affected by council decisions. The council is currently refreshing its Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment to better understand enduring or emerging inequalities since its development. This will inform the allocation of funding made available in our second Participatory Budgeting programme. A community engagement session was held in September where representatives of the worst affected groups were invited to talk about their experiences and how they have been and could be supported.</p> <p>A community steering group has now been established to deliver Participatory Budgeting Programme 2 which will see around £500k distributed to grassroots and voluntary sector groups across the city. Newport Fairness Commission are key participants in the planning of this programme. Funding priorities will be informed by the refreshed Community Impact Assessment which will highlight those communities that continue to experience disadvantage as a result of the pandemic. PB training has been undertaken by steering group members and three out of four decision-making sessions have now been completed. Invitations for funding bids will go out in November. It has been agreed that NCC funding will be combined with funding from ABUHB to deliver maximum benefits to the worst affected groups, deprived communities and grass roots groups.</p>
<p>Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.</p>	<p>The Policy, Partnership and Involvement team will be conducting a survey in November with the Citizens Panel and the wider public through the bus wifi on the impacts of the second lockdown measures, the Council's (including partners) response and communication with Newport's communities.</p>
<p>Developing opportunities for people to access suitable and affordable housing.</p>	<p>The Social Housing Grant programme is funding the development of over 500 new affordable housing units with several schemes due to complete within the current financial year. Delivery schedules are impacted by the sector wide issues with materials and labour supply, along with associated increased costs.</p>

### Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19

Provide people with the resources and support that they need to move out of the crisis, considering in particular the impact that Covid 19 has had on our minority and marginalised communities.

### Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities

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

### Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19

Provide people with the resources and support that they need to move out of the crisis, considering in particular the impact that Covid 19 has had on our minority and marginalised communities.

### Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities

Strategic Aim Step	December'21 Update (By Exception)
Re-establish Community Regeneration facilities and services where it is safe to do so for staff and its service users.	<p>Licensing and Trading Standards are working to reduce alcohol related ASB. Licensing Officers are active in improving the practices of businesses that facilitate drunken misbehaviour in communities and the city centre. The latest under-age-sales test purchasing operation took place on 28 October with Gwent Police. 14 premises were tested; 5 for knives, 2 for vape products, 1 for nitrous oxide and 6 for fireworks. There was one illegal sale. A shop in the Pillgwenlly ward sold a knife to the volunteer. Advice and follow up work will be carried out. Officers also participated in Operation Bang and investigated allegations of illegal fireworks sales.</p> <p>The response to addressing ASB is continuing to work dynamically, utilising a strong partnership approach through the twice monthly Problem Solving Group and CaSAMs. These are led, chaired and facilitated by the ASB Liaison Officers in Law &amp; Regulation.</p> <p>The Community Safety Warden Service will continue to respond to incidents of ASB as it has throughout the pandemic.</p>
Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.	<p>Home visits are undertaken under strict Triage and Risk Assessment procedures, alongside telephone and Teams appointments.</p>
	<p>Community steering group has now been established to deliver Participatory Budgeting Programme 2 which will see around £500k distributed to grassroots and voluntary sector groups across the city. Newport Fairness Commission are key participants in the planning of this programme. Funding priorities will be informed by the refreshed Community Impact Assessment which will highlight those communities that continue to experience disadvantage as a result of the pandemic. PB training has been undertaken by steering group members and three out of four decision-making sessions have now been completed. Invitations for funding bids will go out in November. It has been agreed that NCC funding will be combined with funding from ABUHB to deliver maximum benefits to the worst affected groups, deprived communities and grass roots groups.</p> <p>The Council is also out on consultation with its Climate Change Plan and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Both can be accessed <a href="#">here</a></p>

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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** Post Brexit Update for Newport City Council

**Purpose** To present an update to Cabinet on post Brexit arrangements and their impact on Newport Council services and Newport's communities and economy.

**Author** Chief Executive  
Head of People and Business Change

**Ward** All

**Summary** The UK is approaching nearly one year since it left the European Union and Single Market on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. Over the course of the year the UK has seen significant impacts across its economy resulting from entering into a new trade agreement with the EU and also the wider global impacts which has affected trade, employment and cost of living for households. For households in Newport and Wales these impacts are affecting low-income households with the cost of living due to increases in the cost of food, goods and energy prices. The Welsh Government has announced a £51.7m Winter package that will give households on certain benefits a contribution to mitigate some of these costs.

Newport Council continues to face ongoing pressures on the cost of goods and services as increases in costs are being passed onto the consumer. The Council alongside other sectors are also facing pressures on staffing and recruiting staff into key roles especially in Social Services, housing & support and City Services.

Since the deadline passed for EU and EEA citizens to apply for EU Settled Status, the Home Office (31<sup>st</sup> October 2021) has received 6.2m applications and have concluded 5.9m applications. 52% of applications have been granted Settled status with 42% granted Pre-settled Status. The remaining 7% have either been refused, withdrawn or invalid claims. There is no data available for the current status of claims in Newport.

**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:

- Heads of Service and Brexit 'Task and Finish' group.

**Signed**

## Background

The UK is approaching one year since it left the European Union and the Single Market on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The last year has seen some noticeable impacts on the UK and Welsh economy as the UK and EU have implemented the new trading arrangements but also the wider global economic impacts resulting from the Covid pandemic. Throughout the economy there have been impacts on the demand and supply of goods, trade, and staffing in all sectors. The UK has faced challenges with the trading arrangement with the EU over certain goods and services such as fisheries and the Northern Ireland arrangement over the last month has led to uncertainty on both sides of the agreement.

- Vacancies across all sectors continue to increase and remain over one million at the end of October. Construction, manufacturing, accommodation & food service activities are seeing over 70% vacancies.
- The UK Government has delayed introducing post-Brexit checks on food and farming imports to January 2023.
- Supply issues of specific food and goods from and to Europe are still occurring with demand on materials but also supply issues of materials imported from the EU such as concrete, timber and other products.
- Inflation of costs in household expenditure increased to 3.8% (October '21) with rises being seen in fuel, gas and electric (price increases taking place in the autumn) as the economy recovers and demand is outstripping the supply of goods and materials.

The energy market has seen significant impacts to households as energy companies' business models have struggled to meet the increase in wholesale gas prices. For many households this has meant they have had to transfer to other companies resulting in increases to their energy costs. There is concern that many low income households will struggle with their winter fuel payments as they will also face pressures on food and goods as the Christmas period approaches.

In November, Welsh Government announced £51.7m package to help low-income households meet the pressures on living costs and reduce the impact of the cut to Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit and rising energy prices. Local Authorities in Wales including Newport Council will administer the one-off £100 cash payment to households where a member of the household is in receipt of welfare benefits (Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Based Employment & Support Allowance, Universal Credit, Working Tax Credits). Further details on how eligible households can claim will be provided by the Welsh Government and Council.

Across the Council pressures remain with the cost of goods and services in areas such as Social Services, City Services and delivery of key projects. The Council and businesses in Newport are still reporting vacancies especially in Social Care, Drivers, housing & support and other services. The Council's Regeneration team continue to support and promote job opportunities with schemes in place to enable people to re-train, learn new skills and support into the employment market.

These risks and issues are being considered as part of the Council's Medium Term Revenue Planning (MTRP) process. The Council's Finance team is working alongside service areas in the monitoring of the Council's in year budgets and will be reporting key risk and issues in their revenue and capital forecast reports to Cabinet. The Council's Revenues team are supporting residents who are struggling to make payments and signposting them to Debt advice agencies such as Citizens Advice bureau. Whilst the Council's Procurement team and services are also supporting local businesses with prompt payments to help local supply chains and revised Contract Standing Orders that enable local suppliers to be selected for lower value contracts without competition from suppliers further afield.

Newport Council has been liaising with the successful organisations that secured over £2.7m in UK Community Renewal Funding (UKCRF). The Council will be supporting the organisations to commence their projects that will enable them to successfully deliver the projects by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## **EU Settled Status / Rights of Non UK Citizens**

The council recognise that as well as impacting on opportunities to live, work and contribute to life in Newport, the UK's exit from the EU can also have an impact on our communities' sense of belonging and wellbeing. The Council alongside its partners will continue to welcome and value our EU citizens and support them to remain living in the city.

Since the deadline passed for EU.EEA citizens to apply for EU Settled Status, the Home Office (31<sup>st</sup> October 2021) has received 6.2m applications and have concluded 5.9m applications. 52% of applications have been granted Settled status with 42% granted Pre-settled Status. The remaining 7% have either been refused, withdrawn or invalid claims. There is no data available for the current status of claims in Newport.

For applicants that applied before the deadline but have not received an outcome, existing rights and entitlements are protected pending the outcome of their application, providing that they had a right to reside in the UK on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 and they have obtained a Certificate of Application. EU citizens who were resident in the UK after the 31<sup>st</sup> December but haven't made an application no longer have their rights protected, including the right to live, work, study and access benefits and services in the UK. If an EU citizen is identified by someone in Immigration Control who may be eligible for the EUSS, they will be given 28 days to make a late application. From mid-September DWP also suspended benefits for all EEA citizens who do not apply for EUSS within 28 days of reminder letters.

The Home Office continue to receive late applications from any EU citizen who has 'reasonable grounds' for missing the deadline. Reasonable grounds include a serious medical condition, where a parent or guardian has failed to apply on behalf of a child, or where a person is isolated or digitally excluded and has not been able to access the application system.

It is anticipated that the number of families and individuals presenting as needing support to due restrictions of their rights and entitlements will continue to increase over the coming months. The council have established a multi-disciplinary hardship solutions group to respond to this demand, as well as other cases where people have no recourse to public funds due to precarious migration status (for example, asylum seekers who have received a negative decision on their claim).

This period, the council has launched its EU Community Grant Scheme which will support grassroots communities and third sector organisations to address some of the emerging issues affecting citizens in Newport. Funded projects will be focussed on:

- Promoting and encouraging late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme
- Reducing discrimination against or hate speech directed at EU communities
- Promotion of EU rights and responsibilities in Post-Brexit Wales
- Social inclusion and integration
- 'Giving a voice' to EU citizens
- Increasing awareness of EU citizens' rights in service provisions
- Creating a welcoming culture amongst our communities towards EU citizens
- Outlining EU citizens' contributions to Newport/Wales
- Addressing inequalities brought about EU exit

### **Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)**

As part of the Council's financial monitoring process, the Council's Finance team are identifying, monitoring and reporting where appropriate, any impacts on budgets due to Covid-19 and Brexit.

### **Risks**

The Council's Brexit risk is recorded on the Council's Corporate Risk Register which is presented to Cabinet and Audit Committee every quarter. The Quarter two risk score is detailed below:

<b>Risk Title / Description</b>	<b>Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (1-5)</b>	<b>Risk Probability of risk occurring (1-5)</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation Action(s)</b> What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	<b>Risk Owner</b> Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Brexit	4	3	See Report	Head of People & Business Change

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

### **Links to Council Policies and Priorities**

Corporate Plan  
Strategic Recovery Aims

### **Options Available and considered**

1. To consider and note the contents of the report and for Cabinet / Cabinet Members to receive updates from officers as part of their portfolio.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of the report

### **Preferred Option and Why**

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

### **Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

As commented in previous reports, the lasting financial impact of Brexit is still uncertain, however, there are emerging issues, as referenced in this report, which have the potential to impact upon both capital and revenue budgets. Whilst no significant financial impact has been explicitly reported to date, increased costs and delays to schemes have been identified as part of the Capital Programme, which are partly due to increased costs of materials and challenges with the availability of labour. During the remainder of the year, budget / service managers, with finance team colleagues, will continue to monitor on a regular basis and any issues arising will be highlighted through the regular monitoring processes.

Should there be any impacts, on the in-year revenue budget in particular, it will be necessary to manage these from within existing resources and any overall Council underspend, as there are no specific reserves or contingencies for Brexit, aside from the following:

- £828k was allocated in the 2021/22 revenue budget for increased adult social care costs in relation to market stability, Covid recovery and Brexit;
- additional funds were set aside from the 20/21 underspend and added to the Council's 'general risk' reserve which could contribute towards this risk, amongst others. Details are included within the 2020/21 revenue budget outturn report.

Officers will continue to explore the possibilities of accessing the various grants that are being made available to public bodies in supporting the potential impact of the new arrangements. In addition, as part of the medium term financial planning process, consideration will be given to any Brexit-related financial pressures that may need to be funded within the Council's budget.

It should be noted that both the distribution of the Winter Fuel Payments and oversight of the Community Renewal Fund will place an additional requirement upon the Council in terms of the administration and governance needed. Any financial impact arising directly from this will be identified and monitored, to ensure that the appropriate costs can be recovered from the relevant grant funding source.

### **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report, which provides an update for Cabinet regarding the Council's Brexit preparations. The specific risks associated with the withdrawal have now

been mitigated by the belated trade deal, subject to ratification by the member states. However, despite the agreement regarding no tariffs and quotas on imported and exported goods, there is still remaining uncertainty regarding the impact on other areas, such as services and data security. Any legal implications for existing contracts for supplies, services and care provision, data security matters and any regulatory enforcement issues, particularly in relation to port health, will be addressed once the details of the trade agreement are clarified and implemented in national legislation. Despite the non-imposition of tariffs and quotas, additional port health checks will be required in terms of certifying compliance with new Regulations. Environmental Health officers have now been trained to undertake import and export food health certificate checks, and this will have significant resource implications once the port activity increases. Local business advice and support is also being provided in relation to Brexit compliance. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the implementation of the Internal Markets legislation will have implications in terms of public sector contracts and procurement and also equivalent state-aid, fair competition requirements.

### **Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

The Council's Brexit Task and Finish officer group is continuing to monitor the people aspects of support required and regular updates will continue to be provided by finance, regulatory and other supporting services. The Council and its partners remain committed to support EU/EAA citizens as outlined in the Report.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

The Council's Audit Committee receives regular risk register updates on the Council's Risk Register which includes the Brexit Risk.

### **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

Not applicable as this is an information only report

### **Wellbeing for Future Generations**

There is potential long term impacts of Brexit Trade Negotiations which could affect the future demand on our services to provide the necessary support, advice and guidance. There may also be opportunities that could arise, and the Council will need to make preparations to accordingly. In preparation we have been working collaboratively across the Council and with our partners to make sure that our services to prevent any scenario where services are disrupted and to provide resilience across the City and to our local partners.

We have also been involving our stakeholders and where necessary providing the necessary advice and guidance to those that need our support. Going forward we will continue to monitor and report where necessary any impacts which Brexit could have on the delivery of our services.

### **Consultation**

Not Applicable

### **Background Papers**

Welsh Government website '[Preparing Wales to leave the EU](#)'

Welsh Local Government Association '[Brexit Website](#)'

Newport City Council's '[Brexit Webpage](#)'

**Dated: 8 December 2021**

## Appendix 1 – Summary of ongoing Council Activity

Theme	Progress of Activity completed by Newport Council to 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
<b>Social Services and Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Welfare Officers and schools were reminding parents to apply to EUSS prior to the deadline. In September Education Welfare Officers will be supporting schools to identify any pupils that have not returned to school as a result of returning back to their home country.</li> <li>• All schools were reminded to inform EU families of the need to apply and offered further support from Newfield's Law who have been commissioned by Welsh Government to work within schools</li> <li>• The council has engaged Newport MIND to support all eligible children who are looked after to apply to the EUSS</li> </ul>
<b>Policy and Partnership Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council received additional funding for 2021/22. This funding is being used to support two officers to support Migration work and additional work related to Brexit.</li> <li>• Remaining funding will be used to support services with any Brexit / Covid work in 2021/22.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Community (Community Cohesion)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EU Settled Status / EU communities</b></li> <li>• <b>Food Poverty</b></li> <li>• <b>Homelessness (EU Citizens)</b></li> <li>• <b>Community cohesion</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council continues to lead a city-wide food project network and has engaged with a range of foodbanks to assess current and expected demand over the winter period. Foodbanks report an increase in demand as a result of energy price rises and changes to Universal Credit as well as continued challenges associated with the pandemic. The council will continue to work with food-based projects across Newport to review resources and capacity to respond to emerging need.</li> <li>• The work of our Community Cohesion officers continues to focus on post-Brexit rights and access to key services in the City for EU citizens</li> <li>• Complex migration cases continue to present to the council for support, and this is expected to continue</li> <li>• The council are aware of a growing number of EU and non-EU nationals who are finding themselves with no recourse to public funds as a result of EUSS outcomes, and the hidden demand for support which is at present masked by extended COVID duties which require LAs to house people with no recourse to public funds, as well as the current restrictions on private evictions.</li> <li>• We continue to provide free school meals to any family that is identified as having no recourse to public funds</li> <li>• Hardship Group has been established to consider complex migration cases and develop organisational policy in relation to NRPF</li> <li>• A weekly partnership drop in for EU communities continues to be co-ordinated and supported by the council</li> <li>• A bi-monthly EU Citizens forum continues to bring services providing support to EU citizens to maintain a cohesive response to emerging issues.</li> <li>• EU Community Grant Scheme launched</li> <li>• EU citizens' rights cards distributed to community venues across Newport</li> </ul>



# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

**Subject** Cabinet Work Programme

**Purpose** To report and agree the details of the Cabinet's Work Programme.

**Author** Governance Team Leader/Cabinet Office Manager

**Ward** All Wards

**Summary** The purpose of a work programme is to enable Cabinet to organise and prioritise the reports and decisions that are brought to each meeting. Effective forward planning by Cabinet also impacts positively upon the Council's other Committees, in particular Scrutiny, because work needs to be coordinated on certain reports to ensure proper consultation takes place before a decision is taken.

The current work programme runs to May 2022, but it is a working document. It is important that the work programme is owned and prioritised by Cabinet Members directly, so each month the Cabinet Office Manager brings a report updating Cabinet on any changes, so that the revised programme can be formally approved.

The updated work programme is attached at Appendix 1.

**Proposal** To agree the updated work programme.

**Action by** Cabinet Office Manager /Governance Team Leader

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chief Officers
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

## Background

The purpose of a work programme is to enable Cabinet to organise and prioritise the reports and decisions that are brought to each meeting. Effective forward planning by Cabinet also impacts positively upon the Council's other Committees, in particular Scrutiny, because work needs to be coordinated on certain reports to ensure proper consultation takes place before a decision is taken.

The Wales Audit Office's Corporate Assessment of Newport City Council, published in September 2013, highlighted the need to "strengthen committee work programming arrangements to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up". Since that report was published, these monthly reports have been introduced to provide Cabinet with regular updates on its work programme, and the opportunity to comment upon and shape its priorities as an executive group. The Democratic Services team have also been working to improve the links between this and other work programmes under its management (e.g. Council, Scrutiny, Audit) to ensure the various programmes are properly coordinated.

The current work programme runs to May 2022, but it is a working document. It is important that the work programme is owned and prioritised by Cabinet Members directly, so each month the Cabinet Office Manager brings a report updating Cabinet on any changes, so that the revised programme can be formally approved.

The updated work programme is attached at Appendix 1.

## Financial Summary

There is no direct cost to adopting a programme of work.

## Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
No action taken	M	L	Work programming arrangements are in place to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up.	Head of Democratic Services
The process is not embraced by report authors and members	M	M	If there is proliferation of unplanned or late items, the opportunity to ensure work programming is timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up will diminish	Head of Democratic Services

## Links to Council Policies and Priorities

These proposals will help the Council provide the best possible service to members and will provide information to the public and elected members.

### **Options Available and considered**

- To adopt the process and adopt or amend the work programme
- To consider any alternative proposals raised by Cabinet members
- To take no action

### **Preferred Option and Why**

To adopt the proposals which should help to ensure work programming arrangements are timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up.

### **Comments of Chief Financial Officer**

There are no financial implications in adopting a programme of work.

### **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no legal implications in adopting a programme of work.

### **Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

There are no specific staffing implications in adopting a programme of work.

### **Comments of Cabinet Member**

The Chair has approved the report for consideration by cabinet.

### **Local issues**

There are no local issues as this report relates to the Council's processes

### **Scrutiny Committees**

Monthly update reports allow the Scrutiny and Cabinet work programmes to be better coordinated. The Scrutiny team and Members are currently developing new ways of working through the new Committees, and continually reviewing the work programmes to focus more on risk, and ensure all scrutiny activity has a defined purpose and constructive outcome.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010**

This does not apply to this procedural report.

### **Children and Families (Wales) Measure**

This procedural report does not impact on Children and Young People although certain reports contained in the programme may do and will need appropriate consultation and comment when they are presented to cabinet.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

This is a procedural report but reports contained within the programme will need to show how consideration has been given to the five things public bodies need to think about to show they have applied the sustainable development principle put into place by the Act.

### **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

This does not apply to this procedural report

### **Consultation**

As set out above

### **Background Papers**

[Newport City Council Corporate Assessment](#), Wales Audit Office (September 2013)

[Newport City Council – Corporate Assessment Follow Up 2015](#), Wales Audit Office (May 2015)

**Dated: 8 December 2021**

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# Cabinet

## Work Programme: June 2021 to May 2022

Meeting	Agenda Items	Lead Officer
<b>Cabinet 02/06/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School Reorganisation Proposal to Expand Bassaleg School</li> <li>▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Q4)</li> <li>▪ Welsh Language Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Levelling Up Fund</li> <li>▪ UK Community Renewals Fund</li> <li>▪ Covid Update Report</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update Report</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CEo</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HRIH</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 29/06/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ Management Restructure Report</li> <li>▪ PSPO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ CX</li> <li>▪ HL&amp;R</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 07/07/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2020/21 Treasury Management Year End Report</li> <li>▪ 2020/21 Revenue Budget Outturn</li> <li>▪ 2020/21 Capital Outturn and Additions</li> <li>▪ Responding to the New Normal Report</li> <li>▪ MIM Strategic Partnership Agreement</li> <li>▪ Covid Update Report</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update Report</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CEo</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 20/07/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ 2020/21 Treasury Management Year End Report</li> <li>▪ Regional PSB Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 08/09/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revenue Budget Monitor</li> <li>▪ Capital Budget Monitor</li> <li>▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 1)</li> <li>▪ Annual Safeguarding Report</li> <li>▪ Covid Update Report</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update Report</li> <li>▪ PSB Summary of Business</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ SD People</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 28/09/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ Scrutiny Annual Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ HL&amp;R</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 13/10/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate Plan Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Replacement LDP – Feedback on Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and proposed next steps</li> <li>▪ Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Covid Update Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HRIH</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brexit Update Report</li> <li>▪ PSB Summary of Business</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 10/11/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revenue Budget Monitor</li> <li>▪ Capital Budget Monitor and Additions</li> <li>▪ Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2020</li> <li>▪ Covid Update Report</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update Report</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ Customer Services Mgr</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 23/11/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ City Centre PSPO</li> <li>▪ Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Democratic Services Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Standards Committee Annual Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ HL&amp;R</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HL&amp;S</li> <li>▪ HL&amp;S</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 15/12/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treasury Management Report</li> <li>▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 2)</li> <li>▪ AW Certificate of Compliance</li> <li>▪ New Normal Report</li> <li>▪ Director of Social Services Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Covid Update Report</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update Report</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ SD - People</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 14/01/22</b>	<p><u>Budget:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2022/23 Revenue Draft Budget and MTFP: Final Proposals</li> <li>▪ Revenue Budget Monitor</li> <li>▪ Capital Budget Monitor</li> <li>▪ Risk Management Strategy</li> <li>▪ Mid-Year Performance Analysis 2020/21</li> <li>▪ Update report on CCR/CJC working arrangements.</li> <li>▪ Welsh in Education Strategic Plan – 2021/2025</li> <li>▪ Verified Key Stage 4 and 5 Pupil Outcomes</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update</li> <li>▪ Covid Recovery</li> <li>▪ PSB Summary Document (for information/awareness)</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/SDT&amp;P/HL&amp;R/ HoF/PPIM</li> <li>▪ CEdO</li> <li>▪ CEdO</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ For info</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 25/01/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ 2021/22 Treasury Management 6 monthly report</li> <li>▪ Council Tax Reduction Scheme</li> <li>▪ Director of Social Services Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles</li> <li>▪ Schedule of Meetings 2022/23</li> <li>▪ Mayoral Nomination 2022/23</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HCS</li> <li>▪ SD – People</li> <li>▪ HL&amp;S</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>

<b>Cabinet 18/02/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2022/23 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy</li> <li>▪ 2022/23 Revenue Final Budget and MTFP: Final Proposals</li> <li>▪ Climate Change Strategy</li> <li>▪ Welsh Language Five Year Strategy</li> <li>▪ Western Gateway</li> <li>▪ Covid Recovery Update</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HRIH</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 01/03/22</b>	<u>Budget:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ 2022/23 Council Tax and Budget</li> <li>▪ 2022/23 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy</li> <li>▪ National Non-Domestic Rates: Discretionary Relief: High Street Relief Scheme 2022-23</li> <li>▪ Welsh Language Five Year Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HoF</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 09/03/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pay and Reward Statement 2022/23</li> <li>▪ The Local Area Energy Plan</li> <li>▪ EAS Business Plan 2020/21</li> <li>▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 3)</li> <li>▪ Covid Recovery Update</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CEoO</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Cabinet 06/04/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report</li> <li>▪ Replacement LDP Feedback on Growth Options and Vision/Objectives</li> <li>▪ Covid Recovery Update</li> <li>▪ Brexit Update</li> <li>▪ PSB Summary Document (for information/awareness)</li> <li>▪ Work Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HC&amp;YPS</li> <li>▪ HRIH</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ CX/HP&amp;BC</li> <li>▪ For info</li> <li>▪ GTL</li> </ul>
<b>Council 26/04/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> <li>▪ IRP Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Pay and Reward Statement 21/22</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> <li>▪ HoL&amp;R</li> <li>▪ HP&amp;BC</li> </ul>
<b>May 2022</b>	Local Elections	
<b>Council 17/05/22</b>	<u>AGM:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Appointments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM</li> </ul>

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