

# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 6 April 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 March update to Cabinet, Wales remains at Alert Level 0 with further eased restrictions to reflect the falling case rate across Wales. In Newport and Gwent, the case rate across the community is also reducing, although Covid continues to be prevalent. The Welsh Government advice remains to self-isolate and to wear face coverings indoors and on public transport, however on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March all remaining restrictions may come to an end if the current public health situation remains.

Newport Council will carry on monitoring the situation whilst services continue to see 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.

**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 [March 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 (March/April)

Since the last Covid update, the reported case rate in Wales has started to see an increase in the case rate to over 400 cases per 100,000 population (Not including positive lateral flow tests). Further information can be obtained from the [Public Health Wales Dashboard](#).

The number of hospitalisations and beds occupied with Covid-19 related patients continues to remain low. However, hospital settings across Wales and Gwent continue to report significant pressures on NHS services, as they continue to manage the impact of Covid-19 aligned with other illnesses and pressures across the whole system. Most recent operational data indicates approximately 25% of patients are actively requiring treatment for Covid-19. Health Boards are looking at returning to pre Covid level of elective activity over the next few months and how they start dealing with the significant levels of backlog.

The vaccination programme to boost and ensure those that haven't been vaccinated is continuing. To date 87% of those eligible have received their booster vaccination in Wales. Health Boards are already planning to offer the vaccine to all 5–11-year-olds from mid-March onwards, and they will now be factoring in the need to prioritise a second spring booster for the most vulnerable, following the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

From the 28<sup>th</sup> March, several restrictions remain in place, namely that face coverings remain legally required in health and care settings; and workplaces and premises open to the public must continue to do coronavirus risk assessments. The following requirements have now been legally removed and will continue to be recommended in public health advice:

- Face coverings will no longer be required by law in retail settings and on public transport.
- The requirement to self-isolate will also move into guidance. A £500 self-isolation payment to support people will continue to be available until June 2022.
- Regulations for individuals involved in the organising of large unlicensed music events and legal requirements on election campaigns will also be removed.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April, people will be advised to take a lateral flow test if they have symptoms and isolate for a minimum of 5 days. Health, social care and special school staff can access PCR tests if they have symptoms or if they are a household contact by contacting their local health board and those individuals fall into the covid treatment group (those previously advised to shield). Welsh Government will further assess the potential to remove remaining legal measures at the next 21-day review by 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Further information on the Welsh Government long term plan can be [found here](#).

## Newport City Council Update

Following the Welsh Government's announcement for workplaces and premises open to the public to continue to do coronavirus risk assessments, the Council will continue to operate on the basis of existing risk assessments for staff to work remotely from home unless their role requires staff to be present in Council offices. The Council is continuing its preparatory work to enable a phased return and approaching a hybrid approach to working. The Council's management teams will be working with Trade Unions, staff and elected members on introducing a phased and safe return, assessing room occupancy numbers, IT/office requirements and updates to Council policies.

## NCC and Welsh Government Support

Throughout the last financial year, Newport Council has been providing support to households and businesses in Newport struggling with the increasing cost of living around energy, fuel, food and household goods. Newport Council has been supporting the city's foodbanks and groups that are supporting some of its most vulnerable and low-income households. Funding from the Council and WLGA is continuing to be distributed across the foodbanks and charities. Newport Council also announced at the Council meeting in March that businesses will receive rate relief from [Welsh Government](#) but also Newport Council will be using its [discretionary powers](#) to support businesses in the city centre as well. For households, the Council will be implementing the Welsh Government's Council Tax rebate for properties in band A-D.

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> April 2022
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 1</b> – Supporting Education & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh Government have confirmed the extension of Free School Meals holiday provision up to academic year 22/23 and will cover the fourth coming May half term and summer holiday period.</li> <li>• The Council has been working across our community hubs and libraries providing drop-in sessions for basic digital skills and provide courses through adult community learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 2</b> – Supporting the Environment and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses in Newport will receive Welsh Government rate relief as well as further rate relief from Newport Council's discretionary powers in 2022/23.</li> <li>• Climate Change Plan approved by Council and will be commencing delivery in 2022/23.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 3</b> – Supporting the Health & Wellbeing of Citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 to work hybrid from both their homes, Council offices or other suitable locations. We will continue to work closely with managers and trade union representatives as legislative measures are relaxed.</li> <li>• Library and museums services now being delivered as per the pre pandemic format with some infection control measures in place until the Welsh Government's guidance changes.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Recovery Aim 4</b> – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory Budget events have concluded. Over 450 people participated in voting events, and a total of 80 projects have secured funding, covering a diverse range of activities and audiences.</li> <li>• £62k has been awarded to food projects across the city to respond to winter demand.</li> <li>• NCC has provided GAVO with funding to recruit a fixed term Food Sustainability Co-ordinator to consider preventative work in relation to food poverty. The postholder will work closely with third sector partners and managing a grant programme which will further boost the capacity of food related projects</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 until 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 of 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 phased relaxation of the previous legal controls and the removal of all legal restrictions as of 28<sup>th</sup> March will significantly reduce 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 some support for care settings and schools but there will be a phased transfer of responsibility to Public Health Wales, as the virus response becomes a public health measure as opposed to a pandemic emergency. As testing is scaled back, and self-isolation rules are relaxed, then the TTP work will refocus on the most vulnerable cases, and the service will need to be restructured as from June. Trading Standards officers will continue to provide advice and assistance as part of their other statutory inspections, but all Covid regulatory work will cease. 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, Policy and Transformation**

There are no HR related issues arising directly from this report, and we will continue to work closely with managers and trade union representatives as legislative measures are relaxed. 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.

### **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](#)

[Responding to the 'New Normal' Report to Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee](#)

**Dated: 28 March 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>April 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 February 2022 <a href="https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance">https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance</a></p> <p>Welsh Government confirmed on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 that Free School Meal holiday provision will be extended up to the start of the 2022/23 academic year and therefore will cover the forthcoming May half term and summer holiday periods. There has however to date been no further information as to whether provision will continue beyond the cessation of the Covid hardship scheme on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 in relation to eligible pupils who are unable to attend school due to being Covid positive or having to self-isolate.</p> <p>In line with the end of the Covid hardship scheme, Headteachers are arranging for school meals services to return to pre-pandemic arrangements from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. Where for specific reasons this cannot be implemented immediately, additional costs will be charged to individual school budgets.</p>								
Work to prevent and reduce inequality of progress and outcomes in education for mainstream and vulnerable learners.	<p>The levels of pupil attendance across both primary and secondary sectors showed small levels of improvement in the period prior to the February half term holiday.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="562 954 1167 1187"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Average % of pupils who were in attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>31/01/2022 to 04/02/2022 (p) (r)</td> <td>87.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>07/02/2022 to 11/02/2022 (r)</td> <td>90.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14/02/2022 to 17/02/2022 (p) (r)</td> <td>90.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(r) Revised (p) Provisional</p> <p>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.</p>	Average % of pupils who were in attendance		31/01/2022 to 04/02/2022 (p) (r)	87.8	07/02/2022 to 11/02/2022 (r)	90.6	14/02/2022 to 17/02/2022 (p) (r)	90.6
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**Strategic Recovery Aim 1 – Supporting Education & Employment.**

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

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


<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>April 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
Support schools to enhance and develop digital skills; digital teaching and learning platforms; and enhanced support for digitally excluded learners.	<p>Whilst there is an overall improvement in access to a stable broadband service, intermittent connectivity is still an issue 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's independent review of this incident has been completed with feedback to local authorities expected over the next month.</p> <p>The project to move school users of @newport.gov.uk emails to Hwb using the @newportschools.wales domain is ongoing with 35 schools having migrated to date.</p>
Ongoing employment support is being offered through existing programmes, including face to face appointments. Employment event proposed for 6 <sup>th</sup> April at Pill Mill..	<p>Ongoing employment support is being offered through existing programmes, including face to face appointments. Employment event proposed for 6<sup>th</sup> April at Pill Mill.</p> <p>Our 'Get Connected' digital skills have been shared across the council, its partners, and its external stakeholders. We are also working across our community hubs and libraries providing drop-in sessions for basic digital skills, and provide courses through adult community learning, for sustainability. We are working with the college and USW, and Kiddicare, and EYST amongst other partners to develop basic digital skills.</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>Ongoing employment support is being offered through existing programmes, including face to face appointments. Employment event proposed for 6<sup>th</sup> April at Pill Mill.</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>A draft specification for the recommissioning of Families First services has been prepared and a supplier day proposed for early April.</p> <p>Applications have opened for playscheme during the Easter holidays, including complex needs provision.</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	April 2022 Update (By Exception)
<p>Maintain our focus on regenerating Newport to deliver existing and new investment projects.</p>	<p>At March's Council meeting, it was approved for the retail, leisure and hospitality rate relief scheme from Welsh Government to be applied for 2022/23. It is expected for up to 1,200 businesses to benefit from the reduced rates. Newport Council also announced Newport City Centre Rate Relief for existing city centre businesses to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic and supporting new businesses to move into and trade from empty premises. Further information can be found in the Council report <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Indoor Market open to public 19/03/22</p>  <p>Work on Chartist Tower is progressing with an expected opening date in May 2022. An additional 20 City of Newport Business Development grants have been awarded.</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. Increased costs of materials and contractor availability continues to present challenges as well as the complex nature of some developments currently on site. Despite this, £7.6m of funding has been drawn down to date.</p>
<p>Enable and support businesses to re-establish normal operations whilst maintaining the health and safety of their workers and customers.</p>	<p>Officers continue to provide advice regarding COVID regulations and interventions continued. This work programme will come to an end on 31 March 2022. Officers continue the Illegal Tobacco Enforcement Campaign. Investigations are ongoing and there are plans to close further shops using ASB closure powers.</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</p>

<p><b>Strategic Recovery Aim 2 – Supporting the Environment and the Economy</b> Understand and respond to the impact of Covid19 on the city’s economic and environmental goals to enable Newport to thrive again.</p>	
<p><b>Supports Wellbeing Objective 2 – To promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment.</b></p>	
<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>April 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 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>Officers have carried out safety checks of taxis during the 6 Nations Rugby Tournament. 43 vehicles and drivers were inspected during night-time enforcement. Further enforcement planned 11 and 19 March 2022.</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.	<p>The Organisational Climate Change Plan 2022-27 was agreed by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022. This sets out the themes, priorities, actions, and milestones that we need to take as a Council over the next five years to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030.</li> <li>• Review the services we provide to ensure they support the city’s journey to net zero and adaptation to climate change.</li> </ul> <p>Delivery will commence in April 2022. The Local area Energy Plan is currently being finalised and will be presented to Cabinet in May/June.</p> <p>A training seminar for Letting Agents and Landlords marketing properties with inefficient energy certification has been arranged for 17 March 2022. Advice work with private sector landlords has seen 48 homes move from energy inefficient F and G ratings to more efficient A-E ratings. Decarbonisation analysis will be undertaken during April 2022.</p> <p>Newport City Council have successfully applied for Welsh Government funding to purchase real-time air pollutant monitors and these are in the process of being deployed across the city. We also successfully sought funding to support our ongoing work on the Air Quality Action Plan.</p>
Continuing support and safe delivery of the Council’s City services including waste, cleansing and highways.	There are no 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**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>April 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
Support people to remain living independently in their homes and communities.	<p>The number of packages of care that are required continues to pose a challenge for Newport residents, but is a steady number of around 31 waiting for a service.</p> <p>A risk assessment audit tool is used each week by teams to ensure the most vulnerable are highlighted and any change of circumstances requiring an urgent service is attended to.</p> <p>Home first (a social work regional service based at the front door of the hospitals) continues to work with citizens attending the hospital to ensure they are only admitted for urgent medical care/treatment. Support to return home with additional support when required is provided.</p> <p>The wider pressures within our community for providers to recruit a reactive workforce across social care in both domiciliary and residential care continues. Welsh Government proposals to provide free driving lessons and access to driving tests through the Local Authority may be an added incentive for citizens to consider care as a career.</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>Workforce pressures across adult and children residential services have been further impacted by the rise in recent COVID transmissibility and positive results for our staff.</p> <p>The relaxing of restrictions has not applied to residential care and therefore the impact of positive staff is considerable on the working environment. Adult services have reported to Care Inspection Wales two regulation 60 reports during March to the regulatory body due to the low numbers of staff available some days. This is with a full recruitment drive internally/externally and across agencies.</p>
Assess the impact and the long-term sustainability of the social care sector in Newport informing future service requirements.	<p>The workforce pressures and continued drive to address this is a number one priority for Adult and children services.</p> <p>Confirming fee uplifts with our commissioned services for 22/23 will provide assurance that we have provider services available for our most vulnerable citizens. This continues to be a national driver across all social care.</p>
Safeguard and support children and young people to remain safely with their families.	<p>Immediate safeguarding referrals for adults and children within Newport continue to be high to our front door and are attended to with full partnership collaboration and intervention when required.</p>
Improve opportunities for Active Travel and work towards improved air quality.	<p>Work continues to progress on the Devon Place Bridge over the railway with the fabrication of the steps and ramps and the works for the foundations into which the ramp supports will be fixed.</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</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>April 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
	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. 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.
Regulate businesses and support consumers / residents to protect and improve their health.	<p>Environmental Health activity is still disrupted by delivering the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but to a lesser degree than previously. Excellent progress has been made on programmed inspections of Food businesses to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan. Additional resources will be made available for this work in April as resources for the Covid response are further reduced. A new Food Safety EHO joined NCC in late October and a Food Safety Agency EHO is also in place to increase performance in this area. Health &amp; Safety issues of a serious nature will continue to be investigated/responded to and an additional Agency EHO, specialising in H&amp;S, joined NCC at the end of February to assist with the workloads. Regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation to protect health (which includes licensing) has also started to recover from the impact of the pandemic.</p> <p>All regulatory activity provides support to businesses wherever possible to avoid formal regulatory action.</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.	Library and museums services now being delivered as per the pre pandemic format with some infection control measures in place until the Welsh Government's guidance changes. It is likely that some Covid control measures will remain including advisory mask wearing and screens at public service points. Enhanced cleaning will also continue to be retained as a control measure.
Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce.	<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> <p>We will continue to work closely with managers and trade union representatives as legislative measures are relaxed.</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	April 2022 Update (By Exception)
<p>Work together with our partners to reduce poverty, address homelessness and support our most vulnerable people as a priority.</p>	<p>Welsh Government hardship funding has been used to support the additional pressures on temporary accommodation due to WG guidance for authorities to accommodate all those presenting as homeless. These expectations are expected to continue into 22/23 and the authority is working with WG to access financial support after the hardship fund ceases. However additional funding is unlikely to cover the full costs of these increased demands for accommodation and this has been identified as a financial pressure. We continue to work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to provide suitable, affordable move on accommodation, although supply remains a challenge.</p> <p>The authority will continue to encourage the take up of WG funding to prevent homelessness for those living in the private rental sector and housing association accommodation who have rent arrears due to the pandemic. However, this funding is likely to cease at 31/03/22.</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. Additional funding has been requested to address this backlog.</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>Newport Council continues to support the city's foodbanks and food projects. In collaboration with Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO), this work will continue, as well as monitoring the impact that the cost of living is having on households in the city. GAVO will also manage a grant programme to provide funding to food projects over the next year. Over £60k has recently been awarded to food projects to respond to winter demand.</p>
<p>Identify, develop and seek to sustain any positive developments emerging during the crisis.</p>	<p>Following the last report, the Covid Recovery Fund participatory budgeting programme events have now concluded. Around 415k was allocated in 6 voting events, the largest of its kind in Wales with over 450 people participating in voting events. 113 projects were presented to voters, and a total of 80 projects have secured funding, covering a diverse range of activities and audiences. The high standard of all the projects was noted by voters and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive from voters and the organisations seeking funding.</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>

**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	April 2022 Update (By Exception)
	<p>47 units of accommodation for older people are shortly due to be completed at the Tredegar Court sheltered housing scheme. Additional units of accommodation for older people are also due to complete at Treberth in the coming months as well as general needs accommodation at Coverack Road.</p>
<p>Deliver a community cohesion programme that effectively responds to community tensions and creates a shared sense of identity across the city.</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 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>Licencing 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 which continues to be a positive support to children, their families, and the community.</p> <p>YJS has now recruited two members of staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds to represent the ethnically diverse children within our community. Both workers are strong cultural advocates for children, one is now an established member of staff and starting to lead on specific and relevant projects and the other has just started with us and also keen to assist in service development in this area.</p> <p>We have made some progress in our quest for a pop-up shop in the town centre area and have some options to improve visible support to children in the city centre, particularly in the evening and are looking at a Friday evening up to 8pm. We have made links with the Tin Shed Company who have a venue in the centre and are keen to work in partnership with YJS to provide opportunities for children which will be aimed at diverting them away from crime. Positive Futures and the social work exploitation team and the YJ Police Officer will all be part of the planning of this provision and form part of the support offered.</p> <p>We have scheduled a meeting with Education Safeguarding Lead next week to see if we can work on joint projects to tackle ASB and domestic abuse via and to provide support to teachers with partnerships and re-engaging the ASB subgroups to improve information sharing and partnership working.</p>

**Strategic Recovery Aim 4 – Supporting Citizens post Covid-19**

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**Supports Wellbeing Objective 4 – To build cohesive and sustainable communities**

<b>Strategic Aim Step</b>	<b>April 2022 Update (By Exception)</b>
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, many of which are delivered on an appointment basis. Community centres are operational, similarly on a risk assessed basis.
Develop opportunities for community involvement participation and engagement.	Following the last report, the Covid Recovery Fund participatory budgeting programme events have now concluded. Around 415k was allocated in 6 voting events, the largest of its kind in Wales with over 450 people participating in voting events. 113 projects were presented to voters, and a total of 80 projects have secured funding, covering a diverse range of activities and audiences. The high standard of all the projects was noted by voters and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive from voters and the organisations seeking funding.