



---

**To: Leadership Board**

**On: 1 December 2021**

---

**Report by: Chief Executive**

---

**Heading: Covid 19 – Recovery and Response**

---

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The impact of the pandemic has been profound across Renfrewshire, with no individual, business or community untouched by COVID-19 and associated lockdowns and restrictions. As an organisation, Renfrewshire Council has also experienced significant challenges, delivering new services to support residents and businesses through the pandemic, and adapting the way in which core Council services have been provided over the period in line with national guidance and legislation.
- 1.2 In December 2020, full Council considered a suite of reports which outlined the initial response of the Council and its partners to the COVID-19 pandemic and the wide-ranging impacts that had been experienced by local businesses, communities and residents. Specific plans to support recovery from the pandemic were approved, focusing on social renewal, economic recovery and the financial sustainability of the organisation overall.
- 1.3 These plans are flexible in nature, as it was recognised that there remains an ongoing need to respond to the immediate impacts of the pandemic whilst looking ahead and progressing shared priorities and actions with partners.
- 1.4 The Social Renewal Plan in particular has been developed in cognisance of the findings of a community impact assessment which commenced in September 2020, and is subject to ongoing review and consultation. An

update on the Social Renewal Plan and Economic Recovery Plans are included as separate items on the meeting agenda.

- 1.5 At a national level, COVID recovery strategies have been published by the Scottish Government in relation to key sectors such as education and health and social care and in October 2021, a new COVID recovery strategy – “For a Fairer Future” was published. The strategy has a key focus on tackling widening inequalities across communities, with local government a key partner in delivering this programme of work.
- 1.6 Section 4 of this report provides further information on the Fairer for All strategy, and sets out how the Social Renewal Plan and Economic Recovery Plan align to the priorities identified by Scottish Government for recovery.
- 1.7 Whilst continuing to work to progress local recovery plans, the focus of the organisation and wider services remains very much on the COVID response. Whilst COVID transmission levels have reduced significantly since September, the average number of daily cases reported remains relatively high in Renfrewshire and has plateaued at this level.
- 1.8 Services are continuing to deliver supports to local residents and businesses in line with national guidance, including in relation to business and self isolation support grants, the vaccination programme and community testing. A summary of this activity is provided within section 5.
- 1.9 In terms of wider organisational recovery, work is continuing to restart services and resume activities in line with national guidance and subject to available local staffing resource. This has facilitated increased face to face contact and support for older people, people with a physical disability, young people and women and children impacted by domestic violence.
- 1.10 For those Council employees that have required to work from home during the pandemic, work has been progressed to support initial access to office accommodation within Renfrewshire House on an interim, phased basis. Based on the learning to date and through further engagement with staff, plans will now be developed to support further office-based working over the next few months. Any change to existing arrangements for service delivery will continue to be progressed in line with national guidance in place at that time.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Leadership Board note:
  - The priorities outlined within the Scottish Government’s COVID recovery strategy – Fairer for All, which align closely to local priorities for recovery and

- The ongoing focus of the organisation and its partners on the COVID response in Renfrewshire, which remains a significant focus for the Council in terms of resource and capacity.

### 3. National COVID recovery plans and strategies

- 3.1 In recent months Scottish Government has published a range of specific sectoral or thematic recovery plans relating to health and social care and education. The Deputy First Minister leads on the Scottish Government's response to COVID recovery, and on 8 October 2021 published COVID Recovery: - For a Fairer Future. This sets out the vision of Scottish Government for recovery overall and details the specific actions that will be progressed to address inequalities across communities which have worsened due to COVID-19. The strategy also outlines key steps that will be taken to progress a wellbeing economy in Scotland and to "accelerate inclusive person-centred public services".



#### Our Vision

By working together, we will:

**1.**

Address the systemic inequalities made worse by Covid

**2.**

Make progress towards a wellbeing economy

**3.**

Accelerate inclusive person-centred public services

- 3.2 A key driver of the strategy is the recognition that COVID has impacted people in very different ways, and has highlighted the inequalities that persist within society. The strategy identifies that there is a need to respond to the challenges around recovery and in tackling inequality, with the same creativity and ambition that was demonstrated through the COVID response. It is recognised that this will require people and organisations working across all sectors to come together to focus on achieving the change required.
- 3.3 For a Fairer Future also recognises the pivotal role that a thriving economy will play in terms of COVID recovery and that solid foundations in terms of job security and fair work support improvements in wellbeing and reduce inequality.
- 3.4 Within the strategy, an overview is provided on the extensive consultation and engagement that Scottish Government has undertaken on the impact of the pandemic. The views of participants suggest that people living across Scotland would like recovery that:

Figure 2: What sort of recovery people want to see



- 3.5 Three core outcomes are detailed within the strategy with a range of specific priorities and actions that will be progressed under each theme. Some of these areas of activity relate to existing activities which are being accelerated due to COVID, whilst others are new and will require further development and collaboration with citizens and stakeholders.

## Our Outcomes



- 3.6 In Renfrewshire, officers have worked with partners throughout the pandemic to identify priorities during the pandemic. An Economic Recovery Plan was developed through Renfrewshire Economic Leadership Panel and endorsed by the Council and its partners in late 2020, followed by the approval of a Social Renewal Plan in early 2021. The Social Renewal Plan was informed

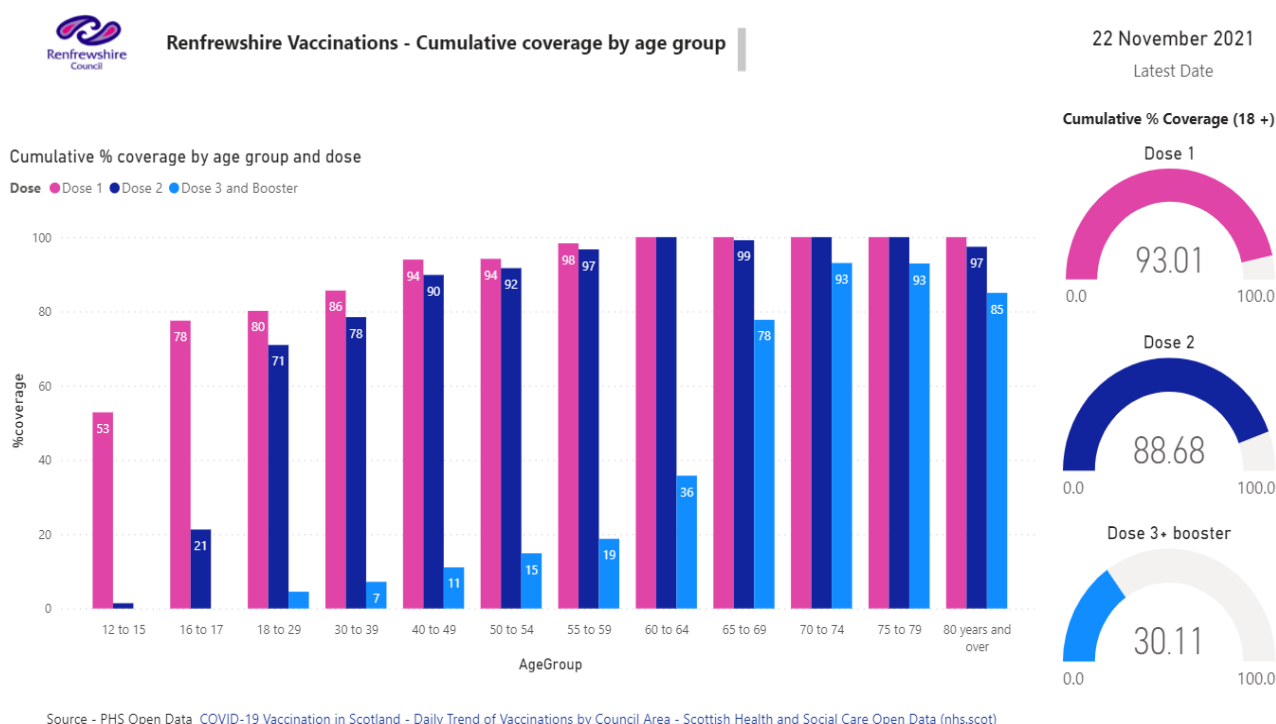
by a community impact assessment, which was undertaken with partners and with residents and communities to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the pandemic on different people and communities across Renfrewshire.

- 3.7 Both of these plans reflect the broad principles of the national COVID Recovery Strategy, with a specific focus on learning and responding to COVID to tackle inequalities and improve wellbeing, using all of the economic levers that are available to drive this change. The climate aspirations of the Council and its partners are core to the delivery of these plans.
- 3.8 Local recovery plans are being implemented now, and a progress update on the work that has been to achieve to date with partners is provided as part of separate reports on this meeting agenda. Key priorities over the next 3-6 months are also highlighted for consideration by elected members.
- 3.9 Going forward, officers will begin to transition and integrate these plans into longer term plans and strategies, recognising that as we move forward into 2022 the longer term impact of the pandemic will be more fully understood and there will be a need to continue to balance immediate recovery priorities with longer term actions.

#### **4 Update on COVID Response**

- 4.1 In addition to the focus on recovery and moving forward from the pandemic, the organisation is continuing to manage a range of significant challenges and additional support requirements as part of the ongoing COVID response.
- 4.2 Whilst the number of COVID cases reported in Renfrewshire has reduced significantly from a peak in late August and September 2021, cases remain much higher than prior to the summer period, with average number of daily cases broadly plateauing in recent weeks at a rate of circa 280-325 cases per 100,000 population over a 7 day period.
- 4.3 The number of cases also continues to impact levels of staff absence and isolation across frontline services and the Scottish Government have indicated that the ongoing pressure on health and social care services over the winter period may require some tightening of restrictions in future months, depending on the scale of the pressures being faced.
- 4.4 Support continues to be provided to individuals required to isolate through mechanisms such as Self Isolation Support Grants and access to emergency food and medicine. In terms of business support, environmental health officers continue to offer support and guidance to local businesses and have been supporting community asymptomatic testing through the deployment of a community testing mobile unit.

- 4.5 The Council and Renfrewshire Leisure continue to support the vaccination centres operated by NHS GGC which are currently in operation across Renfrewshire, offering COVID vaccinations, booster vaccinations and the winter flu vaccination programme.
- 4.6 Progress in terms of the main COVID-Vaccination programme in Renfrewshire remains very positive, with 93% of resident receiving Dose 1 and 88% of residents receiving both doses. 78% of 16-17 year olds have now received dose 1 and 53% of those aged 12-15 years. Work is ongoing with NHS GGC to encourage take up across age groups and within specific localities.
- 4.7 The booster roll out is underway, with care home and housebound residents being vaccinated by HSCP staff. At the vaccination centres over the last few weeks there have been occasions where residents have experienced longer wait times. These have been raised with NHS GGC and work is underway to ensure the scheduling of appointments operates more efficiently going forward.



- 4.8 In terms of wider organisational recovery, work has been progressed to support the reopening of services that have been paused during the pandemic or have not been able to be provided in the same way with alternatives developed to support vulnerable service users. This includes the phased reopening on a limited basis of day services for older adults and people with a physical disability, and services for women and children impacted by domestic violence.

- 4.9 Work has also been undertaken to facilitate access to office space for those employees that have been required to work from home during the pandemic. In line with existing Scottish Government guidance, staff access has been provided on a limited and phased basis in Renfrewshire House since September 2021.
- 4.10 An exercise is underway to engage with staff to assess how this has worked, with the findings used to inform the next phase of the organisation's approach to the utilisation of accommodation by the workforce. As throughout the pandemic, any future proposals will continue to be developed in line with Scottish Government guidance.

---

### Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – the impact of the pandemic on the financial sustainability of the organisation continues to be closely monitored and reported to elected members.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – The Social Renewal Plan and Economic Recovery Plan which set out local priorities for recovery for partners, have been endorsed by community planning partners.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – none

---

**Author:** Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Commissioning