Lessons Learned Log - NPT Safe and Well		Appendix 4
Version: July 2020		
Gone Well	**Not Gone Well**	**Actions**
Decision to set up humanitarian assistance as a cell within the Council's emergency response structure from the outset. This ensured alignment with the Council's wider emergency response, the Local Resilience Forum and national forums	Late receipt of information from Welsh Government or information received at very short notice. National guidance changing - sometimes a number of times over a short period of time. Lack of clarity about the end of shielding/food support and how humanitarian assistance might be stood down. Very late mobilisation of a national volunteering effort which was too late to deliver on the work we had to do locally	Ensure we continue to follow the Cabinet Office guidance on mobilising an emergency response. This worked well.
Decision to re-purpose council staff, resources and assets which were stood down from normal operations as part of the crisis response. This made the Council's contact centre, large numbers of staff, depots and vehicles available to resource the emergency at pace	Welsh Government announcements to bring services back into operation at short notice has put pressure on the resources and assets tied up in the emergency response. Unclear if there is understanding within WG that there is a transition required from the emergency response to re-opening of services and functions	Ensure we capture the philosophy of re-purposing council staff, resources and assets as part of our contingency planning. Look for opportunities to build staff confidence and skills in working across the council to respond to a wide range of issues - could include job swaps to aid succession planning. More formal arrangements in redeploying staff to S&W and releasing from their substantive role would have had benefits, particularly for the staff involved.
Adoption of collaborative working to bring together people with the right skills and experience to develop solutions to needs and requirements that were imposed on the Council at extremely short notice. This enabled a complex service that supported over 1300 people in a three month period to be created from scratch, safely	Some of the work was imperfect as we had to mobilise services and learn from doing. Generally, there were no major problems as we used people with experience and the right skills. With more time to plan we probably would have avoided some of the issues but we could equally have just created others.	Look for further opportunities to develop multi-disciplinary and corporate working. Build this into workforce planning, including recruitment, promotion and performance management systems to embed this as part of the council's corporate culture

Communications strategy - a range of new and innovative approaches were used to inform residents and wider stakeholders about the service. During this project we have created video, animations, used radio, secured the support of social media influencers and used the gov.notify service on a significant scale. We have also extended the use of social media and gov.notify in our communications with staff. We have developed insights enabling us to gauge how the community were receiving our communications. As well as ensuring people knew about and were confident to access our service what we have learned will permanently improve the way we engage and communicate	We need to further develop communications for those who are digitally excluded and those who need to have more accessible communications. It is clear from the review that there are a sizeable number of people who are not going to be on-line and we should further develop methods of engagement that enable this group of people to be fully included in communications moving forward.	Ensure the lessons learned from this project are developing into the next phase of the council's corporate communications and community relations strategy
Flexibility and adaptability - staff willingly worked over seven days per week and late into the normal working day to deliver the objectives of the service. It was clear that staff were intrinsically motivated by the contribution they were encouraged to make. We can learn from this in the way we empower our staff, remove bureaucratic and command and control approaches and encourage people to take ownership of shared outcomes and find their own solutions to achieving those outcomes	As is often the case in emergency situations, people can be placed under significant stress as they strive to respond to the crisis. Generally, where people were becoming stressed this was recognised and additional support was put into place immediately to help. For the future, we need to make sure there is explicit consideration of the hours people are working and the way in which they are responding to pressure to ensure their wellbeing is being continuously supported	Consider providing training to staff about the way in which we instinctively respond to emergencies and identify ways in which we can ensure staff wellbeing when we are working under extreme stress and pressure
Governance - care was taken through the exercise to create good records and systems. We used Internal Audit to verify our systems so we could account for the money and resources we were using and from this we could also make sure staff were safe in the work we asked them to do. We created a steering group with different workstreams led by a person who took responsibility and accountability for their work. This enabled us to provide an integrated system of support for our residents and to solve problems and issues together		

We made efforts to contact a wide range of potential partners at the outset of the crisis. We had fantastic support from housing associations and some of the local voluntary organisations - we need to explore how we develop these relationship further into the future. We had a more mixed response from other organisations, including some voluntary organisations that the council funds and also a mixed response from town and community councils. We will need to explore in more detail the reasons why response was mixed to inform our future relationships with those organisations	We need to have a more complete understanding of community capacity to inform our future community development work, in particular, to identify where we may have gaps in community capacity. We should also take the opportunity to review the objectives of the Council's Third Sector Funding Scheme and the Member Development Fund to ensure resources are being effectively targeted	As part of the council's wider work to develop our community development approach, undertake more analysis of the capacity in communities and across the third sector and use this information to review existing funding and partnership arrangements. Work with partners to understand the support offered through housing associations, voluntary organisations and communities, to help avoid duplication of effort and to identify gaps in support. Establish clear communication channels for sharing service information and updates
Digital services - we benefitted from our in-house digital expertise and were the first to receive the details of people who were shielding. We matched our lists against the lists of other vulnerable people known to council services and housing associations. This enabled us to quickly identify a wider network of support. Our software development team created a database to support our service operations and our communications and customer services teams created surveys to enable us to capture good, detailed metrics on how people were accessing and experiencing our service. This has enabled us to continuously adjust the service over the months	We established good information systems but it was clear that there were some discrepancies in some of the reports and statistics we were generating. This was largely due to the way people were querying the database. We also recognised relatively late in the process that we needed full case management functionality. If we had built review into the system from the beginning we would not have spent so much time cleansing the data and probably would have exited some people from the service earlier.	Consider further developing the case management system and use it to underpin future humanitarian assistance initiatives. Prioritise work set out in the Smart and Connected Strategy to bring together the Council's data assets

Liaison with elected members - we recognised the absolutely critical role of elected members at an early stage and worked with a number of members to communicate their street champions initiatives into their local wards. We linked community leads to a number of members to ensure there was a clear point of contact and responded to feedback received from members, particularly early on, about problems that were apparent. As time has elapsed we have been able to communicate and engage with members before making changes -something we were unable to do at the early stages because of the pace at which the arrangements had to be introduced	NPT Safe and Well was implemented at the same time as elected members were busy establishing their street champions networks with the support of local area co-ordinators. It was clear that there was a tension between the two initiatives in the early stages which was overcome through dialogue and by ensuring the work done by LACs was taken on by a team of community leads when LACs were reassigned to other duties. Throughout the project we have worked hard to communicate through elected members, respecting their unique role in their communities but this can still vary from time to time. Moving forward there is more that can be done to explain the role of the ward member to staff and to ensure there is a strong and mutually understood member-officer protocol that ensures harmonious and effective working between officers and members	Build into staff and member training improved understanding of the member-officer relationship. Use this exercise to strengthen the local ward member's role in leading community development for their ward
Food - the decision to create a local food hub enabled us to bridge the gap between what the national food box system could do and the needs of our residents.	We took the decision to bring the national food boxes into the hub to reduce the amount of cost to the Council and WG. This placed an additional strain on the food hub operation which in retrospect hasn't been justified by the benefits	
Community pharmacies - being able to communicate problems with the Head of Primary Care has benefited residents and the health board as we have been able to provide support to meet gaps in the community pharmacy service in the short term and communicated those gaps to the Health Board for them to include in their work.	The Welsh Government commissioned the British Red Cross to support community pharmacies and there were also discussions about commissioning support locally. The commissioning processes simply took too long to mobilise the additional capacity and instead we had to rely on an extensive volunteer network to meet need	Feed back to WG and the LRF that a commissioning approach is not a good fit within an emergency situation. Other models need to be developed and deployed

Community Leads - have played a key role in co-ordinating the corporate aspects of the Service with what has been happening in neighbourhoods. They have adjusted their work to suit the needs of different wards - there is a lot of variation across the Board. Leads have fed back what has been working, not working which in turn has enabled us to continuously adapt. This shows that harnessing the experience of front line staff and those who use our services is crucial to the way in which we plan and develop services	The transition from LACs to community leads was difficult. There was no effective handover of information which created some challenges across the system at the beginning. We need to ensure the knowledge gathered by the community leads is effectively transferred into any successor arrangement	Use the learning from this work to inform the way the council approaches community development moving forward
Volunteering - we were taken aback by the huge numbers of people who volunteered to work with the service. We created a volunteering policy and induction programme and undertook DBS and other checks. We learned that a significant number of our own staff have appreciated having an opportunity to volunteer in their own time too	We had a surplus of volunteers from our recruitment and took some time to set up our processes and support arrangements. The council now has an opportunity to develop its own infrastructure and pipeline of volunteers to support its corporate work which could include the role of volunteers in supporting the council's business continuity and emergency response arrangements	Formalise the council's objectives in relation to volunteering effort as part of its own corporate arrangements and set in place a suitable infrastructure to further develop this work
Supporting vulnerable residents - through the communications strategy and community awareness of S&W, many vulnerable residents have been identified who were not accessing support through other services. For others, S&W was able to work alongside existing support networks where Covid had impacted on their needs.	The support offered to residents often did not have an expectation in terms of review or end which has allowed some dependencies to begin to develop. Building in reviews with residents at set intervals would avoid the need for a large review process to be carried out and encourage residents to explore other options.	Ensure clarity on the offer of support, how this works alongside other services and how residents transition into other support where none was previously in place.
Food hub - the hub allowed us to make an offer of support to residents requiring food through the provision of basic food boxes that could be quickly packed and delivered through a central distribution network.	Many residents were able to pay for food, and some would have preferred to but it was difficult to implement a mechanism to 'shop' for residents or charge for food. Also, it is not feasible to manage the hub to meet all dietary needs and to include non-food items, so residents may still have a need for supplementary shopping.	Consider other options for supporting residents in accessing food including shared learning from other community based initiatives

Connecting with communities - this initiative has enabled the Council to strengthen its connection with communities in many ways - through the role elected members took on in mobilising the community, through staff who live in the county borough volunteering their help and support, by focusing on those who were most vulnerable and finding innovative ways of supporting those people.	The nature of the emergency has meant that it is difficult to provide continuity as staff were pulled back into other areas of work. There is however a very strong view amongst all those who have worked as part of NPT Safe and Well that the crisis has brought about a renewed sense of community and this is a platform we should build upon to permanently connect into communities	Bring clarity to the Council's approach to community development, led by members and the community itself. Provide training to staff to ensure there is a shared understanding of how to work with communities. Consider options for co-ordinating efforts at the community level taking forward the learning from Area Co-ordination and the Community Leads and other insight gained from the crisis