

Delivering Capital Ambition

Half Year Strategic Assessment of Performance
2020-21

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Cardiff in 2020

This section of the report considers some of the major trends impacting the city and provides a wider context for considering organisational performance.

Covid-19

The emergence of Covid-19 has represented an unprecedented challenge for the Local Authority and its partners, affecting almost every aspect of service delivery; the impact of Covid-19 on the deliverability of the Council’s policy agenda and commitments is therefore considered throughout this report.

Cases over Time: On 16 November 2020, the cumulative number of Covid-19 cases in Cardiff reached 9,473. Figure 1 illustrates Cardiff’s cumulative number since the pandemic began in March 2020.

Figure 1: Cumulative Number of Covid-19 Cases in Cardiff (as reported on 17 November 2020)

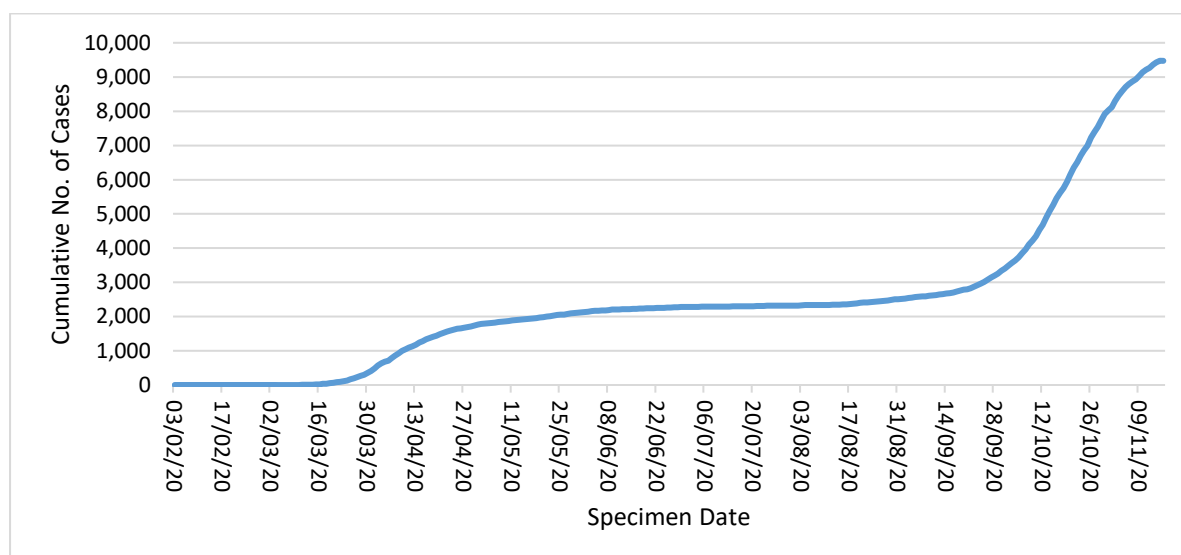
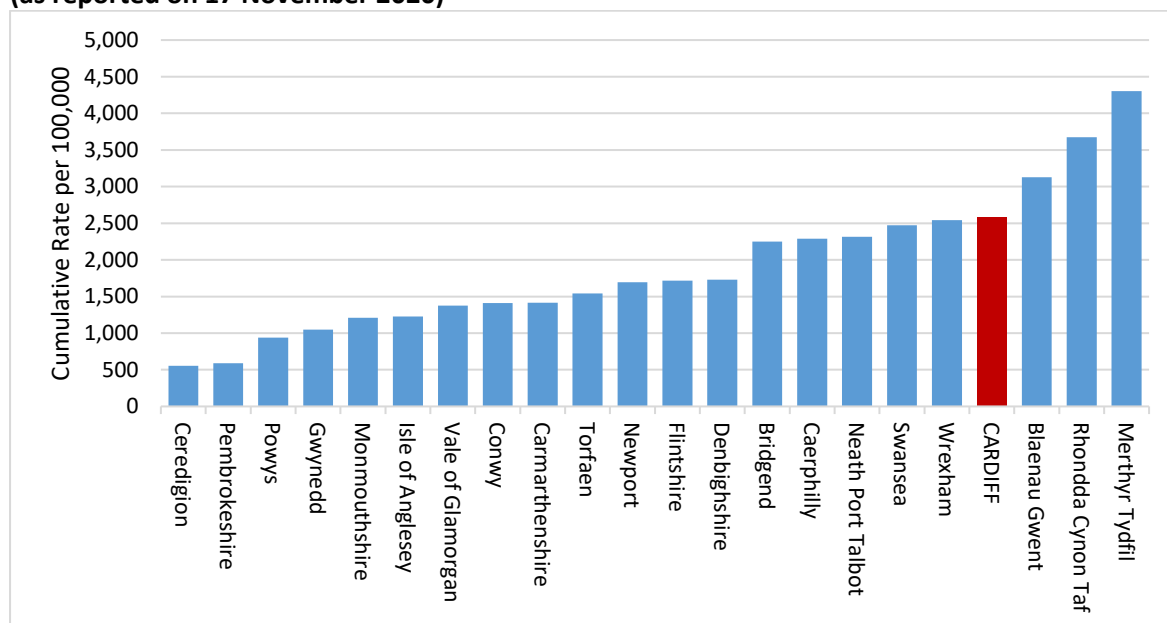


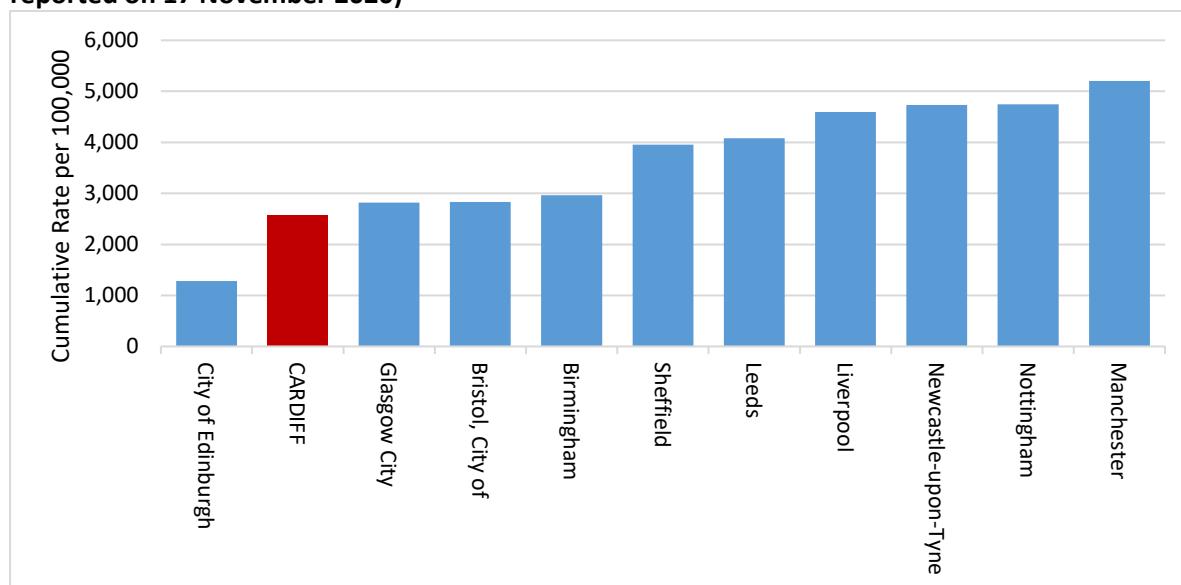
Figure 2 shows cumulative cases in Cardiff, per 100,000 population, compared with other Welsh Local Authorities. Cardiff’s relatively high position can be attributed, at least in part, to Cardiff’s position as an urban local authority and its population density.

Figure 2: Cumulative Number of Covid-19 Cases per 100,000 Population by Welsh Local Authority (as reported on 17 November 2020)



Nonetheless, it is clear that Cardiff has fared much better than most Core Cities. When compared to Core Cities across the UK, Cardiff’s cumulative number of Covid-19 cases, per 100,000 population, is low, second only to Edinburgh (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Cumulative Number of Covid-19 Cases per 100,000 Population by UK Core Cities (as reported on 17 November 2020)



Responding to Covid-19: The Council has undergone a significant period of change and innovation as it works to continue to deliver services and progress its city development agenda, whilst managing the impacts and implications of the pandemic. In response to both the initial lockdown in March 2020 and the ‘fire-break’ lockdown in October/November 2020, the Council transitioned to an essential services model; this meant that a range of services were either adapted, suspended, or, in some instances, established for the first time.

Where and when necessary, the Council has worked to restart or repurpose Council services to function effectively, sustainably and safely, aligning with UK/ Welsh Government and public health guidance. It is clear that the Council must operate, for the foreseeable future, within the context of mandatory social distancing. This will require a continuation of home working where possible, and continued work to prevent the further spread of the virus whilst planning for potential future ‘peaks’.

Moving forward, the Council will also continue to repurpose its services and priorities to contain the spread of the virus, support the most vulnerable and drive forward economic recovery. Work will be undertaken to build on the firm foundations laid with the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service, which helps to trace and control the spread of the virus. This includes expanding the service, making sure it has the manpower, the expertise and the technology needed to keep Cardiff safe through the winter.

Financial Resilience

The level of revenue funding announced for 2020-21 represented an improved position compared to the planning assumptions published in summer 2019 in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan. Whilst the improved funding position for 2020-21 is welcome, the position for 2021-22 and beyond is much less certain.

Major risks to the Council’s budget position have emerged, not least the impact of an anticipated recession and the ongoing costs and lost income associated with responding to Covid-19. From the outset, it was clear that the crisis was likely to have significant financial implications for the Council, both in terms of additional costs and loss of income, over the course of 2020-21 and beyond. Within certain directorates, additional expenditure will have been incurred and losses of income experienced. Work is ongoing to establish the full financial impact of the crisis, both in the short- and medium-term.

Many of the underlying budgetary challenges facing the Council also remain. These financial challenges follow a decade of austerity over which time the Council has made almost a quarter of a billion pounds in cumulative savings and reduced the number of its non-school staff by 22%.

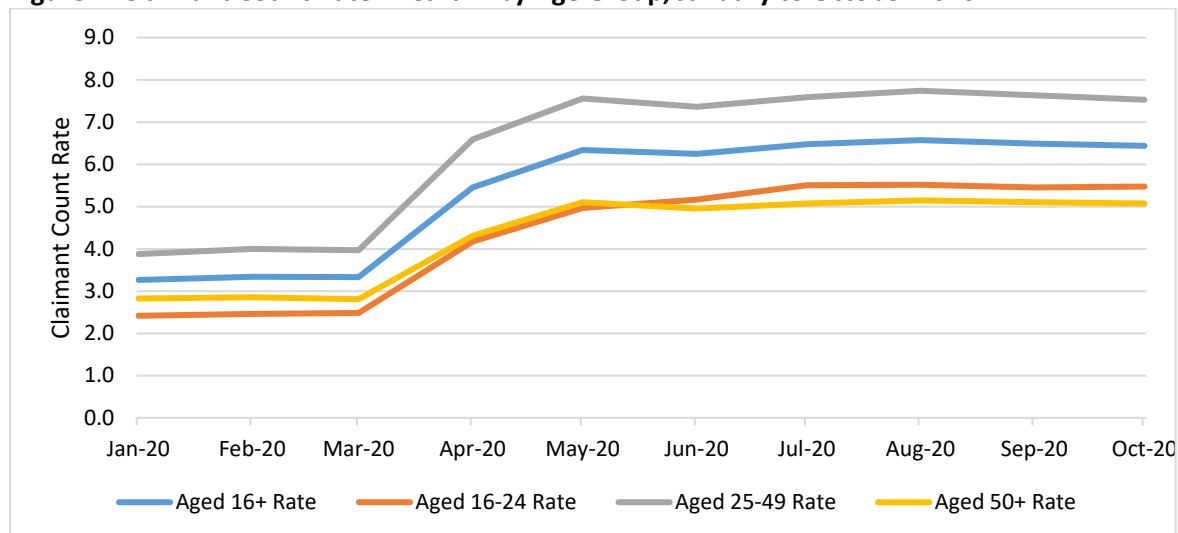
Economic Crisis

In parallel with the Covid-19 public health crisis, the UK is now facing an unprecedented economic crisis. The UK economy is facing the biggest contraction in three centuries with the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) projecting that unemployment will be over 50% higher in Cardiff for at least two years.

The economic impact of lockdown has led to young people and those in unsecure work being at the greatest risk of unemployment, since the most affected sectors – hospitality, leisure and retail – are those that employ large proportions of young people. The economic crisis can also be anticipated to hit the poorest areas of Cardiff hardest, entrenching deprivation and increasing the gap in outcomes between communities in the city.

Figure 4 shows the claimant count rate in Cardiff, by age group, from January to October 2020. The claimant count records those individuals who are unemployed and claiming jobseekers allowance or other unemployment-related benefits. There has been a clear rise in claims across all age groups since March 2020, and the onset of the pandemic.

Figure 4: Claimant Count Rate in Cardiff by Age Group, January to October 2020



The Council has done all it can to support local businesses, and this will continue to form a key part of the recovery strategy as we move forward. Between April and June 2020, the Council facilitated the provision of £42.8 million to businesses via the Welsh Government’s Business Grants Scheme. Further to this, the Council has worked to repurpose the city centre, and wider local and district centres, to create an environment that is safe, socially distanced, well-managed and welcoming. Adaptations have included pavement widening, cycle routes and speed restrictions, as well as allowing café and bars to create ‘spill out’ areas to trade outside.

The Council will continue to seek the important balance of protecting public health while preventing a protracted economic decline. This includes mobilising a council-wide Economic Recovery Taskforce, to create opportunities and provide a tailored package of interventions for impacted businesses and employees.

Brexit

From 31 January 2020, the UK legally ceased to be a member of the European Union (EU). However, a future relationship/trade agreement between the UK and EU is yet to be decided. Brexit uncertainty therefore continues to affect business planning and investment decisions. Cardiff is particularly vulnerable to a disruptive Brexit, as it is amongst the top five British cities most reliant on EU markets, with 46% of its exports going to EU countries.

Should the UK Government and the EU fail to agree a free trade deal before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, the UK would once again face a ‘no-deal’ scenario, in which trade with the EU would be based on World Trade Organisation rules, with most UK goods subject to tariffs. There would also be a range of other implications of the UK leaving

the EU without a deal, which the Council has already taken steps to prepare for, as set out in the Brexit Issues Register.

Potential disruption to supply chains and the local economy, the registration of EU nationals on the EU Settlement Scheme and Council finances are amongst the key Brexit risks facing the Council. Moving forward, appropriate preparations will be put in place, dependent on the outcome of negotiations.

Climate Emergency

Notwithstanding the depth of the Covid-19 crisis, climate change remains the defining global challenge of our generation, with impacts including rising sea levels, flood risk, extreme weather events, unsustainable energy supplies and ultimately, widespread economic instability. These issues are already impacting the Cardiff area and its population; our actions in the coming decade are therefore crucial, as they will define the shape and well-being of our society and our planet for generations to come.

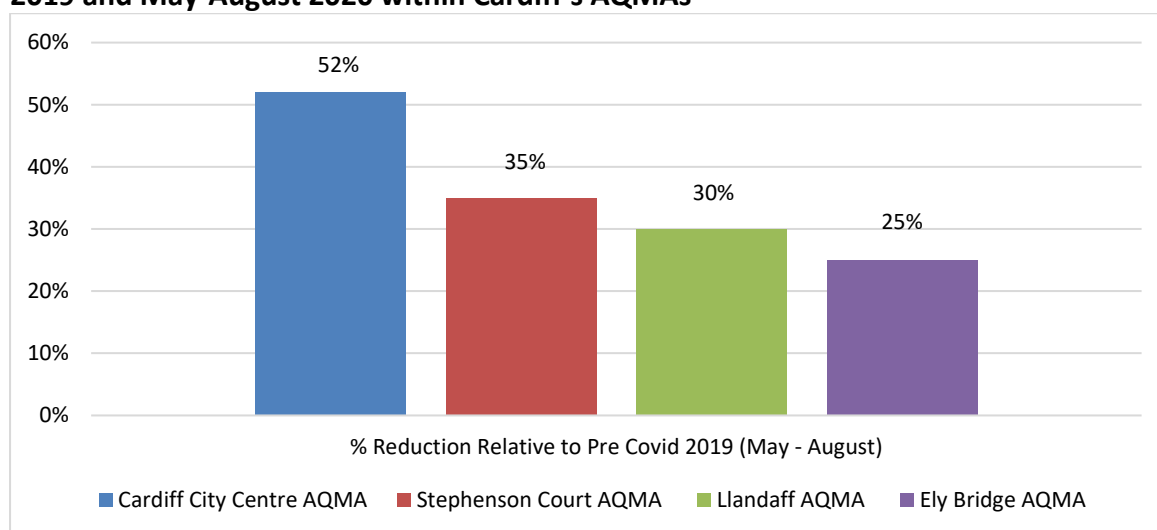
Recognising the scale of this challenge, the Council has declared a Climate Emergency, with the One Planet Cardiff strategy published in October 2020 as a strategic response to this declaration. The strategy analyses the scope and scale of the challenge facing the Council and the city, and highlights the opportunities that could arise from positive action to address this challenge, proposing a wide range of immediate and potential actions that will form the basis of our longer-term response.

Whilst the development of the strategy coincided with the Covid-19 emergency, it is clear that the Council's response to both emergencies cannot be mutually exclusive. Some indicative analysis has already been undertaken to ascertain what impact the current pandemic has had on air quality levels, especially within Cardiff's established Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)¹. The below chart highlights percentage reductions in average NO₂ concentrations from May to August between 2019 and 2020².

¹ Where air quality reviews indicate that a Local Authority's air quality objectives may not be met, the Local Authority is required to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Action must then be taken at a local level to ensure that air quality in the identified area improves.

² Whilst it is not viewed as a preferable indicator to directly compare to previous years' data given influencing meteorological conditions, the analysis is useful to populate indicative trends/ visualise impacts.

Figure 5: Percentage Reductions in Average NO₂ Concentrations between May-August 2019 and May-August 2020 within Cardiff's AQMAs



The One Planet Cardiff strategy highlights projects and opportunities that can further stimulate a “Green Recovery”, with the Council leading a capital city that will be at the forefront of a green and inclusive economy, supporting both environmental and economic recovery in Wales.

Inequalities

The gap between rich and the poor in the city is too wide, and it is growing. Differences in health outcomes are even more pronounced, with a healthy life expectancy gap of between 22 and 24 years between the most and least deprived communities of Cardiff. This deprivation damages too many lives, places pressure on public services and breaks the bonds that help to create a strong society. In addition to economic inequalities, the gap in outcomes for those of different ethnicities, gender and those living with a disability remains too wide.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed the inequalities that exist in our society; during the peak month of April 2020, those from more deprived communities were more significantly impacted by the pandemic, with the mortality rate for the most deprived being twice that of the least deprived. Furthermore, demographic data from deaths across England and Wales shows that mortality rates are higher for men, and for those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME). This information is significant for Cardiff, due to the city’s ethnic diversity.

In September 2020, the Council published a new four-year roadmap to promote equality and inclusion in Cardiff, developed following consultation with residents, community groups, Council staff and partners. The strategy aims to remove any barriers caused by inequalities that Cardiff residents may experience and sets out how the Council will seek to achieve these objectives. Additionally, the Council has established a Race Equality Taskforce which will focus on addressing racial inequality in the city. The Taskforce will be responsible for identifying opportunities to implement meaningful and practical changes, which will make a difference for BAME communities and address the well-documented inequalities that still exist in the city today.

Well-being Objective 1:

Cardiff is a great place to grow up – Summary

- All children and young people in Cardiff experience high-quality education
- Supporting vulnerable children and families – improving outcomes for all our children

Key Successes

All children and young people in Cardiff experience high-quality education

Following the national lockdown in March 2020 as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, all schools closed for statutory education provision and some schools were rapidly re-purposed into hub schools, providing childcare for the children of key workers and the most vulnerable learners. In line with Welsh Government direction, schools re-started on a phased basis in June, and opened full-time for all learners in September 2020. Whilst schools have reopened to all learners, teaching and learning will continue to be affected during the 2020-21 school year. The approaches taken by schools and settings will continue to evolve to provide learning both in school and elsewhere as the need arises.

- A significant collaborative effort between schools and the Council enabled all Cardiff schools to open safely to learners during the phased return in June and at the beginning of the new academic year in September. Rigorous health and safety risk assessments have been completed and are under constant review. Enhanced protocols for confirmed cases of Covid-19 in schools have been established and parental concerns managed sensitively. Free school meal provision has been maintained throughout, using a combination of methods including lunch bags, supermarket vouchers and direct payments.
- School attendance has now improved in all phases when compared to the start of term in September, as confidence builds in returning children to school. However, due to cases of the virus requiring self-isolation, attendance remains lower than at a similar period last year.
- Schools are continuing to develop practices which enable continuity of learning for children and young people who need to stay at home to self-isolate due to the virus. Guidance and support is being provided by Welsh Government, the Council and the Central South Consortium. This includes work with key partners to offer a range of training and support to upskill teachers and pupils in their use of digital technology.

To support continuity of learning, 8,000 devices along with 2,000 4G and Wi-Fi enabled devices to provide broadband access were distributed to schools/ individual households during the summer. A further 10,000 Chromebooks and several hundred iPads will be distributed to schools before the end of the current term.

- Exams and Assessment: Exams in the 2019-20 academic year for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 were cancelled, and results awarded on Centre Assessed Grades. Data collections including Teacher Assessment in the Primary phase were also cancelled. Provisional data

from WJEC shows that results in Cardiff are improved and higher than the national averages.

- Support for vulnerable learners has been and will continue to be at the centre of the Council's approach. This includes establishing a summer holiday programme to ensure young people were supported, the remodelling of provision for Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) learners including digital deprivation and opportunities for some learners to repeat year 11.
- Learner Voice: The Local Authority and partners have worked together throughout the pandemic to make sure that the voices and needs of children and young people are at the heart of decisions. This includes:
 - Collecting and responding to the views of children and young people through the 'Coronavirus and Me' survey;
 - A webinar and pupil task group to inform reopening of schools and the City Recovery Strategy, and;
 - Conducting a Child Rights Impact Assessments as part of Recovery Planning.
- Good progress is being made to prepare for the implementation of additional learning needs (ALN) reform. 97% of schools were rated very good or strong in relation to strategic preparedness for ALN Reform, compared with a regional average of 85%. School closure period led to the development of more robust multi-agency approaches between health and special schools.
- Schools are continuing to draw on resources to support emotional health and well-being including Thrive, Nurture and Adverse Childhood Experiences. Exclusions this term are lower when compared to the same period last year.
- The Youth Service has seen an increase in access by young people, including through outreach work, street-based youth work and digital networks. During August there were over 250,000 social media hits, nearly 1,500 socially distanced in-person connections and over 580 young people were supported by mentors. The service is contributing to a new multi-agency panel, along with Children's Services and the Youth Justice Service to provide support for vulnerable young people.
- Cardiff Commitment partners supported a range of initiatives over the summer holiday period to assist school leavers with their transition from statutory education. The Youth Service is leading the tracking and one-to-one support for Year 11 school leavers throughout the autumn term. Provisional 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training) figures should be available at the end of Quarter 3. Further interventions are in development including optimisation of the UK Kickstart Scheme, improved access to Post-16 pathways, and enhanced brokerage and support for the most vulnerable learners.
- A new governor recruitment campaign has been launched on social media containing key messages about supporting Cardiff's schools as a governor. Over 100 expressions of interest and 35 completed governor application forms have been received to date. Regular guidance has been produced for governing bodies on their role and priorities

during the pandemic, highlighting the importance of strong governance. Regular webcasts have also been held for chairs of governors to update them on key developments during this time, as well as online governor training opportunities.

Supporting vulnerable children and families – improving outcomes for all our children

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the Council's service delivery in the first half of the financial year. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Children's Services has rapidly transitioned to a hybrid model of working, with social worker assessments undertaken virtually where possible, or via other alternative means, such as through windows, in order to maintain social distancing while providing essential support. Due to the risk of further spreading the virus, face-to-face interventions have been reserved for critical situations or instances of safeguarding concerns. The shift towards the use of virtual technology has increased children's and parents' access to support services, and paired with the Council's enhanced partnership working during the lockdown period, has allowed staff members to efficiently, effectively and safely respond to high service demand in a time of crisis.

- Family Help: Despite the impact of Covid-19, the Family Help team has supported 811 people, and is on track to meet the year-end target of 1,500 people. Additionally, 94% of families referred to Family Help have shown evidence of positive distanced travelled, far exceeding the target of 70%.
- Children Looked After: The Council's Vulnerable Learners meetings have been highly effective, enabling information sharing about particularly vulnerable Children Looked After, as well as some children who are on the Child Protection Register. Key discussions have been taking place to identify needs, how they can be met and by whom. In terms of housing placements, with 76% of Children Looked After placed within a 20-mile radius of Cardiff at mid-year, the target has been exceeded, and the year-end target has also been met.
- Fostering Service: The number of children in in-house placements has risen to 110 as of 28 September, compared with 93 on 30 September 2019.
- Children with Additional Needs: A Cardiff Parenting Additional Needs Implementation Plan has been developed to ensure that all elements of the Adults' and Children's Learning Disabilities Service are inclusive and supportive of children with additional needs and disabilities, as well as their parents. The plan also covers skills training for the Cardiff Parenting Service's workforce, so that staff are enabled to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and families.
- Recruitment in Children's Services: Work on addressing the recruitment gap in children's social workers has continued throughout the lockdown period, with improved trends emerging following the successful implementation of the market supplement in April 2020. Other key measures taken include the allocation of a dedicated manager responsible for recruitment, the co-ordination of a recruitment campaign with Golley Slater from May to the end of September and the use of a dedicated website – [Social Work Cardiff](#) – to direct traffic to recruitment. This multi-faceted response has led to a marked

reduction in social worker vacancies from 38.7% in June 2020 to 29.2% in September. While this figure remains above our target, based on new starters due to come into post, it is projected that vacancy levels will continue to decrease in Quarter 3.

- Mental Health and Well-being: Three Primary Mental Health Specialists (PMHS) started in post in September 2020 to improve support for young people's mental health and emotional well-being. As part of a new integrated approach, these specialists are now either managing cases directly that have come through the Family Gateway, referring cases onto specialist health services or providing mental health advice to the Family Help or Parenting teams to support them in the management of their cases. Additionally, a review of the referral pathway for the Barnardos Well-being service via the Family Gateway has revealed the success of this approach, with only 2 out of the 223 referrals made so far this year through the Gateway being deemed inappropriate.
- Engagement for Corporate Parenting: The Council held consultation sessions with young people to inform its new Corporate Parenting Strategy prior to Covid-19 and has since held further sessions virtually, ensuring that the Council responds to the needs and concerns of one of the city's most vulnerable groups. In total, 22 young people between the ages of 5 and 27 have been engaged in a range of care settings, including children with disabilities, and kinship carers and foster carers have also been engaged.
- Supporting Young People Into Work: The Council's Into Work Services has been working closely with the Personal Adviser Service to identify young people for referral. From April to September 2020, Bright Futures received 101 new engagements, of which 16 entered employment, 17 entered education, 40 started training and 18 started a Bright Start work placement. Furthermore, a bid has been submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions for a grant to embed a 'stepping stones' programme of relationship-based activities that will support young care leavers who are not eligible for referral to the Into Work Service into education, training or employment.

Key Challenges and Risks

All children and young people in Cardiff experience high-quality education

The impact of Covid-19 has, by some margin, had a disproportionate impact on the education services, bringing a range of new pressures to bear. Whilst the directorate has responded well to the immediate challenges and ensured that longer-term response plans are in place, the demands and pressures on the service cannot be underplayed.

- Safe Learning Environment: Ensuring schools remain safe and open should cases of the virus escalate, and managing any impact on business continuity within schools has represented a critical challenge. Risk assessments remain under constant review.
- Continuity of learning: The Local Authority will be required to work closely with the Central South Consortium to support schools and seek assurances that all learners are able to maintain access to quality education whether in the classroom or at home.

- Health and Well-being: Supporting the health and well-being of school staff as they continue to respond to Covid-19 and ensure access to high-quality education represents an ongoing challenge and may require additional support measures.
- Impact on Pupil Progression: Working with the Consortium to mitigate the impact of the lockdown on individual pupil progression, ensuring that effective practices are deployed to enable children and young people to 'catch up', in particular our most vulnerable learners.
- Preparing for the summer 2021 examination series: Following Welsh Government's decision, work will be required to support schools to prepare for and establish teacher-managed assessments.
- Availability of Performance Data: Qualifications data is not to be published or used for accountability purposes in 2020-21, and school inspections are not taking place. A consistent approach to school performance and improvement is required across Wales, including an evidence base to support effective self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Out of County Placements: Whilst additional specialist places for complex learning needs were secured for September 2020, there continues to be significant pressure for emotional health and well-being places, leading to a significant increase in out-of-county placements.
- School Organisation Programme: Progressing schemes in accordance with the Band B 21st Century Schools Programme of school investment has been impacted by the pandemic.
- Delivery of Asset Management Programme: As a result of the pandemic, the Asset Management programme of works for condition and suitability were delayed as health and safety adaptations were prioritised. A programme of works has been set for 2020-21 and 2021-22 including all high priority (1a) works to be completed by March 2021. All necessary suitability adaptations required for pupils and staff for September 2020 have been completed.

Supporting vulnerable children and families – improving outcomes for all our children

The service is grappling with increasing scale and complexity in terms of demand which, if left unchecked, could have significant impact on service user outcomes and the Council's budget. Ongoing areas of challenges include ensuring the sufficiency of placements, particularly to address the numbers of children placed outside of Cardiff, the numbers of children in residential care and the low numbers of children leaving care.

- Managing an increase in the scale and complexity of demand represents an ongoing risk.
- Children Looked After: Ensuring placement sufficiency and monitoring the numbers of children placed outside of Cardiff and entering residential care remains a priority. The effective implementation of the Children's Commissioning Strategy will be crucial to managing this risk.
- Ensuring Staff Well-being and Provision of Support: The importance of emotional well-being and ongoing support for staff must remain a key area of focus.
- Early Help Services: Due to Covid-19 disruption, the Family Gateway has failed to reach its mid-year target of supporting 3,750 people and is equally not expected to reach the year-end target. Having supported 836 people, the Support4Families Team has fallen slightly short of its mid-year target of 900, however the year-end target is projected to be met.
- Adoption Services: Adoption services have experienced difficulties due to the pandemic, with the percentage of children with a Placement Order not placed for adoption within 12 months of the order remaining far too high at 46%, against a target of 25%, making it likely that that the year-end target will not be reached.
- Additional Learning Needs Support: Work to evaluate the new transition teams in Children's Services has been delayed by Covid-19, however transition workers have continued to make contact with families to ensure that immediate needs are met. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and Disability Futures Programme Board have agreed that focus will be placed on children with disabilities first, and then be widened to cover other issues, such as mental health.
- Support for Young Carers: Innovative approaches to working with young carers have been developed during the Covid-19 period, however the planned launch of the new service to support young carers has been delayed due to arrangements for staff to work from home.
- Poverty in Localities: Work in relation to mapping out the impact of poverty in localities and to identify community resources has been delayed by Covid-19 but will restart shortly now that the responsible manager is back in post, after having been repurposed during the initial stages of the pandemic.
- Youth Employment: The economic impact of Covid-19 on employment opportunities for vulnerable young people is a major concern, particularly for those aged 16-24 who are care experienced and not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

All children and young people in Cardiff experience high-quality education

- In the short term, keeping schools safe for learners and staff to remain open and protecting their well-being is a priority. This includes supporting schools to manage incidents of the virus, close working with families where there are safeguarding concerns and managing workforce capacity/ business continuity.
- Preparing for Teacher Assessment in the absence of formal examinations.
- Continuing to work with schools and the Consortium to ensure continuity of learning for children and young people out of school, particularly the most vulnerable and making sure that some groups of learners are not disadvantaged.
- Continuing to work towards curriculum and ALN Reform. Whilst there is recognition that schools can work differently as a result of the pandemic, they and other education services must continue to move forward with wider ambitions to achieve the goals set out in Cardiff 2030.
- Progressing schemes in accordance with the Band B 21st Century Schools programme of school investment.
- Pursuing opportunities to progress wider strategic commitments as outlined in the Corporate Plan and Cardiff 2030 in the months ahead, including developing a School Workforce Strategy, Community Focused Schools Policy and an integrated model of Youth Support Services.

Supporting vulnerable children and families – improving outcomes for all our children

- Delivering the Youth Justice Action Plan and responding in full to any follow-up on the recommendations from the HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection of Youth Offending Services in Cardiff.
- The renewed Corporate Parenting Strategy is being drafted, informed by good practice from Bristol, Powys and Carmarthenshire, and arrangements are being made for the Strategy to be agreed at full Council in January 2021.
- A needs analysis will be undertaken as part of the Disabled Children's Commissioning Strategy, which will inform the strategic direction for respite provision in the future. This work will feed into a business case setting out the proposal for how the building should be used to meet the needs of disabled children and young people. It is proposed that the timescale for this work be extended to September 2021.

Well-being Objective 2:

Cardiff is a great place to grow older – Summary

- **Work with people with care and support needs, helping them to live the lives they want to lead**
- **Become a Dementia Friendly and an Age Friendly City**

Key Successes

Work with people with care and support needs, helping them to live the lives they want to lead

Across Wales, shielding was introduced between March and August 2020 to protect those considered most at risk of serious harm from coronavirus. Those required to shield due to pre-existing conditions and their level of vulnerability resulted in increased numbers of Cardiff's older population requiring additional care and support. Shielded people were instructed to avoid contact with those from outside their household, and not to leave their homes, even to buy food and other essentials.

- Supporting Those Who Are Shielding: The Council led on the local distribution of food parcels to shielded individuals who were unable to access essentials via another route and managed the high volume of calls and enquiries regarding additional support. This support also included the co-ordination of volunteers to collect prescribed medication, and advice on accessing priority online shopping delivery slots.
- Ensuring the Safety of Staff and Service Users: The need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene supplies was recognised as a key priority for the Council in responding to Covid-19. This ensured that both Cardiff Council staff and Cardiff's social care providers had ready access to the equipment they needed to keep themselves and their service users as safe as possible. Initial arrangements allowed for staff and care providers to collect equipment from locations across Cardiff and the process advanced to allow for deliveries to be made to social care providers. Since March 2020, over 10 million items of PPE and hygiene supplies have been distributed, with the vast majority of this volume being used to support social care providers and vulnerable people.
- Safe Hospital Discharges during the Pandemic: Hospital social workers have linked in with community teams and care providers to work through complex cases in order to discharge individuals from hospital. This work has continued in line with the 'home first' principle. To support the discharge process during the pandemic, isolation beds were secured by Adult Services for those who have left hospital, the primary purpose of these being to keep individuals who may be infectious from spreading Covid-19 to their care home as they return to it. In total, 26 of these beds were secured.
- Supporting Hospital Discharges: Work has been undertaken to strengthen the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) within the Single Point of Access to reduce delayed discharge and this continues to be supported by the First Point of Contact Hospital team (the 'Pink

Army') and wider MDT in the hospital. This work continues to feed into the enablement team to support people moving back home.

- Older Persons Housing Strategy: Work continues to deliver the Older Persons Housing Strategy despite delays caused by Covid-19. Plans for Broadlands Court have been finalised with the residents and planning consent has been achieved for the Maelfa and St. Mellons independent living schemes, both of which are out for tender.
- Tackling Social Isolation: Virtual platforms are being developed to help address social isolation and enhance quality of life of older people within the constraints created by Covid-19. Virtual meetings have been put in place for individuals with dementia who previously would meet in community centres, enabling them to continue seeing familiar faces and maintain invaluable social interaction. Online approaches have also been established for users of the Ty Canna service and disability service to provide ongoing support for those at high-risk of social isolation. Engagement plans are in place in relation to the restart and creation of support groups as restrictions are lifted.

Become a Dementia Friendly and an Age Friendly City

- A new Dementia Friendly Cardiff website has been launched, aimed at providing a 'one-stop shop' of valuable information about services and support in the city to assist people living with dementia to live well in the capital. Dementia Friendly Cardiff is a partnership between Cardiff Council, Alzheimer's Society Cymru and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board.
- Over 150 locality-focused dementia awareness events have been held throughout the city in the first two quarters. Digital options are being explored to hold further events, given the limitations on being able to deliver classroom-based practical training.

Key Challenges and Risks

- Impact of Covid-19 on Older People: Additional focus will be required on supporting and protecting vulnerable individuals in care homes across the city and those receiving domiciliary care. Statistics show that in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, Cardiff experienced proportionally more deaths in care homes (35% of Covid-19 deaths) than the Welsh average (28%) and the English Core Cities average (32%). While examining deaths from Covid-19, and excess deaths when compared to the normal expected death rate, those receiving domiciliary care were identified in Cardiff as having a high excess mortality rate, along with care homes.
- Cost Pressures: The Covid-19 pandemic has added to the already significant demographic and cost pressures on Adult Services. The projected end of year position for Adult Services is an over-spend of £1.059 million.

- Impact of Covid-19: Delayed Delivery

Delayed Roll-out of Improvements to Hospital Discharge Arrangements: An 'Asset Based Approach' has been developed to reduce the number of people experiencing failed or delayed discharge from hospital, however the roll-out of these improvements has been delayed due to Covid-19. A new deadline of March 2021 has been established for this model of support to be implemented.

Delayed Home Condition Evaluations for Trips, Slips and Falls: During the initial onset of the pandemic, all home visits were put on hold apart from those deemed critical, and support moved to remote phone calls or video calls. The effectiveness of this approach has its limitations as it is not possible to accurately evaluate an individual's home conditions or their associated levels of safety from trips, slips and falls. Services have begun returning to a business as usual position, however as the frequency of face-to-face home visits begins to return there is clear risk of staff contracting Covid-19. A number of questions relating to Covid-19 symptoms are asked prior to a visit being arranged and these are asked again prior to entry of a property. For new clients and where the information given may be unreliable, staff must assume a high level of risk and wear appropriate levels of PPE.

Delayed Roll-out of Dementia Friendly City: Numerous activities to develop Cardiff as a Dementia Friendly City have been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic. Work to encourage businesses to become more Dementia Friendly has paused, and as businesses across the city seek to recover and adjust to the requirements of Covid-19, retaining a focus on Dementia Friendly may prove difficult. School engagement programmes have not been undertaken due to the risk around introducing external staff into school settings.

- Service Resilience: As Covid-19 cases across Cardiff and Wales begin to rise, there is a risk that staffing levels may be impacted upon and may not be sufficient to meet service demand, particularly as the frequency of face-to-face visits is increasing. A series of measures will be adopted to allow a flexible approach to staff deployment, to increase focus on business continuity planning, to utilise community and volunteer capacity if deemed safe and appropriate, and to closely monitor staff numbers required to isolate or testing positive for Covid-19. Issues of staffing and meeting demand will also be experienced by the wider social care marketplace.
- Market Sustainability: Service providers have been sustained financially through Covid-19 grants but are running at under occupancy. Weekly meetings are being held with care providers to understand potential capacity issues and financial measures have been put in place to support the financial viability of providers during the ongoing pandemic. Many third sector or voluntary groups are at risk and this creates a potential increase in demand on statutory services.
- Social Isolation: The impact of social isolation and loneliness on the well-being of older people will have been exacerbated during the pandemic. Activity to address social isolation by building links between citizens, groups, organisations and private businesses

has not been undertaken during this period due to the social distancing requirements, demographic risks and other limitations associated with Covid-19.

- The number of Council staff undertaking Dementia Friends training across the Authority remains well below the 100% compliance target for Council staff by April 2021. Achieving this target will be further hindered by the number of staff across the Council remaining on furlough.

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

- Working with colleagues from Cardiff & Vale University Health Board to enhance models of support and further join up social care, health and housing.
- Making sure that individuals are enabled to return home safely as soon as they are fit and healthy and to empower people to remain independent at home. Key areas of focus include:
 - Rolling out the 'Asset Based Approach' model of support and care by March 2021.
 - Establishing a new model of residential reablement. The tender period for this closed in October 2020.
 - An update on the commissioning arrangements for the future delivery of care at home (domiciliary care and sessional support) to be considered by Cabinet in Quarter 3. Existing contact arrangements have been extended to 1 April 2021.
- Adapting services working to reduce social isolation to enable them to operate in the current climate. Independent Living Services are focused on digital inclusion for the older community, including signposting community groups to sources of funding for devices.
- Responding to the increased need and demand for social care services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Previously constructed plans to 'shift the balance of care' prior to the Covid-19 crisis will be reviewed, and assumptions revised as the Council and its partners move through a period of stabilisation and reconstruction.
- The Adult Strategy for Social Services is currently on target to go to Cabinet in May 2021, with engagement events planned for November and December 2020

Well-being Objective 3: Supporting people out of poverty – Summary

- **A Living Wage City**
- **Help people into work**
- **Tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping**

Key Successes

A Living Wage City

- Increased Number of Living Wage Employers and Employees: Acting as an advocate for the Living Wage, Cardiff has increased the number of employees working for an accredited Living Wage employer. There are now 117 accredited Living Wage employers in Cardiff with nine new employers becoming accredited during the first two quarters of 2021, including Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. There are now 48,691 people working for an accredited Living Wage Employer and 7,131 workers have received a pay rise as a result of their employers becoming Living Wage accredited this financial year.

Help people into work

The Council has effectively integrated employment support services from across the city. The Employment Gateway brought together over forty employment services to help support people to get and to keep a good job. The Council has also worked with local employers to identify the skills they need their staff to have and then ensured that appropriate training is provided.

- Into Work Services has incorporated Cardiff Works (the Council's in-house employment agency) and Adult Learning, creating wrap-around support and pathways into permanent employment. This ensures that referrals and outcomes between the services are seamless for those looking for work or to improve their digital skills. In response to the emerging economic challenges, the service has enhanced its capacity to provide support. In total the service is now able to support more than 55,000 clients and 250 employers annually.
- Enhancing Cardiff Works: Following a full review, a proposed way forward for Cardiff Works was approved by Cabinet in September 2020. The process of modernisation and enhancement includes digitalisation of the service; streamlining of recruitment processes; increased accessibility of the service, with a full-time, face-to-face presence at Central Library Hub; and greater visibility in the community, including attendance at jobs fairs and job clubs alongside Into Work Services.
- Supporting Recruitment within the Council: During the Covid-19 pandemic, Into Work Services have supported large-scale Council recruitment activities (with bespoke training packages added) including home carers and Test, Trace, Protect. To date, 148 people are in post with 46 recruited from mentoring projects and 68 through the Employment

Gateway. At the end of Quarter 2 the number of paid apprentice and trainee opportunities across the Council was 104, well on track to meet the annual target of 125. Close contact has been kept with Directorates during the pandemic to ensure that apprentices and trainees are being utilised effectively and that their learning is continuing.

- Breaking down the digital barriers to work: A publicity campaign about Into Work Services has been launched. The campaign is now at the halfway point, with over 1m views on online channels leading to nearly 3,000 new clients accessing the Into Work website <https://www.intoworkcardiff.co.uk>. An Into Work mobile app has also been developed to keep jobseekers up to date with training and employment opportunities. For those who are not able to access digital services, the roll-out of a tablet gifting scheme has recently begun.
- Support for care leavers: Bright Futures, the Council's scheme to help care-experienced young people into education, employment or training, was fully launched at the beginning of 2020 and has continued to operate during the pandemic. During the first two quarters of 2020-21, Bright Futures supported 16 young people into employment; 17 into education; 40 into training and 18 into a Bright Start work placement. A referral scheme has also recently been set up; staff at the Jobcentre can now refer young people who are interested in the new UK Government Kickstart scheme for a robust 'better off calculation' carried out by the Council's Money Advice Team.
- Access to Advice and Support: The number of clients supported and assisted with their claims for Universal Credit is only marginally below the half-year target of 750 at 743. This demonstrates the increased need for support at this time, even when face-to-face services have been less available.

Tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping

The Council had some success in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020 the number of people sleeping rough on the city's streets was at its lowest level for six years. Closer partnership working and innovative projects such as Housing First were already seeing positive outcomes. Due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the service has faced unprecedented levels of challenge. To support the response, Welsh Government made available £10 million for Local Authorities with a further £20 million available to transform homelessness services and ensure that no-one need return to rough sleeping. The scale and pace of service adaptation has ensured that a number of vulnerable people have been effectively supported during the pandemic and a new approach is currently being progressed in this area that responds to the challenges of Covid-19.

- 'Real Change' Campaign: This was launched at the end of June 2020 and aims to embed the achievements made by homelessness services during the pandemic into a long-term approach, to lock in the benefits realised and lessons learned from the crisis.
- Homelessness Services post-Covid: A report to Cabinet on 16 July 2020 outlined the impact of Covid-19 on the homeless population of Cardiff. The report noted the steps already taken to secure additional permanent homeless accommodation to replace

temporary provision and to ensure that no service user will experience a reduction in service availability as lockdown measures are relaxed. Cabinet approved the provision of further accommodation and support for single homeless people and families, the direct award of a contract to deliver temporary accommodation units for families at the Gasworks site in Grangetown, and additional measures to deliver the new model of homeless provision in Cardiff.

- New Premises: In order to close the hotels commandeered during the pandemic and move clients into appropriate accommodation, 42 self-contained units for those with medium-support needs opened at Ty Casnewydd in September 2020.
- Housing First: The Housing First model, which seeks to ensure that individuals have safe accommodation first before looking at the underlying causes for their homelessness, has been expanded to 55 units, an increase of 15. 93% of clients utilising Housing First have experienced a successful outcome.
- Partnership Working: The Multi-Disciplinary Team has expanded with an additional three therapeutic workers to be recruited, bringing the total to six in the team. A Probation Officer has also been recruited and funding has been secured for a psychologist and occupational therapist. The pandemic provided an opportunity for improved joint working with prisons, particularly surrounding referrals for early release prisoners and improvements to the prisoner pathway including access to Housing First.

Key Challenges and Risks

- Economic Downturn: The economic impact of both Covid-19 and Brexit is likely to lead to an increase in poverty, unemployment and homelessness. Funding has been received for a further expansion of Into Work Services, however it is anticipated that the increased demand for advice services may outstrip supply.
- Reduced support for residents: At the same time as demand is expected to increase, restricted Hub openings and lower engagement with Advice and Into Work Services due to Coronavirus restrictions are making it harder to provide support to people living in poverty. Relatively few people (213) have been supported into work in the first half of 2020-21 given an annual target of 850.
- Homelessness: Demand for homelessness services are currently suppressed and the end of the ban on evictions is anticipated to have an impact from January onwards. The risk of the virus spreading among rough sleepers has led to a change in the emergency accommodation provided – all accommodation must now be self-contained with shared sleeping places heavily reduced in order to comply with Covid-19 restrictions. The pandemic has slightly delayed the pilot of the new assessment and triage centre which will act as a co-ordination point with both health and homelessness services on site.

- Responding to Covid-19 has placed additional financial pressure on services:
 - The Advice & Benefits section have a projected overspend of £146,000. This is due to a number of factors, including irrecoverable Covid-19 expenditure and a reduction in internal income against the Cardiff Works budget.
 - Funding has been made available for this year to manage the transition to the proposed new way of working with single homeless people and an application has been submitted to cover costs. However continued funding will be required, if services are to remain in place and the progress made to date in addressing homelessness is to be maintained.
 - The Council Tax Reduction Scheme has seen a significant increase in expenditure due to the economic downturn. At the midway point of the year, the full contingency allocation of £3.042 million would be required to cover costs.

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

- Enhancing and modernising Cardiff Works to fully align with Into Work Services, tailoring support to ensure that candidates are helped to become 'Cardiff Works ready'.
- Embedding a 'stepping stones' programme of relationship-based activities in order to support young care leavers, who are ineligible for referral to Into Work Services, into education, training or employment. A bid has been submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions for a grant to deliver this.
- Continuing to tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping through increasing the current Housing First team and opening new sites such as the pilot Cardiff Assessment Centre, 47 self-contained units at Baileys Court and converting the current family hostel at Adams Court into a specialist supported accommodation for single clients with complex needs.

Well-being Objective 4:

Safe, confident and empowered communities – Summary

- **Work to end the city's housing crisis**
- **Invest in local communities**
- **Create safe and cohesive communities**
- **Ensure children and adults are protected from risk of harm and abuse**
- **An inclusive and open city**
- **Promote the Welsh language**
- **Improve sports and leisure**

Key Successes

Work to end the city's housing crisis

- New Council Homes: For the first time in a generation, new Council homes are being built to reduce the number of people on the waiting list and tackle the city's housing crisis. To date, 381 homes have been delivered, including 65 this financial year and, whilst Covid-19 has delayed delivery of the overall target, it is expected that over 500 homes will be completed by March 2021.
- Improving the Standards of Private Rented Homes: As well as delivering new homes, a revised Rent Smart Wales Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed in consultation with Local Authority partners and Welsh Government to drive up standards in the private rented sector and the city's high-rise buildings.

Invest in local communities

- Neighbourhood Regeneration: Strong communities rely on access to local services and healthy local economies and so the Council is working with its partners to design and deliver a wide range of regeneration schemes across the city. As part of a series of whole neighbourhood regeneration projects, the Lower Llanrumney scheme is now on site and designs are being developed for the Trowbridge Green and Pennsylvania estates. Progress also continues to be made on a three-year programme of smaller regeneration projects across the city. Environmental improvements to Cathays Road and in Riverside have been completed and consultation has been carried out on three further schemes – Llanishen Street, Llanishen Park and Cowbridge Road East. 94% of residents responding to surveys have been satisfied with completed regeneration projects to date.
- Community Hubs: As part of the Council's Hubs programme, work has been completed on the Butetown Creative Hub and Whitchurch and Rhydpennau Hubs now provide an improved offer following a programme of refurbishment. Options are being explored for a Youth Hub in the city centre. The Maelfa Health and Well-being Hub is close to being ready, and the design and operation of a new domestic abuse one-stop shop in the Cardiff Royal Infirmary is also being progressed in partnership with health and third sector partners.

- Shared Regulatory Services: The Shared Regulatory Services partnership between Cardiff Council and Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Councils has adapted to be at the forefront of monitoring and enforcing Covid-19 restrictions in businesses and has played a key role in Test, Trace, Protect. As well as supporting businesses to re-open, the service has played a crucial role in challenging the adequacy of measures put in place to manage the behaviour of customers. Work has also included market surveillance of hand sanitisers and face masks that have been supplied as PPE which resulted in several brands of hand sanitiser being identified as ineffective against viruses including Covid-19.
- Volunteering: The 'Together for Cardiff' initiative, hosted on the Council's Volunteer Cardiff website, saw over 1,000 people volunteer to help deliver food and medical supplies to the most vulnerable at the beginning of lockdown in March. High levels of volunteering have continued. In Quarter 1, levels of volunteering were more than ten times higher than this time last year. Visits to the website have far exceeded expectations with 87,190 hits by the end of Quarter 2.

Create safe and cohesive communities

- Community Safety: Through the city's Community Safety Partnership, the Council and its public and private sector partners have played a central role in the city's response to Covid-19, working as one team to safeguard the well-being of residents. Key areas of partnership working have included supporting those at risk of homelessness, adapting services to continue to support victims of domestic abuse and the re-opening of public spaces to promote social distancing and compliance with Covid-19 regulations.
- Support for migrant communities: The Council has also worked with the Welsh Local Government Association to co-ordinate support for migrant communities in the city. This has included supporting a local immigration advice charity to provide legal advice to those whose immigration status is uncertain and which could place them at additional risk to the economic and health impacts of Covid-19.
- Youth Justice Service: In June 2020, "All Our Futures", a new Youth Justice Services Development Strategy, was launched in response to performance challenges identified in the city's Youth Justice Service. A highly-experienced Chair of the Youth Justice Management Board has been appointed. Strengthened partnership governance structures have been put in place with the Board reporting progress directly into the Cardiff Public Services Board and a new Quality Assurance framework developed.
- PREVENT Strategy: As a priority area for the Home Office's PREVENT Strategy, Cardiff has secured funding for PREVENT projects which will build capacity at the community level. The funding is also supporting projects to ensure partners understand the threat posed by far-right groups and how to protect people from radicalisation online.

Ensure children and adults are protected from risk of harm and abuse

- **Exploitation Strategy**: A joint Child and Adult Exploitation Strategy has been published to reflect new and emerging themes of child and adult exploitation such as modern slavery. Links have been made with the Youth Justice Service and Early Help Service. Work is underway with partners to develop the idea of contextual safeguarding, recognising that outside of the family unit, the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

An inclusive and open city

- **EU Settlement Scheme**: The Council is supporting EU citizens to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 including providing digital support to access the scheme online.
- **Race Equality Taskforce**: The Council has established a Race Equality Taskforce to address racial discrimination and promote race equality in the city in collaboration with public sector partners and major employers in the city.

Promote the Welsh Language

- **Annual Report**: The Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-20 and associated Bilingual Cardiff Action Plan was approved by Cabinet and Council in September 2020.
- **Welsh-medium Education**: The Council has been awarded a capital grant of £6 million from Welsh Government to increase Welsh-medium school provision and promote the Welsh language. As well as plans to expand Ysgol Y Wern and establish new Cylch Meithrin provision and dual-stream provision to serve the Plasdŵr development, Welsh-medium primary school provision for Central Cardiff has been approved and will be progressed in autumn 2020.
- **Tafwyl**: This year, the Tafwyl Welsh language festival went online extending its reach to a global audience. The annual celebration of Welsh arts and culture held in June was viewed from as far as the USA and Japan, with more than 8,000 tuning in to enjoy digital content. During a worrying time for the arts, the festival provided essential cultural output and industry support when it was most needed.
- **Street Naming Policy**: Work continues to introduce new Welsh street names across the city following the introduction of Cardiff Council's new Street Naming Policy in October 2019, which ensures parity between Welsh and English street names in the city.

Improve sports and leisure

- **Parks and Green Spaces**: The number of the city's parks and green spaces achieving the Keep Wales Tidy international mark of quality continues to rise. Fourteen parks and green spaces have achieved the Green Flag standard, Forest Farm Country Park and Hailey Park both receiving the award for the first time. One green space, Llandaff North Allotments, maintained the status Green Flag community award. The Council's parks and green

spaces are also benefiting from a major playground refurbishment programme, with a wide range of projects being delivered across the city.

- Move More, Eat Well Plan 2020-23: The Cardiff and Vale ‘Move More, Eat Well Plan 2020-23’ has been launched by Cardiff’s Public Services Board to support behavioural change toward a healthier and more active population and develop resilience to health crises such as Covid-19. Alongside this, Cardiff’s Sport, Health and Physical Activity Strategy will be developed to maximise the use of the city’s parks, green space and leisure centres to increase participation in physical activity and improve the health of our communities.
- Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs: Construction work has now been completed on the restoration of Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs with the prospect of this becoming a destination for walking, water sports and a space for improving residents’ mental and physical health. The planning application for the visitor centre is due to be submitted in autumn 2020 and the refill of the reservoir is expected to take place in spring 2021.

Key Challenges and Risks

- New Council Homes: Whilst progress has been made, the timescale for delivering the first 1,000 new Council homes has had to be delayed by seven months to December 2022 due to the emergence of Covid-19.
- The continued impact of Covid-19 on local and community services: Although visits to libraries and Hubs have increased from 25,000 to over 140,000 since April, this is less than half of the average monthly footfall prior to Covid-19. With Hubs and libraries only able to provide limited services, this is having a community-wide impact in terms of access to services and the health and well-being of residents. The Council is also losing income due to events not being held. However, an underspend of £115,000 is projected in relation to Hubs and Community Services, due to the in-year supplies and services savings.
- Shared Regulatory Services: Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) is a key partner in Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) and has seconded a number of its officers to play key roles in its delivery. Although SRS has been able to deliver elements of its business plan, the service is currently recruiting staff and contractors to backfill some of the vacant posts within the service created as a result of TTP, to attempt to return to a “business as usual” position.
- Crime Trends: In the first few months of the pandemic there was a drop in the overall crime rate and across most types of crime, compared with the same time last year. There was a significant increase in anti-social behaviour, but this was mainly due to breaches of Covid-19 regulations. As Covid-19 restrictions eased over the summer, there were a number of small increases across a number of crime types including public order and hate crime. Levels of anti-social behaviour in Quarter 2 were also up on the same time last year but not to the same extent as in Quarter 1. However, with Wales experiencing its second lockdown, there is the risk of compliance fatigue which may impact compliance trends.

- Domestic Violence: It is likely that Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions will have resulted in under-reporting of domestic violence. The volume of domestic abuse referrals received is being closely monitored through the work of the Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership Group.
- Safeguarding Training: Whilst over two-thirds of Council staff have now completed the training, this remains short of the target for this key corporate performance indicator. Work to address this has been delayed due to redeployment to assist with the response to the pandemic and many staff shielding do not have access to the Council network to complete the training. Directorate self-assessments have been issued for return early in Quarter 3 and a safeguarding awareness video is to be launched shortly.
- EU Settlement Scheme: EU nationals can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021. Individuals will need to be living in the UK by 31 December 2020 to apply with the application deadline set for 30 June 2021. The risk that support from the Council and its partners does not reach more vulnerable EU nationals has increased due to Covid-19, as face-to-face engagement has not been able to take place. For those EU nationals who do not apply by the deadline, there could be issues around eligibility for public services. A Council officer has been recruited to lead the co-ordination of support for EU nationals and an immigration advice charity, Asylum Justice, has been assisted by the Council to secure additional funding to enhance legal advice provision in Cardiff. Funding has also been made available to support the applications of Children Looked After and Children's Services have designated leads to oversee this work.
- Community Cohesion: Although Cardiff is an open and inclusive city, tensions between communities could increase as the Covid-19 crisis continues to have an impact on the lives and livelihoods of residents. The UK's departure from the European Union from 31 December 2020 could also exacerbate these tensions particularly with the threat of increased activity by far- and extreme right-wing groups. Throughout lockdown and during recovery, the Council has supported tension monitoring and mitigation activity in partnership with South Wales Police and Welsh Government and this will continue.
- Youth Justice Service: Following a review of the service by the HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in January 2020, significant progress has been made with the launch of the new youth justice service strategy 'All Our Futures' and the new governance arrangements in place. A follow up assessment has been scheduled.
- High-rise Buildings: Since the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, Shared Regulatory Services, South Wales Fire & Rescue and residents' groups have made progress in addressing the issues relating to some buildings, but a number of buildings continue to require attention. Residents of these buildings currently have to pay for the work and this will continue to be the case unless additional funding is provided by Welsh Government. The Council continues to work to resolve this issue and the issue has been raised with Cardiff's Public Services Board.

- Provision of Leisure Services: Falling attendance and membership figures due to Covid-19 restrictions has placed pressure on all leisure operators. A review of Council provision delivered through its operating partner will be required.
- Parks and Green Spaces: The health and vibrancy of our parks and open spaces as spaces for community well-being rely on the work of volunteers. Much of this work has been put on hold as many volunteers fall into the vulnerable demographic group and therefore under Covid-19 social restrictions. Friends Forums and community-based platforms are anticipated to start up again in the autumn.

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

- Investing in homes and communities: Progress will continue to be made on the 'Cardiff Living' housing scheme, delivering new energy-efficient homes, better connectivity to green spaces and facilities, and improved sustainable transport networks. The planning application for the Channel View scheme in Grangetown will be submitted in December 2020 following public consultation.
- New Hubs Website – Adapting to Covid-19: A new website was launched in October, bringing together information on services provided in Hubs across Cardiff, such as Advice Services, Adult Learning, Into Work Services and Library Services. The site will also detail all events taking place. The events will be delivered online until restrictions are lifted.
- EU Settlement Scheme: A review of all live cases within Children's and Adult Services is to be undertaken to ensure that all eligible cases have been identified and are supported to apply by the deadline.
- New Serious Violence Bill: The Council is working in partnership with South Wales Police and its newly-established Violence Prevention Unit to develop an enhanced preventative approach to tackling violence and organised crime. In advance of the implementation of a Serious Violence Bill, this will include supporting a Home Office and Violence Prevention Unit evaluation of current approaches to address Serious Violence and Serious Organised Crime and participating in a review of current partnership arrangements across South Wales in November. The evaluation will inform proposals around future governance arrangements and violence prevention initiatives.
- Continue to Improve Our Parks and Green Spaces: As part of the response to the Climate Emergency, the Council is working with partners to increase Cardiff's tree canopy, enhance biodiversity and provide environments which support improved health and well-being of local residents. In addition to working in partnership with the Woodland Trust and Trees for Cities, projects are being developed following a grant from Natural Resources Wales to Public Services Boards in Wales. Projects include identifying opportunities for public sector land to contribute to increasing the tree canopy in Cardiff from 19% to 25% by 2030 as part of the Coed Caerdydd project and expanding the "Greening the Council Estate" project, installing green walls in areas of poor air quality. Projects will also identify opportunities for improving natural habitats and growing food, benefiting biodiversity as well as health and well-being.

Well-being Objective 5: A capital city that works for Wales – Summary

- **Lead a capital city that works for Wales**
- **Continue the development of the city**
- **Support innovation and business development**
- **Bring world events to Wales and take the best of Wales to the world**

Key Successes

Lead a capital city that works for Wales

Cardiff's central role in the Welsh economy continues to grow in importance, with the capital city creating 20,000 net new jobs over the past two years and five out of every six new jobs in Wales over the past five. The unprecedented challenge of Covid-19, however, means that the city must now grapple with both a public health and an emerging economic crisis. The Council has moved swiftly to support businesses during this period whilst working to repurpose the city centre as a Covid-secure environment.

- **Direct Funding Support**: Approximately £80 million has been allocated to around 6,000 local businesses over the course of the pandemic.
- **Covid-Secure Public Spaces**: Beyond direct funding support to businesses, the Council's innovative new public space and outdoor seating area, the Castle Quarter, has allowed the hospitality industry in the city centre to continue trading within the confines of continued social distancing regulations. This initiative has generated approximately half a million pounds for the local economy and drove a sharp rise in city centre footfall during the month of August, when the city centre had 620,000 visitors, compared to 395,000 in July and 70,000 in April. Additionally, in July, the Council established Memorandums of Understanding with many hospitality businesses in the city centre, allowing them to apply for temporary outdoor seating, which 90% of surveyed businesses reported had been crucial in saving their business.
- **Economic Recovery Task Force**: A Recovery Taskforce – bringing together Economic Development and Into Work Services including Adult Community Learning – has been established to support those who have recently lost their job due to Covid-19 into new employment, help employers recruit and train, and more broadly, to lead the post-Covid economic recovery in Cardiff.
- **City Development**: Despite the significant impact of Covid-19, good progress continues to be made in positioning Cardiff as the leading force in a growing city-regional economy. Funding has been secured for the development of a business case for Cardiff Central Station's regeneration, and with UK Government and City Deal funding already in place to deliver the capacity improvements at the station, the Council is playing a key role in developing the transport connectivity needed to build a dynamic and productive economy.

- Job Creation: Over 700 new jobs have been created, meaning that the position at the end of Quarter 2 has already exceeded the annual target by 40%, and the overall combined target for jobs created and safeguarded exceeds the Quarter 2 target by 60%.

Continue the development of the city

- Dumballs Road: The Dumballs Road regeneration scheme continues to progress with the agreement of a land transfer to Vastint, representing another step towards delivering over 2,000 affordable homes, commercial and retail space and improved connection between the city centre and Cardiff Bay.
- Cardiff Parkway: The planning application for Cardiff Parkway has been progressed, a key component of the Industrial Strategy for the East, which will deliver a new train station, a new business park and real economic opportunity for this long-overlooked area of the city.

Support innovation and business development

- Creative Industries: The Council supported a Cardiff University-led Strength in Places (SIP) bid to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to support research and development in the screen and creative industries in Cardiff and the region. This industry has been significantly affected by the pandemic and ensuring a successful recovery and supporting innovation in this sector will be key to the future success of the local economy.
- Business Infrastructure: Work to expand the city's business infrastructure has continued, with support from the Town Centre Loan Fund secured to develop new facilities for fin-tech businesses.

Bring world events to Wales and take the best of Wales to the world

- Supporting Cultural Venues: Throughout the pandemic, the Council has worked to secure funding support for St David's Hall and the New Theatre, and recently secured over £3m from the Arts Council of Wales who administered the Cultural Recovery Fund and the Capital Recovery Fund. This funding will help to ensure that Cardiff's internationally renowned live music and theatre offer will be supported during the current crisis.

Key Challenges and Risks

Impact of Covid-19

- Unemployment and Business Closures: The number of people claiming unemployment benefits doubled in Cardiff between January and September 2020, with the threat of business closures a real possibility. Many national department stores have already announced closures, and city centre footfall has once again fallen dramatically due to

renewed lockdown measures, putting many local retail and hospitality businesses at risk of closure.

- **Cultural Sector:** Continued lockdown restrictions on cultural venues and tourist attractions have left them unable to generate income since the end of March. The Council will therefore need to review its approach to supporting the city's cultural venues over the coming year and develop an innovative new policy response. Work will continue to develop a Cultural City Compact approach, however its implementation is likely to be delayed until 2021-22, as the Council has initially focused on supporting the cultural sector in surviving the impact of the pandemic.
- **Attendance at Council Venues:** Attendance at Council venues remains well below target, with 79,546 visits at the end of Quarter 2, against an annual target of 595,000. Whilst this issue pre-dates the pandemic, the ongoing public health restrictions have significantly exacerbated the problem, leaving the Council largely unable to drive improvement in this area of challenge for the time being. Additionally, the Council's Tourism Strategy and delivery arrangements have been delayed to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on the local tourism market.
- **Major Events:** Progress on the development of the Events Portfolio has been disrupted by Covid-19 restrictions. In terms of major sporting events, the Guinness Pro 14 Final, originally set to take place in June 2020, was cancelled by the organisers, and work to assess the feasibility of a 2030 FIFA Football World Cup bid has been delayed due to a focus on addressing the immediate effects of the pandemic. Cardiff's cultural events portfolio has also suffered a significant setback, with the new signature music event for the city, the 'Cardiff Music City Festival', postponed from October 2020 until autumn 2021 due to ongoing public health restrictions. The Music Strategy being developed by the Cardiff Music Board has also been delayed into the post-Covid world. Despite these major challenges, Council officers continue to support and work with Welsh Government, through the Wales Event Advisory Board and monthly event planning meetings, to identify and consider future opportunities in this key sector for the city.
- **Delayed Delivery:** The Council has continued to collaborate with developers to progress work on major city development projects, namely Central Square, Central Quay, Capital Quarter and Callaghan Square, which will significantly increase the city's offer of premium office space and create the dynamic environment needed to attract new businesses, albeit in the face of the current economic headwinds. Additionally, the next phase of development for the International Sports Village has been delayed due to Covid-19, and its procurement process will not commence until early 2021.
- **Brexit:** Brexit uncertainty continues to affect business planning and investment decisions, and Cardiff is particularly vulnerable to a disruptive Brexit, as it is amongst the top five British cities most reliant on EU markets, with 46% of its exports going to EU countries. The Council has been working with partners to signpost businesses to the information and support available to them in responding to the imminent impact that Brexit may have on their competitiveness.

- **Future of Regional Funding:** The future of structural funds – a major source of economic investment for South East Wales – remains an ongoing area of uncertainty, as the UK Government is yet to confirm the amount of funding Wales will be allocated from the Shared Prosperity Fund, nor at which level of government EU replacement funds will be administered. Funding from the EU has been a significant financial contributor to regional and local economic development in Wales, especially outside of Cardiff, with per capita funding far exceeding that in Scotland, Northern Ireland or England, making any changes to regional funding post-Brexit a significant risk for Wales. Given the nature and scale of the disadvantage in certain areas of Cardiff, the Council will work to ensure future funding arrangements more accurately reflect inequality across the region and the levels of deprivation within the city.

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

- The Cabinet will consider the appointment of its preferred bidder for the Indoor Arena in Cardiff Bay, marking a significant step forward in the delivery of the last major missing piece of infrastructure in the city's culturally-focused economic regeneration programme of the last two decades.
- The Canal Quarter masterplan will be finalised upon the conclusion of the Indoor Arena procurement process, which will see a long-overlooked part of the city centre transformed into a dynamic area, with a new public square surrounded by the uncovered dock feeder canals of Cardiff's industrial past.
- A final masterplan for the future vision of Cardiff Bay's development will be presented to Cabinet in December 2020. The procurement process for the next phase of the International Sports Village's development, the centrepiece of this vision, will commence in early 2021.
- Vastint, the developer for the Dumballs Road regeneration project, will submit a planning application for this crucial new development early in 2021.
- A proposal for the creation of a Science Park Campus at Coryton, developed by the Council in partnership with City Deal partners, the private sector and the University Health Board, is currently being considered by City Deal, and funding has been approved by the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Cabinet to develop the proposition.
- From 2021, Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) will become an important new feature of the regional economic development policy landscape in Wales. The Welsh Government has already published draft regulations for the establishment of a CJC for South East Wales, covering the local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, which will be a distinct corporate body with the power to employ staff and hold budgets. CJs will exercise functions relating to Strategic Development Planning and Regional Transport Planning and will also have the power to promote or improve the economic well-being of their regions. Cabinet will consider its response in December.

- Over the coming year, the Western Gateway, a cross-border strategic partnership with Cardiff and Bristol at its core, will play a key role in attracting the level of inward investment to Cardiff from the UK Government and private sector that has been seen in the North of England in recent years, namely in infrastructure, education, Research and Development and new businesses. More broadly, the Western Gateway will help drive the inclusive and green economic growth that will define the post-Covid era and position the South Wales/West of England region at the centre of the national Climate Emergency response. The partnership's full vision document will be released later this year, following the completion of an Independent Economic Review.

Well-being Objective 6:

Cardiff grows in a resilient way – Summary

- Work as one team, keeping our streets clean
- Make Cardiff a world-leading recycling city as a core part of our response to climate change
- Lead Cardiff's low-carbon transition
- Promote and instigate sustainable flood risk management
- Put sustainability at the heart of our plans for Cardiff's future development
- Lead a transformation of Cardiff's public transport system, alongside promoting more active forms of travel

Key Successes

Work as one team, keeping our streets clean

- A robust management response and reform programme was developed to address longstanding issues within waste management and street scene. These include the establishment of new management arrangements and a focus on performance management, including a data-led approach to service development and problem resolution. Progress was also made in relation to workforce reforms by addressing concerns relating to collections around bank holidays, permanent staff recruitment and improvements in workplace Health and Safety arrangements. Continued focus will be required to ensure that this reform programme delivers sustained improvement.
- Cleansing Services: Additional resources have been allocated to the inner ward areas of Cathays, Plasnewydd, South Riverside, Grangetown and Splott for the provision of cleansing services.
- Work has also been progressed in relation to 'unloved spaces', which are spaces on the highway that are licensed to the community for local people to improve them; however, Covid-19 restrictions have meant that group gatherings have not been possible in recent months and the litter picking kits that are usually provided in Hubs have not been accessible.
- Volunteer groups like Cardiff Rivers Group are working safely in line with the controls that have been put in place in response to Covid-19 to undertake activities like cleansing around the edge of Cardiff Bay.

Make Cardiff a world-leading recycling city as a core part of our response to climate change

- Policy-driven improvements continue to be progressed to address significant operational issues leading to performance, budget and public perception challenges. Work has also progressed in relation to the reform programme, permanent staff recruitment and a significant improvement in workplace Health and Safety arrangements.

- Service Innovation: A booking system was introduced for the city's two Recycling Centres in order to enable them to re-open safely at the end of May 2020. In addition, a booking system for bulky item collections was launched on 9 September 2020 on both the Council's website and Cardiff App. The new booking system and controls at Recycling Centres have supported improving recycling performance to 90%.

Lead Cardiff's low-carbon transition

- The One Planet Cardiff Strategy was approved for public consultation by the Cabinet in October 2020.
- Overall air quality has improved significantly in accordance with the Welsh Government timescales; however, further development of the Castle Street scheme is required. There is ongoing dialogue with the Welsh Government about any revision to the Castle Street scheme to ensure that compliance can still be achieved in the shortest possible time. Air quality monitoring stations have been installed at five locations in the city centre, including a permanent monitoring station on Castle Street, with live data being captured from early August 2020.
- The Lamby Way Solar Farm structure has been completed. Connection to a nearby electricity consumer via a private wire connection is scheduled to commence mid-September, but is dependent on Natural Resources Wales granting flexibility around some ecological constraints. An embargo on works in the Rumney estuary has been imposed by them. Discussions are taking place about potential additional flexibility but if they are not successful, this will delay the private wire completion until April 2021. Until this connection is made, the energy produced by the solar farm will go to the National Grid.
- A Food Strategy Steering Group and Food Growing Plan task & finish group have been formed to support the delivery of the Cardiff Food Strategy: Recruitment to a three-year post to support the implementation of the Council's Food Strategy was put on hold due to the budgetary impact of Covid-19.

Promote and instigate sustainable flood risk management

- Ground investigation works for the coastal defence improvements in Cardiff East were completed by the end of May 2020. The final business case and detailed design work is being completed to enable the commencement of construction works; however, environmental conditions for the construction works are difficult, together with the need for agreement/licences to be obtained from Natural Resources Wales before entering the River Rumney estuary.

Put sustainability at the heart of our plans for Cardiff's future development

- Green Infrastructure Plan: A working group has been established to prepare a project brief for the development and delivery of a Green Infrastructure Plan, taking into account existing resources and other priorities in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

- Grant and loan funding have been secured for the Heat Network scheme and the procurement process for this project is ongoing, with initial bids expected to be submitted by the end of September 2020.

Lead a transformation of Cardiff's public transport system, alongside promoting more active forms of travel

- Central Interchange Transport Hub and Central Station: The working relationships with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government have enabled agreement on investments in the Central Interchange Transport Hub and Central Station. Governance and working arrangements for Cardiff Council to engage in discussions with Transport for Wales (TfW) and TfW Rail have been established. The overarching business case for the Metro, including the Cardiff Core Metro/Cross-rail, is being developed. Potential key issues include timely delivery of Metro improvements and extension aspirations in Cardiff. This is being mitigated through the Governance structure and programme of study work.
- Safe Cycle Network: Work to develop a new fully segregated, safe cycling network across the city is ongoing. The North Road Phase 2 scheme has been completed, phase 2 of Cycleway Way 1 consultation completed, Hailey Park consultation completed and solution agreed with Members; detailed design commenced. Contracts have been let for both phase 1 of Cycleway 4 and the Gold Pop-up Route and work on both sites commenced at the end of September.
- Active Travel Network Map: Technical work for the initial draft Active Travel Network Map is in progress with a statutory submission date of September 2021.
- 20mph zones: Plans have been developed for 20mph speed limits to be implemented in Splott, Butetown, Canton/Riverside, Llandaff, and Creigiau with Traffic Regulation Orders processes underway. Initial scoping work with Welsh Government has commenced to assist on an evaluation pilot of processes to inform guidance on a future 20mph default speed limit in built-up areas.
- E-bikes infrastructure planning is underway to locate 125 bikes in key appropriate locations across the city. The focus will be on connecting the Bay with the city centre in the first instance.
- Active Travel Plans by 2022: 64 schools have been supported to develop Active Travel Plans during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2020-21. Further to this, 660 bicycles have been provided to over 30 Cardiff schools with funding from Welsh Government. This fleet of bicycles will be housed in on-site containers on school sites making them easily available for balance bike training and National Standards Cycle Training activities. A further phase of bikes is being planned for other schools and schools have been invited to express their interest to receive a new bike fleet.
- Living Streets: A pilot study focusing on Plasnewydd has been completed. A community group, drawing from the membership of existing community groups in Plasnewydd and

Roath/Penylan areas, has been established by. The Living Streets report identified a number of measures such as ‘parklets’ (pop-up amenity spaces – seating, planting areas – provided on street) and de-cluttering of street furniture which could potentially be delivered as part of Covid-19 interventions, in particular, the potential Pop-Up segregated cycle route running along the Albany Road corridor which is currently being investigated.

Key Challenges and Risks

- One Planet Cardiff: Detailed delivery planning required to identify funding requirement, delivery capacity and implementation profile to effectively progress the strategy.
- Statutory recycling targets: Household waste and recycling collections completely changed during the period 22 March to 6 July 2020 due to the initial lockdown: food and recycling were collected at the same time as general waste, and garden waste collections reduced from fortnightly to once every five weeks. These changes dramatically reduced the number of collections planned and undertaken. As such, Quarter 1 figures would in no way be reflective of normal operations, and therefore would not provide a useful comparator with previous years. Work continues to take place with Welsh Government, Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and local partnerships to review how Cardiff can achieve the Welsh Government target of 70% by 2024-25 after falling short of the statutory target in 2019-20. A new service model for waste and recycling collections is expected to be delivered in February 2021. This includes moving to a four-day working model where waste is collected between 06:00 and 15:45.
- Public Transport: The impact of lockdown and the requirements of social distancing has had a major impact on public transport, particularly municipal bus companies. Scrutiny panel members were reassured by the current approach being taken to minimise the financial risks to the Council, following the meeting of the Covid-19 Scrutiny Panel on 23 June 2020, with a package of support measures subsequently agreed at the October meeting of Council.
- Delays to the Bus Retrofit Scheme as a result of the state aid notification process and the impact of Covid-19 has meant that the intended October 2020 completion date will be delayed.
- Central Transport Services are intending to review the wider Council fleet with Welsh Government Energy Service/Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV): Following this review a revised timetable will be known or the delay period to the original plan. Potentially pushed back by one year. Further review with Welsh Government Energy Service will enable a more robust assessment on vehicle and infrastructure requirements at Council locations.
- The timescale for delivery of phase one of the new Canal Quarter scheme has been delayed due to the impact of Covid-19: Detailed design work is being progressed to ensure that a high-quality and environmentally-sound scheme is developed that can complement and integrate with the city centre masterplan.

- The Local Development Plan (LDP) Review Report: The LDP Review Report and Delivery Agreement were due to be considered by Cabinet and Council in March 2020; however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these meetings were cancelled. The Welsh Government has since issued guidance in July 2020, which states that Local Planning Authorities should consider the implications of the pandemic for LDP reviews. Approval of these documents for submission to Welsh Government would then trigger the formal commencement of the LDP review process. Given the delay to the review of the LDP, the date for completion of the full review of the LDP is now 2024 in the proposed timetable that will be considered by Cabinet and Council in November 2020.
- Confirmation on an enhanced funding package to support taxi drivers to switch to ULEV from Welsh Government is being awaited. Currently, the date of the revised policy introduction is not known and will be dependent on future discussions with the taxi trade. The revised taxi scheme has been further assessed and reported to Welsh Government and a decision on this is awaited before it can be launched with the trade. The Welsh Government is unlikely to provide any funding for any transition of Euro 6 vehicles as this is against the policy direction of Zero Emission fleet by 2028. Covid-19 has severely impacted the trade and further implementation of Euro 6 policy will be met with strong opposition from trade.
- Flood Risk Management: The development of a sustainable water, flood and drainage strategy for Cardiff by 2021 has been put on hold for 12 months due to the ongoing impact of the February 2020 storms on the work and resources of the Flood Risk Management Team, as well as ongoing demands relating to the impact of Covid-19.
- Covid-19 programme delays and project delivery capacity a risk to major infrastructure programmes. These issues will need to be mitigated by reprogramming to take account of Covid-19, and merging of schemes with Recovery Projects. Sourcing of agency staff and consultancy support is also being pursued.
- Financial Resilience in Civil Parking Enforcement: A reduction in income has significantly impacted ongoing financial resilience in the directorate. Over £5m of income supports the delivery of services across Planning, Transport and Environment.
- Regional Development Plans and Regional Transport Plan requirements under Corporate Joint Committees.

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

- The Council will need to set out its response to the consultation on Corporate Joint Committees and the regionalisation of aspects of land-use planning and strategic transport.
- The draft LDP Review Report and Delivery Agreement are being revised to take account of the implications of Covid-19, particularly in relation to consultation and engagement methods in the context of potential new waves of infection and the need to maintain

social distancing. These revised documents will be considered by Cabinet and Council with consultation planned for January and February 2021 and a further report to Cabinet and Council seeking approval for formal commencement in spring 2021.

- Consideration and agreement required on the next phase of the District Heat Network.
- Results of the One Planet Cardiff Consultation to be considered in March 2020.

Well-being Objective 7:

Modernising & Integrating Our Public Services – Summary

- **Deliver fewer and better Council buildings**
- **Rebuild and reform our public services so that they can meet the challenges of the 2020s**
- **Use the power of the public purse to deliver social progress**
- **Deliver our ambitious Digital Strategy**

Key Successes

Deliver fewer and better Council buildings

- **Covid Secure Buildings:** A key part of the Council's response to the pandemic has been repurposing its buildings to create Covid-19 secure environments. Extensive work has been undertaken by the Council's Health & Safety team to risk assess each Council premises to achieve physical distancing. The work has included ensuring safe access and regular cleaning of high-contact surfaces and provisions of hygiene supplies. This has enabled staff to continue delivering business critical operations from Council premises, provide key services whilst also creating a working space for those with physical or mental health requirements that prevent them working from home
- **Covid Safe Services:** Each service has completed an assessment checklist, highlighting risks in relation to interaction with the public, colleagues, contractors as well as the use of equipment and travel in work. Following on from this, risk assessments have been completed for each service area to ensure that controls that are in place which accord with both Council policy and national guidelines.
- **Core Office:** Long-term core office proposals are being developed as part of the development of the wider property strategy. The Council recognises that significant parts of its office estate are outdated, in poor condition and in need of investment and modernisation. The office footprint will need to reduce to reflect the changing size and shape of the organisation and as it embeds and enhances some of the positive changes to working practices that have been implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council has mapped its service area requirements as part of its Restart and Recovery strategy for corporate offices. The vacation of Willcox House forms part of the core office strategy and the long-term aspirations of enabling office-based staff to operate in a more agile way.

Rebuild and reform our public services so that they can meet the challenges of the 2020s

- **Adaptive HR Support:** To respond to the challenges of Covid-19 and support an effective response, the Council has introduced new and adapted existing HR policies. This has ensured that staff have the clarity, support and flexibility needed to deliver effectively, and has included new special leave allowance and homeworking guidance.

- Corporate Health Standard: The Council continues to work towards the Corporate Health Standard, adapting to the impact social distancing measures have had on face-to-face health and well-being interventions through Occupational Health. Increased support for mental health and well-being has also been provided during the pandemic through changes to the Carefirst contract and re-directing in-house face-to-face counselling services to virtual support groups for key workers.
- Enhance Health and Well-being Provision: Further support mechanisms have been put in place for those shielding/ self-isolating such as welfare contacts with staff, mental health and well-being sessions and workforce risk assessments for those returning from self-isolation. This has been alongside virtual physio sessions and DSE support for those working from home.
- Sickness Absence: Over the last six months, there has been a marked reduction in sickness absence. The Quarter 2 sickness outturn forecast suggests an end of year position of 7.66 days per full-time employee (FTE) against a target of 9.5 day per FTE; these figures include any Covid-19 related sickness. This is an improvement of 3.43 FTE days compared to the same forecasted period in 2019-20.

The percentage of short-term sickness has decreased by approximately 10% when compared to the same period in 2019-20. This equates to a reduction of around 8,500 FTE days. This can be attributed to a number of factors including an increase in the numbers of staff working from home, a number being allocated special leave due to Covid-19, the furloughing of staff and compliance with social distancing and enhanced hygiene practices.

- A Council That Reflects Its Communities: Work has continued throughout the pandemic to promote the Council as a workplace to under-represented groups. Whilst face-to-face work experience has not been possible due to Covid-19 restrictions, work is being undertaken to develop virtual work experience to provide alternative opportunities to young people.
- The Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2020-24 has been approved, which outlines its response to the impact of Covid-19 on different communities and the extensive work that Cardiff is carrying out to create a fairer and more inclusive Cardiff.

Use the power of the public purse to deliver social progress

- Socially Responsible Procurement Policy: The Council continues to support the foundational economy through the implementation of its Socially Responsible Procurement Policy, ensuring that local people and communities benefit from the money the Council spends on goods and services.
- The Social Value Framework and Social Value Portal has been established, with the TOMs (Themes, Outputs and Measures) for Wales being launched in November, which Cardiff have played an active/leading role in developing.

Deliver our ambitious Digital Strategy

- The Council has progressed its digital agenda at pace and scale during the first half of the financial year.

Online Services: During the first six months of the year, 924,412 customers contacted the Council via digital channels, approximately 400,000 more digital contacts compared to the same period in 2019-20. The Cardiff App has also seen a significant increase in the number of citizens downloading it; at the end of Quarter 2, 32,467 citizens had downloaded the Cardiff App, around an 8,000 increase on the 2019-20 figure. This enables online engagement on issues such as Council Tax and waste at a convenient time.

Automation of Services: The Council's 'Chatbot' was launched at the end of the 2019-20 financial year as part of the Council's work to improve digital access. The initial launch saw high volumes of contacts; however in April the 'Chatbot' was taken offline and relaunched to enable improved conversation scenarios and enquiry responses. Since then the Council has seen the 'Chatbot' reach is 30,000th conversation. This is based on approximately 3,500 conversations a month with 81% of customers rating their experience as very good, good or ok. Further services continue to be developed and Quarter 2 saw the deployment of free waste bag ordering.

Agile Working: The shift towards agile and home working has progressed at pace through the first half of the year. Approximately 500 new laptops and tablet type devices were procured to increase the number of staff who can work from home or alternate locations. Alongside this, 5,500 users were converted to the use of Microsoft Teams, as Skype for Business was phased out. Further functionality has been released in Microsoft Teams and SharePoint Online to improve the user experience and enable collaborative work cross-directorate and with external partners.

Key Challenges and Risks

- Financial Resilience: The Council continues to face significant ongoing financial pressures as well as the financial implications of Covid-19, with many areas having significant additional expenditure as a result and others facing loss of income. Certain assumptions have been made regarding the extent to which these costs and income losses can be recovered via the Welsh Government Hardship Fund for Local Authorities. However, work continues on both short- and medium-term financial plans with directorates in relation to the planning and delivery of efficiency savings. Enhanced service planning has been undertaken in a number of areas grappling with strategic challenges to ensure clear accountabilities, metrics and targets.
- Governance: Ensuring that the corporate responsibilities that the Council has in terms of Insurance, Procurement, employment, fraud and cyber security are maintained during periods of crisis management and the shift to online working.

- Sickness Absence and Staff Well-being: Sickness absence remains a longstanding area of challenge for the Council, and whilst the forecasted outturn position looks very positive, it is vital that the proactive and strengthened management practices that have been put in place are maintained and built upon. The Quarter 2 figures show evidence that short-term sickness continues to fall with a 10% decrease over the last 12 months, however, long-term sickness continues to account for over 80% of all Council staff sickness.
- Assets and Property: The new property strategy is being developed, informed by the core office accommodation approach. The need for buildings to be Covid Safe will need to be taken into consideration in these strategies, along with the relocation of staff and services from Willcox House.

Forward Look: Areas of Focus

- Directorates must continue to review the risks associated with responding to Covid-19 from a service planning perspective. This must include financial, service and workforce planning.
- Home and Agile working: The development of the Agile Working Strategy will provide an opportunity to capture some of the productivity, efficiency and well-being gains achieved to date by enabling a more permanent shift to home or agile working as the default mode of operation for many staff. This will tie in with the core office proposals and the new property strategy. Other areas will need to be considered as part of this model, including:
 - Digital Infrastructure, ICT equipment and virtual processes;
 - Staff Terms and Conditions;
 - Staff Well-being (Physical and Mental);
 - Management Support and Performance Management Arrangements.
- Progress the delivery of the Digital Strategy: Further implementation of services offered via the 'Chatbot', alongside the further development of the Cardiff App, enabling citizens to interact by their preferred means at their preferred time.