

Report



Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 13 October 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.

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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 September, Wales and the region has continued to see positive Covid cases increase but hospital admissions remain lower in comparison to last year and the winter period. As the city and the Council enter into the autumn and winter period, there is likely to be further increase with the case rate which will have an impact on the hospital admissions. The focus over the autumn will be to get the over 50s, vulnerable and health & social care workers boosters alongside vaccinating 12 to 15 year olds across secondary school settings.

Proposal Cabinet is asked to consider the contents of the report and note the progress being made to date, the risks that are still faced by the Council and the city.

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 [8th September](#), 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 (September / October)

Following WG decision to move into alert level 0 over the summer period, the return of schools and tertiary education in September, there has been an increase in the community spread of the Delta variant. Whilst the latest PHW data shows the spread being over 500 per 100,000 of the population the overall hospital admissions in comparison to last winter has remained low. Hospitals across ABUHB have been reporting significant number people being admitted into hospital with positive Covid-19 cases but have predominantly been unvaccinated.

As we enter the Autumn / Winter period, it is highly likely that the country will see a further increases and waves in cases and hospital admissions. These will ultimately impact hospital settings and their ability to provide other forms of acute care. Furthermore, this could also impact settings such as care homes across the city. In response, the Welsh Government have announced the implementation of Covid passports into indoor venues and events and will be inviting people over 50 and the most vulnerable to receive their booster jabs as well as the seasonal flu jab. 12 to 15 year olds will also be able to receive the vaccination which will be administered in the schools. Finally, it will be important for those that have not taken up the vaccination to date to also take up this opportunity as it will not only protect them, but it will also protect others around them.

WG messaging remains for 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 the economy has been reopening, Wales and Newport are starting to be impacted by wider economic factors due to vacancies, increasing household costs due to food and energy, disruption to food and goods supply chains. These impacts will be affecting those in low income households and could disrupt economic recovery. These are being monitored by the Council as part of its business continuity arrangements.

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 have installed technology in a number of rooms that will enable us to provide hybrid meeting facilities.

For this to operate effectively we are finalising the technology requirements and will then develop specific protocols for the management of these meetings. To facilitate this, we will:

1. Operate a hybrid Corporate Management Team meeting
2. Undertake a hybrid Cabinet meeting
3. Based on the learning from these activities and where Covid restrictions and case numbers allow, we will aim for a hybrid Committee meeting

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). We will be reporting back to Cabinet in November 2021 for a series of decisions regarding policy changes and building utilisation, along with the associated benefits, risks and impacts. Once agreed we will develop 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 1st October 2021
Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates of attendance for the first 2 weeks of the academic year are lower than anticipated due to positive Covid cases, asymptomatic pupils being kept at home and parents not sending pupils into school due to Covid-19 • All libraries open and available for people to access services, training and other council services • Supporting the hospitality sector to fill vacancies and provide opportunities for people to access employment opportunities
Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the City of Newport Business Fund £300,000 to enable new and emerging start up businesses to grow. • Regulatory services undertaking risk-based assessments of business premises to ensure compliance with Covid restrictions. • Trading Standards awarded grant funding to improve energy efficiency of housing in Newport.
Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy will feed into the forthcoming updated Air Quality Action Plan for NCC in respect of the 11 AQMAs we have. • All leisure facilities that have not been redeployed as either vaccination or testing centres, have been reopened to the public.
Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing and Trading Standards delivering under-age-sales enforcement work. 3 operations have been carried out involving 46 visits; 6 sold alcohol and 2 sold tobacco; a 17% failure rate. • Youth engagement and diversionary work with community safety partners continues in identified hotspot areas • A budget allocation for £500k over 2 years has been made for a Covid Recovery Fund to support grass roots groups and projects.

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 1 (April to June '21) 2021/22 risk report update. Quarter 2 update to be provided in November.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (1-5)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (1-5)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Covid 19 Pandemic Risk (Corporate Risk)	5	3	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. 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. Since the last report, the move to 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 in relation to retail and licensed premises and also larger organised events.

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. We will eventually move towards a hybrid approach for the Council that will provide flexibility for staff and mitigate the number of people in office spaces.

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: 6 October 2021

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

<p>Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment. Understand, and respond to, the additional challenges, which Covid19 has presented, including loss of employment, impact on business and on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of both mainstream and vulnerable learners.</p>	
<p>Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.</p>	
Strategic Aim Step	October 2021 Update (By Exception)
Support schools and other educational establishments to safely reopen for staff and pupils.	The supermarket voucher scheme continues to be used to support free school meal eligible pupils who are prevented from attending school after testing positive for Covid. The vouchers provided are sufficient to cover the relevant self-isolation period.
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>Rates of attendance for the first 2 weeks of the academic year are lower than anticipated and are being affected by a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive cases of Covid-19 • asymptomatic pupils being kept at home when parents, siblings or another close contact has a confirmed case of Covid-19 • parents not wanting to send their children to school because of concerns about Covid-19 <p>Education Welfare Officers continue to work closely with schools to identify those pupils and parents who require additional support to re-engage with education.</p>
Support schools to enhance and develop digital skills; digital teaching and learning platforms; and enhanced support for digitally excluded learners	An order for additional devices has been submitted using the Hwb EdTech grant funding for 2021/22. This order will provide schools with a further 2408 digital devices, 105 digital screens, 106 projectors and 86 charging trolleys. Delivery dates are as yet unconfirmed, but most items are anticipated during the Autumn Term.
Support and enable people that are digitally excluded to access community IT programmes, Council services and other public services.	All libraries now open to direct access by the public, without the need to make an appointment. Public IT access is available in 8 of 9 sites.
Support people who have been affected by unemployment to access new opportunities through training and re-employment required for post Covid 19 businesses.	<p>The 2021-22 Adult Community Learning Programme starts from September 14th. 24 ICT courses have been planned initially, with the aim to develop further introductory courses in community venues across the City later in the year.</p> <p>Work & Skills teams continue to work with participants to support them into employment or upskill to enable them to move closer to the labour market.</p> <p>The hospitality sector has an increasing demand for staff and we are working closely with employers and organisations to assist with this demand.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment.

Understand, and respond to, the additional challenges, which Covid19 has presented, including loss of employment, impact on business and on the progress, achievement and wellbeing of both mainstream and vulnerable learners.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 1 – To improve skills, education and employment opportunities.

Strategic Aim Step	October 2021 Update (By Exception)
Ensure our diverse communities are appropriately supported through tailored interventions specific to their needs, including consideration of language, culture and points of access.	<p>There has been an increase in referrals for the digital devices since children have returned to school/ Flying Start playgroups to engage in-group support such as language /parent. There has also been requests for digital support to enable families to engage with Team around the family discussions to access further support.</p> <p>Newport Live - engagement with ethnically diverse groups via Positive Futures programme (via Levelling the Playing Field / Sport Wales initiatives). Sport & Wellbeing events across the Summer in parks/green spaces engaging ethnically diverse families (e.g. Maindee, Pillgwenlly, etc).</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 2 – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

Strategic Aim Step	October'21 Update (By Exception)
Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.	<p>ERF 1 Spring Restrictions Grant supported 325 businesses with a grant of between £2,500 and £10,000 in this round. £831,000 has been defrayed, protecting a reported 375 jobs in the city.</p> <p>ERF 2 Summer Restrictions Grant opened on the 26th July. NCC Business Development Fund 2021/22 to launch August 2021</p> <p>Launched the City of Newport Business Fund £300,000 to enable new and emerging start up businesses to grow.</p>
Enable and support the construction industry to re-establish the supply of new and affordable housing.	<p>The affordable housing development programme for 2021/22 has been approved by Welsh Government. The programme totals £12.5 million and supports the creation of 523 units of affordable housing.</p>
Enable and support businesses to re-establish normal operations whilst maintaining the health and safety of their workers and customers.	<p>The move to Level 0 has seen the removal of most business controls. There remains a requirement for each business to have in place a risk assessment to control the spread of coronavirus.</p> <p>Officers have analysed the compliance performance of each business and identified over 350 who had shown poor practices during the higher-level restrictions. These businesses have been targeted and a programme of engagement has been put in place to deliver the risk assessment requirement message. By the end of September this programme will have ended, and the service will move to a complaint/response model rather than proactive engagement.</p> <p>In relation to other areas of work officers have commenced near 'business as usual' work patterns. High numbers of non-compliance are being identified across all areas of the service; this is particularly acute in relation to the following</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy

Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city's economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.

Supports Wellbeing Objective 2 – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.

Strategic Aim Step	October'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>areas: the supply of illegal tobacco; the allergen safe systems of work for food businesses; and the adherence to licence conditions for hospitality businesses.</p> <p>Environmental Health activity is still primarily focussed on delivering the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, however programmed inspections of Food businesses have restarted to endeavour to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan. Additional resources will be made available for this work as soon as resources can be pulled back from Covid. A new Food Safety EHO has been recruited and</p>
Enable and support businesses to prepare for future trade arrangements resulting from Brexit negotiations.	Regulatory Services are continuing to will be supporting businesses reopening as restrictions are eased over the next few months.
Protect and improve the environment, including air quality and decarbonisation of the city for its residents, businesses and visitors.	<p>Action Planning associated with the Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy will feed into the forthcoming updated Air Quality Action Plan for NCC in respect of the 11 AQMAs we have. The two documents will work in tandem with subtly different emphasis. Plans to revoke some AQMAs are ongoing.</p> <p>RE:Fit Procurement nearly complete, works to commence before March 2022. Final elements of solar PV planning application being submitted. Local Area Energy Planning in energy system modelling stage and a workshop is planned to share the outputs with wider stakeholders. Development of the Council's Organisational Climate Change strategy is progressing.</p> <p>As Development Control consultees, Air Quality mitigation requests currently include EV infrastructure, anti-idling schemes, low carbon boilers and ASHP, s.106 contributions towards updating/maintaining air quality monitoring infrastructure. These are being sought for all new development that needs to contribute towards reducing emissions.</p> <p>ECO Stars scheme is in follow up phase and metrics on fuel/emissions saved are being sought from members of scheme. Gwent PSB may provide opportunities to facilitate fresh sign ups in future.</p> <p>Trading Standards has been awarded a grant to seek to improve the energy efficiency of housing showing poor and unlawful energy performance. A programme has been commenced to ensure landlords improve the energy performance of 330 homes. Also, nearly 3000 homes do not have an assessment at all; Trading Standards will endeavour to improve this situation.</p>
Continuing support and safe delivery of the Council's City services including waste, cleansing and highways.	Studies are ongoing to integrate further electric vehicle charging and renewable energy to support zero emission transportation.

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	October'21 Update (By Exception)
Support people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.	<p>Fee negotiations are concluded. Demand is growing for care home placements. There is sufficient capacity within the market to accommodate the need, but staffing is an issue. The holiday period, sickness and positive covid cases are having an impact.</p> <p>Domiciliary care is also being impacted by staff shortages, agencies are unable to recruit, and some staff are leaving to find better paid jobs in hospitality and retail. Consequently, there is no capacity within the market and hospital discharges are being affected. These issues are being experienced across the region</p> <p>Providers are implementing contingency measures to maintain current caseloads. Social Workers have been directed to prioritise requests to the most urgent cases.</p>
Fully restore Children and Adult Services, supporting partners that have been impacted by Covid 19 and ensuring service users and staff are supported and protected.	<p>We continue to work with citizens and providers to build confidence and reinstate services as circumstances change. The relatively small number who have not returned are being reviewed and options discussed.</p> <p>Work is ongoing with partners to ensure additional Housing Support Grant funding is fully utilised to develop sustainable accommodation solutions for people who have been homeless and/or with complex needs such as mental health and substance misuse issues</p>
Assess the impact and the long-term sustainability of the social care sector in Newport informing future service requirements.	<p>The hardship fund will remain in place until the end of September on an as is basis. We await confirmation of what will happen thereafter, but it is expected that financial support will start to reduce.</p> <p>Demand for all services is at higher than normal levels and the biggest risk to sustainable provision is currently around staffing. It is hoped that there will be some improvement in September when the holiday period is over and when the furlough arrangements come to an end.</p>
Safeguard and support children and young people to remain safely with their families.	Business as usual operations are in place.
Improve opportunities for Active Travel and work towards improved air quality.	<p>Accessible Active Travel bridge project has moved into the Phase 2 Construction. Works have begun on site with the closure of the subway and confirmation of the Right of Way extinguishment. Footings are being dug ready for piling works beginning at end of September and into October. Taxi rank will be temporarily moved to the west of the main entrance by October. Works to crown reduce the trees will take place and precede the erection of a large crane in the taxi rank area ready for the Christmas lift. Spans are currently in fabrication at the base of ProSteel of Pontypool and the main spans on schedule to be lifted into place at Christmas 2021. All other Active Travel schemes are progressing with design and development including the canal towpath works and the city centre cycling scheme. Additional works on Gaer fort route are underway with lighting installation both there and at the old Tredegar golf course site.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

Strategic Aim Step	October'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>Action Planning associated with the Council's Sustainable Travel Strategy will feed into the forthcoming updated Air Quality Action Plan for NCC in respect of the 11 AQMAs we have. The two documents will work in tandem with subtly different emphasis. Plans to revoke some AQMAs are ongoing.</p> <p>Work with Air Inequalities and Healthy Open Spaces projects has allowed engagement with communities and vulnerable groups. Engagement will lead to community involvement in projects such as anti-idling schemes and local air quality monitoring at schools e.g. Charles Williams Primary, Caerleon. Introduction of real time monitors where resources allow will provide air quality intelligence that will assist in developing interventions.</p>
<p>Regulate businesses and support consumers / residents to protect and improve their health.</p>	<p>Environmental Health activity is still primarily focussed on delivering the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and this includes providing 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>The move to Level 0 has seen the removal of most business controls. There remains a requirement for each business to have in place a risk assessment to control the spread of coronavirus. Officers have analysed the compliance performance of each business and identified over 350 who had shown poor practices during the higher-level restrictions. These businesses have been targeted and a programme of engagement has been put in place to deliver the risk assessment requirement message. By the end of September this programme will have ended, and the service will move to a complaint/response model rather than proactive engagement.</p> <p>Trading Standards and Licensing are engaged enforcement programmes that will result in health improvement and protection.</p> <p>Food Standards Surveillance has been active since July 2021. The focus of the inspection effort is on the catering and hospitality sector and audits of 'allergen safe systems of work'. It is notable that whilst businesses were not subject to inspection during lockdowns, standards have slipped. Officers are reporting that higher numbers of businesses are showing poor and dangerous practices. Five food businesses are currently under investigation in this threat area.</p> <p>Trading Standards has been continuing enforcement in the illegal tobacco trade. Rogue businesses are targeted. ASB Closure Notices are being issued; seizures of tens of thousands of cigarettes are being completed; and prosecutions/investigations are being carried out.</p> <p>Trading Standards has carried out under-age-sales test purchase work. Higher non-compliance has been identified. Further advice and enforcement work is planned.</p>

Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens

Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people, safeguarding the most vulnerable, and building strong, resilient communities

Supports Wellbeing Objective 3 – To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient

Strategic Aim Step

October'21 Update (By Exception)

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.

All leisure facilities that have not been redeployed as either vaccination or testing centres, have been reopened to the public. The exception remains the Newport Centre pool which requires significant building works to be undertaken.

All public rights of way that were closed during covid are now fully open as are all countryside sites, parks and buildings. Volunteer groups have started back up on countryside sites and rights of way. New field sports season underway and all sites are now receiving plenty of bookings and usage. Where approved by risk assessments the changing room facilities have been allowed to reopen namely:

- Lysaghts Park
- Shaftesbury Changing Rooms Old block and New Block
- Westfield Changing Rooms
- Caerleon
- Coronation Park

the following are under private lease arrangements and will be open subject to operators risk assessments:

- Black Ash Park/Lliswerry Rec.
- Coronation Park (Private changing Rooms).
- Cold Bath Road
- Albion Rovers Crindau/Kimberly Park

Due to issues with ventilation the following buildings were considered unsafe to open at this time:

- Tredegar Park
- Bettws Lane

The ventilation issues are being resolved and these will hopefully be available shortly.

Events at Tredegar Park including the Colourclash were well attended but monitored closely for compliance with risk assessments. No infringements have been reported although some ground reinstatement and bollard repairs are currently underway. New entrance to Fourteen locks has been completed enabling cars within the facility car park after closing time to exit via new 'quiet' traffic barrier.

The Licensing Team will continue to ensure that licensed venues operate safely and adhere to the four licensing objectives. Recent work at the Tredegar Park festivals and the general interaction with the city's night-time-economy, highlighted the need for enforcement and business engagement as businesses reopen.

Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery have now reopened on a drop-in basis. Numbers are slowly returning to normal but remain well below pre-pandemic levels. Enhanced cleaning procedures are in place.

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	October'21 Update (By Exception)
	Newport Live – organised 16 free outdoor events (sport, arts, health & wellbeing) on parks and open spaces across Newport communities, as well as transition camps, Positive Futures youth engagement sessions, referred families / young people engagements/trips/visits, and supported SHEP in schools. Over 6,000 inclusive engagements in total, and 1,400 free packed lunches given out to families. Linked into Summer of Fun for additional arts and cultural activities provided city wide, in communities, green spaces, and the city centre.
Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.	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.

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	October'21 Update (By Exception)
Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our most vulnerable people as a priority.	WG hardship funding is continuing to be used to support the additional pressures on temporary accommodation due to the pandemic. The authority continues to follow WG guidance to provide temporary accommodation to all homeless persons. We are working in partnership with RSLs to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation. 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.
Assess and address the inequalities that Covid 19 has highlighted or contributed to within our communities.	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.

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	October'21 Update (By Exception)
Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.	The Policy, Partnership and Involvement team will be conducting a survey 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. An NRPF group established during the height of the pandemic to respond to people experiencing hardship who may not have access to public funds has continued to meet as a refreshed 'Hardship Solutions Group', responding in the main to families and individuals affected by changes to immigration rules.
Developing opportunities for people to access suitable and affordable housing	<p>The increase in Social Housing Grant funding has allowed several new schemes to be brought into the development plan. As well as general needs accommodation, several specialist schemes have been funded which will provide residents with the support to sustain and manage in their own accommodation.</p> <p>The energy performance enforcement programme may have a housing affordability side effect. Improvements in energy efficiency can save householders up to £1000 per year. As the project continues, any savings will be measured and reported.</p> <p>Trading Standards has noted a worrying trend regarding 'home improvements. Rogue traders and normal traders cutting corners have caused significant detriment to Newport's homeowners. The service is dealing with 13 rogue trader cases where detriment is over £100,000.</p>
Deliver a community cohesion programme that effectively responds to community tensions and creates a shared sense of identity across the city.	Welsh Government have confirmed funding for continuation of community cohesion work until March 31st 2022. Recent activity includes a virtual Ramadan learning project for schools and the development of the 'Faces of Welshness' project, focussed on celebrating difference and recognising commonality across diverse communities in Newport. The council's minority ethnic e-bulletin continues to update grassroot community groups on developments that affect them and a number of small grant schemes will be promoted during the autumn, focussed on encouraging community cohesion and supporting EU communities in particular.
Prevent and address instances of antisocial behaviour (ASB) impacting upon the residents and the business community of Newport	<p>The response to addressing ASB is continuing to work dynamically, utilising a strong partnership approach through the twice monthly Problem Solving Group and CaSAMs. These are led, chaired and facilitated by the ASB Liaison Officers in Law & Regulation. It has been noted that there is possible link of the perception of ASB in the community and the increasing numbers of rough sleepers in the city.</p> <p>The Community Safety Warden Service will continue to respond to incidents of ASB as it has throughout the pandemic. Following a severe shortage of staff recently due to various factors, the Service returned to operating until 10pm each night from 13/9/21 and reductions of service provision due to Covid-19 hazards have been ended.</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	October'21 Update (By Exception)
	<p>ASB powers are being utilised to close businesses causing nuisance and ASB via their sale of illegal tobacco. Such businesses are operated by OCGs and have guards on their door to alert sellers of the presence of enforcement officers.</p> <p>Licensing and Trading Standards are working to reduce alcohol related ASB. Under-age-sales enforcement work has restarted. 3 operations have been carried out involving 46 visits; 6 sold alcohol and 2 sold tobacco; a 17% failure rate. Licensing Officers are active in improving the practices of businesses that facilitate drunken misbehaviour in communities and the city centre.</p> <p>Newport Live – Positive Futures, Alternative Education, and Families First Health & Wellbeing programmes continue to work with referred children, young people and families around improving education, attainment, wellbeing, and community safety/risk of criminality using sport as an engagement tool. Youth engagement and diversionary work with community safety partners continues in identified hotspot areas (e.g. Pill, Maesglas, Ringland, Always, Duffryn, etc.)</p>
<p>Re-establish Community Regeneration facilities and services where it is safe to do so for staff and its service users.</p>	<p>Living with Covid restart plans have been developed with risk assessments in place. Enhanced delivery has been implemented through pre booked appointments within the following areas, work and skills, community development, family intervention and play services. The School Healthy Enrichment Programme was delivered throughout August within the four geographical Hub areas. Other support continues as a hybrid model of delivery virtually.</p>
<p>Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.</p>	<p>A budget allocation for £500k over 2 years has been made for a Covid Recovery Fund to support grass roots groups and projects. A participatory budgeting approach will be adopted to help build social capital, deliver social value and bottom-up recovery. An updated Community Impact Assessment will inform the programme and a high degree of community involvement in planning and delivery will be a key feature.</p>