

**CABINET MEETING: 20 MAY 2021**

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**RECOVERY AND RENEWAL: DELIVERING A CHILD FRIENDLY  
RECOVERY**

**LEADER (COUNCILLOR HUW THOMAS)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 5**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To consider proposals to deliver a Child Friendly Recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the proposed Capital Ambition: Recovery and Renewal agenda.

**Background**

2. On 25 February 2021, the Cabinet agreed to a series of approaches to respond to the urgent issues facing the city as lockdown restrictions are eased. These included ensuring the safe reopening of schools to all learners and re-engaging pupils; maintaining access to learning and building the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people; and continuing to support businesses and workers most greatly impacted by the pandemic, particularly young people.
3. Recognising the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's education, rights, wellbeing, and future pathways into employment the Cabinet also committed to putting a programme of activity in place to ensure that Cardiff's recovery and renewal post-Covid-19 has the voice, rights and interests of children and young people at its centre.
4. This report sets out the Council's plans for a Child Friendly Recovery in Cardiff where:
  - Children and young people are at its heart, and the voices, needs and rights of all children and young people are respected.
  - Children and young people, regardless of belief, ethnicity, background or wealth are safe, healthy, happy and able to share in the city's success.
5. In doing so, it identifies the short and medium to longer term actions that will be delivered across Council service areas and with partners in the public, private, higher education and community sectors. These actions address the needs of all children and young people in Cardiff, from those who will access enhanced universal services through to those requiring specialist safeguarding and mental health services.

6. In addition to services for young people, securing a Child Friendly Recovery will also require ensuring that the voice of young people is heard in all aspects of recovery and renewal. The report therefore also sets out how children and young people will engage with the 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger: City Recovery and Renewal' strategy and the 'One Planet Cardiff' response to the climate emergency.
7. Over the medium to longer term, the Council will work in partnership with children, young people and families to refresh and publish a new, post-pandemic, Child Friendly Strategy in the autumn of 2021, inclusive of detailed shared commitments and a 3-year plan.

## **Introduction**

8. This report represents the Child Friendly Recovery element of the Capital Ambition: Recovery and Renewal Programme and provides an overview of the shared responsibility for delivering a Child Friendly Recovery. It also identifies the short and medium to longer term actions that will be delivered in partnership as we move forward as a city to ensure that Cardiff is a 'Great Place to Grow Up':
  - A city with children and young people at its heart, where the voices, needs and rights of all children and young people are respected.
  - A city where all children and young people, regardless of belief, ethnicity, background or wealth are safe, healthy, happy and able to share in the city's success.
9. To achieve this, the Recovery and Renewal Programme will address specifically the needs of all children and young people in Cardiff, from those who will access enhanced universal services through to those requiring specialist safeguarding and mental health services.
10. This report is one of a series of reports to be considered by the Cabinet on 20 May 2021, which will contribute to the *Capital Ambition: Recovery and Renewal Programme* and inform a refresh of the *Cardiff 2030 Vision for a Capital City of Learning and Opportunity*.

## **A Child Friendly Recovery – a shared responsibility**

11. In November 2018, the Cardiff Public Services Board launched the Child Friendly Cardiff Strategy setting out Cardiff's ambition to be recognised as a Child Friendly City and five key goals to provide the framework for delivery:
  - Every child and young person is valued, respected and treated fairly.
  - Every child and young person has their voice, needs and priorities heard and taken into account.
  - All children and young people grow up in a safe and supportive home.
  - All children and young people access high quality education that promotes their rights and helps them to develop their skills and talents to the full.

- Children and young people have good physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
12. In January 2021, the Cabinet received an update report which outlined the positive progress being made towards these goals, as recognised by UNICEF UK. The Cabinet also committed to continue to drive a council wide commitment to action to embed a child's rights approach across all council services and to maintain a meaningful approach to the participation of children and young people in policy, strategy and decision making where changes will impact upon their lives.
  13. To ensure that the city's Recovery and Renewal Programme is child friendly, our stated child friendly ambitions will be considered throughout the development and delivery of plans, ensuring joint efforts and purposeful partnerships across Cabinet portfolios, Council departments, public services and partners across the city region to take account of children's rights.
  14. An important feature of a Child Friendly Recovery will be positive messaging and communications, to champion children and young people, to celebrate their resilience and generate a sense of optimism and opportunity about positive futures. The Council will lead a joint communications strategy with city partners, commencing in the early summer of 2021 to bring these messages to life, in line with the city's Capital Ambition that 'Cardiff is a Great Place to Grow Up'.
  15. The Child Friendly Cardiff team will provide leadership to ensure that there is parity of engagement by children and young people in developing city recovery and renewal plans across all themes of the programme. The voices from seldom heard groups of children and young people will be key and appropriately targeted engagement will be carefully enabled. The team will also support the creation of child friendly versions of plans, access to child right's impact assessments and evaluation programmes of work as required. Where it will add further value, UNICEF UK will also directly support the programme.

### **The Impact of Covid-19 on Children & Young People: Update Position**

16. Schools welcomed back pupils in all age groups from 12 April 2021, following the phased return of foundation phase, primary and examination year groups prior to Easter during February and March 2021.
17. As children and young people across all year groups have commenced their return to school, school leaders are reporting a widespread eagerness for 'normality' amongst pupils, a genuine aptitude for learning and noticeable happiness and contentment as pupils get to socialise again with their friends. The vast majority of children and young people are settling back into school well and re-adjusting to school life, albeit with ongoing COVID safety restrictions.
18. Children and young people continue to be generally less clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 than the adult population, with infection rates

much lower in the younger population. Over the last fourteen months, since March 2020, we have witnessed the remarkable resilience of children and young people, the majority of which have coped extremely well with the significant disruption of COVID-19 to their daily lives. Children and young people have experienced substantial changes to education with several extended periods of school closures and a switch to online learning, separation from friends and extended families, and a lack of access to recreation, sport and leisure activities that they previously enjoyed.

19. All schools have maintained learning as far as possible, through blended learning options and now that pupils are back in the classroom, targeted support and intervention is being provided as teachers deem necessary to enable pupils to progress their education and prioritise aspects of the curriculum as required.
20. For the city's most vulnerable children and young people however, the impact of the pandemic has been greater, with the disruption of the last year highlighting and exacerbating existing inequalities in our communities. Support for these groups is being prioritised and will form a key feature of the Council's recovery plans.
21. From the beginning of the calendar year to 27 April 2021, 123 positive COVID-19 cases were reported by schools in Cardiff. Isolation rules continue to apply and, as a result of these cases, a total of 1,328 children and 159 staff were advised to isolate by Public Health Wales. The Local Authority and Public Health Wales will continue to support schools to keep schools COVID safe and to manage positive cases should they occur.
22. During the period from 23 February 2021 to 23 April 2021, school staff have been provided with the option to self-test using Lateral Flow devices at home. Over 38,000 tests have been recorded with only 6 positive cases leading to a PCR test. Lateral Flow tests are also now available to pupils in Year 7 and above but as these are reported using the national recording portal, we cannot provide figures on outcomes.
23. All special school, specialist resource base and wellbeing class staff have been prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccine. Staff providing intimate care to children with medical needs in our mainstream classes have also been prioritised. Whilst Head teachers and Trade Unions have called for the education workforce to be prioritised for vaccines, this has not been agreed nationally.
24. Health and Safety guidance has continued to be updated in line with the latest Welsh Government and Public Health Wales advice. Monitoring visits are undertaken where required to review infection prevention and control measures in place at individual schools. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited 10 Cardiff schools during the Autumn term 2020, providing positive feedback on the controls in place with no issues identified at any of the schools inspected. Regular deliveries of PPE and cleaning materials are well established with orders in place until the end of the Summer term 2021. Enhanced cleaning arrangements continue to

reduce the risk of transmission from high contact surfaces, this arrangement will remain in place until the end of the Summer term and will be reviewed prior to September 2021.

25. In recognising the challenges facing children and young people in Cardiff, it is important to understand the demands on specialist services and how they have changed over the past 12 months, which includes:
  - An increase in referrals to our front door to children services:
    - The Family Gateway service saw an increase of 13.4% (from 4,256 to 4,917)
    - The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub saw an 9% increase (from 4,839 to 5,531)
  - An 81% increase in children on the Child Protection Register (from 253 to 458) over the last 12 months
  - A 22.6% increase in children open to Children's Services requiring a Care and Support Plan (CASP) (from 1,819 to 2,230)
  - A 4% increase in the numbers of Children Looked After (from 955 to 993).
26. Coinciding with the reopening of schools following the latest lockdown there has been a significant rise in the Children and Young People presenting with emotional and mental health issues, with a rise in in-patient admissions and referrals to both Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Children's Services. In addition, the numbers of young people engaging with street based youth work citing health as a concern are high.
27. The impact of lockdown has been particularly difficult for children and young people with disabilities and their families, with many vital support structures and networks closed for a significant amounts of time including some schools, health services, respite and community facilities.
28. Recent reports suggest that 4 and 5 year olds who commenced school during September 2020 are displaying a greater delay in acquiring basic speech, language and communication skills. In some areas this is as much as a 25% increase in delayed skills compared with previous years.

### **Short Term – A Graduated Response to Need**

29. The report considered by the Cabinet in February 2021 provided an early insight to the immediate issues facing children and young people and made clear that, in the short term, the Council will work with school leaders to support children and young people to re-engage in the daily routine of attending school, with a sharp focus upon learner wellbeing, confidence, self-esteem and happiness.
30. This approach will remain to be of paramount importance as society anticipates the further lifting of restrictions, whilst remaining resilient and ready for any future waves of the pandemic. However, it is evident that actions in the short term need to ensure that the very most vulnerable

children, young people and families can readily access targeted support and intervention alongside the universal response.

31. Hence, our developing approach to supporting children and young people differentiates more clearly between the Universal response for all children and the Targeted response for more vulnerable groups. A graduated response will be provided to meet identified needs, underpinned by strong buoyant universal services, narrowing to specialist services for the very most vulnerable children and young people.



### **Universal Response – Short Term (9-12 months)**

32. The universal response for all children and young people in Cardiff will continue to follow the pattern outlined in the prior report, covering four specific areas of focus:

- Health & Safety
- Re-engagement and wellbeing
- Maintaining learning
- Pathways to Progression

#### Health & Safety

33. Further guidance will be provided on safe restart of school facilities including swimming pools, hydrotherapy pools and hiring of premises to community groups. In addition, further advice will be issued to support off-site activities and educational trips and support will be provided for the safe operation of summer clubs/activities provided. Risk assessments will be reviewed prior to return to schools in September 2021, taking into account any revised COVID-19 guidelines. The Council's Health and Safety team will resume normal school support services from September 2021, with enhanced support for school estates staff to recover lost ground on

building and school environment safety matters due to the impact of the pandemic.

### Re-engagement and wellbeing

34. An inclusive, innovative and joined up response to the re-engagement and wellbeing of children and young people is at the core of the Council's Child Friendly Recovery agenda. Children, young people, families, schools and support services have consistently advised that in the short term, there must be opportunities for children and young people to recover lost social, recreational, sport and leisure experiences, to simply 'be' with their friends and to enjoy some return to life as it was before the pandemic. In partnership, the Council will deliver three key areas of activity to mobilise this renaissance:

- **A Citywide Children and Young People's Festival – 'Summer of Smiles'**

The Summer of Smiles festival will see the city open up to offer a broad range of experiences and opportunities for children and young people, including:

- City centre festival sites and themed activities such as Adrenalin and Adventure, Technology, Sports/Physical, Creative Arts & Culture and Inspirational.
- The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) offering Food and Fun at school locations, extended to include communities beyond the traditionally Welsh Government funded targeted areas.
- Community based activities, led by community organisations in partnership with the Council through a grant scheme.

The festival will ensure that priority groups, such as care experienced children and young people, young carers and those with disabilities are able to access activities with appropriate support.

- **Enhanced Youth Service Provision**

The Youth Service will provide a range of enhanced open access youth provision, to respond to emerging needs and to help tackle any inequalities due to poverty or disadvantage. A variety of options are being explored and could include:

- Virtual Youth Clubs offering live access to youth workers, activities, signposting and direct support and content for common interest groups.
- Pop-Up Youth Clubs utilising the youth bus, a mobile kitchen and tents.
- Extra sessions and nights at existing youth centres.
- An extension of the Youth Innovation Grants to enable partners to offer extra provision in different parts of the city.
- Establishing new open access provision in partnership with a city 'Hyb'.

The Youth Service will connect open access provision with appropriate targeted support for more vulnerable groups.

- **A Children's University**

In partnership with the Children's University charity, Cardiff University, schools and city organisations, the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate will be offering a '*Passport to Learning*' programme for children and young people to provide access to and recognition of engagement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. This builds upon the '*Passport to the City*' commitment made in the Cardiff 2030 vision for education and will bring together partners to create and offer activities which optimise the use of the city's resources.

### Maintaining Learning

35. All schools reopened to provide onsite learning for all pupils on 12 April 2021 in accordance with Welsh Government advice. Schools will lead the re-integration of their pupils into learning, developing their priorities and focus for learning, deciding what is important for learners now and in the longer term and acknowledging the situation of each learner following the disruption of the pandemic. Schools will ensure that personalised assessments of learning enable pupils to make meaningful progress as they return to school, and will design learning that supports the increasing depth and sophistication of learning over time.

36. Early years practitioners and Health Services will work together to tackle any emerging delays in early years development. Joint programmes will involve support for all practitioners to increase their capacity to meet the needs of all learners commencing full time education to develop their social and communication skills.

37. Welsh Government has advised that learning should include:

- Health and wellbeing
- Literacy, numeracy and digital competence
- Broad and balanced learning experiences that span the curriculum.

and that learning should continue to be co-constructed with parents, carers and learners building upon the progress seen during the pandemic, where parents and carers have worked closely with schools to achieve blended learning at home. We will work with schools to ensure the appropriate progression of literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills for every learner within a school.

38. It has also been made clear that the purpose of assessment for learning is to support each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace and that assessments should not be about 'testing' in an attempt to 'catch-up' and cover everything that they would have done before the COVID-19 outbreak. It should help develop a holistic picture of the learner – their strengths, how they learn and areas for development – in order to enable them to be ready to learn and to agree their next steps.

39. To create greater space and flexibility for this more individualised approach to assessment, Welsh Government will be disapplying the



requirements for end of key stage assessments (Foundation Phase, Key Stages 2 and 3) and the associated moderation requirements this year. Welsh Government Policy on requirements around personalised assessments and continuous assessment of the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 and 3 is that they will continue on a reasonable endeavours basis to enable teachers to understand and support individual learner needs.

40. In addition, in order to minimise burdens on schools and local authorities, the National Data Collections (Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 assessments) and Attendance Collections have been cancelled for 2021.
41. Learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales will have their qualifications awarded through a Centre Determined Grade model in 2021. This means that grades will be determined by their school or college based on an assessment of the learner's work. Schools and colleges will be able to use a range of evidence to determine the grades to be awarded to their learners. There will be no formal external assessments.
42. Learners can appeal to their school or college if they are unhappy with their grade, and to WJEC if they are unhappy with the process. This Centre Determined Grade approach puts trust in teachers' and lecturers' commitment to prioritise teaching and learning in the time available, and their knowledge of the quality of their learners' work.
43. This process of assessments and the management of appeals will place significant pressure on secondary schools during the summer term of 2021 and will undoubtedly cause anxiety and stress for many learners as they await their final grades in August 2021. There is also some concern regarding the available options for learners who do not achieve the grades that they were capable of this summer due to the extended disruption of the pandemic since March 2020. There will be no resits for Centre Determined Grades as the process was not examination led. Options are being explored with Welsh Government to ensure that appropriate support and choices are available for all learners.
44. Alongside the return to on-site classroom based learning, all schools in Cardiff have continued to develop their remote and blended learning offers, some of which have been celebrated in "Snippets of Success" updates for regional Directors of Education and Diocesan Directors. Some Cardiff schools have also produced case studies, lead School Improvement Briefings to Central South Consortium staff and "By schools, for schools" Webinars for the region's schools on a variety of themes including:
  - Equity in remote learning
  - Engaging learners and ensuring progress in online lessons
  - Developing remote learning
  - Maintaining standards in remote teaching and learning
  - A whole school approach to remote and blended learning

- Engaging our community during a pandemic
45. There will continue to be a dependency on a blended learning offer as schools manage instances of pupil isolations when positive COVID-19 cases are reported, and ensure readiness for any future waves of the pandemic.
  46. Additional funding has been agreed for the Youth Service to deliver programmes that enhance the curriculum of the Pupil Referral Unit thereby strengthening the offer for young people who require Education Other than at School due to emotional and mental health needs.
  47. The Council will continue to work towards its target of equipping every learner with a digital device and connectivity. Since March 2020, 20,017 end user devices and 2,500 4G mobile broadband devices have been distributed to schools for their learners. A further 6,800 Chromebooks will be supplied over the next few weeks.
  48. Welsh Government funding of data contracts for the 4G devices has now come to an end and has been replaced with a Cardiff Local Authority funded scheme. Unfortunately, it remains the case that only around 500-600 of the 2,500 4G devices, which were distributed to pupils have actually demonstrated any data usage.

### Pathways to Progression

#### *School Leavers 2021*

49. Building upon the achievements of the summer of 2020, Schools, the Youth Service, Into Work Services and wider Cardiff Commitment partners will work together throughout the summer period, to ensure that all young people leaving school and EOTAS (education other than at school) in 2021 secure a positive destination into further education, employment or training.
50. Welsh Government has announced transition funding for Sixth forms and Further Education Institutions to provide transition support for learners in year 11, and learners in year 12 and 13 studying AS/A2 level qualifications who are transitioning to the next steps in their educational journey. This additional funding has been provided in recognition that learners have experienced disruption to their education during the pandemic.
51. Schools and education providers will be encouraged to collaborate to ensure that as many Post-16 options as possible are made available to young people whilst the job market remains so volatile post pandemic. Additional capacity has been added to the Cardiff Commitment team to build a partnership portal creating visibility of Post-16 education options in Sixth Forms and Colleges across the city. A Social Value Officer has also been added to the Cardiff Commitment team to drive up opportunities for young people, secured via community benefits procurement and planning by the Council.

52. The Youth Service will use the vulnerability assessment profile, to identify any young people in need of additional mentoring and support, and will work with schools and providers to ensure that the appropriate support is put in place. An additional Identification & Tracking Officer and two Post-16 Mentors have been added to the Youth Service to support this work.
53. As part of the corporate apprentice and traineeship programme, the Youth Service has recruited 12 young people who will receive experience and training, which could lead to employment with the service. Into Work Services have also enhanced their universal offer to young people seeking employment to include:
- A further six Youth Mentors;
  - Youth specific drop in sessions with Job Centre Plus;
  - Weekly virtual drop in sessions with Citizens Cymru Wales; and
  - Partnership with Cardiff and Vale College to support college leavers.
54. Schools will be supported and encouraged to ensure that the progression of all their learners is used as a measure of success in their School Improvement Plans in line with the expectations of the emerging new Accountability and Assessment Framework from Welsh Government. Improvement Partners from the Central South Consortium will challenge and support schools in this respect and provide join up with the Youth Service as required to support the summer transition programme.
55. Through the Cardiff Commitment networks, a positive communications campaign will run throughout the summer and early autumn 2021 to alert young people and youth support services to emerging opportunities, and also importantly to maintain positive, assertive messages that champion the futures of young people in Cardiff.

#### *Cardiff Commitment – Work Experience*

56. Whilst COVID-19 continues to restrict face to face access to work experience for children and young people, a range of approaches will take place to ensure that they are able to keep in touch with the world of work, to understand where job opportunities may arise and to continue building aspirations. These approaches will include:
- Virtual 'Open your Eyes' weeks, commencing in mid-June, accessible to all Year 5 and Year 6 pupils.
  - A Growth Sector communications strategy and training for teachers, developed in partnership with the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership, highlighting new, emerging or thriving employment sectors and skill shortages across the region.
  - Information events for Youth Support Services and recruitment roadshows with employer partners.

#### *UK Kickstart Scheme*

57. As set out in the report considered by the Cabinet in February 2021, the Council is prioritising the promotion and uptake of the UK Kickstart

scheme, which provides funding to create new six month traineeships for 16 to 24 years olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment. The Council itself will be supporting 30 Kickstart places and has also launched a Cardiff communications campaign to promote the scheme to employers, young people and youth support services.

58. The Council's Into Work Services will work with the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to promote the appropriate uptake of Universal Credit by young people, where this is in their interest, in order to open up the Kickstart scheme to young people who may not otherwise be eligible.
59. To increase the range of Kickstart traineeships available, where possible, the Council will apply for further Kickstart trainee places to support the range of activity planned for children and young people over the summer period, for example as 're-engagement ambassadors with youth services' and to support the 'Summer of Smiles'.

#### *Entrepreneurship & Innovation Spaces*

60. A key area for development, in response to economic uncertainty, inclusive growth and the increasing interests of young people to innovate in creating their own employment options, is Youth entrepreneurship. Empowering young people to succeed in running their own business is part of the mixed economy that the city requires as it recovers and renews post pandemic. Young entrepreneurs can create new jobs, help shape local economies and in doing so, develop the skills needed to better navigate the challenges of the ever changing labour market.
61. Working together with the Council's Economic Development team, the Child Friendly Cardiff team will explore the possibilities of utilising empty spaces across the city, for social enterprise and innovation. 'Innovation Spaces' will be a series of 'out of the box' pop-up spaces, designed for young people, established entrepreneurs and business mentors to collaborate and create. Individuals, teams of future leaders and future change makers will utilise the knowledge and expertise of entrepreneurs and mentors in residence to help bring their ideas to life. We will also look at how existing facilities like the Butetown Youth Hub can support entrepreneurial activity

#### **Targeted Response – Short Term (9–12 months)**

62. Whilst a universal response is crucial, we are acutely aware that the disruption of the last year has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable families. Structural inequalities have been further exposed and highlighted by the pandemic. Children and young people facing vulnerabilities risk falling further behind and are likely to be most disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes, health & wellbeing and future life chances.
63. A joined up targeted approach, to ensure the most vulnerable children and young people are able to access and benefit from support services is key.

One of the positives from the pandemic has been the successful partnership working with all partners coming together to respond to the crisis. There is now the opportunity to build on that as part of our recovery with Council, Health, Police and the Third Sector continuing to unify.

64. The priorities for the short term aim to achieve co-ordination of services and sufficiency to meet demand and will be evidence led and duly informed by the voice of the child, parents/carers and communities. The key areas of focus, all inter-related, are:
- Safeguarding and Wellbeing
  - Ambition, Opportunities and Progression
  - Integrated Youth Support Services and Community Wellbeing

Responses will be graduated as indicated to respond to individual need.

### *Safeguarding and Wellbeing*

65. The Council and its partners offer a broad range of support services, many of which, especially preventative services, have of necessity due to COVID restrictions been withdrawn or very limited over the last year. Whilst virtual services, and some face-to-face provision has been enabled in the highest risk scenarios, normal services have been challenging to maintain in lockdown phases.
66. As the city begins to re-open, including the full re-opening of schools, it is imperative that we fully restart all Council support services and work with partners to re-instate the services required by our most vulnerable children, young people and families. It is widely recognised that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the wellbeing of some children and young people has been negatively affected. Certain children and young people have experienced bereavement of close family members. Others, as a result of social isolation have developed increased feelings of low mood, depression and anxiety leading to increased levels of self-harm and suicidal ideation.
67. The Education directorate has implemented a safeguarding identification and recording system across all schools, the Youth Service and EOTAS provision to ensuring consistency and the ability to target resources based upon reports that summarise geographical and issue based need.
68. Council led support services including Education Welfare, Specialist Teacher teams, Inclusion Services, School Based Counselling and Youth Services will assess demand and prioritise requests for support, escalating to statutory services as necessary.
69. Where possible, purpose led grant funding such as the Additional Learning Needs Recovery grant will be used to add capacity to front-line teams. For example, additional Education Psychologist time and Teaching Assistants will be added to develop and deliver psychology-led targeted interventions.

70. Schools will be supported to complete an assessment tool as part of the implementation of the Welsh Government 'Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being' and to identify actions for development. This will be done initially through a pilot number of schools, and will later be rolled out to all schools across Wales.
71. Additionally, as part of the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing funding provided by Welsh Government, enhanced training will be provided to schools to support children and young people who are bereaved and who are expressing increased thoughts of suicide.
72. The Council has in recent years developed a proven, effective 'Team around the Family' approach to services, at the core of which is the successful Early Help model and the new Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service. To ensure that Early Help services are able to respond to increased demand and assess the needs of families at the earliest possible opportunity, and to reduce waiting times for a range of parenting support, the service will be:
- Utilising an increase in Welsh Government grant funding to recruit additional practitioners into the Cardiff Parenting Service, Cardiff Flying Start and Cardiff Family Advice and Support to provide support to vulnerable children, young people and their families.
  - Delivering a targeted publicity campaign to raise awareness of the Early Help Services.
  - Continuing to engage with schools and other partners to ensure that they are familiar with the Early Help offer and how to make a referral on behalf of the family for information, advice or assistance.
  - Extending the "Let's Play Every Day", A 5 week virtual play and stimulation course that equips families with the knowledge and resources to continue to support their child with their speech and language development during and beyond the intervention.
73. As schools work with their whole school populations to reassess and recharge learning, school leaders urgently need and are calling for 'hands on' support to re-engage their hardest to reach pupils. In addition to the collaboration that achieves the 'Team around the Family' approach in Cardiff, in the short term, to support schools in some of our most challenged communities, we will also consider 'Team in the School' - the co-location of services in secondary school clusters. Such locality based delivery models will assist schools to readily access support for their pupils, and to seamlessly engage with families in school settings.
74. In the short term, this approach will add crucial capacity to school teams as they recover from the pandemic. It will also contribute to the medium to longer aims to further Cardiff's community focused school approaches, whereby schools are recognised for the central role that they play in providing support for their pupils, families and wider communities. The community dimension of schools has never been so evident as it has been in the last year as schools and the local authority have built strong partnerships with parents to facilitate home learning, to ensure free school meal entitlements are honoured, to equip pupils with digital devices and

connectivity and to keep school doors open for the children of keyworkers and vulnerable children.

75. Pilot locality working is already underway with Cardiff West Community High School, with consideration being given to integrated support for vulnerable pupils, offers of council services such as Into Work Advice and Adult Learning for parents onsite, better and awareness of and join up between the School and the Council's Community Hub and links with Third Sector groups.
76. As part of the pilot, one of the Children's Services Locality teams has been working closely with Cardiff West Community High School and there has been real benefit from this joint working. Due to the need and demand outlined in this report, it is proposed that this approach is quickly rolled out across all secondary school clusters. This will mean that all secondary schools will have a named Social Services Team Manager to work closely with to address the needs for those more vulnerable children.
77. Whilst the numbers of pupils eligible for Free School Meals continues to increase, there is clearly much more scope to ensure that all families are maximising access to all the benefits to which they are entitled. With the risks of economic insecurity escalating post pandemic, the Council's Into Work Services will be leading on a number of initiatives to ensure Advice and Support is accessible to the families that need it the most including:
  - Using additional funding to increase capacity in the Money Advice team and further publicising the help that can be provided.
  - Including specific support for families with children with disabilities, families affected by the benefit cap and Food benefits.
  - A pilot of providing Advisors in school settings for parents to access money, Into Work and housing advice.
  - A wide reaching campaign to promote the uptake of Free School Meals with schools.
78. Pressures in Primary care Community and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) continue with an increase in referral rate of 36% over the same 3 month period last year. There are plans in place to reduce the length of time children and young people wait for a first assessment and work with 3rd sector organisations to provide support to children who are waiting for CAMHS intervention.
79. Through the Regional Partnership Board (RPB), there is a programme of work underway focused on improvements in three key areas, support to schools, links to Early Help services, and support for safe accommodation.
80. Welsh Government have recently published their Whole School Approach plan, and locally there is a working group to support schools in taking this forwards. The resilience transformation programme is providing support material and training for schools to support emotional wellbeing and has produced specific COVID-19 recovery information, which can be found at: <https://cavuhb.nhs.wales/our-services/children-young-people-family->

81. Joint working across Health and Children's Services has commenced to address this critical rise and the phased delivery of the work to address the significant issues. It has been agreed that we will jointly:
- Immediately – ensure that there are joint care plans in place for all Children and Young People in hospital with the aim to better support the children and their families for their safe discharge.
  - Medium term – set up a task and finish group with the aim of reviewing the current provision and identifying how any gaps in provision can be addressed, with the alignment of social work and support staff working closely with the CAMHS.
  - Longer term – develop joint commissioning plans and joint arrangements for assessment care and treatment plans.
82. Further to increasing reports of domestic violence in households with children, a range of interventions are planned by Council led support services, including:
- Further work with schools including targeted awareness campaigns, adoption of prevention policies and whole school approaches.
  - An increased number of specialist Independent Personal Advocates via the Rise partnership between Cardiff Women's Aid and BAWSO Women's Aid.
  - Continuing to support staff to manage disclosures through further roll-out of the mandatory Welsh Government National Training Framework.
83. Operation Encompass have recorded 2,254 Public Protection Notices (relating to domestic violence in households with children) from the Police in the period September 2020 to the end of March 2021, which is a significant increase on the same period last year when there were 1,043 notices.
84. In the critical area of housing, council teams will be running a range of initiatives to support children, young people and families including:
- Focused homeless prevention activity for young people through specialist youth homelessness prevention officer in homelessness services.
  - Enhanced support for young people who become homeless by expanding services through the young person's accommodation and support gateway.
  - Expansion of the gateway will also support the step down of young people from residential care, whilst providing a clear pathway to independence post 18.
  - Integrating homeless services within the Hubs, ensuring families have easy access to homelessness prevention services in their local communities.



- Continuing to deliver remote access to homelessness services post-pandemic, to ensure families have the option of receiving services digitally or over the telephone.
  - Introducing rapid rehousing for families, aiming to reduce times spent in temporary accommodation and minimise disruption for children.
  - Developing family homelessness centres.
85. Children's Services, with partners, are delivering a range of new projects for those children and young people who require specialised and high level targeted support. Some of these projects were planned but are either increasing their scope or the timeframe is being brought forward to support the recovery response:

#### Residential Assessment Centre

Falconwood House is a 3-bed home, which has been developed as our new short-term assessment provision. The provision is designed to provide multi-disciplinary assessment and support over the course of a young person's 10-week residence at the home, with input from Children's Services, Health, Education, and other agencies as required, to ensure that young people's next move, whether back home to family or on to a new placement, is as suitable as possible for their needs and wellbeing.

#### Young carers

Working in partnership with the YMCA Cardiff, support for young carers is available and from national research this is a group that has been impacted by the pandemic. The service has recently added a specialist social worker to support young carers and this will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the demand.

#### Mind of My Own App

Cardiff will launch the Mind of My Own App in Summer 2021. The app enables young people to be more actively involved in their own lives. An accessible and empowering way for young people to tell their workers about things that are important to them. The app will initially be used for Children Looked After, but has the potential to be rolled out further to wider groups of young people including those with additional educational needs or even whole schools.

#### Enhanced Support and Respite for Families

To support children and young people to remain supported within their family home Children's Services will soon be able to offer a new type of care at home and sessional respite. The early intervention support will be commissioned and will offer a range from practical household tasks and meal preparation to providing respite via activities based sessions.

#### Youth Justice Service – Resettlement Panel

The new Resettlement Panel has been introduced to ensure that planning for a young person's release into the community commences from the moment that they enter custody or become at risk of entering custody. This is based on a partnership approach involving Children's Services, Housing, Health, Police, Education and Secure Estate who will propose and then support the resettlement plan. Constructive resettlement is about

ensuring the resettlement plan is created entirely in conjunction with the young person – co-created, co-produced, co-ordinated, consistent and customised – allowing for a child's identity shift from pro-offending to pro-social.

#### Enhanced Personal Advisor Service

During the pandemic the service had to change the way it has operated, this has included a more flexible approach from the Personal Advisors increasing the times that staff are available outside of core hours. Other changes have included the payments to care leaving through BACS or directly to housing providers to give to the young people. The service is now looking how it can further support care leavers as part of the recovery, ensuring all have access to employment support and for the team to begin working with Children Looked After from 16 years of age, beginning the transition from leaving care.

#### Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

The service is undertaking a review of all cases and is reinstating the age assessment process to ensure that appropriate support is provided.

#### Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Strategy has recently been approved and the draft action plan, which will include many of the same projects included in this report. The Council's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is responsible for advocating for all care leavers and Children Looked After by Cardiff Council, to ensure that they receive the best possible care and support.

#### Children with disabilities

As part of the recovery it is important that as many support services recommence as soon as it is safe to do so, including:

- Community support packages back to full hours
- Support to attend mainstream holiday opportunities and developing of specialist holiday clubs where required
- Work with local schools regarding after school clubs and transition planning for further education
- Respite provision to increase, including the maximising of facilities such as Ty Storrie.

### *Ambition, Opportunities and Progression*

86. Building on the successful 'Cardiff Commitment' to the futures of children and young people in the city, we will combine new, innovative approaches with extensions of highly effective existing services to continue to build ambition and create opportunities for our most vulnerable. These will include:

- An inspirational life-coaching programme targeted in the first instance at a Secondary School cluster in the west of the city, and, Children on the Edge of Care, Children Looked After, Children in the Pupil Referral

Unit or Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) and those young people being supported by the Youth Justice Service.

- Enhanced Into Work Services, including specific youth co-ordinators for the Southern Arc and care experienced young people, liaison with the Prince's Trust, partnership with Cardiff and Vale College for early college leavers and laptop gifting schemes in hostels and supported accommodation.
- Additional Children Looked After in Education Mentors and targeted careers and work related experiences for this group.
- Enhanced identification and tracking methods and additional Post-16 Mentors in the Youth Service to support young people who may have disengaged from education, employment and training.
- Careers and Work related experiences for young people supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- Increased access to work related opportunities for children with Additional Learning Needs including a 'Project Search' pilot with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.
- Targeted employability programmes secured via social value secured via Council procurement.

#### *Integrated Youth Support Services and Community Wellbeing*

87. With partners, the Youth Service will continue to work towards an integrated model of youth support services to ensure that all 11 to 25-year-olds have access to the variety of services, support and experiences they require. Through quality youth work approaches and trusted relationships, the most vulnerable and hard to reach young people will be supported to improve their wellbeing and to access citywide opportunities as society gradually opens back up post pandemic.
88. The Youth service will continue its street based and outreach youth work programme, including weekends and holidays; and its children/young people and families engagement programme via remote activities and competitions.
89. The Youth Service will continue to fund third sector partners to deliver additional open access provision for young people in targeted areas and review the impact of these interventions in the autumn. These partnerships allow shared good practice, joint working and greater reach along with added value to communities. The Youth Action Groups will be extended and strengthened to build on existing examples of strong community cohesion.
90. The Welsh language youth offer is under review and will be enhanced to ensure that staff and young people have greater opportunities to access youth support via the Welsh language.
91. Children's Services and the Youth Service are working together to deliver a Young Person Safeguarding Strategy and approach to prevent and intervene to address adolescent harm, promote resilience and enable young people to live safely in their families and /or communities wherever possible.

92. The Community Safety Partnership is also testing and beginning to implement a range of approaches to support community wellbeing through social and developmental programmes for young people. These include:
- Multi-agency area based problem solving approaches for complex localised issues, including tackling youth anti-social behaviour. Actions emerging from the problem solving groups include measures to change public spaces, coordinate police/council/partner resources and ensure there are preventative service interventions and support in place- for example the placement of Street Based Youth Workers and engagement with local schools.
  - A youth anti-social behaviour review with the Youth Justice Board which will evaluate the referral process for young people, record an agreed escalation process with intervention and support pathways and refresh the focus on early intervention and prevention.
  - A strategic review in response to youth violence, which will consider the existing referral process for youth involved in serious violence and provide recommendations on how to address any gaps identified in service provision. This will include an understanding of multi-agency risk assessments, improvements to information sharing, enhancing communication with partners, and ensuring appropriate support services are available.
  - Accessing the Youth Endowment Fund to introduce a Neighbourhood Fund Award with a focus on diversionary provision which will offer support and development opportunities relevant to a range of vulnerabilities.
  - Ad-hoc sports and mentoring interventions to respond to shared intelligence, co-ordinating partnership work with youth providers such as Cardiff City Foundation, the Princes Trust and local boxing clubs for example.

## **Medium to Longer Term Response**

### **Refresh of the Child Friendly Cardiff Strategy**

93. 'Child Friendly Cardiff' was launched in November 2018 and sets out the vision for Cardiff to be a Child Friendly city where all children and young people have an equal chance to thrive and reach their potential. The values and commitments made in this strategy set the direction for future Council policies and strategies, including Cardiff 2030, the vision for education and learning that was launched in November 2019.
94. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented change, to an extent and pace, not witnessed before and has shone a spotlight on the lives of children, young people, families and communities. We are presented with an opportunity now to reflect on not just the experience of the last year, but of our Child Friendly journey to date and to consolidate the lessons learned before setting out our future missions.
95. Our ongoing evaluation will deepen in readiness for the new calendar year and will test the sustainability of the values, principles and practices we

have embedded together as a city. The evaluation will include considerations of how to manage the long term impact of the pandemic on the mental health of children and young people. Within a framework of children's rights and in direct partnership with children, young people and families, we will work towards the publication of a refreshed Child Friendly Strategy in the autumn of 2021 inclusive of detailed shared commitments and a 3-year plan.

96. It will incorporate all key areas of reforms to education as outlined in the Education in Wales: Our National Mission and will incorporate Curriculum for Wales 2022, Additional Learning Needs Reform whilst taking account of the new accountability & performance frameworks for Education. It will maximise all opportunities provided by the schools 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools investment programme, and the Cardiff Commitment, alongside a cohesive Post 16 strategy, integrated and locality based models of support for Vulnerable children and young people, an integrated model of Youth Support Services and a clear education workforce development strategy.
97. The further development of the 'Greener, Fairer, Stronger' – City Recovery and Renewal Strategy will ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard, and that these views directly influence the key missions and priorities for action. The One Planet Cardiff Strategy is also being developed in partnership with children and young people, being an area of specific interest to this demographic in responding to the climate emergency. Young people are represented on the One Planet Cardiff Board, and education strategies including the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme and the Curriculum for Wales 2022, will provide key contributions to realising the One Planet Cardiff vision.
98. 'Child Friendly' versions of all the city recovery and renewal strategies will be designed and published with children and young people.

### **Scrutiny Consideration**

99. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee considered this issue on 11 May 2021. The letter from the Chair is attached at Appendix 1.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

100. The following recommendations are made to ensure that the Council's Recovery and Renewal programme takes full account of the Council's commitment to Children's Rights and the city's ambition to be recognised as a 'Child Friendly City'

### **Financial Implications**

94. This report sets out a series of projects, with the majority having already identified the level of funding required either through securing additional external funding or from identified budgets as allocated as part of the 2021/22 budget process. Potential challenges associated with progression routes for young people who will not be able to access end of Key Stage 4 and 5 resits this year to enable access to preferred Post 16 options, will

require continued dialogue with Welsh Government in order to establish the quantum of any required additional WG financial support and any associated terms and conditions in order to ensure that all young people can be appropriately supported.

### **Legal Implications**

95. The report provides an overview of actions being taken and proposed, to support delivery of a Child Friendly Recovery as part of the Capital Ambition: Recovery and Renewal Programme. Legal advice will be required throughout the planning and implementation of specific proposals within the Programme, with regard to legal processes, consultation and formal decisions required.
96. The Council must be mindful of its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are: (a) Age, (b) Gender reassignment, (c) Sex, (d) Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, (e) Disability, (f) Pregnancy and maternity, (g) Marriage and civil partnership, (h) Sexual orientation, (i) Religion or belief – including lack of belief.
97. The Council also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage ('the Socio-Economic Duty' imposed under section 1 of the Equality Act 2010), and must demonstrate how it has discharged this duty.
101. Equalities Impact Assessments will be required to identify the equalities implications of specific proposals, including inequalities arising from socio-economic disadvantage. The Council's decisions must have due regard to the outcomes of any Equalities Impact Assessments.
102. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a 'well-being duty' on the Council, aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible. This requires the Council to consider how its decisions will contribute towards meeting its well-being objectives (set out in the Corporate Plan). The well-being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with a 'sustainable development principle', which requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must: Look to the long term; Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems; Deliver an integrated approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals; Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions; and Involve people from all sections of the community in the

decisions which affect them. The decision maker should be satisfied that the proposals set out in this report accord with the principles above.

100. The Council must also be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards and consider the impact of its proposals upon the Welsh language.

### **HR Implications**

101. The report refers to the creation of new posts to support the recovery plan. These posts will need to be created in accordance with the Council's agreed evaluation processes and subject to consultation prior to formal creation. Appointments must be made in accordance with the Council's Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure. Trade unions should be briefed on the content of this report.

### **Property Implications**

102. There are no specific property implications in respect of the Child-Friendly Recovery report. The Strategic Estates Department will assist where necessary in supporting recovery in relevant areas. Where there may be property transactions required to deliver any proposals, such as for provision of Innovation Spaces, they should be done so in accordance with the Council's Asset Management process and in consultation with Strategic Estates and relevant service areas.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Adopt shared responsibility across all Cabinet portfolios to enabling a Child Friendly approach to city recovery and renewal.
2. Agree the short term response for the next 12 months which comprises an appropriate balance of both universal and targeted solutions to meet the needs of all children and young people.
3. Endorse the proposed focus upon the re-engagement and well-being of children and young people, in particular to support multi-agency partnership working and community inclusion to successfully deliver the 'Summer of Smiles' festival across the city.
4. Support a positive communications campaign that champions children and young people and continues to build trust in schools to promote children's best interests, well-being and individual potential.
5. Delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team, in consultation with the relevant cabinet members, to deliver the actions identified within the report, and ensure that resources are appropriately prioritised to address the needs of the most vulnerable and at risk children and young people.

6. Delegate responsibility to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the relevant cabinet members, to work with partners to refresh the Child Friendly Cardiff Strategy by the end of 2021.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Melanie Godfrey</b> <b>Director of Education and Lifelong Learning</b>
	14 May 2021

*The following Appendix is attached*

Appendix 1- Letter from Chair of Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee