

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 14 June 2018

Time: 4.00 pm

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

In Attendance: W Godfrey (Chief Executive), B Owen (Strategic Director – Place), J Harris (Strategic Director – People), G Price (Head of Law and Regulation), M Rushworth (Head of Finance), S Morgan (Chief Education Officer), K Duffin (Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing), E Mulligan (Democracy and Communication Manager).

Apologies: Councillor M Whitcutt

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 were confirmed as a true record.

3 **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills presented the report, asking Cabinet to approve updates to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities to prepare a WESP. WESPs are intended to set out the Authority's vision for how Welsh medium and Welsh language education is planned and developed locally.

In December 2017, Cabinet considered and approved an amended WESP for Newport which was duly submitted to Welsh Government. This revised plan included

- commitments to expand existing schools under future 21st Century Schools programmes;
- increasing primary school targets to account for additional "late comer" children;
- increasing the number of early years and nursery places;
- a commitment to scope the language medium of all new developer schools.

In March 2018, the Authority was made aware of a new Welsh Government fund established to specifically support the development of Welsh Medium education. The £30m Welsh-wide fund provides 100% finance for approved projects. A successful bid to this fund could enable the Authority to build a new Welsh Medium school, further strengthen the WESP 2017-20 and achieve the objectives within its 21st Century Band B programme.

A further revision to Newport's WESP was now being proposed which included the Council's intention, subject to funding from Welsh Government, to establish a Welsh-medium seedling primary school from September 2019 on a temporary site with a permanent location to be determined. This would increase by 50% the number of places available in Welsh Medium education.

If funding was approved, the school would be established under a seedling model, for nursery and reception pupils only in the first year, and grow incrementally over a seven-year period before reaching full capacity. The bid proposed that the school was a two-form entry provision, with eventual capacity for 420 mainstream pupils of statutory school age. There would also be a nursery class able to take up to 48 pupils over either a morning or afternoon session and a 10-place Learning Resource Base.

Officers commented that the opportunity to develop the plan in this way was welcomed, and without the funding offer from Welsh Government this would not be possible. It was noted that the funding offer would cover capital costs, and developing a new school would also have revenue cost implications.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the proposal, noting that the authority was committed to developing Welsh Medium Education in the city and continuing the momentum of progress on the WESP to date.

Decision:

To approve the revised WESP 2017-20 as set out in the report.

4 Capital Programme Outturn 2017/18

The Leader of the Council presented the report, asking Cabinet to note the outturn on last year's Capital Programme, to approve budget carry-overs into 2018-19, and approve additions to the programme since February Cabinet.

2017/18 was the final year of the previous four-year capital programme. The updated 2017/18 budget approved by Cabinet in February 2018 was £49,710k. Since that report there had been a number of additions/decreases to the capital programme, as set out in the report, giving a final 2017/18 budget of £50,578k.

The capital expenditure outturn for 2017/18 was an underspend variance against budget of £16,504. This included £13,789k of projects that had slipped on delivery and therefore needed to be carried forward into 2018/19 to complete the schemes. Overall there was a true underspend of £2,714k on projects that had completed, which was known and factored into the new capital programme from 2018/19 onwards.

Members noted the slippage for this financial year, the reasons for those variances, and that projects would need to be managed tightly going forward to ensure that the level of slippage was reduced in 2018/19 and/or the capital programme re-profiled.

The Leader highlighted the additions to the 2018/19 budget:

- £3.158m updating street lighting to LED
- £1.5m for 3 new homes in Children's Services to reduce out of county placements
- £34k funding feminine hygiene in schools
- £8k additional funding for Caerleon Lodge Hill
- £446k for 123-129 Commercial Street
- £43k additional funding for Homelessness Prevention
- £1,542m for early feasibility and consultation on the 21st Century Schools Band B Programme

- £665k funding for In-House Composting

The Cabinet Members spoke in support of the report, particularly noting the innovative work by the Council to reduce out of county placements, both within Newport and regionally.

Decision:

To note the outturn position for the 2017/18 capital programme, to approve budget carry forwards requested to cover slippage into 2018/19, and to approve any additions since the February Cabinet.

To note the balance of and approve the future earmarking of Useable Capital Receipts as detailed in the report.

5 **Report on Treasury Management covering the Financial Year 2017/18**

The Leader of the Council presented the Treasury Management report for noting and comment by Cabinet.

In line with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy, the Council continues to be both a short term investor of cash and borrower to manage day-to-day cash flows. Current forecasts indicate that in the future, temporary borrowing will continue to be required to fund normal day to day cash flow activities.

The first half of the year saw the successful sale of the Friars Walk development which allowed borrowing which had been undertaken in relation to the loan provided to Queensberry Newport Ltd to be repaid. All borrowing in relation to this development are now fully repaid, and this has meant that loan borrowing for the year has fallen from £209.2m to £147.5m during the year.

All borrowing and investments undertaken during the year were expected and within the Council's agreed limits for 2017/18.

Decisions:

To note and provide comment on the Annual Report on Treasury Management for the Financial Year 2017/18.

To note and provide comment that 2017/18 Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management were in line with those set by Council in March 2018.

6 **Neighbourhood Hubs**

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing presented the report, outlining the proposals to implement a sustainable 21st century offer around neighbourhood services in Newport, that sought to plan assets and resources to improve the customer experience. The report requested cabinet approval to develop the Neighbourhood Hub in East Newport as a pilot project, and incrementally develop the concept of Neighbourhood Hubs across other identified areas in Newport subject to funding availability and demonstrable need.

Currently NCC delivers its community services through a number of different programmes and many community buildings. This method of delivery provides a number of challenges, such as access to services, maintenance of buildings and providing a holistic service to citizens.

The Neighbourhood Hubs proposal provides NCC and public sector partners with an opportunity to rationalise services and create more focussed investment into community facilities.

Cabinet Members shared their feedback from visiting hubs as part of the development of these proposals, which they felt demonstrated to them the advantages of centralising services and support through a hub model. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing also highlighted the robust evidence base for developing this model, and the strong links between this project and achieving the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Cabinet noted officer comments on the importance of this project to the regeneration of the city, taking an innovative approach to developing services in local communities.

Decision:

To pilot a single hub for design and development purposes and an in principle agreement for incremental development of the hub model, as outlined in the report.

7 Work Programme

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

Decision:

To agree the updated work programme.