

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 18 February 2022

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 Since the last report in January, Wales is now seeing the community spread of the Omicron variant. Since the festive period, the case rate has been falling and the Welsh Government has set out a programme to ease the restrictions taking Wales back to Level 0 by the end of the month.

Newport Council's Gold team has continued to monitor the situation across the City and in Council. Some Council services have seen disruption due to staff absences and also increasing demand and services are taking necessary action to manage the situation.

The report also includes a summary of activity across Council services in January 2022.

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 [14th January 2022](#), 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 (January/February)

Since the last Covid update, the case rate in Wales has fallen significantly from 2,300 cases per 100,000 population to around 500 cases. Omicron remains the most prominent variant in Wales. In Newport the case rate remains above 1,000 cases per 100,000 population but this is expected to reduce further over the next few weeks. Further information can be obtained from the [Public Health Wales Dashboard](#).

Hospital settings across Wales and Gwent continue to report significant pressures on services as they manage covid pressures but also the winter pressures that are faced by the NHS. These impacts on NHS services are also having an impact on the transfer of care into social services. The vaccination programme to boost and also ensure those that haven't been vaccinated is continuing. To date over 2.3 million have received at least two doses with over 1.7 million receiving a booster.

Since the Welsh Government took Wales into Alert Level 2 on 26th December, restrictions have been eased back to Level 0 since 28th January. However, the Welsh Government continues to strongly advise people to take lateral flow tests before seeing others, self-isolating if people display symptoms and to wear face coverings when entering indoor venues and/or on public transport. Mobile testing units remain in place across Newport to enable residents to take their PCR tests.

Newport City Council Update

Since the last update the Council's Gold team has been responding and coordinating as necessary the response to the changes in restrictions. Throughout January, service areas across the Council have been reporting additional pressures with staff resources and additional demand on key services. Social Services continues to report regularly on the ongoing pressures with staffing and allocating packages of care to service users. This included a [joint statement](#) from Gwent's health and social care services to families and the community to help and support services during this challenging time.

For all other staff in Newport the message remains for staff (where they can) to work from home. With the new variant communications have been issued to provide staff updates on the WG restrictions. This message equally applied to Members and access to the Civic Centre and democratic functions will continue to be undertaken virtually.

Risk assessments are in place for all the 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 work with. For the 5,500 staff employed by Newport City Council (including schools) approximately 1,200 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 currently operational and are providing in-person activity.

NCC and Welsh Government Support

At this difficult point in time, Newport Council is aware that many households and businesses in Newport will be concerned about self-isolating, money worries and/or need support. The Welsh Government, Newport Council and the third sector offer a range of services to households and businesses. Many of the Council's services can be found on the Newport Council [website](#). Some of these services include:

- **Food Bank Support** – The Council pledged an additional £100k for local foodbanks and community initiatives to apply.
- **Winter Fuel Support Scheme** - to support households with winter fuel bills and applications will be open until midnight on 28th February 2022. Welsh Government
- **Covid-19: Self-isolation support scheme** – supporting people on low income and cannot work from home who have to self-isolate.
- **Council Tax and Benefits** – The team is available to offer support to households and businesses struggling to pay their Council Tax, and also can assist in signposting to other organisations offering money / debt support
- **NDR Business Support** – Newport Council is offering Non Domestic Rate Grants and Welsh Government have announced a package of financial support for businesses and two of these schemes will be implemented by the Council’s Business support and revenues teams. Both schemes are now open with eligible businesses having to apply or register for support. Details are posted on the Council’s website with eligibility and application details.

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 st February 2022
Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education services continuing to support school and home learners and schools. • The Welsh Government team is working closely BT and with local authorities across Wales to address issues with broadband connectivity.
Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works are nearing completion on strategic regeneration schemes including the indoor market, Market Arcade, and Chartist Tower. • The Council’s Climate Change Plan was out for public consultation and until 31st December. Public consultation on the Council’s Climate Change Plan is now closed, and a final version will be considered by cabinet.
Strategic Recovery Aim 3 – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Services continuing to support businesses and enforcement action where there is non-compliance. • Guidance continues to be updated to align with the Welsh Government’s rule changes.
Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Budgeting Programme now well underway with a significant amount of bids received from a range of community projects • £100k committed to support foodbanks/food projects across Newport respond to additional winter demand, fund currently open to bids • £35k provided to Welsh language community projects via small grants to address gaps in Welsh service provision arising as a result of COVID-19 • 4 EU citizen projects awarded small grants to assist with cohesion and integration • Information continues to be provided to communities in accessible formats (e.g. translation of COVID-19 pass information into community languages) • Community tensions meeting (LA/Police) now stood up to weekly to respond to community concerns in light of changing restrictions and increased infection levels

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 3 update to be provided in December.

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	5	4	See Report on action being undertaken by the Executive Board, CMT and Gold group to manage the Council's response.	Executive Board

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 and this remains the case while restrictions are being reintroduced, which in turn places further pressure on services, as a result of concerns over the spread of the Omicron variant.

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 December 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.

The draft settlement for local authorities in Wales was released on 21st December and the proposed budget for 22/23 has been produced which includes consideration of certain long lasting issues as a result of 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 concerns about transmission of the Omicron variant and the move to alert level 2 in Wales as from 27th December has impacted on the work of Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams in managing clusters, containing transmission, and enforcing compliance with the new Covid restrictions. Previously, the Covid response work had been scaling-down and regulatory staff had been able to resume other enforcement work, but the high transmission rates and new restrictions have required a re-focusing on the Covid work. In particular Environmental Health were required to provide additional support for care settings during this period, as Public Health Wales were unable to cope with the increased numbers of outbreaks. As the Omicron variant has now become the dominant strain of the virus, the TTP team have had to reduce backward tracing in light of increased case numbers. Enforcement staff are re-engaged in Covid inspection work and carried out programmed inspections over the Christmas and New Year period to check compliance, particularly in licenced premises and close contact businesses, such as hairdressers and barbers. It was pleasing that most premises inspected were compliant with the Covid restrictions. The subsequent tail-off of cases in January and the phased relaxation of the restrictions, testing and self-isolation requirements, will require a further review of the Covid-response work.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The Council's existing Gold structure is closely monitoring and reporting on the impacts of the new variant and restrictions on Council services. The Human Resource team will closely monitor and report on staffing levels to the Gold group that will assist in identifying risk areas in the Council.

The Council maintains a policy for staff where they can work from home and for front-line staff to take necessary measures to maintain social distancing. There is likely to be an impact on the delivery of services and may require resources to be diverted and support key front-line 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.

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: 11 February 2022

Appendix 1 – Progress of Delivery against Strategic Recovery Aims (to 1st February 2022)

<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	February 2022 Update (By Exception)								
Support schools and other educational establishments to safely reopen for staff and pupils.	<p>Schools reopened on 6th January 2022 to all learners. Schools are following revised guidance from Welsh Government - https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance</p> <p>The supermarket voucher scheme is being used to support free school meal eligible pupils who are prevented from attending school after testing positive for Covid or due to self-isolation during the Spring term. The scheme was also used to support the additional planning days at the beginning of the spring term, with a two-day voucher being issued for all eligible pupils.</p> <p>The Commissioning Team is continuing to work with Chartwells to monitor supply chains and staff availability in relation to the school meals contract, with local adjustments to provision being made where necessary. Breakfast Clubs are operating where practical in accordance with local risk assessments.</p> <p>Periphery functions such as Home to School Transport and cleaning services are also being closely monitored in terms of workforce availability, although to date no significant issues have been reported.</p> <p>Welsh Government has provided additional Lateral Flow Tests for distribution to primary schools to support parents / carers who are unable to access tests for their primary aged children through other channels for daily contact testing.</p>								
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>There remain high levels of pupil absence across school settings.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="562 1114 1167 1350"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Average % of pupils who were in attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>29/11/2021 to 03/12/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>86.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>06/12/2021 to 10/12/2021 (p) (r)</td> <td>87.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13/12/2021 to 17/12/2021 (p)</td> <td>84.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(r) Revised (p) Provisional</p>	Average % of pupils who were in attendance		29/11/2021 to 03/12/2021 (p) (r)	86.3	06/12/2021 to 10/12/2021 (p) (r)	87.2	13/12/2021 to 17/12/2021 (p)	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.

Strategic Aim Step	February 2022 Update (By Exception)
	<p>Education Welfare Officers work closely with schools to identify pupils who are persistent absentees and provide support to help improve rates of attendance. During the period 01.09.21 – 31.11.21 there were 1,176 primary school pupils with rates of attendance lower than 80%. Of these, 76 had attendance rates lower than 50% with 10 having a rate of attendance that fell below 20%. During the same period there were 1,528 secondary school pupils with rates of attendance lower than 80%. Of these, 239 had attendance rates lower than 50% with 69 having a rate of attendance that fell below 20%.</p> <p>Education Welfare Officers continue to work closely with schools to support improved individual learner level attendance</p> <p>As of 31st December 2021, 194 children were known to be electively home educated in Newport. The Senior Education Welfare Officer leads on the work to ensure that home educating families are supported and that a programme of regular visits to home educating families is in place. Welsh Government grant funding has been used to introduce a Family Liaison Officer for Home Educating families who has provided extra capacity for this work.</p>
<p>Support schools to enhance and develop digital skills; digital teaching and learning platforms; and enhanced support for digitally excluded learners.</p>	<p>Issues with broadband connectivity are ongoing and continue to pose concerns for many schools in Newport. The Welsh Government PSBA team is working closely BT and with local authorities across Wales to address these issues. They recognise the unsatisfactory level of connectivity that some schools are experiencing and the disruption this is having on teaching and learning. The Welsh Government has instigated a full review of this incident with the interim report from this review expected by the end of January 2022.</p> <p>The project to migrate school users of @newport.gov.uk emails to Hwb using the @newportschools.wales domain is ongoing.</p>
<p>Support and enable people that are digitally excluded to access community IT programmes, Council services and other public services.</p>	<p>Requests for devices for younger children needing access to speech and language sessions are being met. Digital services continue to be issued for service users with lack of IT equipment. Language line is accessed for those families who require language support.</p>
<p>Support people who have been affected by unemployment to access new opportunities through training and re-employment required for post Covid 19 businesses.</p>	<p>Work is currently ongoing with DWP and Serco (prime contractor) on a regeneration of the Restart Contract due to lower than predicted referrals. The criteria for referrals to the Restart Contract has been broadened from the 17th of January to help with the eligibility numbers.</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	February 2022 Update (By Exception)
<p>Ensure our diverse communities are appropriately supported through tailored interventions specific to their needs, including consideration of language, culture and points of access.</p>	<p>Digital devices continue to be issued for service users with lack of IT equipment. Language line is accessed for those families who require language support.</p> <p>Practitioners from diverse communities are being recruited to help engage and offer services in areas of high minority ethnic population. Within the health strand of Flying Start a lead role is currently being created to work with special interest groups.</p> <p>Delivery of play scheme in Welsh is currently in the early stages of planning to be rolled out in the East geographical area. £35k has been provided to Welsh language community projects via small grants to address gaps in Welsh service provision arising because of Covid.</p> <p>4 EU citizen projects have been awarded small grants to assist with cohesion and integration. Information continues to be provided to communities in accessible formats e.g translation of Covid pass information into community languages. Community tensions meeting (LA/Police) meet weekly to respond to community concerns in light of changing restrictions and increased levels of infection.</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	February '22 Update (By Exception)
<p>Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.</p>	<p>Planning permission was granted for the new leisure and wellbeing project on 3rd November and represents a positive step in the delivery of the Newport Knowledge Quarter. Works are nearing completion on strategic regeneration schemes including the indoor market, Market Arcade, and Chartist Tower.</p>
<p>Enable and support the construction industry to re-establish the supply of new and affordable housing.</p>	<p>The authority continues to work with Housing Association partners to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing via the Social Housing Grant Programme.</p>
<p>Enable and support businesses to re-establish normal operations whilst maintaining</p>	<p>In relation to COVID Restrictions officers carried on the Level Zero inspection work through the early weeks of December 2021. Then for the end of December, the COVID Compliance enforcement work refocused on two separate areas namely, licensed/hospitality trade and general retail premises. In relation to hospitality, new rules came into force</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	February '22 Update (By Exception)
the health and safety of their workers and customers.	<p>on 26 December 2021. The new rules include track and trace details, wearing of face masks when walking through the premises, table service only and limits to 6 people per table. Licensing Officers ensured each business received the guidance on compliance from Welsh Government via email correspondence. Visits were also undertaken on 29 and 30 December 2021 and continued last week. 76 were completed in the high priority premises. In relation to general retail, new rules came into force on 26 December 2021. The new rules include renewed social distancing and maximum capacities. Trading Standards Officers carried out visits to businesses on 29, 30 and 31 December 2021. 126 visits were completed. The feedback from the inspection teams is that the sectors were quieter than normal, and that compliance was good.</p> <p>In relation to Tobacco Control and Operation CeCe it had previously been reported that recent seizures resulted in an estimated 340,00 cigarettes were seized, and the value was £425,00. Officers have now catalogued the seized items. The revised figure of the seizure value at full market price would be approximately £579,000 and the seizure amounts to 1,041,561 cigarettes and 115.65kg of hand rolling tobacco. This is the largest single seizure of illicit tobacco in Wales in 2021.</p> <p>Officers continue to carry out business enforcement work; issues under scrutiny; licensed premises adherence to conditions; rogue traders active at people's homes; 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>
Enable and support businesses to prepare for future trade arrangements resulting from Brexit negotiations.	See EU transition Cabinet Report. The Council is making arrangements with the successful organisations to deliver their Community Renewal Fund projects over the next six months. These projects will provide employment opportunities to disadvantaged groups into self-employment, creative and film industry and other areas of skills / re-training.
Protect and improve the environment, including air quality and decarbonisation of the city for its residents, businesses, and visitors.	<p>The Council's Climate Change Plan was out for public consultation and until 31st December. The results are now being collated ahead of report to Cabinet. Public consultation on the Council's Climate Change Plan is now closed, and a final version will be considered by cabinet.</p> <p>Wales Govt grant funding awarded for the installation of low carbon heating at three sites. One installation is to be completed by 31st of March and the others later in 2022.</p>
Continuing support and safe delivery of the Council's City services including waste, cleansing and highways.	The Council's City Services have seen an increase in staff absences due to positive covid cases and self-isolation, but services continue to operate as normal.

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	February '22 Update (By Exception)
Support people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.	<p>Adult services continue to monitor and review all packages of care in the community supporting citizens to stay in their own homes. The RAG rated assessment tool ensures that the most vulnerable are supported as a priority. Brokerage have engaged with our providers in meaningful discussions to ensure care is provided to the most vulnerable. We have managed to secure some block contracts with a couple of domiciliary care providers and residential home providers for immediate care when required.</p> <p>The number of Packages of care have remained stable between 32 and 34 for the last few weeks, and as soon as they are allocated, they are back filled with more demand. Compared to our regional partners, our figures are much lower than neighbours by 50% waiting for packages of care.</p> <p>The workforce pressures continue across social care internally and externally and requires robust management each day to ensure staff are available where they are needed.</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>The loosening up of the pandemic restrictions across the community continues to pose problems across social care workforce. The reduction of self -isolation when initial positive LFT's has not provided the additional resources as was hoped due to the evidence from our internal workforce. Staff are continuing to test positive on days 9 and 10, so may be non- symptomatic but cannot return due to positive LFT's.</p> <p>The additional Covid recovery funding and winter pressure funds through WG and RPB continues to be required to ensure we obtain as much flexibility with obtaining a workforce that engage while the pressures are significant.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention are a National issue and while we continue to explore a wide range of options to attempt to recruit and retain staff it is going to continue to be a challenging arena for many months to come.</p>
Assess the impact and the long-term sustainability of the social care sector in Newport informing future service requirements.	<p>Continued local and regional work with our partners to ensure the most vulnerable are supported to live within their own homes is a priority for Adult services.</p> <p>Home First initiative based in the RGH is actively supporting citizens to have their medical needs attended to and returned home as soon as possible. Ability to work in partnership with frailty and reablement services ensures a wide range of professionals are accessed, physio, social work, OT etc.</p> <p>The future drivers for this to continue and to enable citizens to remain at home before reaching hospital is an on-going development and relies on community provision across the care sector. This we know is under strain at the moment.</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	February '22 Update (By Exception)
Safeguard and support children and young people to remain safely with their families.	<p>The increased numbers of referrals to our front door is a service pressure and the complexity of the referrals and individual needs requires expert assessment and partnership working with Police and health and Education colleagues and prevention services.</p> <p>The ability of the safeguarding Hub to prioritise and work collaboratively with partners to ensure full lateral checks and communication between services is a positive and pro-active resource.</p>
Improve opportunities for Active Travel and work towards improved air quality.	<p>Following the submission of the Active Travel Network map we were informed that Newport had been awarded £750K of Core Allocation fund to develop and improve active travel routes across the city. In addition to this funding we have applied to the Main Active Travel Fund for other money to complete schemes developed this financial year.</p> <p>The five key segments of the Devon Place to Queensway bridge were lifted into place on Christmas Day. Work is now progressing with the fabrication of the steps and ramps and the ground works for the foundations into which the ramp supports will be fixed.</p> <p>Surfacing works were completed on the Gaer fort route and the lighting installation will commence shortly. The route will be available for use while the lighting is being installed.</p> <p>The surfacing work for the Bettws Canal link has commenced and the towpath will have to be closed intermittently over the next two months, for works to be undertaken. In January a new bridge design (for implementation next year) will be submitted for planning permission. Work has started on the Tredegar to St David's link as have ground investigation works for the fourteen locks bridge.</p> <p>Design works for links at NISV, Lliswerry Ponds, Sorrel Drive, Albany street, Bassaleg school, Queenshill , Mill street connections, City Centre Cycle ways and storage facility (GAP project) are underway with schemes moving towards implementation in the new financial year.</p>
Regulate businesses and support consumers / residents to protect and improve their health.	<p>In relation to COVID Restrictions officers carried on the Level Zero inspection work through the early weeks of December 2021. Then for the end of December, the COVID Compliance enforcement work refocussed on two separate areas namely, licensed/hospitality trade and general retail premises. In relation to hospitality, new rules came into force on 26 December 2021. The new rules include track and trace details, wearing of face masks when walking through the premises, table service only and limits to 6 people per table. Licensing Officers ensured each business received the guidance on compliance from Welsh Government via email correspondence. Visits were also undertaken on 29 and 30 December 2021 and continued last week. 76 were completed in the high priority premises. In relation to general retail, new rules came into force on 26 December 2021. The new rules include renewed social distancing and maximum capacities. Trading Standards Officers carried out visits to businesses on 29, 30 and 31 December 2021. 126 visits</p>

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

Strategic Aim Step	February '22 Update (By Exception)
	<p>were completed. The feedback from the inspection teams is that the sectors were quieter than normal, and that compliance was good.</p> <p>In relation to Tobacco Control and Operation CeCe it had previously been reported that recent seizures resulted in an estimated 340,00 cigarettes were seized, and the value was £425,00. Officers have now catalogued the seized items. The revised figure of the seizure value at full market price would be approximately £579,000 and the seizure amounts to 1,041,561 cigarettes and 115.65kg of hand rolling tobacco. This is the largest single seizure of illicit tobacco in Wales in 2021.</p> <p>Officers continue to carry out business enforcement work; issues under scrutiny; licensed premises adherence to conditions; rogue traders active at people's homes; 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>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, Museums and Art Galleries remain open within in current Covid guidelines.</p>
<p>Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.</p>	<p>The Council's message remains for Council staff to work from home (where they can). The Council has also updated its guidance for staff working in the office to meet the Welsh Government's rules. Ongoing communications are in place to remind staff about self-isolation, social distancing and undertaking risk assessments.</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	February '22 Update (By Exception)
<p>Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our</p>	<p>Welsh Govt 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</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	February '22 Update (By Exception)
<p>most vulnerable people as a priority.</p>	<p>Registered Social Landlords to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation, however supply remains a challenge.</p> <p>Take up of additional funding to prevent homelessness for those living in the private rental sector who have rent arrears due to the pandemic has been low to date. However, eligibility for this scheme has been widened. The Housing and Homelessness teams continue to face challenges regarding recruitment. This is a sector wide issue.</p> <p>Delays amongst the construction of Social Housing Grant funding schemes developed in partnership with Housing Associations will impact on the delivery of affordable housing within the city. Increased labour and material costs are impacting on the delivery of the Disabled Facility Grant programme with longer contractor/material lead times.</p> <p>£100k has been made available to foodbanks and food projects across Newport with the fund currently being open to bids. The Council is working in partnership with GAVO to recruit a Food Sustainability Co-ordinator to look at longer term preventative work in relation to food poverty, working closely with third sector partners.</p>
<p>Assess and address the inequalities that Covid 19 has highlighted or contributed to within our communities.</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 encourage more effective engagement with those groups who are affected by council decisions. The council is also refreshing its Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment to better understand enduring or emerging inequalities since its development.</p>
<p>Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.</p>	<p>More than ever, it has been important for us to develop engaging communications content that would improve our reach on such platforms in what was a particularly saturated environment.</p> <p>Our move towards using more graphical representations, animations and video content has been supported with additional training and upskilling of the team. In addition, we have just appointed an additional resource within the communication team with a specific focus on creating digital content. This will allow us to produce more content in-house and further develop our communication offering.</p> <p>The NCC and One Newport annual reports are now published highlighting a range of positive work in the last year.</p>

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Developing opportunities for people to access suitable and affordable housing.	The Social Housing Grant Programme is funding the development of over 500 new affordable housing units with several schemes' due completion within the current financial year. However, delivery schedules are impacted by issues with materials and labour, along with associated increased costs.
Deliver a community cohesion programme that effectively responds to community tensions and creates a shared sense of identity across the city.	<p>The council's Connected Communities Team continues to meet regularly with policing and other partner colleagues to monitor and respond to emerging community tensions. 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.</p> <p>EU and Welsh Language community grant schemes are now in place with funds allocated to support grassroots groups to build resilience, cultural awareness and promote positive community relations across the city.</p>
Prevent and address instances of antisocial behaviour (ASB) impacting upon the residents and the business community of Newport.	<p>Trading Standards continue to investigate two cases where alcohol/cigarettes were sold to children. Reports will be compiled for consideration under the council's enforcement policy.</p> <p>Trading Standards and the Partnerships Team have held discussions relating to the use of call-blockers. These are devices that will prevent ASB in the form of nuisance phone calls to vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>Trading Standards are developing a 'Responsible Retailers' scheme. The prime objective of the scheme is to encourage off-licences to adopt good practices in relation to sales of alcohol and similar products.</p> <p>Licensing Officers remain active in improving the practices of businesses that facilitate drunken misbehaviour in communities and the city centre. Meetings and audits have been carried out at key venues.</p> <p>Youth Justice Service now has an established presence on the panel. The lead officer is liaising with the M4 corridor property consultant with a view to secure a 'pop up' type premise in Newport city centre for YJS and other ASB agencies to use. This will provide opportunities to engage children and try and identify what informs their antisocial behaviour and what could divert them away from it. Operation Aston will be part of this if we can secure it.</p>
Re-establish Community Regeneration facilities and services where it is safe to do so for staff and its service users.	All hubs open and operating in accordance with risk assessments. Hubs continue to deliver a range of services which are delivered on an appointment basis. Risk Assessments are frequently updated with new guidance or advice is provided. Community centres are operational, similarly on a risk assessed basis and in line with latest restrictions.
Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.	The Covid Recovery Fund to support grass roots groups and projects has been launched with significant interest from communities. The participatory budgeting approach will be adopted to help build social capital, deliver social value and bottom-up recovery. The steering group will be assessing bids in January.

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	We are currently running engagement to support budget decisions here.