

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: 20TH JULY, 2021

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 5TH JULY, 2021

“C622 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – (L/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The report provided Cabinet with a high-level overview of the current position regarding coronavirus and the Council’s current arrangements to respond and recover from the pandemic.

The report also provided an update on the latest position for Council services and the regional arrangements for managing the public sector response to the pandemic, and specific aspects of this, including mass vaccinations and the Test, Trace, Protect service.

The Council’s Recovery Strategy adopted in late 2020 had provided a framework for progressing the strategic recovery of the organisation and an update on this was included for Members’ information and consideration, alongside the results from the recent staff well-being survey.

It was recommended that Cabinet refer the report to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee with regards the Council’s approach to managing the impact of the pandemic and to the Governance and Audit Committee as further contextual information when considering the Corporate Risk Register. Given the importance of the report, it was also recommended that the report be shared with all Elected Members and the Council’s Public Services Board partners for their information.

The Leader advised that since 23rd June the national position had changed and drew attention to the latest position as of 5th July as below:

- As at 5th July, 2021, the latest coronavirus data that was available for the rolling seven days showed 123 new cases had been diagnosed in the Vale of Glamorgan, with a case rate of 53.3 per 100,000 of population;
- As at 5th July, 2021, the positive proportion of tests carried out was 5.4%;
- As at 5th July, 2021, the comparator figures for Wales was 3,015 cases with a case rate of 41.2per 100,000 of population and the positive proportion of tests carried out being around 5%;
- This was a significant increase in recent weeks as coronavirus measures had been eased;
- The Delta variant was now the most prevalent in Wales;

- Current hospital admissions were not very high and those affected did not seem to require previous levels of hospital treatment, but hospitals were feeling the strain of levels usually associated with winter for diagnosis and treatment which had not been possible during the height of the pandemic;
- The Leader encouraged anyone who had not had a vaccination to do so in order to protect themselves and those around them;
- The current surges in those affected were within the 10-29 age groups, suggesting it was not as severe amongst the older population, but the younger generation were still capable of passing it on.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report and Appendix A be noted.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration alongside the Council's Corporate Risk Register.
- (4) T H A T the report be sent to all elected Members, Town and Community Councils and members of the Public Services Board for their information.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the ongoing work underway in response to, and recovery from, the coronavirus pandemic, including the results from the most recent staff well-being survey.
- (2) To provide Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to consider the Council's response to, and recovery from, the coronavirus pandemic.
- (3) To provide Governance and Audit Committee with the latest information for context when considering the Corporate Risk Register.
- (4) To provide an update to the Council's stakeholders."

Attached as Appendix: Report to Cabinet: 5th July, 2021

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 05 July 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Coronavirus Update
Purpose of Report:	To provide Members with an update on the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic.
Report Owner:	Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer:	Rob Thomas, Managing Director
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Strategic Leadership Team
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for executive decision by Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provides Cabinet with a high-level overview of the current position regarding coronavirus and the Council's current arrangements to respond and recover from the pandemic. • The report also provides an update on the latest position for Council services and the regional arrangements for managing the public sector response to the pandemic, and specific aspects of this, including mass vaccinations and the Test, Trace, Protect service. • The Council's Recovery Strategy adopted in late 2020 has provided a framework for progressing the strategic recovery of the organisation and an update on this is included for Members' information and consideration, alongside the results from the recent staff well-being survey. • It is recommended that Cabinet refer this report to Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Performance and Resources) with regards the Council's approach to managing the impact of the pandemic and to the Governance & Audit Committee as further contextual information when considering the Corporate Risk Register. Given the importance of the report, it is also recommended that this report be shared with all Elected Members and the Council's Public Services Board partners for their information. 	

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Cabinet notes the contents of this report and Appendix A.
2. It is recommended that Cabinet refers this report to Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Performance and Resources) for its consideration with regards the Council's management of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
3. It is recommended that Cabinet refers this report to Governance & Audit Committee for its consideration alongside the Council's Corporate Risk Register.
4. It is recommended that this report be sent to all elected Members, Town & Community Councils and members of the Public Services Board for their information.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To apprise Cabinet on the ongoing work underway in response to, and recovery from, the coronavirus pandemic, including the results from the most recent staff well-being survey.
2. To provide Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Performance and Resources) with an opportunity to consider the Council's response to, and recovery from, the coronavirus pandemic.
3. To provide Governance & Audit Committee with the latest information for context when considering the Corporate Risk Register.
4. To provide an update to the Council's stakeholders.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report was drafted on 23rd June 2021. Due to the changing situation, the report is accurate as at the date of drafting. Any developments of note that arise following publication of the report will be reported to Cabinet at the meeting of 5th July 2021.
- 1.2 Reports have previously been produced on the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Links to these reports can be found in the Background Papers to this report and focused on the initial service response, emergency planning mechanisms enacted and associated governance arrangements.
- 1.3 In July 2021, Cabinet considered and approved a report relating to the Council's Recovery Strategy which is also referenced in the Background Papers to this report.
- 1.4 The pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council's operations and the residents of the Vale of Glamorgan. This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the latest position.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

The Current National Position

- 2.1** As at the 23rd June 2021, the latest coronavirus data that is available for the rolling seven days shows 59 new cases have been diagnosed in the Vale of Glamorgan, with a case rate of 44.2 per 100,000 of population. The positive proportion of tests carried out is 3%. The comparator figures for Wales is 1,014 cases, with a case rate of 32.2 per 100,000 of population and the positive proportion of tests carried out being 2.6%. This is a significant increase in recent weeks as coronavirus measures have been eased.
- 2.2** The Welsh Government's management of the pandemic follows its Coronavirus Control Plan. The plan sets out a framework of 'alert levels' and corresponding restrictions on a range of activity including how business can operate and the number of people who can gather indoors/outdoors. From 7th June 2021, Wales has been moving in a direction from alert level two to one. From 7th June regulated events are allowed outdoors with up to 10,000 people seated or up to 4,000 people standing (subject to a risk assessment), extended households can be formed between 3 households and up to 30 people can meet in any outdoor area, including private gardens, public spaces and outdoor regulated premises such as cafes, restaurants and bars. From 21st June, wedding, civil partnership receptions or wakes can take place in regulated premises such as hotels. The number of people is limited by venue size and a risk assessment. Overnight stays in residential outdoor education centres are allowed for primary school children.
- 2.3** The First Minister has announced that further movement to alert level one will only take place once Welsh Government deem it safe to do so in response to increasing cases associated with the delta variant of coronavirus which is now the most prevalent strain of the virus in Wales. The number of cases of coronavirus have been rising steadily in recent weeks and it is not yet clear whether this will lead to a proportionate increase in hospital admissions and mortality as was seen in the first and second waves of the pandemic given the acceleration of the mass vaccination programme in Wales.
- 2.4** At time of writing, the total number of doses of a vaccine administered in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan is 575,035 (comprising 350,029 first doses and 224,951 second doses). Drawn from the [data that is published daily by Cardiff & Vale University Health Board](#), the following summarises this by age cohort and priority group:

COVID-19 vaccine update

23rd June 2021



Total Vaccinations: **575,035**

1st Dose: **350,029**

2nd Dose: **224,951**

	1st Dose	2nd Dose
AGE COHORTS: Cardiff & Vale Uptake		
80 +	20,955 94.5%	20,196 91%
75 - 79	15,105 96.1%	14,691 93.5%
70 - 74	21,474 95.5%	21,218 94.3%
65 - 69	21,911 93.9%	21,194 90.8%
60 - 64	25,976 92%	25,329 89.7%
55 - 59	29,234 89.8%	28,025 86%
50 - 54	28,786 87.2%	26,862 81.3%
40 - 49	54,100 80%	32,322 47.8%
30 - 39	57,373 72%	19,469 24.4%
18 - 29	73,085 71.7%	16,164 15.8%

	1st Dose	2nd Dose
PRIORITY GROUPS: Cardiff & Vale Uptake		
Care Home Residents	1,960 98.2%	1,916 96%
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	11,328 93.6%	10,964 90.6%
Underlying Health Conditions	45,715 88.8%	42,164 81.9%



Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board



- 2.5** Cabinet will note that the Council has been supporting the University Health Board with the mass vaccination programme through the provision of premises (Holm View Leisure Centre), Communications support and the Council's Head of Policy and Business Transformation is a member of the Programme Board to provide a link between the programme and the Council. With the roll-out progressing, plans are in place to 'leave no one behind' by extending the arrangements at mass vaccination centres to offer walk-in appointments and delivering doses through a variety of different methods, including community pharmacies, GPs and the deployment of mobile/'pop-up' facilities.

The Current Position of Council Services

- 2.6** Members will be aware that Council services have continued to be provided throughout the duration of the pandemic, albeit for some in very different ways. At the time of writing this report, all Council services are operational. A summary of key Council services is as follows:

- Schools are providing face-to-face teaching (with appropriate class bubbles and risk assessments in place).
- Social Care services such as domiciliary care and residential care are also operating in line with the latest local and national guidance, including residential home visiting for relatives.
- For office-based staff, the default position remains to work from home where it is possible to do so and risk assessments are in place for those staff who must attend an office or work-place location.
- The Civic Office reception is open for reduced hours and with staff on hand to manage the flow of customers in a safe manner.
- Neighbourhood Services (such as Waste and Parks) services are operating in line with guidance and risk assessments.
- The Council's leisure centres (delivered in partnership) are operating in line with the latest guidance, with booking systems in place to manage demand.
- A number of Covid-related safety features have been introduced to help protect visitors to the Council's libraries. These include the provision of 'click and collect' services, 20-minute book browsing sessions and 50-minute slots for computer use, which must be booked in advance by contacting the respective library.
- Adult Community Learning courses continue to operate on-line only at the current time.

- Resorts and country parks are operating as normal, with additional staffing deployed as required to ensure social distancing and other relevant measures are in place and being adhered to by businesses and visitors.

Strategic Management Arrangements

- 2.7** The Council's Strategic Leadership Team, including the Leader and Deputy Leader continue to meet fortnightly as the Gold Command Unit for the Council's response to and recovery from the pandemic. The frequency of the meetings for the Gold Command Unit has moved from daily at the beginning of the pandemic, to several times a week, weekly and now fortnightly. The meetings highlight service specific risks and issues relating to the management of coronavirus within Council services, review the latest statistical and descriptive epidemiology and relevant legislation in line with the Council's Emergency Planning protocols. The Strategic Leadership Team meets weekly to discuss other strategic issues.
- 2.8** Across the South Wales Police area, the Council continues to play an active role in the Local Resilience Forum both during the Response phase to the pandemic and now during the Recovery phase. The Council's Emergency Planning lead, the South Wales Local Resilience Forum Coordinator (employed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council) and the Council's Managing Director have all been involved in the response and recovery phases and as a consequence meet regularly with Welsh Government officials to inform and feedback on the situation at a regional and national level.
- 2.9** A Coronavirus Response & Control Plan is in operation across the region which involves an Incident Management Team (IMT) being convened fortnightly to review the current statistical and descriptive epidemiology across the region and involves the Health Board, Public Health, Local Authorities, Fire and Higher Education. This IMT reports to the Strategic Leadership Group which comprises Leaders/Chairs and senior officials from the partner organisations. The role of this mechanism is to take local decisions in response to the pandemic and to make recommendations to Welsh Government for action where this is within the powers of Ministers. The IMT feeds into a Strategic Leadership Group, which involves the Council's leader and Managing Director with counterparts from Cardiff Council and Cardiff and Vale UHB. This has proven a useful forum to discuss challenges, inform clear and consistent communication messages, discuss issues around the challenges during the response phase of the pandemic and more recently inform thinking during the transition to recovery and the roll out of the vaccination programme.
- 2.10** The Council continues to contribute to the regional arrangements for Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) as one of the most significant mechanisms available to prevent the onward spread of the virus. These arrangements draw together colleagues from various partner organisations, including Shared Regulatory Services, Public Health, Communications HR and Social Services. The Council leads the communications workstream for TTP on behalf of the partnership. Members will

be aware of the recent report to Scrutiny Committee (Learning & Culture) relating to work to engage with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and that report is referenced in the background papers to this report. This work has informed the communications associated with the mass vaccination programme, with the Council working alongside the UHB to promote the importance of vaccination to residents across the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Council's Strategic Approach to Recovery

- 2.11** Cabinet endorsed the Council's Recovery Strategy in September 2020 following consultation with Scrutiny Committees. The Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Council's four well-being objectives and contains a series of 19 strategic recovery priorities. The strategy outlines three phases of response, transition and recovery which it makes clear may not be linear. Since endorsing the Recovery Strategy, Members will note that the reintroduction and easing of restrictions has led to different services having to move into 'response' mode, whilst others have continued their trajectory through transition and onwards to recovery.
- 2.12** Progress against the Strategic Recovery principles has been reported regularly to elected members through the quarterly performance monitoring reports. From April 2021 the strategic recovery priorities are reflected in the 2021/22 Annual Delivery Plan. This enables the regular monitoring of progress against each to be reported alongside other Corporate Plan commitments. These recognise the significant work undertaken to date, for example in the administration of grants to business, support to pupils for digital learning and investment in town centres to attract visitors. The Recovery Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan are referenced in the Background Papers to this report.
- 2.13** Accompanying the Recovery Strategy and subsequently to inform the development and adoption of the Annual Delivery Plan, a Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken and refreshed. Drawing together international, national and local data and research, this work provides an evidence base for identifying the impact of the pandemic on our communities and informs the action that will be required to support these residents. The Community Impact Assessments are referenced in the Background Papers to this report.
- 2.14** Coronavirus was recognised as a risk in the Council's Corporate Risk Register which is regularly reported to the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet. The Risk Register will be reported to Governance & Audit Committee at its meeting of 20th July and it is recommended that this report is referred to that Committee to provide additional context to inform members' consideration.
- 2.15** The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the Council's role as a community leader, drawing together partners, residents and other stakeholders to take collective action to tackle issues such as poverty and deprivation, many of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. This is reflected in the renewed

Reshaping transformational change programme, which contains a particular area of focus on 'Reshaping with our community' to tackle issues such as food poverty, health inequalities alongside other issues such as climate change. The more positive lessons and experiences arising from the pandemic, such as the power of community action and volunteering through the Vale Heroes scheme, are also referenced in the next phase of Reshaping.

- 2.16** The pandemic has also prompted the Council to think about the way it operates. This is also reflected in the Reshaping programme, with programmes of work considering the future office requirements and support for digital learning in schools, for example. The approved Reshaping Programme framework is referenced in the Background Papers to this report for Members.
- 2.17** During the summer of 2020, a well-being survey was issued to all staff inviting their reflections on their experience of the pandemic and the communication and support arrangements put in place by the Council. This work was used to inform the Recovery Strategy and the work of a series of sub-groups progressing specific work packages on behalf of SLT Gold. A second well-being survey was recently issued and a summary of the findings can be found in Appendix A to this report. The survey results will continue to inform the support the Council's transition from the pandemic.
- 2.18** The results from the survey will also continue to inform the support and communication arrangements that are available to all Council colleagues. Since the beginning of the pandemic the Council has placed considerable emphasis on internal communication. This includes a weekly update message from the Managing Director to all staff and these messages have been issued without fail every week since the week commencing March 23rd 2020. There have also been regular 'Ask the MD' Question time sessions which provide the opportunity for all staff members to join and ask any questions relating to the pandemic and any other issue of interest. There are also a series of well-being, mindfulness and exercise activities that have been established and provided for staff members.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** In basing the Council's Recovery Strategy within the strategic context of the Corporate Plan, it is intended to ensure that this work is consistent with delivering the Council's overall vision.
- 3.2** The themes running through the Recovery Strategy are all cross-cutting and will require effective involvement, engagement & communication, understanding our partners' issues, working together, a focus on the longer-term and seeking to understand and prevent the root-causes of issues and are therefore consistent with the five ways of working required to demonstrate the sustainable development principle

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. However, the impact on the Council's finance arising from the pandemic (and work required in recovery) is significant. These effects have been reported to Members throughout the pandemic as part of the regular budget monitoring reports and have informed the budget setting process for 2021/22.
- 4.2** The Council has been able to claim additional expenditure incurred as a result of the pandemic from Welsh Government via the Local Authority Emergency Hardship Grant. In the period March 2020 to March 2021 the Council has claimed £16.5m, of which £14.4m has been received. In addition, the Council has received £3.5m for income lost in the same period, together with £60.2m other specific grant funding received from WG to cover additional costs relating to COVID-19, including support to businesses. Further details of the funding received is detailed in the Report entitled "Closure of Accounts 2020/2021" which is also being considered by this Cabinet meeting.
- 4.3** Welsh Government has confirmed that funding will continue be available for Local Authorities to cover increased expenditure and lost income for the first half of the current financial year.

Employment

- 4.4** There are no direct employment implications associated with this report. The report refers to the work to support the Council's staff and the results of the recent well-being survey.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.5** Welsh Government have continued to publish a series of regulations associated with the different phases of response to the pandemic, including legislation governing the way in which Council services can operate, alongside wider restrictions on business and daily life. This legislation and associated guidance form the basis of a fortnightly report to SLT Gold from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and are cascaded to the Council's Chief Officers for information and action.
- 4.6** The Community Impact Assessment referenced above highlights the impact on different communities in the Vale of Glamorgan, highlighting the exacerbation and production of new forms of inequality. The Council's Annual Delivery Plan, Strategic Equality Plan, Recovery Strategy and Reshaping Programme all contain actions that are designed to tackle inequalities.

5. Background Papers

Test, Trace & Protect: Supporting Ethnic Minority Communities, Learning & Culture
Scrutiny Committee, 10 June 2021.

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-LC/2021/21-06-10/CaV-TTP-Service.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-LC/2021/21-06-10/CaV-TTP-Service.pdf)

The Impact of Coronavirus on Our Communities, Cabinet, 8 March 2021 (and previous version within Recovery Strategy, Cabinet, 13 September 2020)

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Impact-of-Coronavirus.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Impact-of-Coronavirus.pdf)

Renewing Reshaping, Cabinet, 8 March 2021

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Renewing-Reshaping.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Renewing-Reshaping.pdf)

Annual Delivery Plan, Cabinet, 8 March 2021

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Draft-VoG-ADP.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Draft-VoG-ADP.pdf)

Corporate Risk Register, Governance & Audit Committee, 1 March 2021

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Governance-and-Audit/2021/21-03-01/Q3-Corporate-Risk-Register-Update.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Governance-and-Audit/2021/21-03-01/Q3-Corporate-Risk-Register-Update.pdf)

Recovery Strategy, Cabinet, 13 September 2020

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-07-13/Recovery-Strategy-Report-and-Appendix.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-07-13/Recovery-Strategy-Report-and-Appendix.pdf)

COVID 19 / Coronavirus - Service Implications and Business Continuity Update, General Information Report, 28 April 2020

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Our%20Council/Press%20Office/Coronavirus/Business-Cabinet-28-April-2020-Covid19-Service-Implications-and-Business-Continuity.pdf>

COVID 19 - Service Implications and Business Continuity, Cabinet, 23 March 2020

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-03-23/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Service-Implications-and-Business-Continuity.pdf

Coronavirus Preparations - Officer Delegations & Working Practices, Cabinet, 23 March 2020

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2020/20-03-23/Corona-Virus-Preparations-Officer-Delegations-and-Council-Working-Practices.pdf

Wellbeing Survey Synopsis

Survey Conducted May 2021

Summary Position



1166 Responses Received



Majority of respondents felt their health and wellbeing had been impacted negatively as a result of the pandemic



687 respondents currently working from home



460 respondents working from their office/place of work

Summary Position

- Majority of respondents strongly agreed/agreed with below statements;

I am kept up-to-date and feel well informed regarding the council response to the situation

My manager is accessible and frequently in contact with me where I am currently working

Where I am currently working I have what I need to perform my job safely and effectively

My Manager cares about my health and wellbeing and is there to support me as I need

Summary Position

379 of respondents would value a mix of home working/office working in the future when Welsh Government restrictions allow

947 of respondents felt the current ICT structure was sufficient to support home/remote working

Biggest Challenges included social isolation, contact with co-workers and anxiety around the pandemic