

Decision Schedule



Cabinet

TO ALL MEMBERS OF NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

Decision Schedule published on 19/10/2018

The following decisions were taken on 17/10/2018. They will become effective at Noon on 25/10/2018 with the exception of any particular decision(s), which is (are) the subject of a valid "call-in".

The deadline for submission of a 'Call-in' request form (available from Democratic Services) is 4.00 pm on 24/10/2018. Reports relating to staffing issues/confidential reports are not circulated to all Members of the Council as part of the consultation/call-in processes.

CAB 48/18

WAO Annual Improvement Report

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Local Government Measure (2009) introduced a new form of improvement reporting required of the Auditor General that sets out how well councils are improving their services.

Legislation introduced in April 2010 requires councils to make arrangements to improve their services and the way that they work.

Each year, the Auditor General must report on how well Welsh councils are planning for improvement and delivering their services. Drawing on the work of the relevant Welsh Inspectorates, and the audit work of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and the Appointed Auditor the report presents a picture of improvement over the last year.

During the course of the year, the Auditor General did not make any new formal recommendations. However, a number of proposals for improvement have been made and these are mentioned in the report. Progress against these recommendations will be monitored internally and by the Wales Audit Office through their ongoing programme of work.

Based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the WAO and relevant regulators, the Auditor General concluded that the Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement for 2017-18. This shows that the council is continuing to improve despite the financial, legislative and population growth challenges that it continues to face.

The Annual Improvement Report is not an exhaustive assessment of all services; rather, it focuses on a range of priorities for improvement.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the report.

Consultation

Strategic Directors; Head of Finance; Monitoring Officer; Head of People and Business Change; Chair of Cabinet

Implemented By: Strategic Directors and Heads of Service

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

CAB 49/18

WAO Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? Review

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

As part of their programme of work for 2017/18, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) reviewed the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements. The main aim of the review was to assess how 'Fit for the Future?' scrutiny functions in responding to current challenges including the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act. The review also included how Councils are beginning to undertake scrutiny of the Public Service Boards.

The intended benefits of undertaking this project are:

- Identification of approaches to embedding the sustainable development principle into scrutiny processes and practices to inform practice sharing and future work of the Auditor General in relation to the WFG Act;
- Providing assurance that scrutiny functions are well placed to respond to current and future challenges and expectations;
- Helping to embed effective scrutiny by elected Members for the start of this new electoral cycle; and
- Providing insight into how well councils have responded to the finding of the WAO's previous Scrutiny Improvement Study.

To inform their findings the WAO based their review methodology around the Outcomes and Characteristics for Effective Local Government Overview and Scrutiny that were developed and agreed by scrutiny stakeholders in Wales following their previous National Improvement Study 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question!'

The WAO undertook the review during December 2017 and January 2018. They reviewed documents, observed a sample of scrutiny committee meetings, interviewed officers and held focus groups with Members involved in scrutiny to obtain their views on the Council's current scrutiny arrangements and understand how the Council is approaching and intends to respond to the challenges identified.

The review concluded that the Council's leadership is committed to improving its scrutiny function and to meet current and future challenges for scrutiny, but Members need a fuller understanding of their scrutiny role and more effective, timely training. The WAO came to this conclusion because:

- a. The Council has made recent changes to its scrutiny arrangements, which now need to be strengthened and embedded effectively in order for it to be well-placed to meet current and future challenges;
- b. The Council is creating a new environment for scrutiny to drive improvement, however Members' need a fuller understanding of their role in scrutiny and timely and specific member training to improve their effectiveness; and
- c. The Council is improving the planning and operation of its scrutiny function, which can be strengthened by greater alignment between the work of scrutiny and Cabinet.

The WAO made 6 Proposals for Improvement:

The Council's scrutiny function could be further strengthened by:

P1 Providing a structured and timely member development programme to improve members' scrutiny skills and improve their understanding of their scrutiny role;

P2 Effectively holding Cabinet Members to account for service performance when invited to scrutiny meetings;

P3 Improving the planning and links between the forward work programme of scrutiny committees and Cabinet;

P4 Providing further training for scrutiny members on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act to improve their understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity;

P5 Reviewing the impact of the new scrutiny structure and arrangements in driving improvement; and

P6 Improving the public's engagement with the scrutiny function by using a wider range of engagement methods.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the report and to initiate the Action Plan to address the Proposals for Improvement.

Consultation

Chief Executive; Strategic Directors; Heads of Service

Implemented By: Strategic Directors and Heads of Service

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

CAB 50/18

Final Year End Analysis of Performance Indicators (All Wales Data)

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

Each year data is submitted to Data Cymru (previously called Data Unit Wales) for relative comparison alongside other Welsh Authorities. The dataset submitted is known as the 'Public Accountability Measures' (PAMs) and enable local authorities to provide an account of their performance to the public, including comparing their performance with that of other authorities. The PAMs also enable the public to hold the authority to account over issues that matter most to them.

In 2017/18, the PAM dataset comprised of 26 performance indicators, but comparisons for only 18 of these have been published by Data Cymru with only 14, which have data directly comparable to 2016/17. The remaining 8 performance indicators are due to be published later in the year. The 2016/17 year-end performance analysis compared the data for 24 performance indicators.

The data for each Local Authority is published in the media and is publicly accessible via Data Cymru's website. Data Cymru also publish a bulletin that summarises performance across Wales.

Against a backdrop of budget cuts and limited resources, Newport has continued to improve performance in national indicators. The improvements reflect significant efforts made in service areas within the Council.

Overall 2017/18 performance has improved for 36% of the performance indicators and performance has remained unchanged for 7% of the indicators in comparison to 2016/17.

The published data indicates that three of the performance indicators are in the top quartile and a further 5 are in the upper middle quartile. The analysis detailed in appendix 1 gives the performance for 2017/18 and includes the comparison of Newport City Council in relation to the other Welsh Local Authorities.

It is important to note that these comparator figures do not take into consideration the potential impacts of financial position, population demographics or service demands. It is worth noting that Newport Council has historically low levels of spending.

The published comparative data ranks local authorities against each other but does not include any qualitative standard of performance.

Whilst it is acknowledged that improvement is needed, and maximising the council's performance within the resources available will be a priority, there have been some positive improvements:

- Significant progress has been made in the percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools improving from 21st to 14th best in Wales since last year;
- To be able to live independently is a priority for many residents; and the Council has continued to deliver Disabled Facility Grants within statutory timescales and are the 4th best in Wales for this indicator; and
- The Pride in Newport campaign has continued throughout 2017/18, which has resulted in nearly 100% of reported fly-tipping incidents being cleared within 5 working days of the incident being reported.

In addition to the national indicators, the Council has adopted four Well-being Objectives and eight Improvement Plan Objectives, which were selected following consultation with the public, members and staff. The objectives include some national performance indicators as well as locally set performance indicators, which support the delivery of the objectives. The annual review of both the Well-being objectives and the Improvement Plan objectives show that we have made good progress against the areas that are important to residents.

Further analysis has been included in appendix 1 and figures are correct as at 5 September 2018. The analysis will help to inform the council's on-going approach to improving performance, which will include the review and revision of targets to aim for improved quartile placement as well as prioritisation of performance indicators according to areas where the most gains are predicted to be made within the resources available.

The following has been noted by Data Cymru:

- Waste data will be reflected in the performance framework in October.
- Social Care data will be published in October by Welsh Government and will be reflected in the performance framework in November.

Decisions:

Cabinet agreed the report.

Consultation

Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Heads of Service

Implemented By: Strategic Directors and Heads of Service

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

CAB 51/18**Academic Results for Newport Schools****Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

The report provided combined pupil performance data for Newport Schools at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. At Foundation Phase, comparison with previous years should be avoided due to changes in assessment criteria.

All schools are subject to rigorous reporting and monitoring of standards each year, with the principal focus in key stages 2 and 3 being on English/Welsh first language, mathematics and science, and the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in all three core subjects – the core subject indicator (CSI).

In the Foundation Phase, schools report on the performance of 7 year olds in language, literacy and communication (English or Welsh language) (LLC), mathematical development (MD), and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development (PSDWCD). The foundation phase indicator (FPI) measures the percentage achieving the expected outcome in all three areas of learning.

Whilst assessment of LLC and MD is broadly comparable to performance in English/Welsh and mathematics at KS2 and KS3, PSDWCD is not the same as science. Instead, it provides a holistic assessment of pupils' wellbeing and the extent to which they are able to inter-relate appropriately with those around them. It also reflects a growing awareness of culture and diversity and of the environment in which they live. As such, it is an important measure of their overall 'readiness' for learning. Achievement in each of LLC, MD and PSDWCD is measured in relation to one of six 'outcome' descriptors.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed and welcomed the report.

Consultation

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; Chief Education Officer; Chief Financial Officer; Monitoring Officer; Head of People and Business Change

Implemented By: Chief Education Officer

Implementation Timetable: N/A

Independent Living Strategy 2017-2022

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, compels local authorities to promote a greater choice of services, to reduce dependency, and to focus on preventative services. The Act also requires local authorities to develop new service models and user-led initiatives, such as co-production and social enterprises. Rather than looking at accommodation needs as merely bricks and mortar, we need to continue to consider the care and support models in the context of these priorities set out in the Act.

The following are key principles of the Independent Living Strategy:

- To reflect significant changes in legislation, policy and planning
- To reflect changing demographic pressures
- To ensure effective partnership working with key stakeholders
- To make effective use of diminished resources and working within budget constraints
- To identify a range of approaches to promote independence
- To encourage creativity and innovation

The Independent Living Strategy identifies a series of actions to develop community services and an extensive range of benefits which will accrue. The expected benefits include reduced reliance on the Council, increased diversity of support and more sustainable, cost effective provision, and supporting people to achieve better outcomes as they become more independent.

The challenges facing the Council are significant, with many of the young adults with learning disabilities presenting complex needs and conditions. Alongside this, there are a significant number of older adults with learning disabilities who continue to be supported by their families. The Strategy highlights the importance of planning for those future needs by ensuring that Social Services and Strategic Housing continue to work together to develop appropriate accommodation and support models. This will require further partnership working with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and will enable the Council to access vital capital funding streams.

The Strategy is aimed at delivery over the period 2017-22, but it is anticipated that it provides an effective blueprint for future planning and partnership working in the years ahead.

Some of the proposed service developments may require formal tendering processes to commission the care and support services.

There are no direct staffing consequences arising from the Strategy.

SLT had indicated support for the Independent Living Strategy and sanctioned issue of it to Cabinet for approval.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the Strategy

Consultation

Newport City Council Strategic Leadership Team; Representative Groups of Adults with Learning Disabilities; Registered Social Landlords (RSLs); Social Care Providers; Newport City Council NCN Social Work Teams

Implemented By: Head of Adult and Community Services

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

CAB 53/18

Annual Report of the Director of Social Services

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The purpose of the annual report is to set out the local authority's improvement journey in providing services to people in Newport, who access information, advice and assistance, and those individuals and carers in receipt of care and support. This report sets out to demonstrate how Newport Social Services has responded to the new requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and how we have promoted and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards to the citizens of Newport.

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (R&I) and the ***Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB)*** sets out the requirement for the Director to produce an annual report setting out the performance of Social Services, following the format prescribed by the Local Authority Social Services Annual reports (Prescribed Form) (Wales) Regulations 2016 and is intended for a range of audiences as set out in the Local Authority Annual Social Services Report guidance document.

The intention of the report is not to detail process but to focus on the activities and outcomes achieved and the impact this has had on citizens in Newport. The evidence of our citizens has been used throughout the report, as has the contribution of our partner agencies and commissioned services.

Director's Summary of Performance

2017/18 was a demanding year characterised by a maintenance in the quality and standards of service delivery. A major task was the continued embedding of the 2016 Social Services and Well-Being Act, which has helped positively in the re-shaping of early intervention and preventative services. This has assisted in the ongoing work to manage demand. The well-being objectives wind through all social services operations and tie closely to the Newport City Council Corporate Plan, notably:

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
- To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
- To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

Each year financial constraints become more significant when available budgets are set against rising costs and increasing demand. There is a continuous striving to minimise costs and identify savings. In Children's efforts have concentrated on addressing the shortage of placement options and the associated costs as well as appropriately minimising the numbers of looked after children. Work in Adults has included the managing of demand and the building of capacity through the integration of health and social care. As usual, there has also been a drive to minimise delayed transfers of care and these were kept at manageable levels though there remains scope to improve. The Care in Wales inspection reports and performance indicators demonstrate however, that the service delivered to children and adults is being maintained, a significant achievement.

In addition to legislative change and financial challenges, implementation of the Welsh Community Care and Information System (WCCIS) has been delivered. This took considerable planning, training and management and means that Newport City Council will be able to take full advantage of this still developing case information system designed for Councils and Health Boards.

Partnership working has developed further with the other South East Wales Local Authorities with numerous joint initiatives maintained and developed. The integrated partnership with Barnardo's has also remained a strength with a retendering for the strategic partnership delivered by Barnardo's recently completed. The Regional Partnership Board, at which the third sector, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and South East Wales Local Authorities are represented, has emerged as a primary route for the transformation of health and social care and Newport City Council engages fully in this process.

2018/19 will prove no less challenging but social services in Newport City Council are lean, efficient and well-placed to respond.

Decision:

Cabinet unanimously agreed to endorse the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2017-18.

Consultation

Social Services staff; Cabinet Member for Social Services; Monitoring Officer; Head of Finance; Head of People and Business Change

Implemented By: Strategic Director People

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

CAB 54/18

Work Programme

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Leader of the Council presented the latest update to the work programme.

Decision:

To agree the updated work programme.

Consultation

Chief Officers; Monitoring Officer; Head of Finance; Head of People and Business Change

Implemented By: Cabinet Office Manager

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Signed:

Councillor Debbie Wilcox, Chair of the Cabinet

Date:
