

# Report

## Cabinet

---



### Part 1

Date: 9 March 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 Policy and Transformation

**Ward** All

**Summary** Following February's update to Cabinet, Wales has further eased restrictions to reflect the falling case rate across Wales. In Newport and Gwent the case rate across the community is also reducing but Covid continues to be prevalent. The Welsh Government's advice remains for people to self isolate and to also wear face masks in indoor venues such as shops.

Newport Council continues to monitor the situation and there continues to be services seeing disruption and ongoing demand on front line services. Newport Council continues to follow Welsh Government's guidance for staff to work from home unless it is required for their role.

The report also includes a summary of activity across Council services in February 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 in [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 (February)**

Since the last Covid update, the reported case rate in Wales has continued to fall with an incidence rate at 400 cases per 100,000 population. However, it must be noted that the reported case rates do not include positive cases resulting from Lateral Flow Device tests and therefore, case rates within our communities remain at higher levels than at any other time of the pandemic. Further information can be obtained from the [Public Health Wales Dashboard](#).

The number of hospitalisations including those requiring intensive care, remain lower than previous waves of the pandemic. Hospital settings across Wales and Gwent continue to report significant pressures on services, as they manage the impact of Covid-19 aligned with other illnesses and winter pressures that are being faced across the whole the NHS system. These impacts on NHS services also impact the whole health and social care system.

The vaccination programme to boost and ensure those that haven't been vaccinated is continuing. To date in the region of 84% of those eligible have received their booster vaccination in Wales. In Gwent an average of 1000 vaccination doses are administered daily. Welsh Government announced children 5-11 will be able to receive Covid vaccine and the booster programme has been expanded to 16–17-year-olds.

Since 28<sup>th</sup> of January Wales continues to be at Coronavirus Alert Level 0. This means most of the rules regarding where we can go and who we can meet indoors and outdoors came to an end. At its press review on 10<sup>th</sup> February, Welsh Government announced changes to Covid passes for entertainment venues, nightclubs and large events will no longer be needed from 18<sup>th</sup> February. From the 28<sup>th</sup> February pupils are not be required to wear facemasks in classrooms and schools will have the autonomy to make their own rules regarding this issue.

The current self-isolation rules remain, however this will be considered at the next Welsh Government 21-day review on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March. Despite the easing of restrictions, the Welsh Government continues to strongly advice wearing face coverings when entering indoor venues and/or on public transport, to complete a lateral flow test before mixing with others and to get tested and self-isolate if you begin to display signs of coronavirus. Mobile testing units remain in place across Newport to enable residents to take PCR tests and free Lateral Flow Device Testing kits are available from several locations across the Council, including Neighbourhood Hubs and Pharmacies.

## **Newport City Council Update**

Since the last update the Council's Gold team has continued to respond and coordinate as necessary to the impacts of the pandemic and the response to the changes in restrictions. Through February, there have been early signs of a stabilisation in staffing levels across the Council resulting in less disruption to service planning and delivery, the situation is reviewed daily, with some operational service decisions still having to be taken at short notice. Some service areas remain vulnerable to the ongoing challenges caused by the continuing impacts of the pandemic, including Social Care services who experience a range of challenges which are exacerbated by staff shortages due to Covid-19 related absenteeism.

## **NCC and Welsh Government Support**

Newport Council is continuing to provide support to households and businesses in Newport that may be struggling in the cost of living crisis. 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.
- **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 <sup>st</sup> March 2022
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 1</b> – Supporting Education & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Hub Work &amp; Skills held an event on 9<sup>th</sup> February focussing on the Care Sector to give people an insight into the industry and to give opportunities (both placement and training opportunities).</li> <li>• The Work &amp; Skills team also partnered with Acorn Recruitment Agency at the end of January 2022 and held recruitment sessions in each of the Hubs. The event was a great success resulting in 62 engagements across the 4 Hubs.</li> <li>• Work has commenced relating to the recommissioning of Families First services, directed by the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) Board.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 2</b> – Supporting the Environment and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor Market Redevelopment nearing practical completion. Formal opening scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>• Award of 18 City of Newport Business Development grants</li> <li>• Award of 200 Emergency Restrictions Fund discretionary grants to micro/small businesses and sole traders</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 3</b> – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full re-opening of all libraries from 28<sup>th</sup> February, operating standard hours.</li> <li>• Brokerage and Commissioning continue to secure contracts for our most vulnerable residents.</li> <li>• Brokerage and Commissioning secured emergency domiciliary care for the recent storms, employing domiciliary contract specifically for the evacuated residents with care needs within the hotel and their return home.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 4</b> – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newport Council is working with Welsh Government to access financial support available for temporary accommodation after the hardship fund ceases.</li> <li>• Voting events are now being advertised to take place in late February/early March for Participatory Budget. Citizen participation will be held through zoom online events with alternative provision is being made available for those without digital connectivity or skills.</li> <li>• 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.</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 3 (October to December) 2021/22 risk report update. Quarter 3 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	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 2020/21 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 continue to be eased.

Close monitoring of the financial issues arising, as a result of Covid, will continue between this point and the end of the financial year, with the overall impact during 2021/22 to be reported as part of the Outturn Report. All activities 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 aspects of the medium term outlook remain challenging.

The release of the draft settlement for local authorities took place on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and confirmed that the Hardship Fund will end as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, with local authorities expected to manage the continuing financial impact of the pandemic from within existing resources. Therefore, as part of the budget setting and medium term planning process, consideration was given to the potential ongoing financial impact, both in terms of additional expenditure and loss of income, beyond the 2021/22 financial year. The 2022/23 budget reflects the outcome of those discussions with resources allocated on both a one-off and recurring basis, to be reviewed on an annual basis as clarity regarding the permanent financial impact is achieved. A process for internally managing the additional costs and lost income during 2022/23 is currently being determined.

## 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 to alert level zero and the phased relaxation and removal of most restrictions has significantly reduced the work of Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams in managing clusters, containing transmission, and enforcing compliance with the Covid Regulations. Environmental Health continue to provide support for care settings and schools but there will be a phased transfer of responsibility to Public Health Wales, as the virus response becomes more of a public health measure as opposed to a pandemic emergency. As testing is scaled back, and self-isolation rules are relaxed, then the numbers of cases being referred to TTP for track and trace has also decreased significantly. Trading Standards officers will continue to advise business premises on risk assessments, but the one remaining legal restriction relating to the wearing of face coverings in certain indoor premises is a matter for the Police. Therefore, Public Protection staff are gradually returning to their other statutory work, particularly in relation to food inspections, as the Covid-related support and enforcement work is scaled-back.

## Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no HR related issues arising directly from this report.

Continuing to adopt the rate relief scheme is in line with the Council's strategic recovery aims and its Well-being Objective to "Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment" and will support the "Newport Offer" intervention within Newport's Well-being Plan.

The Scheme is funded by Welsh Government and will enable businesses that are in the retail, hospitality, or leisure sector to assist them in recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These sectors are of major importance to the local economy and labour market and taking up the available support would be in the Council's interests. Being able to assist businesses in this way could help prevent business decline and support the economy for the immediate and longer terms.

## 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: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## Appendix 1 – Progress of Delivery against Strategic Recovery Aims (to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

<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>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>								
Support schools and other educational establishments to safely reopen for staff and pupils.	<p>Schools remain open to all learners. Schools are following guidance from Welsh Government that was last updated in late January 2022 <a href="https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance">https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance</a></p> <p>In line with direction from Welsh Government, the supermarket voucher scheme will continue to be used to cover the fourth coming two-week Easter holiday period. Given that the Covid hardship fund is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, we are awaiting further information in relation to whether provision will continue into the summer term. We continue to wait for further information of the continuation of provision into the summer term regarding holiday periods and instances where eligible pupils are unable to attend school due to being Covid positive or having to self-isolate.</p> <p>Aligned to the planned cessation of the Covid hardship scheme, work is being undertaken to ensure that all school meals and breakfast club services can return to pre-pandemic arrangements from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 in the majority of settings.</p> <p>Officers continue to monitor all periphery functions, although to date no significant issues have been reported.</p>								
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>High levels of pupil absence still remains across school settings, with numbers in attendance falling each week since the start of the Spring Term.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="562 1059 1167 1295"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Average % of pupils who were in attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>10/01/2022 to 14/01/2022 (r)</td> <td>89.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17/01/2022 to 21/01/2022 (p) (r)</td> <td>85.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24/01/2022 to 28/01/2022 (p)</td> <td>83.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(r) Revised (p) Provisional</p>	Average % of pupils who were in attendance		10/01/2022 to 14/01/2022 (r)	89.1	17/01/2022 to 21/01/2022 (p) (r)	85.7	24/01/2022 to 28/01/2022 (p)	83.7
Average % of pupils who were in attendance									
10/01/2022 to 14/01/2022 (r)	89.1								
17/01/2022 to 21/01/2022 (p) (r)	85.7								
24/01/2022 to 28/01/2022 (p)	83.7								

**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>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
	Education Welfare Officers continue to work closely with schools to identify pupils who are persistent absentees and provide support to help improve rate of attendance.
Support schools to enhance and develop digital skills; digital teaching and learning platforms; and enhanced support for digitally excluded learners.	<p>Issues with broadband connectivity remain and continue to pose concerns for many schools in Newport. The Welsh Government PSBA team continues to work closely with BT and local authorities across Wales to address these issues. The Welsh Government has instigated a full review of this incident with the interim report expected shortly.</p> <p>The project to move school users of @newport.gov.uk emails to Hwb using the @newportschools.wales domain is ongoing with 29 schools having migrated to date.</p>
Support and enable people that are digitally excluded to access community IT programmes, Council services and other public services.	Requests for devices for younger children needing access to speech and language sessions are being met. Digital services remain available for service users with lack of IT equipment. Language line is accessed for those families who require language support.
Support people who have been affected by unemployment to access new opportunities through training and re-employment required for post Covid 19 businesses.	<p>Central Hub Work &amp; Skills held a small event on 9<sup>th</sup> February focussing on the Care Sector to give people an insight into the industry and to give opportunities (both placement and training opportunities) that would enable them to earn more money as a result of the completion of the AWIF principles and values.</p> <p><b><u>Aim of the event:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free informal Advice on working in the industry</li> <li>2. Opportunity to gain some knowledge through a placement</li> <li>3. Opportunity to gain AWIF Principles and values (accredited training) giving participant the chance to register with Social Care Wales and to earn a higher hourly rate.</li> <li>4. Opportunity to be referred to one of our Partners to gain employment (Through our partners we can place both drivers and Non Drivers)</li> </ol> <p>The Work &amp; Skills team also partnered with Acorn Recruitment Agency at the end of January 2022 and held recruitment sessions in each of the Hubs. Acorn are one of the largest, most established agencies in the UK and consequently have a huge variety of Jobs available. Job seekers were given the chance to register with Acorn and to consider a range of flexible working opportunities.</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	March 2022 Update (By Exception)
	The event was a great success resulting in 62 engagements across the 4 Hubs.
Ensure our diverse communities are appropriately supported through tailored interventions specific to their needs, including consideration of language, culture and points of access.	<p>Work has commenced relating to the recommissioning of Families First services, directed by the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) Board. A task and finish group will begin scoping specifications in order to tender via Sell2Wales.</p> <p>Expressions of Interest have been invited from existing CCG partners for Early Help funding which is available for 2022/23 only. The aim of the funding is to address the waiting lists which have accrued as a result of Covid, and ensure the families, children and young people receive the support they require sooner.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place for play schemes to be delivered across all hubs during February half term, including complex needs provision. A specialist Health Visitor has also been appointed to support infant feeding.</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	March 2022 Update (By Exception)
Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor Market Redevelopment nearing practical completion. Formal opening scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>• Majority completion of the Market Arcade restoration project</li> <li>• Award of 18 City of Newport Business Development grants</li> <li>• Award of 200 Emergency Restrictions Fund discretionary grants to micro/small businesses and sole traders</li> </ul>
Enable and support the construction industry to re-establish the supply of new and affordable housing.	<p>The authority continues to work with Housing Association partners to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing via the Social Housing Grant Programme. Increased costs of materials and contractor availability continues to present challenges.</p> <p>Hill Street units were delivered to site under permitted development. Planning application for permanent retention expected soon.</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	March 2022 Update (By Exception)
Enable and support businesses to re-establish normal operations whilst maintaining the health and safety of their workers and customers.	<p>In relation to COVID restrictions, through the last few weeks the restrictions have eased, and businesses were provided with compliance advice regarding the regulations and interventions continued. One nightclub was issued a Premises Improvement Notice for failures; but improved soon after.</p> <p>Officers have continued with the Illegal Tobacco Enforcement Campaign. This has seen several 'illegal pop-up shops' closed using ASB closure powers and investigations continue in relation to groups carrying out significant criminality. 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>Following a lengthy investigation, the 4 February 2021, saw the execution of a warrant on a suspected unlicensed dog breeder. In total 20 officers from across our enforcement partners were involved in the raid. 26 dogs were recovered from the premises. This included "breeding bitches" and puppies. They are now being cared for at an animal rescue. Assets belonging to members of the OCG, to the value of £0.5 million, were frozen pending ongoing investigations. Officers have responded to UK intelligence alerts warning of the dangers of unsafe vaping products on general sale. Multiple visits have been made. Since November 620 dangerous products have been identified at 17 Newport shops, with a combined value of £5,800. The products were removed from the marketplace.</p> <p>During February officers were again testing whether shops would sell age restricted products to children. Vaping products were under scrutiny. The supply of such products to children are banned; and of the 11 shops tested, 4 made illegal sales.</p> <p>Officers hope to improve support to businesses wishing 'to get things right' and plan to run food allergen training and launch a responsible retailer scheme in the coming months.</p> <p>Three nightclubs suspected of breaching licensing conditions have agreed to a voluntary action plan. Improvements to be made will see a reduction in drinking time and closing time and staff carrying out counterterrorism training.</p>
Enable and support businesses to prepare for future trade arrangements resulting from Brexit negotiations.	The Council is continuing to monitor and report the Council's response since the UK left the EU. A separate update is reported to Cabinet on the Council's progress.
Protect and improve the environment, including air quality and decarbonisation of the city for its residents, businesses, and visitors.	Progress on the delivery of the Carbon Management Plan was considered by Scrutiny Committee on 28 <sup>th</sup> February.

**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	March 2022 Update (By Exception)
Continuing support and safe delivery of the Council's City services including waste, cleansing and highways.	There have not been any significant changes to City Services since the last report and 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	March 2022 Update (By Exception)
Support people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.	<p>The number of current packages of care outstanding for Newport residents on 21/02/2022 requires brokering for 30 packages of care, a total of 320.75 hours. 21 long term Residential/Nursing placements and 8 respite, 29 in total. This number of POC appears to be a stable figure for the last couple of months.</p> <p>Brokerage and Commissioning continue to secure contracts for our most vulnerable residents and were also able to secure emergency domiciliary care for the recent storm Eunice, employing domiciliary contract specifically for the evacuated residents with care needs within the hotel and their return home.</p> <p>The pressure within the wider workforce/commissioned services with recruitment to the workforce is still a factor in our ability to provide further packages of care.</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>There is continued pressure within the internal workforce for the recruitment of qualified staff and social care staff with our cared for services. Continual management hours juggle our residential care homes to ensure staff coverage. This is for two main reasons, staff absence due to Covid and isolation rules, secondly an inability to recruit from the population.</p> <p>Additional funding through WG Covid pressures funding and the RPB winter pressures money required to ensure we are directly working with our most vulnerable and creating pathways for citizens to stay in their own homes. National recruitment pressures to all social care/work posts continue.</p>
Assess the impact and the long-term sustainability of the social care sector in Newport informing future service requirements.	<p>We have continued to work pro-actively with our commissioned services, to ensure they are supported and are resilient for our future citizens needs in Newport.</p> <p>Individual evaluations for each brokered service have been completed to ensure we get the tailored provision required when commissioning services that fits assessed needs. Smaller specialist services that are required are actively sustained to ensure citizens have choice and that their individual needs are met.</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**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
	<p>The National driver for sustainable workforce across social care continues to have the highest priority, locally regionally and nationally. Looking at strategic delivery of services to ensure robust services are available to maintain citizens well-being in the community.</p>
<p>Safeguard and support children and young people to remain safely with their families.</p>	<p>Referrals to both adults and children front doors requiring immediate safeguarding intervention continue to be high but manageable by services. This continues to require full partnership engagement to ensure safety in the community by all who work across our communities within health and social care and complete 'duty reports' where there is concern.</p>
<p>Improve opportunities for Active Travel and work towards improved air quality.</p>	<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>Work is now progressing on the Devon Place Bridge over the railway 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>
<p>Regulate businesses and support consumers / residents to protect and improve their health.</p>	<p>In relation to COVID restrictions, through the last few weeks the restrictions have eased, and businesses were provided with compliance advice regarding the regulations and interventions continued. One nightclub was issued a Premises Improvement Notice for failures; but improved soon after.</p> <p>Officers have continued with the Illegal Tobacco Enforcement Campaign. This has seen several 'illegal pop-up shops' closed using ASB closure powers and investigations continue in relation to groups carrying out significant criminality. 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</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**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
	<p>standards work continues; the emerging threat is a high proportion of businesses failing to deploy an adequate allergens protection system.</p> <p>Officers have responded to UK intelligence alerts warning of the dangers of unsafe vaping products on general sale. Multiple visits have been made. Since November 620 dangerous products have been identified at 17 Newport shops, with a combined value of £5,800. The products were removed from the marketplace.</p> <p>During February officers were again testing whether shops would sell age restricted products to children. Vaping products were under scrutiny. The supply of such products to children are banned; and of the 11 shops tested, 4 made illegal sales.</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>Full re-opening of all libraries from 28<sup>th</sup> February, operating standard hours.</p>
<p>Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.</p>	<p>Newport Council is still following Welsh Government guidance for staff to work from home unless required by their role. There is ongoing work as part of the New Normal project for staff work hybrid from both their homes, Council offices or other suitable locations.</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**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
<p>Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our most vulnerable people as a priority.</p>	<p>Welsh Government hardship funding continues to be used to support the additional pressures on temporary accommodation due to WG guidance for authorities to accommodate anyone presenting as homeless. These expectations are expected to continue into 22/23 and the authority is working with WG to access financial support available for temporary accommodation after the hardship fund ceases. We continue to work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation, however supply remains a challenge.</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**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
	<p>Take up of WG 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 and the authority is working with RSL partners to assist those who have accrued rent arrears as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>There are delays relating to the construction of Social Housing Grant funded schemes developed in partnership with Housing Associations due to labour and material issues. This is also 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. The Covid Recovery Fund participatory budgeting programme is progressing on plan. Enough applications have been received to give sufficient choice in voting which should ensure the full allocation of the available funds. Voting events are now being advertised to take place in late February/early March. Whilst most citizen participation will be held through zoom online events, alternative provision is being made available for those without digital connectivity or skills. Once the current programme is completed, over £5 million in funding for Covid recovery work would have been allocated by the community through participatory budgeting.</p>
<p>Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.</p>	<p>As above the Council alongside its strategic partners is leading on the delivery of the Covid Recovery Fund to support community based projects. The Council is also supporting and administering various Welsh Government and local grants to support vulnerable and disadvantaged households through the cost of living crisis.</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. However, delivery schedules continue to be impacted by issues with materials and labour, along with associated increased costs. This is being closely monitored.</p>
<p>Deliver a community cohesion programme that effectively</p>	<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</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**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>March 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
<p>responds to community tensions and creates a shared sense of identity across the city.</p>	<p>been utilised to support the second round of Participatory Budgeting and the team have engaged with 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>
<p>Prevent and address instances of antisocial behaviour (ASB) impacting upon the residents and the business community of Newport.</p>	<p>Licensing Officers remain active 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 (YJS) continues its involvement on the Operation Ashton Panel and is waiting for further information of the possibility of a pop-up shop in the town centre to operate a 'drop in' venue for children to divert them away from antisocial behaviour. M4 Property Consultants has indicated that they may be able to assist in this venture. Partners have been identified in the form of Newport Live, the Police, exploitation worker and YJS volunteers.</p> <p>YJS are meeting to review projects focusing on domestic abuse. The aim is to target the younger age group of year 6 primary schools and work with them around appropriate relationships, and to re-establish our Roma group with Maindee Primary School along with other identified schools. YJS to meet with the Education safeguarding Lead, to consider supporting teachers with antisocial behaviour partnerships to divert children away from such behaviour rather than opting for a Duty to Report option which could be dealt with at a lower level.</p>
<p>Re-establish Community Regeneration facilities and services where it is safe to do so for staff and its service users.</p>	<p>All hubs open and operating in accordance with risk assessments. Hubs continue to deliver a range of services, many of which are delivered on an appointment basis. Community centres are operational, similarly on a risk assessed basis.</p>
<p>Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.</p>	<p>The Covid Recovery Fund participatory budgeting programme is progressing on plan. Enough applications have been received to give sufficient choice in voting which should ensure the full allocation of the available funds. Voting events are now being advertised to take place in late February/early March. Whilst most citizen participation will be held through zoom online events, alternative provision is being made available for those without digital connectivity or skills. Once the current programme is completed, over £5 million in funding for Covid recovery work would have been allocated by the community through participatory budgeting.</p> <p>The Council is also developing its Participation Strategy that will support the Council's programme to improve how the Council engages and promotes participation in the democratic process. The current consultations the Council is leading on can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

