

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 16 January 2019

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors D Wilcox (Chair), G Giles, D Harvey, R Jeavons, D Mayer, P Cockeram, J Mudd, R Truman and M Whitcutt

In Attendance: W Godfrey (Chief Executive), J Harris (Corporate Director – People), B Owen (Corporate Director – Place), G Price (Head of Law & Regulation), M Rushworth (Head of Finance), R Cornwall (Head of People & Business Change)

1 Apologies for Absence

None received.

2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting: 12 December 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2018 were confirmed as a true record by the Cabinet.

4 Mid Year Analysis of Performance Indicators

The Leader introduced the report and gave a brief overview of the information contained therein:

- This is a half-yearly position and the overall position is encouraging.
- We are year on year continuously improving.
- At the Cabinet meeting in December, we reported the Wales Audit Office Second Certificate of Compliance.

The Leader explained the purpose of the report is to provide an overview on the progress of delivery against the service plans, part of the Corporate Plan Golden Thread, and performance measures for the first six months of this financial year (2018/19).

The report includes the feedback and recommendations of the People Scrutiny Committee and Place & Corporate Scrutiny Committee following the presentation of the service plans in November and December 2018.

In 2017, the Council's five year Corporate Plan was successfully launched which set out this Administration's vision and goals for delivering Council services and delivering its Well-being objectives for the citizens of Newport.

To ensure those goals are achieved Newport Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22 identified four themes (Thriving City, Aspirational People, Resilient People, Modernised Council) and 20 commitments to deliver.

To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, the Council's eight service areas have developed their service plans for the period 2018-22, which outline how they will support and deliver the Council's commitments.

To ensure these objectives are achieved over the next five years, each service area in the Council developed supporting individual service plans, which were approved by each of the Cabinet Members.

The report showed that for the first six months of this financial year:

- 84% of the actions (205/245 actions) identified in the service plans were reported as being '*In Progress*';
- 7% of actions (17/245 actions) reported as being '*Completed*'; and
- 9% of actions (23 out of 245 actions) *awaiting to be commenced*.

As this is the first year of delivering against the service plan objectives, the expectation was not for service areas to have reported that they had successfully delivered a significant proportion of these objectives.

However, what the report does highlight is the notable developments in the delivery of the Corporate Plan, which has seen the Council taking bold decisions against the backdrop of ongoing financial pressures. This period of austerity is beyond compare and the Leader thanked cabinet colleagues for taking up their positions and taking forward some very difficult decisions.

The full detail of the developments are included in the report, but the Leader highlighted some of the progress made to date:

- The purchase of new homes to bring back children in out of county placements, which will ensure their care and support is delivered within the Newport area; the first child moved in today!
- Preparation work for civil parking enforcement is on course for delivery in 2019/20 which will improve the desirability of Newport and in particular the city centre; this will assist in helping to 'sell' our city to developers and external partners and make it a safe place for citizens;
- The regeneration of Newport City Centre is continuing at a good pace with sites such as Chartist Tower, Newport Market and Market Arcade being redeveloped. This is also supported by the development of the new Convention Centre at Celtic Manor and approval of Heritage Lottery Funding for the Transporter bridge.
- The new Hub in Ringland is on course for delivery in April 2019, which will see changes in how services are delivered between us and our partner organisations to the communities of Newport.
- The schools in Newport reported improvements in GCSE and A Level results with positive feedback received from Estyn in the delivery of Educational Services.

With regard to the Performance Measures, the Leader reported that:

- In the first six months of 2018/19, 40 out of 63 performance measures were '*On Target*' in achieving or exceeding their target. (More detail is provided in the body of the report in relation to these measures).
- There were 16 out of 63 performance measures were reported as being '*amber*' or *short of meeting their target*
- 9 out of 63 performance measures reported as being *Red* or '*off target*'. (The report states that four of the nine measures were in relation to National/Public Accountability

Measures and the report includes information on the action being undertaken by the service areas to improve their performance).

The Leader emphasised that Cabinet Members need to ensure close monitoring of the measures reporting either an 'Amber' or 'Red' and to further ensure that service areas are taking the necessary action(s) to improve their performance before the end of the financial year.

The Leader also emphasised the importance of the role of Scrutiny and reported the Scrutiny Committee Feedback and Recommendations, which were:

- The mid-year performance updates were presented to the Place & Corporate and People Scrutiny Committees in November and December 2018.
- The Report includes detailed information on the feedback and recommendations raised in the report for consideration by Cabinet. A summary of the feedback and recommendations included:
 - The committees were pleased with the improved structure of reports but believed further improvements can be made with the referencing and clearer explanations when using acronyms;
 - Improved clarity over the timescales to deliver the actions in the service plans so that Members can effectively understand and challenge the progress of delivery;
 - Further training and support for the Scrutiny Committee Members prior to the end of year reporting;
 - Cabinet were asked to address the concerns raised about the slow progress on the development of the Master Plan and if the Council has sufficient resource to work with inward investors on large scale development opportunities. (The Leader confirmed this is being done on a very limited budget and tight timescales);
 - The Committee wanted to seek assurance that the Council was maximising the opportunity to promote Newport as a result of the removal of the Severn Bridge tolls. Again, the Leader confirmed this was being done and all Cabinet Members are engaging with external partners in promoting Newport.

The Leader was keen to ensure the Cabinet, who are responsible for the oversight and delivery of these service plans and where good progress is being made, recognise the work being undertaken by the service areas and their staff.

Equally, that Cabinet Members take responsibility to ensure that where under-performance is reported that the necessary action(s) is taken by the service areas to improve their performance and deliver the services required by the citizens of Newport.

The Leader asked for comments and questions from Cabinet colleagues and the following points were raised:

- Important to acknowledge that Newport City Council continues to achieve in times of austerity;
- Newport City Council's services continue to gain national recognition and awards;
- Improvements in ways of working and modernisation of the Council's IT services were commended;
- Recognition was given to the new ways of working with regard to looked after children and it was noted what good works have been taken forward with assistance of funding from the Transformation Fund, in relation to Domiciliary Care and, going forward, Children's Services;
- Newport City Council's responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement is on track to commence on the 1 July 2019; the new team structure has been completed and every street in Newport has been physically surveyed;

- Thanks were given to the Education Service for the preparation undertaken prior to the recent Estyn Inspection;
- Thanks were given to all colleagues for the work carried out in relation to the changes in the Council Tax Premium for unoccupied properties; the excellent work in bringing forward the new Community Hub, which is an example of the Council working in partnership both internally and externally, to provide better service delivery and quality of life for citizens; the work being undertaken to regenerate Newport.

Cabinet was asked to consider the following options:

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the report.

5 Education Pupil Performance Data

The Leader introduced the report and confirmed that Cabinet will be aware that there have been a number of significant changes to Key Stage 4 and 5 performance measures and the programmes of study that sit behind each examination in Wales.

The Leader explained the examinations require a different skill set and knowledge than in previous years, therefore it is not appropriate to compare 2018 verified results with former years.

The Leader was pleased to report that Newport secondary schools have been well prepared for these changes and this has resulted in strong results in the Level 2 Inclusive measure, which sits at 57% compared to an all Wales average of 55.1%. Newport ranks 8th in Wales, which is well above its current Free School Meals position of 13th.

Other additional successes include:

- English A*-C which is verified at 65% for the City. This is above the all-Wales average for the second consecutive year; and
- Maths A*-C which is verified at 65.2% which is above the all-Wales average for the first time since 2011.

These are strong results, which have required hard work, coordinated and bespoke support.

The Leader also reported on those young people in the City who did not gain the level 2 inclusive measure, but did successfully reach their potential and gain the level 1 or 2 measures by acquiring a range of GCSE qualifications or equivalent.

The Leader expressed her congratulations to all these pupils and the expertise of the teaching staff who guided them through this challenging time.

The Key Stage 5 indicator for Wales is exceptionally broad. The Level 3 threshold definition is: *'a volume of qualifications equivalent to 2 A Levels A*-E'*.

This year 95.7% of Newport's 732 post-16 students gained that performance measure. Whilst this is commendable, it does not tell the story of the many young people who have been highly successful in gaining a place in their University of choice or who are now thriving in employment. The Leader congratulated all of those young people who are taking the next important steps in their careers.

The Leader introduced the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

The Cabinet Member reported that whilst collectively, Newport has achieved some excellent results, specific praise was warranted for two secondary schools who have accelerated their key stage 4 outcomes;

- St Julian's School demonstrated a 5.5% rise in the Level 2 inclusive indicator and a 4.7% increase in A*-C Maths. This is good progress.
- Newport High School demonstrated a 10% rise in the Level 2 inclusive indicator, a 10% improvement in the level 2 indicator and a 12% improvement in A*-C English. This is excellent news.

Whilst variability in secondary school performance is a theme across Wales, these types of improvements in individual secondary schools help to reduce this issue. The Cabinet Member congratulated the pupils, staff, governors and parents in the Newport High and St Julian's school communities.

Although not part of this report, this aligns to the continuing picture of inclusivity in Newport, ensuring that every young person matters. Over the last seven years, the rate of young children not in education, employment or training (NEETS) for Year 11 has reduced by 80%. During the last three years, Newport has moved from Local Authority ranking position 14th to 8th position and is committed to ensuring that all young people are engaged in education, employment or training.

Every set of performance outcomes require further work. In Newport, the intention is to focus on accelerating Free School Meal outcomes and improving the new 'Capped 9' performance measure at Key Stage 4. The Authority will work closely with the EAS School Improvement Service and each of Newport's secondary schools to ensure this improvement is recognised in subsequent years.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member and agreed this is absolutely a good news story since education is such a game changer for young people giving them the building blocks for the future.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the report.

6 Work Programme

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

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the updated work programme.

7 Public Services Board Summary Document (for information/awareness)

The Leader confirmed this document provides a monthly summary update of business undertaken by the PSB and is for Cabinet's information/awareness.

8 Date of the Next Meeting: 13 February at 4pm, Committee Room 1

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 13 February 2019, at 4.00 pm in Committee Room 1, at the Civic Centre, Newport.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified