

Annual Well-being Report

2021/22



Leader's Introduction

Our ambition is to make Cardiff a stronger, fairer, and greener capital city. To achieve this, we have placed a focus on delivering excellent public services, addressing inequality, promoting inclusive economic development, and managing the city's growth in a sustainable way.

This Annual Well-being Report provides an assessment of the Council's performance for the financial year 2021/22 and offers an important measure of the progress we have made in realising our ambitions.

The judgements made in this report have also been subject to consideration by the wider political governance of the Council, and rightly so. Following a consideration of corporate performance by Cabinet, our Self-Assessment of Performance is considered by the Council's Performance Panel, (which brings together all the Scrutiny Committee Chairs), the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee, the Governance & Audit Committee, and Council. So, by any measure, the Well-being Report represents a balanced assessment of performance.

Clearly, this is an important document for my Cabinet as we need the reassurance that our agenda is being delivered. On that basis, I was pleased with what this Council has delivered over the past year, not least in the context of a global public health crisis.

We delivered a good education for children in Cardiff – clearly recognised by Estyn in their latest report – and invested significant amounts in building new schools and improving the school estate.

We delivered on the largest housing development programme in Wales, and plan to build even more new council houses in the years ahead.

We have massively reduced rough sleeping.

Our work to recruit and retain social workers is paying dividend and we are continuing to shift the balance of care.

There are signs of post-pandemic economic recovery. The Council created over 1,000 new jobs and safeguarded 900 in the local economy last year, city centre footfall is bouncing back and the pipeline of major events – a feature of life in Cardiff – has returned.

The reform of the waste services has been progressed with the implementation of the four-day working week and the segregated recycling trial points to a way forward with contamination reduced from 30% to 6% based on the initial analysis.

Major strides have been taken to address climate change through the One Planet Cardiff strategy. Works totalling £61m have been delivered to improve sustainable transport, the Lamby Way Solar Farm private wire project has been completed, and construction of the Heat Network has begun.

That said, we recognise areas of improvement. Our recycling rates are not where we want them to be, however, the position for the first quarter of this financial year is above 64% suggesting that our interventions are beginning to take hold.

The fall in attendance rates for school children is a concern – a direct consequence of the pandemic – and we are taking forward immediate measures to support children, families and schools get attendance rates back up. The report also clearly outlines that the challenges we are facing in adults' and children's services where the scale and complexity of demand is increasing. These are system challenges which will demand a cross-public services response.

This report covers the 2021/22 financial year, since then a number of emerging challenges have escalated significantly. Russia's invasion of the Ukraine has triggered a global economic shock – most notably with the price of gas – which will have a major impact on the Council's budget. The cost-of-living crisis, coming so soon after the public health crisis, will place untold pressure on households, particularly those on low incomes. They will turn to the Council for support; we need to be ready.

I am clear that the mark of a good performance system is one that allows us to recognise where progress is being made and identify areas where intervention is needed to address areas of challenge. One of honest and open self-assessment, that celebrates successes and welcomes challenge where improvement is needed.

That's exactly what this report does by providing a fair and balanced assessment on which future planning can be based.



Cllr Huw Thomas

Leader of Cardiff Council

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About this Report

■ What is the Annual Well-being Report?

The purpose of the Annual Well-being Report is to provide a self-assessment of Council performance in delivering its Well-being Objectives for 2021/22.

These Well-being Objectives, including the steps the Council will take to achieve them and how performance will be measured, are set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021/24:

- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
- Cardiff is a great place to grow older
- Supporting people out of poverty
- Safe, confident and empowered communities
- A capital city that works for Wales
- Cardiff grows in a resilient way
- Modernising and integrating our public services
- Managing the Covid-19 pandemic

This Annual Well-being Report is the product of a comprehensive self-assessment process (set out below), and draws on service performance, governance and risk, resources and other sources of performance information provided for each Well-being Objective:

- A strategic assessment of performance
- Key successes
- Areas of risk and challenge
- Areas of focus for the year ahead

In doing so, the report fulfils the Council's statutory duties in relation to both the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

■ Statutory Requirements

The Annual Well-being Report fulfils the Council following statutory requirements:

- **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** requires the Council to set and publish Well-being Objectives, take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives and publish a statement about Well-being Objectives. These duties are fulfilled through the Council's Corporate Planning process. The Well-being of Future Generations Act also requires the Council to publish an annual report of progress, which is done through the Annual Well-being Report.

- **The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** established a new legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance, and performance. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review, through self-assessment, the extent to which it is meeting its “performance requirements” and publish a report setting out the conclusions of their self-assessments once each financial year.

This Annual Wellbeing Report, produced through the self-assessment process outlined below, sets out the Council’s conclusions as to the extent to which it has met the performance requirements (that is, exercising its functions effectively, using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively, and that its governance is effective for securing the above) during the financial year.

■ How is the Annual Well-being Report developed?

The assessment of performance contained within the Annual Well-being Report is developed through a thorough process of self-assessment involving the political and managerial leadership of the Council, drawing from a wide range of sources of performance information.

Sources of Performance Information

Sources of performance information which contribute towards the performance assessment contained within the Annual Well-being Report include:

- **Performance against the Council’s Key Performance Indicators** – The Council’s Corporate Plan contains a suite of performance indicators which measure progress made in delivering the Well-being Objectives. Where applicable, targets are set against these performance indicators to demonstrate the desired level of achievement. Performance indicators are assigned a RAG status: **Green** where the indicator is on or above target, **Amber** where the result is within 10% of the target and **Red** where the result is greater than 10% from the target. The Year-End Performance against Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators can be found as Appendix 1a to this report.
- **Progress against the steps in each Well-being Objective** – Each Well-being Objective within the Corporate Plan also contains a set of ‘steps’ or actions. Monitoring the progress of these steps provides an understanding of what has been achieved and where further work is required. The Year-End Performance against Corporate Plan steps can be found as Appendix 1b to this report.
- **Consultation and Engagement** – The Council has a number of established consultation and engagement mechanisms such as the Annual Ask Cardiff Citizen Survey, the Budget Consultation, the Child Friendly City Survey as well as other surveys and consultation exercises which take place over the course of a year that provide residents, businesses and other city stakeholders an opportunity to share their views on a wide range of the Council’s services.

In addition, the Council's Annual Compliments and Complaints Report provides valuable insight into where Cardiff's citizens feel the Council needs to improve. The Corporate Plan contains a number of 'qualitative' Key Performance Indicators that relate to citizen satisfaction with services, and the findings of the consultation and engagement work forms an important part of the Council's self-assessment process, policy development and budget setting process.

- **Finance Monitoring** – The Council's Outturn Report 2021/22 serves to inform of the Council's financial position in respect of the year ending 31 March 2022 and its findings contribute to the assessment contained within the Annual Well-being Report.
- **Good Governance** – The Council's Governance Framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed, controlled, and the means through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. The Council's Annual Governance Statement sets out an assessment of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control.
- **Risk** – Delivering objectives requires frequent management of a wide range of risks at both operational and strategic levels, particularly in the dynamic external environment in which the Council is currently operating. The Council's Year End Risk Report, and its Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, provides an overview of the current risks and the actions in place to mitigate them.
- **Scrutiny Committees and Governance & Audit Committee** – The Council responds to the issues raised and recommendations made by the Committees, which help inform policy development and performance improvement.
- **Inspection Reports** – The Council is subject to a number of inspections from regulatory bodies including Audit Wales, Estyn (Education) and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Their findings help the Council to assess areas of strong performance, as well as identifying areas that require improvement.

Self-Assessment Process

The Annual Well-being Report is developed through a process of self-assessment involving the political and managerial leadership of the Council, with enhanced roles for both Scrutiny Committees and the Governance & Audit Committee. This includes:

- A Directorate self-evaluation of service performance, resourcing and governance challenges and priorities, answering the following questions:
 - What is going well?
 - What are the key risks and challenges facing your services?
 - What are the next steps?
- Performance and budget challenge and assurance sessions convened by the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer with each Director to consider the findings of the directorate self-assessment;
- A progress and performance session with Cabinet and the Council's Senior Management Team where the Chief Executive provides a strategic assessment of organisational performance;
- Consideration of the draft Annual Well-being Report by:
 - The Performance Panel, convened by the Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, and involving the Chairs of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees (The letter from the Chair of the Performance Panel, the Panel's recommendations and Cabinet's response are included as Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c of this report.)
 - Governance & Audit Committee (The letter from the Chair of Governance & Audit Committee is attached as Appendix 3.)
 - Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee
 - Cabinet, having received and responded to the recommendations of each Committee;
- Consideration of the Annual Well-being Report by Cabinet and Council.

Well-being Objective 1: Cardiff is a great place to grow up

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Supporting a Child Friendly recovery and safely reopening schools and regaining momentum
- Continuing to deliver the Cardiff 2030 vision for education & learning
- Protecting the wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people, and families

■ Strategic Assessment

The pandemic has been an extremely challenging time for children, young people and their families, and those working in schools across the city. During the pandemic the Council established strong and productive partnership working with schools and undertook extensive work to protect the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils and reduce as much as possible the disruption to learners in Cardiff, a response commended by Estyn in their report of 2021. This partnership approach has continued into recovery, with a focus on helping schools re-open safely and on re-engaging learners. Safeguarding learners after prolonged absences from school and improving attendance, particularly amongst pupils from more deprived communities and vulnerable groups, which remains lower than pre-pandemic levels, will be improvement priorities for 2021/22.

The Council considers that sustained progress has been made in delivering its Cardiff 2030 vision for education and learning, with educational outcomes improving over a number of years, performing well against the Welsh average. In their report of February 2022 Estyn noted that there has been ‘sustained and incremental improvement’ in the quality and effectiveness of Education services and school inspection outcomes have been strong between 2017 and 2020. While outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals have generally been higher than that of the same group nationally, the Council recognises that improvement is required in attainment for the city’s most vulnerable learners.

Children’s Services continue to face high and increasing demand and increases in case complexity. This demand pressure is reflected throughout the child’s journey, with severe challenges in particular in securing appropriate accommodation for children entering the care system and increasing demand on services to address children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Council has made some progress in its strategy to ‘shift the balance of care’, including in recruitment and retention of social workers, however the scale and nature of the demand pressures will present a significant challenge to Council and partner services and budgets in 2022/23, and will require corporate support and close monitoring over the course of the year.

■ Key Successes

Supporting a Child Friendly recovery, safely reopening schools and regaining momentum

- **Child Friendly Recovery:** The Council has strengthened the influence and voice of children and young people through the aspiration to become a Unicef Child Friendly City, including receiving over 6,500 responses to its recent Child Friendly City survey, the establishment of a new young person's citizens panel and through a programme of engagement with the Youth Council and other groups.
- **Supporting Schools through Covid-19:** The health and safety of children, teachers and all school staff has been prioritised during the pandemic, with extensive work undertaken to diminish the disruption to learners in Cardiff. Cardiff's response to the pandemic has been commended, with Estyn citing its "sustained strategic leadership", noting that "a strength of Cardiff's response to providing support for children and young people... was its collaboration with partners in the public and private sectors".
- **Re-engagement Activities:** Working closely with schools, Welsh Government and community partners, the Council has delivered a number of re-engagement activities including 'Summer of Smiles', 'Food and Fun – SHEP (School Holiday Enrichment Programme)' and 'Winter of Wellbeing'. Activities are being planned for the summer 2022.
- **Rights Respecting Schools:** The Rights Respecting Schools Approach (RRSA) forms a significant element of our Child Friendly Cardiff strategic goal 4 which has a focus on a rights-based approach to education. There has been an increase in the number of schools, with 80 schools in total achieving the bronze, silver or gold award, and a further 18 schools now registered.

Continuing to deliver the Cardiff 2030 vision for education & learning

- **Improving Attainment and Quality of Education:** Education in Cardiff was inspected by Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, in November 2021. In their report published in February 2022, Estyn noted that there has been sustained and incremental improvement in the quality and effectiveness of Education services. In general school inspection outcomes have been strong between 2017 and 2020 and Key Stage 4 outcomes have been above expectations in the majority of schools in the three years to 2020. Outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals have generally been higher than that of the same group nationally.
- **Addressing Digital Deprivation:** A transformative ICT programme has been implemented, building on the Education Technology funding made available through Welsh Government to address the digital deprivation experienced by some young people across the city. In the 2021/22 financial year, the annual contribution amounted to £3.8m.

- **School Organisation Programme:** Delivery of the new Band B schemes in accordance with the programme is underway following delays because of the pandemic and changing demographics. Fitzalan High School and St Mellons Church in Wales Primary School are developing well on site and other schemes including Fairwater Campus are proceeding through design. Engagement for Willows High School, Cathays High School and the Court have agreed school visions. The 2021/22 Asset Renewal Programme spent circa £18.5m and is being delivered to address prioritised condition and suitability issues. Investment in asset renewal has increased and the target for the next financial year will be £20m.
- **Youth Service:** The Estyn inspection noted that the Cardiff Youth Service provides high-quality provision in prioritised areas of the city that includes a mixture of open access and targeted work. The effective use of digital platforms has been highlighted as an area of good practice by Estyn and the support for young people's emotional health and well-being has also been highlighted as strong. Cardiff Youth Service has also achieved the National Youth Agency Quality Mark. The service was awarded bronze for its vision, youth work practice, and development and engagement of young people.
- **Low level of NEETs (Those Not in Education, Employment, or Training) Sustained:** Despite challenges faced during the pandemic the low percentage of school leavers becoming NEET at the end of year 11 has been sustained. In October 2021, 1.5% (53 young people) of learners were not in education, employment, or training.
- **Cardiff Commitment:** Links with businesses and partners have continued to be developed throughout the pandemic and benefit priorities such as social mobility and the provision of work-related experiences for children and young people. This area has been highlighted as an area of good practice in the February 2022 Estyn Inspection Report.
- **Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform Progress:** There has been strong progress at school and Local Authority level in preparing for ALN Reform. Well-developed multi-agency processes are in place to identify and assess children and young people with additional learning needs, and to create appropriately resourced individual development plans.



Protecting the wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people, and families

- **Ensuring Care and Contact with Vulnerable Children and Their Families Throughout the Pandemic:** Due to the ongoing nature of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2021/22, service delivery adopted new technology at scale. The digital/ in-person hybrid approach enabled the Directorate to adapt its operating model to respond to the regular changes in Welsh Government guidance and legislation. Priority was given to safeguarding and child protection with face-to-face visits maintained for the children considered most in need of them. This model will be maintained to safely meet the needs of children and their families whilst ensuring the most appropriate and efficient use of resources.
- **Recruitment, Retention of Children's Social Workers and Improved Staff Engagement:** Against a very challenging recruitment market nationally, Children's Services, through the implementation of the Recruitment & Retention Strategy and Workforce Plan, has improved the Council's ability to attract and retain social workers. This has resulted in a net increase of 13 staff members during the year with less reliance on agency staff in the social care workforce. From Quarter 2 onwards, the percentage of Children's Services social work vacancies met its target (of less than 24%) and stayed below the target for the remainder of the year. Staff engagement work has also helped to retain social workers, with the Staff Ambassador Group being reinstated, and practice leads and best practice sessions being established.
- **Shifting the Balance of Care:** The Council has retained its focus on shifting the balance of care to ensure that children and young people receive the right services from the right people, at the right time, based on their needs.
 - To support this work, the Reunification Framework has been implemented, with the aim of supporting children to return to live with their families, where it is safe to do so. There is a continued increase in the number of children remaining with their families via kinship arrangements, and an increase in in-house fostering provision.
 - The Interventions Hub has brought together all support staff across Children's Services to determine what interventions children need, and to provide them in a co-ordinated way. The approach supports children to remain at home where it is in their best interest, and it is safe to do so. This approach also helps improve the management and allocation of support where resources are limited.
 - The introduction of the Reviewing Hub builds on the services already in place to support statutory reviewing functions for children on the Child Protection Register and children who are looked after. The Reviewing Hub helps respond to increased demand for reviewing services resulting from the increasing numbers of children being looked after, whilst also extending the service to children with care and support plans (CASP). This independent review of all CASPs will help to ensure that cases are stepped up or down in a timely manner, and that children and their families are receiving the right support from the right person at the right time. The review process provides reassurance that cases are being managed and closed appropriately.
 - Additional accommodation for vulnerable young people has been secured through joint working between Children's Services and Housing. The Personal Advisor Service and the Into Work Services have also been working closely together to support young people into education, training, and employment.

- **Engagement with Children and Hearing the Voice of the Child:** The Mind of My Own App was launched in July 2021 and has helped to strengthen engagement with children. The app uses secure digital technology to enable children as young as 2, as well as those with additional needs, to express their views, wishes, and feelings. The app was co-produced with young people, and they continue to be involved in the ongoing development. The app helps to enable better communication between children and the service, and provides insight and understanding into when children are struggling, allowing intervention to be targeted at the right level, and at the right time. As of 31 March 2022, 141 children and young people have signed up to the app, and 247 worker accounts have also been created.
- **Service Improvements:**
 - **Locality working:** A locality approach for situating social work teams around the city is being embedded within Children's Services case management, with a focus on developing a skill mix within teams and a whole-team approach.
 - **Systems and data improvements:** A multi-agency performance dashboard for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee has been introduced, as Microsoft Power BI is rolled out as a primary reporting tool for Children's Services. Work is ongoing to upgrade the CareFirst client record system to the new system, Eclipse.
 - **Quality assurance:** Quality assurance processes have been strengthened and policies and procedures are in the process of being updated. The Signs of Safety approach is being drawn on to develop a new practice framework for Children's Services built around a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach.
- **Youth Justice Services:** The implementation of the All Our Futures Youth Justice Improvement Plan has been progressed, with most actions in the plan having been completed by the end of 2021/22. Key areas of progress include the collection of victim feedback on a six-monthly cycle to feed into the decision-making process, the review and updating of several service policies, and the appointment of new managers in the service. The outstanding actions in the Plan require multi-agency input and will be the focus of ongoing work over the following year. Since the inspection in 2020, informal feedback from HM Inspectorate of Probation is positive, and acknowledges the distance travelled in the last two years. Between 2020 and 2022, the rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system in Cardiff decreased from 241 per 100,000 to 80. Over the same period the rate in England and Wales fell from 222 to 167. The re-offending rate in the city has dropped from 54.4% to 33.3% and is now below the overall rate across England and Wales.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Re-Engaging Learners:** The re-engagement of learners following the Covid-19 pandemic represents an immediate challenge, in particular the capacity of schools and the Local Authority to safeguard learners and improve attendance following prolonged periods away from school.
- **Ongoing Improvement in Schools:** This must be maintained in the context of changing accountability and assessment arrangements with the expectation of a new performance framework for schools being published in September 2022 alongside major reforms to the Curriculum. While Estyn commended the Council's strategic performance arrangements in relation to schools, they also recommended that further work be undertaken to improve the quality of self-evaluation at a service level within the Education Directorate, and that the Council ensures that the work of the regional consortium focused on Cardiff's priorities.
- **Managing Financial Pressures in Schools:** The number of schools with deficit budgets will be closely monitored, with a focus on supporting and challenging schools to deliver any agreed deficit recovery plans. Budget management in specific areas of service delivery remains an ongoing challenge with school catering, the music service and home-to-school transport areas of longstanding focus. The sharp spikes in demand for specialist support services, including counselling services for children and young people, will also require close monitoring and financial management.
- **Delivery of School Organisation Programme and Management of School Estate:** The School Organisation Programme (SOP) represents a significant body of work in terms of scale, complexity and level of capital spend. There are still many urgent/ reactive asset projects that enter the programme and an imbalance of school places across the city. The development of a high-level SOP Strategy that sets out short, medium and long-term aims and the strengthening of delivery capacity within the SOP team will be a priority for 2022/23.
- **Universal Free School Meals:** The pace and scale of the adaptations required to deliver this represent a challenge to ensure the scheme can be made available to all school children in Cardiff. A rapid audit of school kitchen capacity and review of the menu offer will be undertaken to ensure effective delivery of the Universal Free School Meal offer to every primary-aged pupil.
- **Delivering the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan:** In February 2022 the Council published the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Whilst there has been an increase in the amount of high-quality provision and take-up of Welsh-medium places, there remain challenges associated with continued growth, not least given the declining birth rate populations. The Council remains committed to expanding Welsh-medium provision in ALN, early years/childcare, primary and secondary, and increasing the uptake of Welsh-medium opportunities.

- **Increasing and Complexity of Demand in Children's Services:** The 2021/22 financial year saw a significant increase in demand for Children's Services, particularly at the front door. It is anticipated that this increase in demand will continue as the long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and their families emerges and will present major budgetary pressure. This reinforces the need to continue to focus on preventative interventions, to deliver the Council's existing strategy and shift the balance of care.

The increase in demand and complexity, alongside the ongoing impact of the pandemic, has impacted considerably on performance against service targets, such as the timeliness of wellbeing assessments and completion of plans for children looked after. As part of the Covid-19 recovery and return to business as usual, the service will be closely monitoring performance to inform project planning and the implementation of the improvement workstreams that are set out in the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2021/2022.

- **Ensuring a Range of Support in the Community and a Variety of Homes for Children Are Available in Cardiff:** The sufficiency of placements to meet the assessed needs of individuals represents a key concern for the service, with the introduction of legislation to reform the social care market likely to cause a period of disruption and lead to providers ceasing their plans to expand their Children's Services provision in Wales. Historically there have been difficulties managing the costs of placements, particularly when children need to be placed out of county (for a range of reasons, including child protection concerns). In relation to demand, not only is the number of cases increasing, but the needs of those referred are evolving and becoming more complex, resulting in very specific placement requirements. For example, as noted below, the increase in the number of young people with serious mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, whilst a national issue, is clearly evident in Cardiff.
- **Increase In the Number of Young People with Mental and Emotional Health Issues and Those Suffering Severe Mental Distress:** The impact of Covid-19 has led to an increase in the number of young people presenting with mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, including a rise in the number of children experiencing acute psychological distress and needing significant and urgent health and wellbeing support. This is placing demand pressures across Council services and wider public services system, and is therefore an area of further service budgetary pressure over the year ahead.
- **Children With Disabilities:** The Covid-19 pandemic has also caused an overwhelming physical and emotional impact on children with disabilities and their families. Urgent response work will focus on the provision of short-break services, which will be supported by the development of a strategy for children with disabilities and additional learning needs, Direct Payments, domiciliary care and further work to improve the experience of transition to Adult Services.
- **Recruitment And Retention of Social Workers:** Turnover rates in Children's Services are high at 13.46%, compared to the corporate average of 10.58%. Between pay differences across authorities (especially agency pay), and the changing perceptions of the social worker role, in the context of the recent media coverage of high-profile cases, attracting and maintaining a stable workforce has been a challenge. While work has been done to support newly-qualified social workers, it has been difficult to attract and retain experienced social workers. Despite this, Children's Services has still managed to achieve a net increase of 13 staff members during the year, reducing its reliance on agency staff.

■ **Forward Look: Areas of Focus**

Supporting a Child Friendly recovery

Supporting a Child Friendly recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to be a key priority for the Council. Moving forward, the Council will do all that it can to ensure that all Cardiff schools can stay open and maintain safe learning environments for pupils and staff, re-engaging pupils, with a focus on tackling persistent absenteeism, and ensuring the impact of the pandemic has no lasting effect on attainment and outcomes, particularly for the city's most vulnerable learners.

Continuing to deliver the Cardiff 2030 vision for education and learning

Supporting schools to continue to provide high-quality learning, whilst protecting the wellbeing of learners, remains a key priority for the Council. As a result of the substantial changes to education, the Council will reset the Cardiff 2030 Vision, considering the experiences of the last two years, which will include the significant work required to progress reforms for the Curriculum for Wales 2022 and Additional Learning Needs.

Across all aspects of education, a continued emphasis will be placed on improving outcomes for vulnerable groups, including pupils in receipt of free school meals, children looked after, and those educated other than at school, who may have been more adversely affected by the pandemic.

More broadly the Council will develop and embed an approach for Community-Focused Schools to enhance the relationship between schools and communities, with a focus on supporting the continued learning and wellbeing of vulnerable children and families will also be a priority. Allied to this, an integrated model of youth support services to remove barriers to engagement and participation will be developed.

Protecting the wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people and families

The increasing and greater complexity of demand in tandem with the insufficiency of placements for vulnerable young people has the risk of creating severe budgetary pressures, and so will be escalated for enhanced corporate oversight and support.

In order to respond to the increasing volume and complexity of demand, the Council will continue to focus on early intervention and on supporting families, so we take a more integrated wellbeing approach, working to families' strengths to provide them with the support that they need and to ensure children can remain at home with their families when it is in their best interests to do so. In terms of recruitment challenges, the Council will place a focus on workforce development by maintaining momentum with improvements to practice and working to attract more newly-qualified and experienced social workers to Cardiff.

In response to the rise in demand for mental health and emotional wellbeing support, work will be undertaken in partnership with the Education Directorate, the University Health Board, and other partners to develop a Joint Recovery Service to help manage the increasing number of children and young people with serious mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. To support mental health and emotional wellbeing for children and young people in schools, a partnership approach to further embedding NEST/ NYTH, a person-centred, multi-agency approach to supporting emotional well-being and mental health, will be taken with the 'whole school' approach at its heart.

Well-being Objective 2: Cardiff is a great place to grow older

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Supporting older people to age well and to live the best lives they can in their homes and communities, through the delivery of proactive and preventative services
- Supporting older people suffering from social isolation and loneliness and delivering our Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly City ambitions

■ Strategic Assessment

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the health and wellbeing of older people more than any other group, and so 2021/22 was another exceptionally challenging year for older people and the services upon which they rely. The pandemic has been followed by rapidly increasing volume and complexity of demand which, combined with a shortage of care workers and specialist health care staff, is placing acute and severe pressure across an already stretched health and social care system in Cardiff. This in turn is leading to delays in care provision and preventing the timely discharge of patients from hospital settings.

Through the agreement and implementation of a new Ageing Well Strategy, the Council is making progress in bringing multiple services together to support older people to live independently at home for as long as possible. Demonstrable progress is also being made in relation to responding to workforce shortages, though the situation remains very challenging and will remain a priority for the Council and its partners.

The closer working between the Council, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and care providers established during the pandemic has continued into recovery. This has led to both a greater understanding of the issues facing the sector and the development of new integrated, cross-sectoral responses, including a new multi-disciplinary approach to hospital discharge and community support that is beginning to have an impact. Given the scale of the challenge further strengthening of this partnership approach to managing the social care system in advance of, and throughout the winter of 2022/23, will continue to be a strategic priority for the Council and its partners.

■ Key Successes

Supporting older people to age well and to live the best lives they can in their homes and communities, through the delivery of proactive and preventative services

- **Cardiff Ageing Well Strategy 2022-27:** This new strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2022. It sets out a series of proposals with a focus on how services can work together closely to support older people to stay active, connected, and living independently at home through strengths-based preventative services, high-quality sustainable care and the modernisation of existing services.
- **Integrated Services:** The integration of Adult Services and Housing & Communities into one directorate, which began in early 2021, has continued to support the alignment of services. The approach is characterised by the effective co-ordination of Adult Services with wider Council services – including housing, Hubs and libraries – as part of a community-based approach to delivery.
- **Day Centres & Community Hubs:** The management of the Day Centres and Community Hubs has been brought together which enables the Council to extend the range of services on offer and offer them seven days a week. By maximising the use of Hubs, the Council is better able to support older people and their carers.
- **Recruitment of Care Staff:** A new initiative began in October 2021 when the Cardiff Cares Academy was launched. The Academy was developed through a partnership between Adult Services, Into Work Services and both internal and external care providers. Over 40 new carers have been trained and employed since the launch. The Academy identifies and trains new carers, ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills needed to work in the sector, and have undergone the necessary vetting. The aim is to create ‘care-ready’ applicants for available social care positions. A dedicated mentor and employer liaison officer has been employed to co-ordinate this and a volunteer scheme has also been put in place, which will help new carers gain vital experience.
- **Enhanced Partnership Working:** The learning from the pandemic has resulted in closer working with colleagues from Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and from care providers which has led to a greater understanding of the issues facing the sector. This partnership working will be further developed as the locality working approach is taken forward. The multi-disciplinary approach to hospital discharge and community support has been expanded with the addition of GP clusters in Cardiff North and Cardiff East to the first cluster in Cardiff Southwest. As part of the @home locality project, the Independent Living Service is fully integrated into the Multi-Disciplinary Team, discussing individual cases and identifying support for people staying well at home and within their communities.
- **Housing Solutions:** The Council currently delivers 10 Community Living schemes across the city for older people which help promote independent living as well as providing a diverse range of facilities and services for tenants. Work is progressing on a refurbishment programme which will provide a modern and welcoming environment to enhance the resident experience and improve the community feel.

- Work is continuing on the Michaelston wellbeing village with an updated masterplan recently agreed and pre-application consultation completed.
- The Community Living Scheme at Riverside (Canton Community Centre) was granted planning permission in December. The tender process to appoint a contractor is underway with initial Expressions of Interests returned.
- Planning permission was granted for the Community Living Scheme at Bute Street. The tender pack required for the scheme is nearing completion ahead of issuing Expressions of Interest.

The Council has also started to use modular extensions which improve the delivery of adaptations, equipment and technology. By using a pre-formed unit manufactured off-site, the unit can be put in place with minimal disruption, enabling an older person to regain their independence much more quickly than through traditional building methods.

- **Independent Living Services:** Focusing on older people and disabled people, the team has continued throughout 2021/22 to empower people to remain independent at home and reduce reliance on intensive interventions. 95% of clients (300 out of 317) felt able to live independently in their homes following support from Independent Living Services. 92% of new cases were dealt with at the First Point of Contact without resulting in an onward referral to Adult Services.

Supporting older people suffering from social isolation and loneliness and delivering our Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly City ambitions

- **Age-Friendly Cities:** In March 2022 Cardiff joined the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. The city is the first Welsh member of the Network which was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations worldwide with the common vision of making their communities a great place to grow older. The city's new membership status is a result of extensive collaboration with stakeholders across the city including Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, educational institutions, and third sector organisations.
- **Reducing Social Isolation:** A range of initiatives have been delivered by the Hubs and Libraries Service to address social isolation and loneliness among our older residents including:
 - An inter-generational pen pal scheme between children from two primary schools (Millbank Primary School, Ely and St Joseph's RC Primary School, Gabalfa) and residents at three care homes (The Forge Care Centre, Heol Don Nursing & Residential Centre, and Ely Court Care Home) which began in May 2021 during Dementia Action Week.
 - The Cardiff Wellbeing Support Service which launched in July 2021 and aims to support individuals who feel socially isolated by providing short-term help from light-touch support to access events in the community, to intensive one-to-one mentoring.
 - Hubs continue to offer many activities and classes aimed at older people such as walking football, tai chi, gardening clubs, singing, knit and natter, and friends and neighbours (FAN) events.

- **Dementia Friendly City:** Work undertaken during 2021/22 includes:
 - Over 1,000 digital and in-person Dementia Friendly City events have taken place.
 - 2,431 members of staff completed Dementia Friends training during 2021/22.
 - Targeted promotion of the Dementia Friendly Website has been carried out via social media, supermarket digital screen advertising and bus promotions. In addition, the website address is now printed on all hygiene waste bags issued by the Council to increase awareness.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Workforce Challenges:** The UK-wide shortage of care workers and health care staff continues to be an issue in Cardiff. Recruitment of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists is exceptionally difficult, with national demand outstripping supply of these essential posts. Into Work Services Pathway Team focuses on specific sectors as directed by local labour market conditions. The team is currently concentrating on the social care industry and are delivering a fortnightly training package 'Get into Care' to support recruitment within the field.
- **Increased Volume and Complexity of Demand:** There has been a 30% increase in people needing care at home, compared with pre-pandemic numbers. This huge increase in demand alongside the workforce challenges in the sector is leading to delays in care provision and preventing the timely discharge of patients from hospital settings. In addition, older people living with dementia and other conditions are presenting with increasingly complex needs. The service provision currently available will need to be re-shaped to respond to this demand.
- **Domiciliary Care:** The surge in demand for social care has put the domiciliary market under increasing pressure. Capacity issues across the Community Resource Team are impacting on their ability to meet the demand for support, both in terms of people supported and number of hours of support provided. There are also a high number of packages of care waiting to be picked up by the market as well as a backlog of social work and occupational therapy assessments. Some mitigations have been put in place such as:
 - Additional Social Worker and Occupational Therapist posts have been created, however there have been difficulties in recruiting.
 - A new Rapid Response Occupational Therapist Role was introduced in early 2022. The role is a dedicated resource providing urgent 48-hour assessments to prevent hospital admission or avoid the breakdown of care. This dedicated role provides greater efficiency in handling urgent cases. In addition to the above and due to the carer recruitment crisis, the role also supports informal carers with equipment and adaptation provision whilst awaiting long-term packages to be sourced.
 - The Community Occupational Therapist working in the hospital has also been actively working with social care and health colleagues to review care needs prior to discharge. To date, the role has prevented 225 care hours.

- The introduction of the new Care Development Block Contracts is also helping to grow the domiciliary care workforce while regular meetings have been put in place for providers to be able to discuss issues and concerns.
- **Dementia Friends Training:** Although 42% of staff have completed Dementia Friends training, this is well below the target of 85%. A management dashboard – providing granular detail on team and staff compliance levels – has been developed and face-to-face sessions are being made available to teams without computer access.
- **Dementia Friendly Businesses:** 16 businesses pledged their commitment to work towards becoming Dementia Friendly during 2021/22. This is below the target, however the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic understandably meant that businesses were focusing their attention elsewhere. It is hoped that interest will increase during 2022/23.

■ Forward Look: Areas of Focus

Supporting older people to live independently at home through strengths-based preventative services

In the immediate term and in preparation for winter, a partnership approach will be needed with the University Health Board and social care sector to meet the increasing volume and complexity of demand which, combined with the shortage of care workers and health care staff, is placing acute and severe pressure on an already-stretched health and social care system. Over the medium term, the Council will work to develop and join up services to better support older people to stay independent at home. As part of this work, the Council will streamline services to make a single route into all our services for older people to support prevention and reablement, as well as a timely and safe hospital discharge. Appropriate housing is also widely recognised as a key factor in supporting independence and the Council is committed to ensuring its building programme delivers care-ready, adapted, and adaptable homes, as well as specialist Community Living schemes for older people that can adjust to meet Cardiff's changing housing need.

Working in partnership to deliver high-quality sustainable care and support

The national issues currently being faced by the sector, particularly the difficulty in the recruitment and retention of staff as well as the inability of the sector to grow to meet the surge in demand, has revealed the fragility of the market. It has also revealed systemic issues, such as low pay and a lack of job security, within the sector. The Council is therefore committed to working in partnership with commissioned care providers to better understand the issues that they face. Valuing and developing the social care workforce is key if good-quality care is to be provided. This will include taking action so that eligible social care workers and personal assistants funded through the Local Authority Direct Payment are paid the Real Living Wage and further developing the Cardiff Cares Academy to ensure that training, mentoring and employer support is available across the sector.

Supporting older people to stay active and connected in an age-friendly city

It is crucial that older people in Cardiff have access to the right advice, support, activities, and services to help them stay healthy and independent. The Council's Community Hubs are well placed to assist in tackling many of the issues that affect the health and wellbeing of older people, particularly social isolation. Moving forward, the Council will strengthen the independent living and wellbeing advice provided in the Hubs for both older people and their carers, providing virtual activities and events, as well as face-to-face activities through a hybrid model of community engagement.

Supporting informal carers and valuing their role

The Council recognises the vital contribution that informal or unpaid carers make to communities and the people they care for and understands the pressure that caring for a loved one can cause. The Council is therefore committed to ensuring that carers are recognised, and that every step is taken to ensure the highest quality of life – both for those providing and for those in receipt of care. Looking ahead, support for carers will be reviewed in full consultation with carer representatives.

Ensuring our services meet the needs of the most vulnerable

The Council's ambition is for Cardiff to be a Dementia Friendly City. As part of this ambition, it is crucial to understand how to best support people with dementia to live in the community. As a result, the Council will embed research-based best practice into approaches, ensuring that this influences the way in which services are commissioned in social care. Ensuring that the voices of Cardiff's citizens are heard – particularly when their mental capacity is compromised – is of utmost importance. Social workers will take a strengths-based approach to mental capacity moving forward, and the Council will continue to commission effective advocacy services.

Well-being Objective 3: Supporting people out of poverty

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Supporting those most impacted by the economic crisis into work, education or training
- Continuing our Living Wage City ambition
- Embedding our new approach to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping

■ Strategic Assessment

The Council has made significant progress in relation to supporting people out of poverty, with its work on the Real Living Wage recognised through a national award; Advice and Support Services hitting all targets set; and the levels of rough sleeping remaining at record low levels as a result of the 'No Going Back' preventative, partnership approach established during the pandemic.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis that has developed over 2022 will, however, be felt across the city's communities with the greatest pressure placed on our city's most vulnerable citizens and families. This in turn can be anticipated to lead to greater demand pressure across Council and partner services, particularly the support and advice services provided by the Council. There is also a danger that the crisis will lead to an increase in people unable to pay their bills and becoming homeless, and potentially sleeping rough. Developing a cross-Council response to the cost-of-living crisis will therefore be a strategic priority for the Council in 2022/23.

■ Key Successes

Supporting those most impacted by the economic crisis into work, education or training

- **Providing Employment Opportunities:** During 2021/22, 183 opportunities for paid apprenticeships and trainees were created by the Council. 32 Kickstart corporate trainees were also appointed. In the same period, almost 4,600 posts within the Council were filled through placements from Cardiff Works.
- **Employment Support:** The Council's Into Work Services have continued to expand throughout the year to ensure that the increased demand can be met. During 2021/22, at least 1,241 clients were supported into work and 266 employers were assisted.

Into Work Services secured 29 possible Bright Start placements for care-experienced young people across various Council departments, with five already completing their first three-month placements. The 'not in education, employment or training (NEET)' status for our care-experienced young people is reviewed on a daily basis and the Bright Futures team target those who have a NEET status and contact them directly.

- **Advice Services:** During 2021/22 over £17.2million of additional weekly benefit was identified for clients of the Money Advice Team exceeding the target of £14million and an increase of £1.8million since 2020/21. Over 10,400 clients were provided with advice and support and over 3,700 customers were supported and assisted with their claims for Universal Credit, a 30% increase on the 2020/21 figure. The Housing Helpline and Advice Line answered over 83,500 calls, with 78% of callers having their enquiry resolved at first contact and 22% being referred to more specialist advice. All of this goes to demonstrate the considerable need for these services given the current economic pressures.
- **Onsite Construction Academy South-East Wales:** The new Construction Academy opened in August 2021 on the site of the former Eastern High School off Newport Road, Rumney. The Academy is helping to tackle the skills gap within the construction industry and seeks to encourage many more people to consider construction as a career, including individuals from under-represented groups in the industry, such as women and individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds. Progress made during Year 1 has been reviewed with the Construction Industry Training Board and the Onsite Construction Academy Steering Group. Project starts, job starts, sustained employment and sustained employment for under-represented groups are all exceeding their targets.

Continuing our Living Wage City ambition

- **National Awards:** The Council won this year's prestigious Local Government Chronicle award in the Public/Private Partnership category for its Real Living Wage initiative.
- **Increase in Real Living Wage Employers:** At the end of March 2022, 164 employers were accredited as Real Living Wage employers in Cardiff, exceeding the target of 150 before May 2022.

- **Increase in Employees Earning the Real Living Wage:** The Council has been working successfully with third sector organisations and other major employers as part of the Cardiff Living Wage City Partnership to secure more jobs in the city that pay the Real Living Wage and encourage employers to become accredited as Living Wage Employers. This has contributed to Cardiff having the lowest proportions of jobs (11.6%; 24,000 jobs) paying below the Real Living Wage among major cities in England and Wales in 2021, compared to 20.7% (42,000 jobs) in 2017.
- **Living Wage Buildings:** The first two Living Wage buildings in Wales are both in Cardiff, with more in the pipeline. The first was the Cardiff University SbarclSpark building which was announced in July. The other building in the city is home to a number of employers, including Cynnal Cymru – the official accreditation body for the Real Living Wage in Wales

Embedding our new approach to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping

- **Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26:** This new strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2022. It is based on the Council's vision that homelessness should be prevented wherever possible and when that is not possible, experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and not repeated. Key aims include a commitment to ensuring that everyone receives the right help and support to address their homelessness including help to address any underlying issues; taking a rapid rehousing approach to homelessness and reducing the time spent in temporary accommodation; while also providing good-quality supported accommodation for those who need it.
- **Levels of Rough Sleeping:** While one person sleeping rough is one person too many, the number of rough sleepers has remained low. Recorded figures were as low as 11 during 2021/22 and consistently remained below 25, compared with 130 pre-Covid.
- **Specialist and Supported Housing Schemes:** A number of supported accommodation schemes are being developed to support homeless families and individuals to become independent as part of the Council's 'No Going Back' approach. A Family Homeless Centre was opened at Briardene in Gabalfa providing families with temporary accommodation and access to a range of services including Early Help, health visits and parenting support. The first phase of the family homeless centre at the Gasworks site has been completed and a third centre is to open next year at Harrison Drive in Trowbridge. Phase 1 of the Adams Court scheme to provide single person support accommodation has been completed with phase 2 due to be delivered later this summer.
- **New Single Person Assessment Centre:** A new process for assessing the needs of single homeless people started at the beginning of June 2021 when the new Assessment Centre opened. This had led to strong multi-disciplinary support for homeless people with complex needs, and rapid, decisive action for those with low needs. Since April 2021 there have been 213 positive move-ons from the low-needs pathway into permanent accommodation with just under half (44%; 93) moved into private rented sector accommodation. The rate of positive move-on from the low-needs pathway supports the view that this new process has been effective in supporting clients to avoid the traditional 'staircase' approach and this supports rapid transition into permanent housing.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Cost-of-Living Crisis:** The dramatic increase in the cost of utility bills, petrol and daily essentials such as food has provided significant pressure on already vulnerable citizens. The associated risks are significant, and it is anticipated that debts, including rent arrears, will increase. The Discretionary Housing Payment grant has decreased, giving the Council less opportunity to support the most vulnerable. Moving forward, the allocation of support to ensure that the most vulnerable are assisted to meet the shortfall in their rental liability may need to be considered. Additional support is being made available, with dedicated Fuel and Food Poverty Champions being deployed across Community Hubs to provide advice and support to people who are struggling with rising costs. All Hub and Advice staff will receive specific training to support customers, but Champions will be available in each of the Hubs to provide advice on a number of schemes. For more complex enquiries, the Champions will work closely with the Money Advice Team and Citizens Advice, and will refer for further support where necessary. The new Champions will also be closely working with the Adult Learning Team to refer for digital inclusion support where appropriate.
- **Removal of European Funding:** Into Work Services' employment projects funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) will cease in autumn 2022, following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The service currently delivers four well-established and successful ESF projects to some of the most vulnerable in society, totalling just over £1.1million in income each year. UK Central Government has recently announced the Shared Prosperity Fund will replace, in part, the gap left by ESF funding, however the value of funding has not been confirmed to date, which could put employment provision at risk. When the four ESF projects end, it is essential that affected clients are seamlessly handed over to other Into Work projects.
- **Migration to Universal Credit:** From summer 2022, the remaining Housing Benefit claims will start to migrate to Universal Credit. This could have a potential impact on Council rent arrears as Housing Benefit is automatically credited to rent accounts, but Universal Credit is generally paid directly to the customer. The Money Advice Team and Advice Line will continue to ensure that support is widely available to assist customers with the migration.
- **Homelessness Prevention and Increased Pressure on Homelessness Services:** Considerable work has been undertaken to prevent homelessness in the city and to support those who do become homeless, however, major headwinds remain. The economic impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis affecting households' budgets, the high cost of housing and the significant inflation within the rental market will provide acute challenge. More fundamentally, despite one of the largest house-building programmes in the UK, the availability of housing represents a significant obstacle to effective service delivery.

■ **Forward Look: Areas of Focus**

Responding to the cost-of-living crisis and supporting those most impacted by the economic crisis into work, education or training

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis will be felt by all citizens and communities in Cardiff, with the most vulnerable feeling the greatest impact of rising costs, with rising energy costs and fuel poverty being a serious concern. Developing a cross-Council response to the cost-of-living crisis will therefore be a strategic priority for the Council in 2022/23.

To help address the challenges in the labour market, our Into Work Services will continue bringing together employers and potential employees with suitable skills. By working with employers to identify in-demand skills, the Service can ensure that relevant training courses are being offered at the right time and in the right sectors.

Continuing our Living Wage City ambition

The Council will continue to play a leadership role in creating a Living Wage City by encouraging and supporting organisations to become accredited Living Wage employers. The Living Wage City Action Plan will be reviewed by the Cardiff Living Wage City Partnership following the full achievements of the targets set for 2022.

Embedding our new approach to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping

Building on the 'No Going Back' model, the new Housing Support Programme Strategy will provide a single strategic view of the Council's approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services. Key areas of work going forward will include providing additional emergency accommodation, creating a rapid re-housing plan in line with Welsh Government guidelines, and developing leasing schemes and move-on provision.



Well-being Objective 4: Safe, confident and empowered communities

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Building new Council homes and investing in community facilities
- Ensuring children and adults are protected from risk of harm and abuse
- Creating safe and inclusive communities
- Promoting the Welsh language
- Working together to support a healthier and more active population

■ Strategic Assessment

The Council has maintained momentum in its house-building and neighbourhood regeneration and community hubs programmes, with targets for new homes hit and several major community schemes completed. The pressure on the housing market, however, especially the cost and lack of availability of homes in the private rented sector, is causing significant demand and cost pressures across numerous Council services. As in other areas of the Council, increasing rates of inflation are impacting upon the Council's neighbourhood regeneration programme and the emerging energy crisis can be expected to impact the sustainability of community services, including the leisure services contract with GLL.

The city's partnership approach to community safety, tackling anti-social behaviour and youth violence and exploitation was further strengthened in 2021/22, resulting in more frequent, intelligence and data-led operational collaboration between the Council and South Wales Police. This partnership approach will be expanded in 2022/23 to tackle anti-social behaviour hot-spots, and to prevent people, particularly young people, from falling into crime or being exploited by criminals.

In 2021/22 the Council effectively led a partnership approach to the Afghanistan and Ukraine Refugee crises, in both cases ensuring that refugees were welcomed, given a place to stay and that the city's wider public services were available and ready to support them. The number of arrivals, and the often-complex nature of their needs, means that demand is being felt across the public service system. With international migration because of conflict and climate change likely to increase over the years ahead, welcoming and supporting refugees is an issue that will become increasingly important, and Cardiff will need to continue to play a leadership role as the point of arrival to Wales, working in active partnership with UK and Welsh governments, and neighbouring local authorities.

■ Key Successes

Building new Council homes and investing in community facilities

- **New Council Homes:** As part of a £1 billion Council-led programme to deliver 4,000 homes over ten years, 683 of the first 1,000 homes have now been delivered, with 131 completions this year despite supply chain issues and the rising cost of materials.
- **Development and Regeneration:** A wide range of development and regeneration schemes are being designed and delivered with partners to transform neighbourhoods, support local economies and deliver low-carbon homes. Survey results show that 90% of residents are satisfied with completed regeneration projects to date.
 - **Maelfa redevelopment:** The completion of this scheme has transformed the area with the delivery of a new and modern shopping centre, affordable new homes, infrastructure and environmental improvements.
 - **Channel View:** Planning has been approved for this £85 million scheme that will deliver more than 350 low-carbon homes, providing new energy-efficient and sustainable homes for every existing resident of the Channel View estate with improved connectivity and access to green space.
 - **'Aspen Grove' in Rumney:** This ground-breaking development of 214 low-carbon, energy-efficient homes on the site of the former Eastern High School has received a prestigious UK award for its sustainability, climate resilience and low-carbon footprint.
 - **Estate Regeneration Schemes:** Work has continued on the Lower Llanrumney, Roundwood and Pennsylvania estate regeneration schemes to deliver safer and more attractive environments, improving quality of life for residents. Plans are now being developed for Lincoln Court in Llanedeyrn and Trowbridge Green.
 - **Investment in the South Riverside Business Corridor:** This large-scale regeneration project, supported by Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRIP) funding from Welsh Government, is progressing well with all four phases of shopfront improvements nearing completion and work to the public realm due to complete in summer 2022. The scheme will see over £5 million invested in Tudor Street delivering improvements to the business environment, transport infrastructure, as well as the regeneration of 30 business premises.
- **Empty Homes:** A new Private Sector Empty Homes Policy 2021-24 was adopted in December 2021. The policy outlines the assistance that can be offered to owners to encourage them to bring properties back into use as well as the enforcement tools which are available where advice and assistance fails. In total 84 properties were returned to use or new units created during the last year.
- **Community Hubs:** The Council's network of Community Hubs across the city continues to be enhanced and expanded:

- **Butetown Creative Hub** has been opened to support young people into the creative sector.
- **Community Hubs in Whitchurch and Rhydypennau have been refurbished**, introducing additional and enhanced services to serve these communities.
- The **Cardiff Royal Infirmary (CRI) Chapel partnership project** providing health and well-being facilities for residents in the south and east of Cardiff has been completed. Progress is also being made on Health and Wellbeing Hubs for Maelfa in Llanedeyrn and Parkview in Ely in partnership with the Health Board. 97% of respondents in a recent customer survey agreed that the services provided by Hubs met their needs.
- The **new website set up to improve access to Hub services** – including Adult Learning, Into Work Services and the new Wellbeing Support Service – now has more than 3,000 users.

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

- **Strength-based Practice and Signs of Safety:** The Social Care Training Unit is delivering a new training programme to embed strength-based practice and Signs of Safety within frontline social work and preventative teams.
- **Tackling Youth Violence and Exploitation:** A Child Friendly City Board has been established to take forward Cardiff's child friendly recovery following the pandemic. A key priority is the development of a robust contextual safeguarding strategy to tackle the causes and consequences of youth violence and exploitation. The SAFE (Safeguarding Adolescents From Exploitation) model, a multi-agency approach to contextual safeguarding and risk management, was piloted in 2021 and will be adopted city-wide moving forward, to proactively respond to exploitation.

Creating safe and inclusive communities

- **Community Safety and Violence Prevention:** Cardiff's Community Safety Partnership has established a Violence Prevention Group which is focused on preventing and reducing serious violence by taking a public health approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence. To inform the development of a Violence Prevention Strategy, an intelligence dashboard has been created using police data providing geographical and trend information to identify emerging issues.
- **Safer Streets Fund:** Cardiff's bid to the Home Office for £432,000 of Safer Streets funding was awarded in full. The funding has been used to improve street lighting, install 20 CCTV cameras and other security measures to address areas of the city with high levels of acquisitive crime. The improvements have had an immediate impact on levels of crime and the reporting of crime and have been positively received by residents with over 2,300 posts on social media.
- **Race Equality Taskforce:** In March the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council all received the Report of the Race Equality Taskforce, which contained recommendations designed to promote race equality in Cardiff.

- **Responding to the Afghanistan Refugee Crisis:** Comprehensive reception support was provided to Afghan evacuees in the autumn and winter of 2021/22 including access to health screenings, education, English and Welsh classes, employment support and a range of activities provided by partnership staff and volunteers. Several families have now been matched with their long-term homes and Cardiff's contribution to the nation-wide effort in partnership with the Urdd was showcased on Channel 4 News and as part of a Welsh language S4C documentary on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales. Cardiff has also provided highly effective educational support for refugees including learning opportunities and provision of school places for newly-arrived children. This has been highlighted as an area of good practice in the February 2022 Estyn Inspection Report.

Promoting the Welsh Language

- **Bilingual Cardiff:** The Council's Bilingual Cardiff Strategy 2022-2027 and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 have been published. Actions include establishing a youth forum to deliver Welsh language events, promotion initiatives with minority and ethnically diverse communities, raising awareness of employment opportunities and producing an information pack detailing Welsh language services for individuals and families moving to the city.
- **Welsh Language and Recruitment:** The Welsh Language Skills Strategy was revised and published in 2021 to increase the number of posts in Cardiff Council advertised as Welsh essential or Welsh desirable during recruitment. 'Welsh desirable' is now a minimum requirement for all Council customer-facing posts when advertising recruitment opportunities. In 2021/22, 67 posts were advertised as Welsh essential, and 648 posts were advertised as Welsh desirable. This represents a 158% increase in Welsh essential posts and a 108% increase in Welsh desirable posts compared with 2020/21 figures.
- **Welsh Language Courses:** A mandatory Welsh language e-learning module has been launched for staff along with a range of Welsh language training courses in conjunction with the Council's Academy. 838 staff have completed Cardiff Academy's Introduction to Welsh Level 1 module which represents the entry course for staff who want to learn the language.

Working together to support a healthier and more active population

- **Supporting a Healthier and More Active Population:** The 'Move More, Eat Well' plan has aligned strategies relating to healthy weight, food, active travel and physical activity. These include Food Cardiff's 'Good Food Strategy 2021-2024' and Cardiff's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2022-27; both launched this year.
- **Green Flag Awards:** 15 Council parks and green spaces have been awarded Full Green Flag status with Waterloo Gardens meeting the international standard for the first time. All of last year's awards were retained having been independently judged against a range of strict criteria including biodiversity, community involvement, cleanliness and environmental management. 19 projects have also been awarded the Green Flag Community Award. Levels of volunteering have bounced back following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions with volunteers committing over 16,000 hours to maintaining parks and green spaces in 2021/22.

- **Investing in Play:** In 2021/22, over £2.5m has been invested into areas for play including playgrounds at Lascelles Park, Peppermint Drive, Caedelyn Park, Creigiau and Glenmount Way with further investment planned for 2022/23.
- **Increasing Cardiff's Tree Canopy:** As part of Cardiff's One Planet Cardiff Strategy, 20,000 trees have been planted across the city this year alone, including 1,700 trees in Tremorfa Park contributing to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Inflationary Pressure Impacting Development Schemes:** High and increasing rates of inflation are having considerable impacts on the construction sector. Not only are essential materials and skilled labour significantly more expensive, but supply chain pressures and shortages are making it difficult to secure construction materials. Across the UK, this challenging combination is leading to delays in the delivery of large schemes, which is anticipated to continue in the immediate future. Already, Council schemes are being impacted by current market conditions demanding detailed management of programme timescales and cost.
- **Availability of Affordable Housing:** The pressure in the city's housing market is leading to a lack of available affordable accommodation, particularly in the private rented sector where there is a scarcity of available homes and rent increases are outstripping the Local Housing Allowance (the maximum amount that can be claimed in benefit). The number of people in temporary accommodation in Cardiff has grown significantly (over 1,400 people), and the impact is also being felt across a range of Council services that rely on housing availability, including placing vulnerable children in care and refugees and asylum seekers. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the arrival of significant numbers of additional refugees from Ukraine can be expected to put further pressure on the availability of affordable housing in 2022/23.
- **Fire Safety Arrangements in Council-Owned Buildings:** In response to the major incident at Grenfell Tower in London, the Council is working with Welsh Government and other regulators to ensure that any updated guidance is taken into account in considering any impact on relevant buildings across the whole of the Council's estate. The Council has undertaken additional testing, beyond the initial review of ACM, which identified that six blocks fail the current standards. Immediate actions have been progressed following the results of the additional testing, including round the clock fire warden patrols and the fitting of smoke alarms in all flats. The removal of cladding, informed by the sample work undertaken, will be progressed alongside other precautionary measures.

- **Tackling Youth Violence and Exploitation:** While fewer in number, the severity of offences being committed by children and young people, particularly in relation to serious youth violence, is increasing. A key priority is the development of a robust contextual safeguarding strategy to tackle the causes and consequences of youth violence and exploitation. The SAFE (Safeguarding Adolescents From Exploitation) model, a multi-agency approach to contextual safeguarding and risk management, was piloted in 2021 and will be adopted city-wide moving forward, to proactively respond to exploitation.
- **Improving Perceptions of Safety and Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:** In the 2021 Ask Cardiff Survey, just over a fifth of respondents agreed that public services are successfully dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime in their local area. Although, Cardiff has the second lowest overall crime rate, compared to the major cities in the UK, fear of crime is increasing with Cardiff dipping for the first time in three years below the Welsh average for feeling safe when walking in their local area and when travelling (National Survey for Wales 2020/21). However, significant success has been had this year through the work of Cardiff's new Community Safety Problem Solving Partnership Group and improvements to CCTV coverage and street/underpass lighting in Butetown, Grangetown and Adamsdown following the award of Safer Streets funding.
- **Domestic Abuse Referrals:** The RISE family support service has seen a steady increase in the number of high-risk referrals received. Following referral, the victim should be contacted by specialist services within one calendar day. Meeting this target has been difficult due to staff shortages. In Quarter 4, contact was made within one calendar day for 77 % of referrals compared to the 90 % target, an improvement on 69 % in Quarter 3.
- **Refugee Settlement Schemes:** Whilst the Cardiff response to the Ukraine settlement scheme has been swift and effective, acute pressures remain. Ensuring the availability of bridging accommodation for Afghan evacuees remains a priority, as well as the ongoing delivery of effective assurance measures relating to safeguarding, health and safety and monitoring far-right activity. These risks are currently being managed through bi-weekly multi-agency operational group meetings. The disproportionate number being supported in Cardiff requires additional accommodation capacity to be made available across Wales. Moreover, ensuring full cost recovery for the provision of support in Cardiff has been identified as an emerging financial risk. This programme of work forms part of the Council's wider evacuee response which includes both Afghan and Ukrainian evacuees.
- **Sustainability of the Leisure Services Contract with GLL:** There are positive signs of recovery across the GLL business in the UK with Cardiff following suit and early indications of attendances returning to normal. However, risks remain around the long-term sustainability of the contract including the risk posed by rising energy prices. The transfer of Pentwyn Leisure Centre to Cardiff Blues will be completed during 2022/23 and a planning application to undertake significant refurbishment of the centre, including a new swimming pool, gym, 3G pitch and café, is to be submitted.

■ **Forward Look: Areas of Focus**

Building new Council homes and investing in community facilities

The Council will continue to progress the new house-building programme ensuring that new low-carbon and energy-efficient homes are delivered at scale and pace. The Council will also develop a new Regeneration Strategy to support district and local centres and the implementation of ‘15-minute city principles’ to improve access to services, increase active travel and strengthen the connections between communities.

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

To address the increase in violent youth behaviour, the Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation (SAFE) model – working in close partnership with the police, probation, and other agencies and following a successful pilot – will be implemented city-wide.

Creating safe and inclusive communities

Cardiff’s Community Safety Partnership will continue to focus on its established priorities, including addressing street-based lifestyles, complex needs and violence in communities, as well as rolling out greater problem-solving targeted responses to anti-social behaviour. As part of this work, a new statutory Violence Prevention Strategy will be developed with partners, focusing on building local intelligence, protecting those who are vulnerable, targeting violent offenders, and progressing a preventative approach to serious violence.

Cabinet will formally respond to the recommendations made in the Report of the Race Equality Taskforce in December. A draft action plan is being created to implement the recommendations. The Taskforce has been asked to reconvene next year to assess the progress made.

The Council will need to build on the approach to the Afghanistan refugee crisis, playing an active city- and Wales-wide leadership role in response to the refugee crisis resulting from the war in the Ukraine, where the number of arrivals, and the complex nature of their needs, will place demand across the public service system.

Promoting the Welsh language

Over the coming year, the Council will take forward the Council’s new Bilingual Cardiff Strategy 2022-2027 and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 to support the vision for making Cardiff a truly bilingual capital of Wales, as well as the national target to double the number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff by 2050.

Working together to support a healthier and more active population

Working with partners, the Council will support the delivery of the 'Move More, Eat Well' plan to promote healthy weight, healthy food, active travel, and physical activity. As part of this approach, the Council will ensure alignment with other major strategies, such as Food Cardiff's 'Good Food Strategy 2021-2024' and the 'Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2022-2027'. Furthermore, maintaining the quality of our award-winning parks and green spaces will continue to play a key part in the health and mental well-being of our residents. A review of the Leisure Services Contract with GLL will also be undertaken to develop long-term proposals for an effective and sustainable service based on a review of the current operating model, contract management and financial sustainability of the contract.

More broadly the work of Shared Regulatory Services will continue to play a vital role in ensuring public health and public safety. Having played a crucial role in responding to the Covid-19 crisis, the service is now re-focusing on core business provision in the context of rising demand pressures and ongoing pandemic management support. The expertise of the service will be effectively deployed as part of a joined-up partnership approach to public health and public protection.



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

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Leading the economic recovery in Wales
- Leading a recovery programme for the City Centre and Bay
- Supporting innovation and business development, with an enhanced package of interventions to help the sectors worst affected by the pandemic
- Supporting the recovery of the cultural sector and major events programme

■ Strategic Assessment

Over the course of the pandemic the Council worked in close partnership with the private sector and provided significant and proactive support to businesses, with over £130m of business support grants directly administered by the Council. The Council also worked with private and public sector, academic and civic society partners to develop a new recovery strategy.

The Council's major projects programme is supporting the economic recovery, with schemes including Central Square, Central Quay and Canal Quarter continuing on-site and the Indoor Arena project progressing to delivery. As with all projects of the Council's capital programme, cost inflation, particularly construction materials and labour, represents a risk that will need to be actively managed over the course of the year. More broadly, the city centre has bounced back, with footfall returning to pre-pandemic levels and live events, cultural and music scene returning. Attendance at Council venues will, however, need to be monitored closely over the year to ensure that they are meeting income targets.

The cost-of-living crisis is likely to impact on local businesses, with energy costs in particular representing a major challenge. As in the pandemic, the Council will work alongside the city's private sector to develop a co-ordinated response.

■ Key Successes

Leading the economic recovery in Wales

- **Recovery and Renewal Strategy:** *Greener, Fairer, Stronger*, the Council's city recovery and renewal strategy, was approved by Cabinet in December. The report was commissioned by Cardiff Council specifically to challenge the authority and to sharpen its own strategies and interventions for a successful post-pandemic recovery. The report focuses on six mission statements: reimagining the city centre; a city for everyone; a fifteen-minute city; a culture and sport-led renewal; a tech city; and a One Planet recovery. A series of engagement events took place to inform the report from June to October 2021, including several child-friendly events to gather the opinions of young people alongside those of residents, business, the cultural sector and other stakeholders. A survey also produced over a thousand responses which was used to help prepare the plan.
- **EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS):** A highly successful Council engagement and digital support programme helped EU nationals who had not yet done so to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. By the deadline in June 2021, 23,990 applications had been made to the scheme, in line with the highest estimate for the number of eligible EU nationals in Cardiff.
- **Cardiff Capital Region City Deal:** The Cardiff Capital Region now has a series of products to be used to attract investment into the region, including the Property Fund, Innovation Fund and the Infrastructure Fund. The Cardiff Capital Region have also made a number of investment decisions relating to Cardiff. This includes direct investment in a number of tech/ life sciences companies, approvals for funding for cyber and fintech support, agreement to invest in business premises and in-principle decisions to support £3m of investment in housing.

Leading a recovery programme for the City Centre and Bay

- **City Centre Recovery Action Plan:** Following on from the approval of *Greener, Fairer, Stronger* in December (see above), the Council published its City Centre Recovery Action Plan in January. This five-year plan will re-imagine and re-vitalise Cardiff city centre post-pandemic and outlines the key initiatives and programmes that the Council and partners will work towards.
- **Transforming Towns Loans programme:** Three local companies in the city centre secured £2.35m in interest-free loans from Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Loans programme, via Cardiff Council, to help with repurposing and regeneration plans. The works include new incubation spaces on Windsor Place, a new golf-themed leisure attraction on St Mary Street, and a new boutique hotel on Quay Street.
- **Cardiff Bay Regeneration:** Procurement for the Multi-Purpose Indoor Arena has progressed well – capacity for the arena will now be 17,000 up from earlier projections of 15,000. In March 2022, the Arena Consortium secured detailed planning consent for the Arena and outline consent for the wider Atlantic Wharf regeneration scheme, and are due to complete planning agreement in September.

The updated masterplan for the International Sports Village has been developed and was approved by Cabinet in March 2022. Planning permission has also been granted for the new state-of-the-art velodrome which will be situated within the Sports Village.

Supporting innovation and business development, with an enhanced package of interventions to help the sectors worst affected by the pandemic

- **Job Creation & Safeguarding:** During 2021/22, the Council played an active role in creating almost 1,200 jobs and safeguarding over 900 others within the local economy.
- **Cardiff Parkway:** As part of the Industrial Strategy for the East of the City, a planning application for the St Mellons Parkway development was approved subject to conditions. The new railway station will for the first time allow travel by train from the east of the city, while the adjacent business park will bring much needed investment to this part of Cardiff.
- **Creative Industries:** Led by Cardiff University, the media.cymru Consortium which includes Cardiff Council won a £50m Strength in Places (SIP) bid to develop a world-leading cluster for media innovation in the Cardiff Capital Region.
- **Incubation Workspace:** The Council is exploring options with partners to create additional incubation and start-up space as well as actively promoting existing tech space for new businesses including Council-owned space at Cardiff Business Technology Centre.
- **Business Support Grants:** Over £130m of business support grants were directly administered by the Council during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Business Rates Relief:** Welsh Government provided 100% business rates relief for leisure, hospitality and retail businesses for the whole of 2021/22, providing crucial relief to three of the sectors hit hardest by the pandemic and creating the conditions to accelerate recovery.

Supporting the recovery of the cultural sector and major events programme

- **Return of Live Music:** To support Cardiff's live music scene, the Council organised four nights of live music in Cardiff Castle, curated by the city's grassroots music venues. The Live & Unlocked event took place over the August bank holiday weekend 2021 as part of a plan developed with Cardiff Music Board to support live music and put culture at the heart of the city's recovery from Covid-19. The independent venues curated the music, sold the tickets, and paid the musicians involved, providing much needed support for an industry hit hard by the pandemic restrictions and showcasing the important role they play in Cardiff. In total, around 3,000 people attended the event. The project was supported by Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Business Fund which supports town and city centres in their pandemic recoveries.

Live & Unlocked was followed by the largest series of events on Council land since before the initial lockdown in March 2020. The Titan 'Bay Series' attracted some of the world's biggest music artists to perform at Alexandra Head in Cardiff Bay, which over a four-day period saw more than 33,000 people in attendance. The festival was the first of its kind to take place at Alexandra Head which proved to be a safe and highly successful site with very positive feedback from the public.

- **Music Hub in the City Centre:** The Council approved the transfer of use of the Old Library to the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama via long lease in November. The College intends on making the building a focal point for the performing arts in the city centre. Its work is aimed at supporting the delivery of the city's Music Strategy and will include performances in the public realm in the immediate vicinity of the building, providing daytime music and animation within the Hayes.
- **Events Programme:** The Council supported the Welsh Government test event programme in spring 2021. This included the successful delivery of four test events; two of which, Tafwyl and Eid Prayers, were hosted at Cardiff Castle with a further two spectator-attended fixtures hosted at Cardiff City Stadium and Sophia Gardens Cricket Ground. The Council's post-Covid events strategy will be developed in parallel with Welsh Government's strategy which is currently under development. Consultation is ongoing with key stakeholders including Cardiff Council.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Inflation:** The volatility of the construction market in terms of labour and material price increases as well as availability poses a risk to major projects with substantial cost increases due to inflation. The rising costs of utilities also presents a financial challenge in terms of managing the costs of running the Council's estate. Increases in the price of food impact on the profitability of Council venues. More broadly, the cost-of-living crisis is likely to impact on local businesses, with energy costs in particular representing a major challenge.
- **Recruitment Challenges:** A skills shortage within the hospitality and security sectors threatens to impact on the Council's ability to run its venues and events. Recruitment issues are also hampering the Council's and the city's recovery from the pandemic as well as risking causing delays to major projects. To address this shortage, the Council's Into Work Services are working with the sectors affected to identify the skills required for different roles and offering relevant training to develop interview-ready applicants.
- **Attendance at Events and Commercial Venues:** The cost-of-living crisis has reduced the amount of disposable income many people have which in turn reduces ticket sales. Covid-19 continues to have an impact on staff availability to support the delivery of shows and projects and has led to the cancellation of shows. Taken together, there remains real pressure on service recovery which is likely to have significant impact on the Council's budget.

■ **Forward Look: Areas of Focus**

Leading the economic recovery in Wales

As the city economy emerges from the pandemic and into an uncertain economic environment, the Council will continue to ensure that the capital city plays a leading role in the Welsh economic recovery. This will involve playing an active role in the establishment of Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) as well as the design of any new Tourism Levy. The Council will seek to maximise the benefits of the Shared Prosperity Fund for Cardiff and secure funding for key infrastructure projects via the Levelling Up Fund.

Leading a recovery programme for the City Centre and Bay

Over the coming year, the Council will progress major infrastructure projects that will transform the city, support green, inclusive growth, and create good-quality jobs, including the Indoor Arena, the International Sports Village, Central Square, Central Quay and the new Canal Quarter.

Supporting innovation and business development, with an enhanced package of interventions to help the sectors worst affected by the pandemic

The Council will need to support the growth of our key high-value sectors – including fintech, cyber and creative – which will create well-paid jobs for our residents, help boost Cardiff's productivity and make our city a globally-attractive place for inward investment. In response to the changed nature of the workplace in the pandemic, a focus will be placed on transforming existing buildings to create flexible and affordable working space for start-ups in our priority sectors.

Supporting the recovery of the cultural sector and major events programme

Our cultural and major events sectors have been amongst the most affected by the pandemic, so the Council will continue working with Welsh Government to ensure the delivery of events delayed or cancelled by the pandemic, as well as to explore future opportunities. Over the coming year, the Council will finalise plans for developing an annual international music festival and sporting event and set out a new cultural strategy, based on the successful Music City Strategy model.



Well-being Objective 6: Cardiff grows in a resilient way

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Delivering One Planet Cardiff to decarbonise the city and lead a green recovery
- Transforming Cardiff's public transport and active travel systems
- Putting sustainability and well-being at the heart of the city's growth
- Enhancing Cardiff's flood defences
- Building resilience into our highway network
- Making Cardiff a world-leading recycling city
- Working as one team to keep our streets clean

■ Strategic Assessment

Over the past year, the Council has accelerated its response to the climate emergency, while laying the foundation for a green post-Covid recovery. The One Planet Cardiff Strategy and action plan, published in October 2021, set out the priorities for delivering a net zero Council and city by 2030, supported by a detailed analysis of the Council's carbon footprint, and the Council has committed to place the climate emergency at the heart of the city's replacement Local Development Plan.

The Council has invested to accelerate the shift in sustainable and active travel, with pop-up cycle lanes introduced in the pandemic now made permanent. However, the impact of the pandemic on mobility in the city and city-region remains uncertain, particularly for mass transit. The reduction in car use during the lockdowns has improved air quality across the city, but long-term trends on car use are unclear, and a decision on the future of Castle Street – the only street in Cardiff where air pollution levels did not meet legal limits in 2019 – will need to be taken later in 2022.

The Council's renewable energy programme has grown, with a solar farm in operation and heat network beginning construction. Managing flood risk as a result of the climate emergency remains a strategic risk for the Council, with key schemes to enhance the city's flood defence infrastructure seeing delays in 2021/22. More broadly, the impact of inflation on the One Planet capital programme risks the delivery of strategic transport schemes, renewable energy generation projects and the Council's housing retrofit programme, and will need close monitoring over 2022/23.

Whilst Cardiff remains one of the best performing core cities for recycling, its recycling rate for the past year (59.59%) has fallen short of the 64% target set by Welsh Government, potentially exposing the Council to a financial penalty. In response, a new Recycling Strategy will be considered by Cabinet in autumn 2022, setting out the steps the Council will take to meet the statutory recycling targets. Similarly, levels of street cleansing in all wards in Cardiff have not met the target set in the Corporate Plan, in part caused by a HGV driver shortage leading to delayed waste collections. In response, a training programme for new drivers has been introduced and a programme of targeted, integrated street cleansing in key areas will be implemented in 2022/23.

■ Key Successes

Delivering One Planet Cardiff to decarbonise the city and lead a green recovery

- **The Pathway to a Carbon Neutral City:** Following extensive consultation and engagement, the Council has set a pathway to making Cardiff a carbon neutral city by 2030, with the publication of the One Planet Cardiff strategy and action plan. Since its publication in October 2021, a number of commitments have been progressed, helping to establish Cardiff as a leading city in the move to net zero, as well as drive a green post-Covid recovery.
- **Renewable Energy Generation:** The Lamby Way Solar Farm is now operational, generating 9MW of renewable energy for Cardiff and the National Grid. Additionally, a private wire project on the site has been completed, connecting the Solar Farm to the nearby Welsh Water treatment works. This will help to decarbonise the city's wastewater processing activities.
- **Cardiff's First District Heat Network:** Construction has begun on the Cardiff Heat Network. The Network will bring low-carbon heat to both Council and non-Council owned buildings in the Bay, connecting to a range of new developments such as the Indoor Arena.
- **Greening the Council's Fleet:** As part of the Council's journey to reduce its own carbon footprint, work is underway to decarbonise fleet vehicles and bring additional Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to the city. Over the past year, the Council has expanded its EV fleet to 70 vehicles. Furthermore, 59 EV charging units have been delivered, including six rapid chargers at Lamby Way for the Council's electric refuse collection vehicle fleet.
- **Improving Air Quality:** As part of the Clean Air Plan, 36 electric buses have been introduced to the city and the Bus Retrofitting Programme has been completed fitting 49 buses with technology that reduces NO₂ emissions by 90%. The Taxi Lease Scheme has also been launched. As a result, the city has seen significant improvements in its air quality performance – Castle Street, previously the most polluted street in Cardiff, is now compliant for NO₂ pollution. Additionally, NO₂ concentrations in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are well below both the Council's internal targets and legal limits.

Transforming Cardiff's public transport and active travel systems

- **Cardiff Metro:** Over the past year, progress has been made on Cardiff Metro with the completion of metro studies and wider master-planning for Cardiff Crossrail, as well as the development of new stations across the city.
- **Delivering a Cycleway Network:** Over the past year, the Cross-City and Bay Pop-Up Cycleways have been completed, as well as a Cycleway from Bute Park to Western Avenue. A Cycleway which connects Western Avenue with Llandaff is currently in the planning process.
- **Developing Active Travel Plans for Schools:** Active Travel Plans allow young people to learn the environmental, health and wellbeing benefits of active travel while reducing rush-hour congestion across the city. The Council has now supported 122 of Cardiff's 127 schools in producing or progressing the development of Active Travel Plans. The remaining five schools have been offered support but have not yet been able to fully engage with the scheme.

- **Intelligent Transport System:** Cardiff is seeking to create an Intelligent Transport System (ITS), combining information, communication, and control technologies in a way that enables users to make better, safer and more co-ordinated use of transport networks. As part of this work, a draft ITS strategy has been approved for consultation ahead of final publication later this year and the Council has been undertaking upgrades of the bus Real-time Information (RTI) system to ensure residents can enjoy a more efficient bus system.

Putting sustainability and well-being at the heart of the city's growth

- **Replacement Local Development Plan:** The Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) will help shape Cardiff for the next 15 years to 2036, ensuring the right development happens in the right place at the right time, benefitting communities and the economy, as well as setting out which areas need to be protected. Work to develop a new LDP over the past year has included extensive consultations on the LDP vision and objectives as well as the Strategic Growth Options. Despite Covid-19 social distancing requirements resulting in significant restrictions on engagement work, targeted activity with key groups has been undertaken across the city and this will continue throughout the process.
- **Transforming the City Centre:** The ongoing transformation of the city centre has created a more accessible and attractive public space, balancing business, public health, wellbeing and ecological needs. The re-opening of the Canal Quarter is just one part of the Council's wider goals; Phase 1 of the scheme is now on site, with works progressing well and due for completion in early 2023.
- **Safeguarding Cardiff's Natural Assets:** To protect Cardiff's biodiversity and natural assets, the Council signed the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity in October 2021 and declared a Nature and Biodiversity Emergency in November, ensuring that the organisation makes the systemic shift required to safeguard Cardiff's natural assets.

Enhancing Cardiff's flood defences

- **Enhancing Cardiff's Resilience to Flooding:** Due to its coastal location, Cardiff is particularly exposed to the risks posed by climate change, namely rising sea levels, more frequent extreme weather events and flooding. Enhancing the city's flood defence infrastructure is therefore essential to Cardiff's future resilience. A draft Full Business Case for the Council's Coastal Defence Scheme has been submitted to Welsh Government and, more broadly, work to identify at-risk areas is helping ensure that infrastructure investment is targeted to the most vulnerable locations. Over the past year, flood incident management software has also been introduced to better understand the spatial distribution of flood events and determine priority areas for future flood alleviation schemes.

Building resilience into our highway network

- **Road and Footway Maintenance:** A resilient highway network plays a key role in ensuring that Cardiff develops in a sustainable way. Over the past year, the Council has reconstructed 112 roads and resurfaced, surface treated or reconstructed 46 footways, for a total of roughly 190,000 square metres of surface treatment. Furthermore, the new Millennium Walkway has been completed using a sustainable recycled composite material.

- **Roll-out of a 20mph Speed Limit:** The roll-out of a 20mph speed limit across the city is helping to make Cardiff safer for local communities and active travel, in addition to improving air quality. Progress has been made in delivering the initiative, with the Traffic Regulation Orders now sealed and on-street delivery well underway for the areas included as part of the pilot scheme, such as Whitchurch & Tongwynlais, Llandaff North, Rhiwbina and Heath.

Making Cardiff a world-leading recycling city

- **Enhancing Recycling Centre Capacity:** Enhancing capacity at recycling centres is a key component of the Council's approach to recycling. Performance at Cardiff's recycling centres remains excellent, with the recycling rate at 85-90% and a review of site usage showing that current capacity exceeds demand. The city's sites have amongst the best rates in Wales. To build on this status, the Council has opened a Reuse Shop at Lamby Way Recycling Centre, a number of community recycling zones throughout the city and a pop-up recycling centre in Parc Ty Glas.
- **Improving Recycling Behaviour:** Ensuring residents contribute to improving recycling performance is key to success. Educating the public is therefore crucial and progress continues to be made in this area. Alongside the Pink Sticker Campaign, which educates residents on proper recycling practice, a dedicated Recycling Education Team has been established to target areas with the highest levels of contamination to encourage improvements in recycling behaviour.

Working as one team to keep our streets clean

- **Developing an Internal Training Programme for HGV Drivers:** Over the past year, delayed waste collections – caused by the nation-wide shortage of HGV drivers – have posed a risk to the city's street cleanliness. The Council has continued to maintain service delivery despite these challenges and responded to the labour shortages by establishing a 12-month internal training programme for officers wishing to become HGV drivers.
- **Love Where You Live:** Over the past year, the campaign has successfully attracted a large volume of volunteer litter champions who help keep their neighbourhood streets clean. Furthermore, a new 'Love When You Leave' campaign has been launched to address waste issues that arise as students leave and to develop residents' sense of pride in their communities.
- **Tackling Fly-Tipping and Littering:** Tackling fly-tipping and littering is a core Council priority and good progress has been made over the past year, with over 99% of reported fly-tipping incidents cleared within five working days and over 90% of these cases resulting in enforcement activity. Furthermore, over 90% of highways land inspected by the Council was found to be of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Flooding and Coastal Erosion:** Parts of the city's existing flood defence infrastructure need to be enhanced to meet the challenges of the climate emergency. Efforts to progress schemes have been subject to a range of pressures, including a delay to the Sustainable Water, Flood and Drainage strategy due to Covid-19, the scale of funding required and capacity challenges within the Flood Risk Management Team. Work is ongoing to enhance capacity and to progress flood risk management schemes using all available funding streams. A number of schemes have been completed or are ongoing, with others at the early investigation stages.

Continued coastal erosion is putting Cardiff's existing defences at risk of a breach with a number of sites in the Rover Way area identified as being at particular risk. Two decommissioned landfill sites with significant environmental repercussions have also been identified within the at-risk areas. Coastal flood defence projects have been delayed due to ongoing issues with receiving a marine licence and full permissions from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to allow for work in the river and protected areas, which has put planning permission on hold. Additionally, estimated costs for the coastal defence scheme have risen by over 75%, due to factors such as Brexit, fuel increases, the global pandemic and material cost inflation. The Council continues to pursue the marine licence application with NRW and Welsh Government, and all opportunities for project funding are being explored.

- **Cost inflation:** The impact of inflation on the city development capital programme represents a significant risk to the delivery of strategic transport schemes, renewable energy generation projects, flood defence improvements and the Council's housing retrofit programme. The capital programme will need to be closely monitored over the course of 2022/23 and the Council will work closely with partners in the Capital Region, national government and private sector to explore all funding opportunities.
- **Air Quality:** NO₂ concentrations in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), including Castle Street, were well below the Council's internal targets and legal limits in 2021/22, though there are risks that they may increase as general traffic levels increase post-pandemic. Moving forward, ongoing monitoring of air quality results will continue, with more detailed assessments undertaken to provide a more robust annualisation of results. Work will also continue to progress plans for a permanent transport improvement scheme on Castle Street and, more broadly, the Clean Air Strategy and Action Plan will be updated.
- **Statutory Recycling Target:** Whilst Cardiff remains one of the best performing core cities for recycling, its recycling rate for the past year (59.59%) has fallen short of the 64% target set by Welsh Government. In addition to the environmental impacts, failing to meet Welsh Government's statutory targets exposes the Council to a potential fine for each year it fails to meet the target and places additional financial costs on waste services.

A number of challenges to improving recycling rates are unique to urban areas whilst a number of national issues have also affected performance improvement, including pandemic management and national labour shortages. Measures have been progressed to improve performance, with the ongoing transformation of operational arrangements delivering efficiency gains and new collections measures being piloted across the city. Drawing on this work, and extensive engagement with Welsh Government and WRAP Cymru, a new Recycling Strategy will be considered by Cabinet in autumn 2022 setting out the steps the Council will take to meet the statutory recycling targets.

- **Street Cleanliness Gap:** While Cardiff is performing well overall in street cleanliness, with 90% of highways land inspected by the Council found to be of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness in 2021/22, eight of the city's 29 wards failed to meet this standard. To address this gap in street cleanliness and ensure that all communities can enjoy a clean and attractive living environment, a programme of service reform continues to be progressed. This has involved establishing three dedicated blitz teams, focused on Cathays, Plasnewydd and the Southern Arc, alongside a new Lanes Team which will cover the whole of the city. A new Jet wash team has also been established to target shop fronts throughout the city and six community-based electric vacuum sweeps have been introduced, with four additional small mechanical sweepers due for delivery in October. The increased frequency of litter bin emptying on afternoon shifts and over the weekends is anticipated to further improve street cleanliness, as will the introduction of collection windows for trade waste customers in the city centre.

Moving forward, a cleansing service will be available to event organisers for events taking place on Council land and venues with increased street washing in the city centre. Crucially, Collections, Cleansing and Enforcement will be closely integrated for targeted campaigns aimed at tackling the incorrect presentation of waste which is known to have a negative impact on street cleanliness. Further to this, the adoption of new technology to monitor fill rates on litter bins will allow for improved planning and a more responsive service.



■ **Forward Look: Areas of Focus**

Delivering One Planet Cardiff to decarbonise the city and lead a green recovery

Over the coming year, the Council will continue delivering One Planet Cardiff's major programme of change and seek to overcome delivery challenges. This includes the Housing Retrofit programme, which will target 5,000 Council housing units and is now in the procurement phase, and the Cardiff District Heat Network.

Transforming Cardiff's public transport and active travel systems

Improving Cardiff's transport system will remain a strategic priority, particularly the shift to more sustainable and more active modes of transport. The Council will continue to progress metro studies for Crossrail, including the new stations from the city centre to Cardiff Bay and the North West Corridor. As part of wider master-planning, the Council will develop a Park and Ride Strategy for Cardiff, as well as progress the delivery of a Park and Ride site at Junction 33 of the M4. The Council will also work with the Burns Delivery Unit on a programme of transport improvements between Cardiff and Newport, as well as make a decision on the new Central Station design and masterplan later this year. Work will also continue to develop a Bus Strategy for Cardiff which will set out what is needed in the city to ensure excellent bus services that are fully integrated with other modes of public transport.

Options for Castle Street's long-term future will be assessed throughout 2022 and delivered in 2023 and 2024. Key steps in this process will include the completion of air quality data collection, further modelling, identification of the preferred option and production of a report for Cabinet approval in 2023. More broadly, work is also planned to commence updating the Clean Air Strategy and Action Plan.

Putting sustainability and well-being at the heart of the city's growth

Delivering the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) process will continue to be a key priority, with major steps for the coming year including a Council decision on the Preferred Growth Strategy. Dialogue with Welsh Government and regional local authority partners will continue regarding the implementation of the new regional strategic planning arrangements within the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC).

Enhancing Cardiff's flood defences

Construction of the Coastal Flood Defence scheme is anticipated to begin later this calendar year, subject to Welsh Government approval of the business case and funding, with completion projected for 2024. Additionally, the Council will work with its partners to continue developing a new Local Flood Management Strategy & Flood Risk Management Plan, which is due for completion in the autumn of 2023.

Making Cardiff a world-leading recycling city

A new Recycling Strategy which will set out the steps the Council will take to improve recycling rates, reduce single-use plastics and support the development of the circular economy will be considered by Cabinet in Quarter 3 2022/23.



Well-being Objective 7: Modernising & integrating our public services

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Developing a comprehensive programme of organisational recovery and renewal
- Building upon our digital agenda, incorporating technology into service delivery and exploiting data to drive performance
- Delivering fewer and better Council buildings
- Supporting a highly skilled and productive workforce with the well-being of staff at its core
- Using the power of the public purse to support the city's recovery
- Making sure that we are a Council that better talks to and listens to the city that we serve

■ Strategic Assessment

The pandemic has been a time of significant challenge, but also one of change, dynamism, and innovation in Council services. The Council has successfully adopted hybrid working and is ensuring that supporting accommodation, technologies and workforce policies are in place or are planned to make this change sustainable. Digital technologies have been introduced, with channel shift evident, in the delivery of more services, though further gains can be made capitalising on the shift by citizens to digital channels. Ensuring that the organisation maintains this momentum and continues to adapt to the post-pandemic situation will be a priority for the year ahead.

The Covid-19 pandemic, and associated public health measures have had significant financial implications for the Council, both in terms of additional costs and loss of income. The end of the Welsh Government Covid Hardship Support represents a significant financial risk to the Council, with many income-generating services facing continued disruption and increasing and more complex demand as a result of the pandemic being felt in many services. In addition, the fiscal landscape globally has changed significantly in respect of pressures on pay and price inflation, in particular for energy costs, and this is playing out locally for the Council and in the cost-of-living crisis now evident across the city's communities. Over the medium term, Welsh Government have provided indicative allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 which are welcome, but given the risks highlighted, a cautious approach is needed given the all-Wales nature of these projections and the uncertainty of the future public sector landscape post-pandemic. With rising demand in key services, the Council must continue to plan for a significant medium-term budget gap.

A sharp focus will also need to be placed on the capital position – there are currently significant pressures resulting from rising inflation and supply chain cost increases, demand for investment to maintain condition, and capital receipt assumptions. Discipline will be needed from directorates to ensure that resources, skills, and capacity are available to deliver the investment programme on time and to meet existing budget allocations.

As in other sectors of the economy, workforce challenges are coming to the fore, with skills shortages across the Council. A greater emphasis will need to be placed on workforce planning and talent development. In tandem with this and responding to the recommendations of the Race Equality Task Force, a greater emphasis will need to be placed on increasing and supporting diversity in the Council so that its workforce reflects the diversity of the city.

■ Key Successes

Developing a comprehensive programme of organisational recovery and renewal

- **Recovery and Renewal:** Despite being one of the most challenging periods for Council services and staff, the pandemic has also been a time of significant change, dynamism, and innovation. In May 2021, the Council set out its framework for organisational recovery and renewal, outlining opportunities to adapt to the new operating environment as the city emerged from the pandemic, including opportunities for service innovation, digitalisation, flexibility, and continued partnership working. Resulting actions have since been built into the Council's policy and budgetary framework.
- **Adopting a Hybrid Working Model:** Covid-19 rapidly accelerated the Council's programme of modernisation, including catalysing a shift to hybrid working. Council staff have been actively involved in the development of new hybrid working proposals; in 2021/22, over 2,400 employees responded to a staff survey and 134 employees from groups particularly impacted by hybrid working took part in a series of focus groups to understand needs and requirements. This evidence has helped shape the Council's transition to hybrid working, including the creation of flexible workspaces in County Hall, together with meeting rooms with hybrid facilities, for staff to utilise. The transition to this working model is enabled by the Council's investment in digital infrastructure, services and skills, which will need to be continued post-pandemic.

Building on the digital agenda, incorporating technology into service delivery and exploiting data to drive performance

- **Continued Channel Shift:** Technology offers residents greater choice and convenience when accessing services, with increasing numbers of citizens choosing to access services via digital means. The Council therefore set ambitious targets to improve its digital footprint in 2021/22, with year-end results showing that over 2 million contacts were made digitally last year. The Council's Chatbot, BOBi, handled over 105k chats, with updates meaning that the Chatbot is now able to support residents with queries about council tax, missed waste collections, fines and elections. Furthermore, Cardiff Gov app downloads exceeded 57,000 – which is over 20% above target – with both accessibility and functionality improved, including allowing residents to make reports of graffiti and problem parking.
- **Data Strategy:** The Council's Organisational Recovery and Renewal Strategy made clear the need for rapid, robust collection, presentation, and analysis of real time data across the public service system to inform decision-making, building on the cross-public service data-led approach in place during the pandemic. The Council's new Data Strategy, approved by Cabinet in February 2022, recognises that data represents an asset which can support the delivery of corporate priorities and, critically, be used to improve service delivery and performance. The strategy will support the Council to transition into a data-driven organisation, by embedding a systematic approach to managing and interrogating data across the authority.

- **A New Planning and Performance Framework:** A strengthened framework, which responds to the new performance requirements set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, was approved by Cabinet in February 2022. The framework places a strong emphasis on self-assessment and on engagement with staff and members in developing the overall assessment, and broadens the Council's strategic and directorate approach to performance management to encompass service performance, resource management and governance. The framework recognises the need to effectively use and analyse data to solve problems and improve service delivery and is therefore complemented by the Council's new Data Strategy. Both will be used to support the identification of corporate priorities and areas of improvement, informing decision-making moving forward.

The new Performance Framework provides an enhanced role for Scrutiny and the Governance and Audit Committee in the self-assessment process and a scrutiny recommendations 'tracker' was adopted for 2021/22. The new tracking arrangement ensures a systematic method of recording and monitoring the progress made against accepted recommendations. A report is presented every six months to each Scrutiny Committee. In addition, a similar tracker approach has been adopted for External Regulatory Bodies to report progress against their recommendations. An update is formally reported to the Governance & Audit Committee on a six-monthly basis.

Delivering fewer and better Council buildings

- **Corporate Property Strategy:** The Council's Corporate Property Strategy establishes the strategic direction, performance, targets, key processes, and governance relating to the management of the Council's land and property estate. After achieving all targets within the Corporate Property Strategy 2015-20, a new five-year Corporate Property Strategy (2021-26) was approved by Cabinet in December 2021. The strategy focuses on the modernisation of a 'leaner and greener' operational estate, whilst also setting out the themes and principles of managing the Council's leased portfolios. This includes plans to modernise the operational estate, as well as reduce its carbon impact as part of the move to net zero by 2030.
- **Corporate Estate:** The delivery of capital receipts remains a critical objective to support the Council's capital programme. Capital receipts are obtained principally through the sale of Council-owned land and property, which is only considered as an option after a rigorous asset management review process, or through the transfer of land and property within the Council. As a result of proactive asset management of the Council's corporate estate in 2021/22, £13.5 million in capital receipts were generated – a particularly large transaction was that of the former Michaelston College, which generated almost £8 million in capital receipts.

Supporting a highly skilled and productive workforce with the well-being of staff at its core

- **Corporate Health:** Run by Welsh Government, the Corporate Health Standard (CHS) is the quality mark for workplace health promotion in Wales. In recognition of the work to create a positive, inclusive working environment, the Council was successful in its reassessment for the Silver Standard by Public Health Wales in 2021/22. The assessor noted the *"strong support from senior management and how [the Council's]*

approach to health and wellbeing is being embedded through partnership with employee networks". As part of the new Healthy Working Wales (HWW) delivery model, a revamped awards programme is being developed to replace the Corporate Health Standard (CHS). The new awards programme will be developed during 2022/23 and rolled out in 2023. Whilst this transition is underway, the Council will continue to be reassessed at silver standard and will review next steps once the revamped programme is published.

- **Stonewall Gold Award:** The Council achieved the prestigious Stonewall^[1] Gold Award in recognition of work to embed equality, value diversity and demonstrate lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace, and in external engagement and service delivery.

Key achievements include:

- the introduction of a fair and unbiased approach to recruitment through anonymised applications;
- the introduction of unconscious bias training as part of the broad range of equality and diversity training for employees;
- using gender neutral and inclusive language in Council policies; and
- having a strong LGBT+ Employee Equality Network supported by new senior management champions.

The award also recognises:

- the Council's procurement approach which ensures that suppliers are LGBT+ inclusive;
 - progress made in LGBT+ equality in the services delivery such as the Foster Service; and
 - collaboration with other Welsh Local Authorities as part of Proud Councils.
- **Employee Networks:** Cardiff Council supports five employee-led networks which make a vital contribution to promoting equality and diversity in the workplace. The networks are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network; Disability Network; LGBT+ Network; Women's Network; and Carers Network. In order to raise the profile of the networks across the organisation, each has been rebranded, with 'SMT Champions' and 'Friends of the Networks' introduced. Additionally, a Joint Employee Network Survey has been developed to establish a benchmark of membership, as well as the lived experiences of employees.
 - **Long-term Agency Staff:** A longstanding commitment of the Council is to transfer long-term agency staff into permanent contracts. A new Agency Worker Policy is now in place, which aligns to Welsh Government's Fair Work Commission and its *Fair Work Wales* report. The policy upholds the Council's current commitment of acquired rights for temporary contract employees and confirms that temporary contract employees with four years' continuous service with the Council will be treated as permanent. This new policy was developed during the last quarter of 2021/22, and formally adopted in July 2022. Under the new policy arrangements, all agency workers with at least four years' continuous assignment in the same service in the Council will be offered a permanent contract without having to go through a recruitment process, subject to relevant pre-employment checks. Those with at least two years', but less than four years', continuous assignment in the same service will be offered a temporary contract. Once the employee has completed four years – taking into account their agency service and temporary contract service – they will be treated as permanent. This further emphasises the Council's commitment to Fair Work.

^[1] Stonewall is a charity that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) rights.

- **Performance Reviews:** The rate of completion of Personal Development Reviews across all directorates remains high, with an outturn figure meeting the target of 95%. Further emphasis will be placed in 2022/23 on the quality of performance reviews, including the development of key performance indicators relating to quality alongside compliance to be included in departmental delivery plans.

Using the power of the public purse to support the city's recovery

- **Social Value in Procurement:** The National TOMs (Themes, Outcomes, Measures) Framework provides a structure through which the Council can measure, review, manage and improve the social value outcomes in its contracts. This is particularly important given the Council spends over £390 million a year procuring a diverse range of goods, services and works. The Framework was piloted across 25 contracts in 2021/22, with different versions of the TOMs (basic, light, and full) created for inclusion in all tenders. A Contract Management Performance Framework has also been launched to ensure a consistent approach to contract management across the Council.
- **Socially Responsible Procurement:** The Socially Responsible Procurement Policy aims to ensure that the Council maximises the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing benefits delivered for communities through its annual procurement spend. The Council has a responsibility to manage public money with probity, to ensure that value for money is achieved and to manage it in such a way that wider Council objectives can be supported. In 2021/22, a review of the Policy was undertaken to ensure that it remains fit for purpose in a post-pandemic context. Additionally, detailed analysis of spend data was undertaken and a project with Cardiff Third Sector Council (C3SC) commenced to identify options for increasing opportunities for social enterprises to secure Council contracts. Over 50% of the Council's spend was with Cardiff-based organisations in 2021/22.

Making sure that we are a Council that better talks to and listen to the city that we serve

- **Citizen and Community Engagement:** The social distancing restrictions in place during the pandemic have significantly impacted the Council's ability to conduct face-to-face community engagement. However, the Council continued to see high engagement with online surveys and consultations, with over 62,000 people responding to surveys and consultations in 2021, up from 44,000 in 2019. Where possible, this has been supplemented by engagement work in communities, with 37 various community engagement events held in 2021/22, reaching 6,465 attendees. A priority for 2022/23, and for the new statutory Community Engagement Strategy, will be to build on the progress made with digital engagement while rebuilding face-to-face and community-based work, with a focus placed on those groups and communities that do not traditionally respond to Council consultations and surveys. Over the course of 2021/22 the Council has also continued to focus on enhancing its digital and social media footprint as the primary channel for communicating to citizens, with the number of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter followers all hitting the targets.

- **Citizen Engagement in Council and Scrutiny:** The impact of the pandemic has meant that 2021/22 saw most Council meetings still needing to be held remotely. Meetings have remained open to the public to attend except where confidential or exempt information is being discussed, as defined by the law. Full Council meetings continued to include a facility for public questions, and the Council's Scrutiny Committees have virtually invited stakeholder contributions to their scrutiny programme, both through research and consultation exercises and through direct access to Committees. During 2021/22, the number of webcast Council and Committee meetings continued to increase by a further 50% building on a similar increase from the previous year which reflected the full calendar of business in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21. Over the past year, the number of Scrutiny meetings webcast and available for public viewing increased by 54%. There was a significant increase in viewing figures (over 40%) and the average viewing time increased by 38% on last year. Additionally 53 verbal contributions and 17 written contributions were received by the Scrutiny Committees from external contributors, in addition to 322 responses to primary research.
- **Customer Services, Complaints and Compliments:** Customer service forms a significant part of how the Council delivers help and advice, and it is recognised that there are many ways in which effectiveness can be improved, whether it is with internal or external customers. As a result, customer service training is being delivered across the Council, tailored for staff relevant to their roles and responsibilities. 245 members of staff attended the 'Introduction to Customer Services' training in 2021/22, whilst 54 members of staff attended the 'Delivering Great Customer Service' training.

A total of 3,633 (corporate) complaints were recorded during 2021/22, a 43.2% increase from the previous year, when 2,537 complaints were recorded. A total of 1,487 compliments were recorded during 2021/22, a 22.2% decrease from the previous year, when 1,912 compliments were recorded. In her annual letter to the Council, the Ombudsman has remarked that it is likely that complaints about "public services in general, were suppressed during the pandemic, and we are now starting to see the expected 'rebound' effect".

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Financial Resilience:** The Covid-19 pandemic, and associated public health measures, have had significant financial implications for the Council, both in terms of additional costs and loss of income. During 2020/21, Welsh Government put in place a Covid-19 Hardship Fund to support Local Authorities in managing additional costs and income loss directly resulting from the pandemic. The Fund was extended until the end of the 2021/22 financial year but will not be in place during 2022/23. This represents a significant financial risk to the Council. Issues supported by the fund include, but are not limited to, the procurement of protective equipment, operational changes to ensure the safe delivery of services, and financial support to care providers. These issues are likely to continue and are expected to be accompanied by longer tail challenges, which will be particularly acute in certain service areas. It is therefore critical that budget plans are sufficiently robust to ensure that the Council can continue to cope with Covid-19-related financial pressures without recourse to external support.

The Medium-Term Financial Planning position for the Council remains challenging given the demand pressures on services, the likely increasing cost base requirements and the projected levels of future resource availability. Welsh Government have provided indicative allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 which are welcome, but a cautious approach is needed given the all-Wales nature of these projections and the uncertainty of the future public sector landscape post-pandemic.

Moving forward, there is a need to ensure that demand pressures continue to be picked up early, as well as where demand for services does not return to anticipated levels, particularly with respect to income-generating services. Directorates will need to deliver effective mitigations against pressures arising, that includes changing service delivery whilst staying within agreed budget parameters.

A sharp focus will also need to be placed on the capital position – there are currently significant pressures resulting from rising inflation and supply chain cost increases, demand for investment to maintain condition, and capital receipt assumptions. Discipline is needed from directorates to ensure that resources, skills, and capacity are available to deliver the investment programme on time and to meet existing budget allocations.

- **Responding to the Maintenance Backlog of the Operational Estate:** The Council fully recognises the importance of its asset base to support the effective delivery of services, particularly given the shift to hybrid and locality-based working.

Longstanding challenges are recognised, particularly in relation to addressing a maintenance backlog within the operational estate. This not only includes core office spaces – such as City Hall and County Hall – but the city’s most historic venues and buildings. Allied to the maintenance backlog is the risk that statutory building inspections – as well as the remedial works arising out of inspections – will not be completed, which are required to maintain premises in a safe and legally compliant condition.

The new Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26, ‘Leaner and Greener’, sets out a strategic response, with the completion of statutory obligation surveys and remedial works representing delivery priorities. A focus is also being placed on the modernisation of the estate through planned and preventative maintenance requirements, ensuring alignment with the estate-related priorities of hybrid working and One Planet Cardiff.

Whilst the new Corporate Property Strategy was being developed, a short-term, one-year plan for 2021/22 was agreed, which included a target backlog reduction of £2million, against which only £1.63million was achieved. In 2021/22, the Council also set a target of £300,000 for reducing the total running cost of occupied operational buildings and achieved £257,098 at year-end. Both these shortfalls resulted partly from continued Covid-related disruptions during 2021/22.

- **Sickness Absence:** Whilst significant improvements were seen in sickness absence levels throughout 2020/21, sickness absences increased in 2021/22, correlating with the easing of pandemic restrictions. The end-of-year result showed that 12.65 working days/ shifts – per full-time equivalent (FTE) Local Authority employee – were lost in 2021/22 due to sickness absence, against a target of 9.5. Much of this increase relates to a large number of staff absent due to Covid-19, with the result dropping to 9.84 FTE days if Covid sicknesses are removed, only slightly above target and significantly less than the outturn in recent years. Over the coming winter, and potentially beyond, Covid is likely to contribute to sickness absence over and above historic trends, which could in turn place staffing pressures on key services.

Sickness absence is also not uniform across the Council, with sickness particularly high in Street Scene and Adult Services. A targeted approach will continue to be applied to improve performance. Additionally, a focus is being placed on reducing long-term sickness absence. Out of the total number of Council-wide working days/ shifts lost to sickness in 2021/22, 62% were as a result of long-term sickness, with 38% a result of short-term sickness. Additional corporate support is being provided for complex cases, with a continued promotion of support mechanisms, for both staff and managers.

- **Workforce Planning:** Local government faces a number of workforce challenges in ensuring sufficient capacity, appropriate skills and in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly given the level of competition for some professions. More recently, recruitment and retention issues have been recognised as a problem not just in local government, but on an economy-wide basis. To ensure a more comprehensive approach to workforce planning, the process is being further developed to align to the Council's policy and performance framework. This will enable a more strategic and integrated process to attracting future talent, including increasing apprentice and trainee opportunities, work experience placements, improve the diversity of the workforce and deliver a workforce fit for the organisation's requirements of the future.
- **Fraud and Bribery:** As resources become increasingly stretched, there is a risk that fraud, financial impropriety and/ or improper business practices could increase. To manage this risk, the Council frequently communicates a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption, as well as undertakes a regular review of relevant policies and procedures. Moving forward, a refresh of the Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy will be undertaken, with a revised Counter-Fraud Action Plan published to reinforce and drive the Council's stance, supported by awareness and training.
- **Information Governance:** Information handled inappropriately exposes the Council to intervention and financial penalties issued by the Information Commissioner. This includes information held by Cardiff's schools. To manage this risk, mandatory data protection e-learning is available for staff to complete, and an Information Governance Champions Group has been established. Additionally, an Information Governance Maturity Model has been developed to monitor risks.

- **Cyber Security:** With more Council services available digitally, the move to hybrid working, as well as greater collaboration and integration with partner organisations, reviewing and reinforcing cyber security arrangements is a key priority for the Council. A cyber security incident can lead to a loss of data, as well as disruption to the running of Council services. The Council therefore continuously reviews, refreshes, and reinforces its approach to cyber security, with risks logged and improvement actions identified.
- **Citizen Satisfaction:** Satisfaction with both the quality of public services and the services the Council provides fell in 2021. Satisfaction with Council services fell to 47.3%, down 20.1 percentage points from 67.4% in 2020. This drop in satisfaction reflects a national trend, with the Glasgow Household Survey 2021, for example, also showing falling satisfaction levels (down from 67% in 2019 to 48% in 2021). Similarly, the Local Government Association survey, 'Polling on resident satisfaction with Councils', saw satisfaction levels fall ten percentage points to 56%, the lowest figure recorded in the history of the survey (dating back to September 2012).

■ **Forward Look: Areas of Focus**

Financial resilience

The end of Welsh Government Covid Hardship Support represents a major risk for the Council which will require active management, particularly for the many income-generating services facing continued disruption and for those services where increasing and more complex demand as a result of the pandemic is being felt. Over the medium term, despite more generous indicative settlements from Welsh Government, rising demand in key services means that the Council must continue to plan for a significant medium-term budget gap. A sharp focus will also need to be placed on the capital position in response to rising costs to ensure that the investment programme is delivered on time and to meet existing budget allocations.

Delivering a comprehensive programme of organisational recovery and renewal

To retain the opportunities realised during the pandemic, the Council will develop a programme of organisational recovery and renewal. As part of this work, the Council is implementing a hybrid working model, supported by investment in digital infrastructure, services and skills.

Building upon our digital agenda, incorporating technology into service delivery and exploiting data to drive performance

Providing access to an enhanced range of services online will continue to be a priority post-pandemic, as the Council continues to accelerate its digital agenda, as will an increased focus on the use of automation to deliver efficiencies. The Council will also continue work to improve the collection, presentation, and analysis of data across the public service system to inform decision-making.

Delivering leaner and greener Council buildings

The Council's approach to managing its strategic estate will continue to adapt to support service delivery, particularly responding to the changes brought by hybrid working and the requirement to decarbonise the estate by 2030. A plan for the Council's core office requirements will be presented to Cabinet in 2022/23, taking into account recent condition surveys undertaken on County Hall and City Hall.

Supporting a highly skilled and productive workforce with the well-being of staff at its core

The Council's work on organisational development will place a focus on enhanced staff engagement, recognising the importance of a connected workforce as the Council transitions to a hybrid working model. An enhanced focus will also be placed on workforce planning across all services, responding to the labour market and the challenges of recruitment and retention, particularly in social care, waste and street cleansing and other front-line services.

Sickness absence levels remain too high in a small number of services. A targeted approach will continue to be applied to improve performance, including a continued focus on reducing long-term sickness absence through effective case management. The ongoing impact of Covid-19 on sickness rates, particularly in front-line services, will also require close monitoring and active management.

Using the power of the public purse to support the city's recovery

The Council will continue to fully leverage its spend to create local employment opportunities whilst promoting social and environmental improvements. In particular, the Council will need to ensure that its approach to procurement – including its draft Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy and Delivery Plan – aligns with new UK and Welsh Government legislation.

Making sure that the Council better talks to and listens to the city that it serves

A new Community Engagement Strategy is to be developed and published in 2022, in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, with a focus on engaging and involving hard-to-reach groups in decision-making. A new Customer Service Strategy is to be launched and embedded in 2022/23, acting as a voice for customers contacting the Council, as well as an online training module.

Well-being Objective 8: Managing the Covid-19 pandemic

Our priorities in 2021/22 were:

- Supporting the delivery of a mass vaccination programme
- Continuing to deliver an effective Test, Trace, Protect Service
- Embedding robust health and safety practices across all Council buildings and in service delivery
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate PPE to protect staff, service users and residents
- Enforcing compliance effectively through the Shared Regulatory Services

■ Strategic Assessment

Over the last two years, the Council and its public service partners have led the response to the pandemic, preventing the spread of the virus whilst ensuring the continued delivery of key frontline services and the protection of the city's most vulnerable people. Partnership delivery arrangements across Cardiff have been characterised by an unprecedented level of joint working, with the Council convening a coalition of public, private and third sector partners to deliver a city-wide response to the crisis. Key successes include the delivery of the vaccination programme, the establishment and delivery of a leading Test, Trace, Protect Service and the joint arrangements between the Council, the University Health Board, Public Health and Environment Health services to respond quickly and effectively to any clusters, and to ensure that the city's businesses and services were operating safely.

Due to the success of the vaccination programme, the course of the pandemic has changed, and the link between the virus, serious illness, hospitalisation, and death has been weakened significantly. The policy position, as it has nationally, has therefore graduated beyond crisis response towards the ongoing management of Covid-19 as a vaccine-preventable disease. Looking ahead, the Council and its partners will need to be ready to respond to any new variants of concern that lead to changes in national policy, including if necessary, re-establishing some of the Covid-19 governance response arrangements, and to continue to work in partnership with the University Health Board to promote the uptake of vaccinations, particularly in low-uptake groups.

■ Key Successes

Supporting the delivery of a mass vaccination programme

- **Delivery of the Mass Vaccination Programme:** Having supported the establishment and rapid escalation of the Mass Vaccination Programme, the Council has continued to provide logistical support at vaccine centres. Whilst the Bayside Mass Vaccination Centre is no longer operational, the lease of the Splott Mass Vaccination Centres has been extended. Last year, Councillors received daily updates on the outputs of the Mass Vaccination Programme, with a detailed breakdown of take-up by age and setting.
- **Supporting Vaccination Uptake Amongst Minority Ethnic Communities:** Recognising the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on minority ethnic communities and concerns over low uptake of the vaccine, a dedicated workplan was developed. The work involved intense engagement with communities and demographic groups with lower vaccine uptake, and leaflets – regarding Covid-19 vaccination in various community languages – were produced and disseminated. Moving forward, this work will continue, with a broader focus on longer term priorities, such as improving health outcomes for minority ethnic groups.

Continuing to deliver an effective Test, Trace, Protect Service

- **An Effective Test, Trace, Protect Service:** In Cardiff, the city's Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) Service was built from the bottom up, bringing together existing local public service expertise to create a new service with the vital role of tracking and limiting the spread of the virus. Such was the success of the Cardiff TTP Service that Welsh Government requested that Cardiff Council be the hosting body for a National TTP Team, providing "overflow" support to regions across Wales when demand exceeded capacity.
- **Ensuring Effective Services and Maintaining High Standards:** To ensure high standards could be maintained across the Cardiff & Vale Test, Trace, Protect Service, a Quality Development Process was established to monitor all teams, including specialist teams. The process was fully rolled out across Contact Tracers and Contact Advisors, with the concept and design presented at the National Contact Tracing Board as a best practice approach.

Embedding robust health and safety practices across all Council buildings and in service delivery & ensuring the availability of appropriate PPE to protect staff, service users and residents

- **Health, Safety and Wellbeing of Staff and Service Users:** The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and service users has been a foremost consideration for the Council throughout the pandemic. Throughout 2021/22, the Council's Covid-19 Secure Policy was continuously updated, in line with evolving Welsh Government and Public Health Wales requirements and remains under ongoing review. The Health and Safety Team also continuously monitored the Corporate Covid-19 Risk Assessment, ensuring it reflected Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance. The team additionally supported service areas to update their service-specific Covid-19 Risk Assessments, with regular communication provided to Operational Managers. To provide a safe working environment for staff and to safeguard residents and service users, effective workforce testing arrangements were established in May 2021. This was supported by robust ordering, delivery, and supply systems of Lateral Flow Tests and a clear communications programme with staff.

- **Ensuring the Availability of Appropriate PPE:** Effective arrangements ensured the availability of PPE throughout 2021/22, with a focus on critical services. As part of this approach, a PPE Demand Compliance Assessment Tool was created for Social Care. The tool reviews PPE supply to settings over an eight-week period, assessed against modelling estimates for safe PPE usage. Procedures were subsequently established to ensure any areas of concern were addressed, with clear escalation systems in place. This analysis was used to inform the dynamic ordering of stock through NHS Shared Services and an exercise was also undertaken to establish projected non-Social Care PPE needs in the new (2022/23) financial year.

Enforcing compliance effectively through the Shared Regulatory Services

- **Compliance with Covid-19 Regulations:** Throughout 2021/22, the Covid Enforcement Team worked to ensure compliance with all Covid-19 regulations – which fall under the authority of Shared Regulatory Services – across Cardiff. This included detailed advice given to businesses to support them in operating safely, as well as routine checking of arriving travellers.

■ Challenges and Risks

- **Variants of Concern:** Despite the removal of Covid-19 restrictions, monitoring new variants remains critical. The Council and partners will need to be ready to respond to any changes in national policy to keep citizens and staff safe, particularly the city's most vulnerable people, including re-establishing some of the Covid-19 governance response arrangements.
- **Vaccination:** Vaccination remains a critical part of the response to Covid-19, and it is therefore crucial that the Vaccination Programme continues to be promoted as part of ongoing activity to prevent illness. This will require a specific focus on addressing inequalities in uptake across all population groups.
- **Test, Trace, Protect:** Following the removal of the majority of Covid-19 restrictions in March 2022, as well as Welsh Government's publication of the long-term plan to live with Covid-19 safely, the Test, Trace, Protect Service has been scaled down. The telephony inbound service has been closed, although digital channels are still open, and call-backs are available. This ensures a level of service continuity through digital channels whilst allowing for the de-escalation of staff, who have been supported to find alternative employment. Moving forward, a new structure will be needed for the service so that it remains proportionate to the ongoing risk and enables resources to be effectively re-directed should the service need to be re-established at scale.
- **Long Covid:** Long Covid describes the presence of symptoms four or more weeks after the original Covid-19 infection that are not explained by an alternative cause. There is currently no local data on the prevalence or impact of long Covid and the potential for differential impact within different groups within the population. Understanding the prevalence and impact of long Covid will therefore be a priority moving forward – including its impacts on Council and partner services.

■ Forward Look: Areas of Focus

Welsh Government has provided a roadmap for the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and the long-term Covid-19 transition from pandemic to endemic. Moving forward:

- The Mass Vaccination Programme will continue, with uptake of the vaccine promoted. A key component of this approach will involve ongoing engagement with communities and demographic groups with lower vaccine uptake.
- As the Test, Trace, Protect Service has been scaled down, a new structure will need to be established that is proportionate to the ongoing risk.
- All Health and Safety Covid-19 guidance will continue to be reviewed, in line with the latest position.
- Service areas will no longer be required to have a service-specific Covid-19 Risk Assessment in place. Instead, the Corporate Covid-19 Risk Assessment will continue to be reviewed, in line with recent announcements, and will capture all control measures.
- PPE will continue to be provided to all relevant staff in 2022/23, with the Demand Compliance Assessment Tool used for Social Care.



