

Minutes



Council

Date: 10 September 2019

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Al-Nuaimi, C Evans, M Evans, C Ferris, D Fouweather, G Giles, D Harvey, I Hayat, Councillor R Jeavons, M Kellaway, D Mayer, R Mogford, A Morris, Councillor J Mudd, J Richards, M Spencer, T Suller, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, Councillor R Truman, T Watkins, M Whitcutt, R White, K Whitehead, D Wilcox, D Williams, J Clarke, V Dudley, Y Forsey, R Hayat, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, H Townsend and J Watkins

In Attendance: Superintendent M Roberts

Apologies: Councillors M Cornelious, K Critchley, J Guy, M Linton, M Rahman, G Berry and T Holyoake

1. Preliminaries

i. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following Councillors: Majid Rahman, Graham Berry, Tracey Holyoake, Margaret Cornelious, John Guy and Malcolm Linton.

ii. To receive any declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

iii. To receive any announcements by the Mayor.

Ron Jones

The Mayor referred to the sad news concerning the death of Ron Jones who passed away at 102 years. Ron was a war veteran and was known for selling badges during the poppy appeal. The Mayor asked members to be upstanding for a minute's silence.

The Leader added that Ron was an outstanding Newport citizen and was the first recipient of the Spirit of Newport award. The Council joined in extending their sympathy to family and friends, saying that Ron had occupied a special place in the hearts of the residents of Newport and wider area.

Leader of the Council

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor congratulated the Leader of the Council on her elevation to the House of Lords following the former Prime Minister Theresa May's

Resignation Honours List. The Leader was made a life peer for her outstanding contribution to education and local government.

This was not only an incredible achievement for Councillor Wilcox but for the City of Newport.

The Mayor added that he was sure all those present would agree that this was a proud moment for Newport City Council, Wales and beyond.

All those present gave a round of applause for the Leader.

The Leader acknowledged the accolade and said that it was a great honour for local government politicians to be valued in this way. The Leader stated that she had loved the role and that she would serve the Council in any way she could but sadly she would have to step down as Leader. The Leader thanked the Councillors for the professional way in which they operated.

The Mayor invited opposition Leaders to also pass on their messages to the Leader.

Councillor M Evans congratulated the Leader endorsing the Mayor's comments and mentioned that being Leader of the Council was a difficult and challenging job as well as being WLGA Leader, especially in the current political climate and on behalf of the conservative group wished the Leader all the best.

Councillor M Whitcutt commented that as Deputy Leader and a ward colleague for almost 17 years that not only was it deserved but in a short time, the Leader had transformed the relationship between Welsh Government, national government, and local government into a more cooperative relationship. The Leader had been outstanding in her roles as Leader and ward member and her elevation to the House of Lords was well deserved. It was also a positive recognition of the fact that the Leader wore education on her sleeve and cared about the public realm.

Councillor K Whitehead added that there had been joyous debates with the Leader and could only endorse what others had said and wished her all the best.

Councillor C Townsend mirrored the comments of those that had already spoken, adding that Councillor Wilcox was a very good leader, very approachable and always answered any queries raised.

Will Godfrey

The Mayor informed the Council that Will Godfrey, Chief Executive would be leaving Newport City Council later this month. Will Godfrey, who joined Newport City Council in January 2013, had been accepted as the new Chief Executive of Bath and North East Somerset Council. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor wished Will all the very best for the future.

The Leader also congratulated Will and mentioned that he had been committed to serving the Council for more than six years. When faced with austerity and challenging times Will worked well with the Councillors and senior officers and had contributed his resources on a regional level.

All those present gave a round of applause for the Chief Executive in light of the news.

Councillor Evans wished Will the best on behalf of the conservative party and mentioned that Will was always courteous and professional and wished him every success in his new career.

Councillor K Whitehead also wished Will all the best, as did Councillor C Townsend, as well as thanking him for attending St Julians Ward meetings..

Will Godfrey said it had been a huge privilege working for Newport City Council and that he could not have done the job without the support of the fantastic staff, who did not receive enough credit for the work they did. Will said that he would not be far away and would visit from time to time as Newport was close to his heart and hoped that the city would go from strength to strength.

Transplant Games Trophy

The Transplant Games Trophy was the first award given to a city in Wales and second in the UK. The trophy was on display in the Council Chamber for all to see and then would be moved back to the Mayor's Parlour

Bomber Pearce Charity

There would be a BBC documentary shown later in the week, which would feature David 'Bomber' Pearce. A book would also be released over the Christmas period and the Mayor suggested that the late David Pearce should be nominated for the Spirit of Newport Award.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 July 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record save for one typing error pointed out by Councillor V Dudley.

Item 8 Questions to the Leader of the Council, page 12: Under the Anti-Harassment Guide paragraph, a correction needs to be made to refer to the word Intimidation (and not Intimation).

3. Appointments

There were no appointments to announce at Council on this occasion.

4. Police Issues (30 minutes)

Superintendent Mike Richards gave a brief update on activity across three policing sectors within Newport.

Some general updates, included Superintendent Mike Roberts welcoming 19 Community Safety Wardens to Newport East, many of those have started and were out and about on independent control.

On a similar theme, the police force was advertising for local constables, which meant that this financial year would see the recruitment of 62 new officers. Finally there would also be a new intake of special constables joining the Police in October who would be patrolling the streets after Christmas.

There was a new inspector for Newport East, Martin Cawley, who would be addressing the issue of boy racers particularly around Spytty Retail Park. Inspector Cawley had been overseeing a lot of enforcement activity and over two weekends in July and August over 300 speeding fines were handed out to drivers across Wales and beyond.

Tesco Stores in Spytty would be installing ANPR cameras which would restrict the amount of time that cars spent in the premises out of hours.

In addition, there had been reports of drug dealing in Black Ash Park and Pont Faen, search warrants executed and patrols increased in those areas. This was also taking place in St Julians and the Old Barn Estate where arrests been made, with close partnership work with Newport Live around Youth Service Provision and diversionary activities. Newport Live was thanked for their support.

In relation to Alway and Ringland there had been a reduction in calls following diversionary work within those wards. An investment was also made in a Mobile Police Station, where Play Station consoles had been installed for the youth in that area and there had been some positive results from this. There was an increase in theft of motor vehicles and burning out of motor cycles within Ringland, which was being treated as a priority.

Issues within Newport West were being overseen by Inspector Griffiths. In Maesglas, there were issues of anti-social behaviour and drug use. Police patrols had been put in place and there had been several arrests for drug offences. There will be a walkabout in this area.

With regards to the Frances Drive area of Pill, there was positive feedback in reduction of anti-social behaviour over the summer which was good news.

There was a successful execution of a search warrant in Pill on 1 August along with a Multi-Agency Action Day planned for later in the month.

There was a three-day operation in Bettws recently, targeting anti-social issues, drug related issues and use of vehicles and an arrest was made for possession with intent to supply.

Finally, in relation to Newport Central, which was overseen by Inspector Nigel Lewis, St Pauls Walk, which continued to be a crime hot spot had been targeted by the Police. The Superintendent had been updated by the neighbourhood sergeant that there had been a reduction in calls over the past four to six weeks.

Neighbourhood policing team in the city centre recently met up with the Council regarding issues of taxi congestion and anti-social behaviour caused by large gatherings in the city centre on weekends or late in the night and allocated waiting areas have agreed and enforced.

There would be a targeted operation and in the city centre relating to bicycle theft as there have been a number of incidents reported.

Questions from Councillors:

Cllr A Morris passed on his thanks to Inspector Cawley for the update. Calls from the Pontfaen did not appear to corroborate with police calls, as many residents would not use the 101 contact number as they felt there was a cost. Could the police confirm how much these calls would cost residents. *In the meantime, Councillor Mogford had searched online and informed councillors that 101 calls were 15p per call on landline and mobile.*

In relation the Old Barn Estate, Cllr Hourahine asked for an update on Operation Harvey and advised that off road biking and non-registered bikes seemed to be on the increase in Glebelands and Durham Road. This would be looked into, as it was a priority for the three sectors across Newport.

Councillor Jeavons advised Superintendent Richards that there had been a spate of fires within the Lliswerry Ward. This would be looked into and reported back.

Cllr J Watkins referred to View Point, in Christchurch, where there were serious concerns by residents. Apparently a decision was made to close the gates at 10pm at night, as there was an incident involving a ranger. In the meantime, that decision was revoked. Cllr Watkins had contacted Inspector Cawley, however, he was not aware of the revocation of the decision. Residents were subjected to groups congregating and motorbikes circling, there was also drug activity in night carrying through the morning. The noise could be heard from over a mile away. Superintendent Richards had not been briefed on this matter but informed the Councillor that Inspector Cawley was aware. The Police would welcome and encourage residents to report these incidents.

Councillor Fouweather requested additional police and special officers to be allocated to the Allt-yr-yn ward as they were a valuable asset. This would be looked into by the Superintendent.

Cllr J Hughes mentioned that over the weekend residents had found a lot of laughing gas canisters and requested that officers increased their patrols in the area. Superintendent Richards agreed to this.

Councillor Forsey thanked officers for attending the Rogerstone festival. Officers were busy meeting with residents and enjoyed the community support. Superintendent Richards would feed this back to the officers.

Councillor Al-Nuaimi thanked the Police for their work in the City Centre. There was an improvement on York Place with the recently appointed Civil Parking Enforcement officers, however, it presented an opportunity for dealers to use the empty spaces, councillor witnessed this on one occasion. Superintendent Richards would look.

Councillor Suller asked if there was any information on 'boy racers' in the Marshfield ward, near Blacksmith Way. In addition were gas cylinders regulated. Superintendent Richards would look into the first query. With reference to gas cylinders, a shop in the Caerphilly area was taken to court by local authority.

Councillor H Thomas observed that the drug activity within Newport had increased, referring to an Armed Police raid in Hoskins Street and asked was insufficient resources a concern. Superintendent Richards mentioned that Newport was a cheap place to buy drugs, hence the increase of incidents. However drug related crime would always be a priority. Fortunately, there was not the serious issues of County Lines drug dealing.

Councillor S Marshall referred to Cyber crime and telephone scams. There was an HMRC scam which led to arrests, however vulnerable residents thought these kind of cold calls were real. This was being addressed and with the investment in Community Support officers it was hoped to raise awareness of the problem. These officers would do the best they could.

Councillor R Hayat asked was Gwent Police offering internships or other recruitment. There were open events, however there was nothing in place with regard to internships.

5. Notice of Motion: #IPledge2Talk - Male Suicide Prevention Campaign

The Council considered a motion for which the necessary notice had been provided. The motion was moved by Councillor Debbie Wilcox and seconded by Councillor Mark Whitcutt.

'This authority supports the #IPledge2Talk Male Suicide Prevention Campaign and will work to support positive mental health in the Newport communities in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces.'

As a local authority, we acknowledge our crucial role in promoting awareness of this issue.

Encouraging mental well-being should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility, including housing, community safety and planning.

The authority will champion mental health on an individual strategic basis and will appoint an elected member as its 'mental health champion' within the Council.'

In moving the Motion, the Leader stated that she had left yellow pledge cards to be distributed to all members after the Council meeting and which could be picked up through normal channels for members of staff.

Also , Cllr K Thomas was appointed to be a Mental Health Champion.

The Leader moved the motion and Cllr Whitcutt moved to second the motion.

Councillor G Giles fully supported this motion for families affected by suicide. Providing appropriate care was crucial, in education in particular. It was imperative to recognise early intervention to prevent occurrences happening. All Welsh pupils had access to counselling, with support recently introduced to children in nursery to age five, which was unique. The Educational Psychology Service promoted self-help and a number of initiatives were being trialled including the introduction of a mental health first aid trainer from October. Ongoing training included applied suicide intervention skills along with significant work undertaken by the Gwent Action Plan. There was increased support for staff and pupils. Referrals were also being made and there was sadly a recognised increase in incidents, therefore Councillor Giles fully supported the motion.

A number of members spoke in favour of the motion and some shared personal experiences relevant to the debate.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting for a short break and reconvened the meeting after ten minutes.

Resolved

It was unanimously resolved to support the motion.

6. Appointment of Interim Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service

The Leader presented the report, outlining that the current Chief Executive had given notice to leave in early October. Within the Council, the Chief Executive was the designated Head of Paid Service in line with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and discharged the relevant statutory responsibilities. Appointing an Interim Chief Executive would allow the continued discharge of these responsibilities and ensure appropriate strategic leadership. Should there be an election during this time then the Interim Chief Executive would also fulfil the role of Returning Officer, therefore the Council was under legal obligation to appoint an Interim Chief Executive as soon as possible.

The report proposed the delegated power to appoint an Interim Chief Executive should be granted to a politically balanced appointment panel of seven members in accordance with standard procedures. As this would be a fixed term appointment, there was no requirement to advertise the vacancy. The WLGA had been tasked to provide suitably qualified candidates who could start work immediately. The appointment would be for a period of six months with the discretion to extend for 12 months.

The report originally stated that the decision to extend to 12 months be taken by the Leader in consultation with the Head of Law and Regulation, Head of People and Business Change. The Leader had since spoken with her colleague Councillor M Evans, Leader of the

Opposition and was happy to amend the report to read that should there be a 12 month extension, the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Opposition take this decision jointly, in order to have a politically balanced panel. The Leader therefore requested that the Chief Legal Officer present at Council note the changes.

Councillor M Evans, thanked the Leader for this and fully supported the report.

The report was seconded by Councillor M Whitcutt.

Resolved

It was unanimously resolved to note the report and delegate authority to an Appointments Committee to appoint an Interim Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service for six months, with an option to extend to 12 months. Delegated power to agree an extension beyond six months be granted to the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Opposition in consultation with the Heads of Law and Regulation and People and Business Change.

7. Newport City Centre Market Arcade: Public Spaces Protection Order

The Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation presented the report, to inform Council of the result of the public consultations on the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Market Arcade in Newport City Centre and

to ask Council to consider the proposal that a Public Spaces Protection Order be made following a recommendation from the Cabinet Member for Licensing & Regulation to Council to make the Order.

Due to the anti-social behaviour experienced in the Arcade, it was timely for the Council to implement a PSPO to close the Arcade at night to the public. There was a public right of way, running through the Arcade and therefore the Arcade owners could not simply close the Arcade whenever they wished. The Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation advised Council that this would be referred to as a 'Gating Order' for the Arcade.

Public consultation had taken place and there was general support for a Gating Order to allow the closure of the Arcade at night. Approval was reserved for full Council, therefore the report asked for Council to make a Gating Order to close the Market Arcade to the public during 20:00 hours to 07:00 hours, seven days a week, following a recommendation to do so by Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation.

Councillor Fouweather gave support for the implementation of a Gating Order, to allow the local businesses to run freely without fear of anti-social Behaviour.

Councillor Cleverly fully supported the report.

The report was seconded by the Leader.

Resolved

That Council make a Public Spaces Protection Order for Market Arcade.

8. Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/2019

Councillor Lacey presented the report outlining that the Scrutiny Committees were required by the constitution to submit an Annual Report each year to Council, to review how Scrutiny had operated in the last 12 months.

It was difficult to measure the impact of Scrutiny using traditional performance measures, which counted the outputs from the Scrutiny Committees but did not measure the outcomes of their work, or show whether improvements had been made as a result. The Annual Report was a more useful tool in reviewing the effectiveness of Scrutiny, providing an opportunity to reflect properly on how Scrutiny had operated in the last year, and to identify upcoming challenges against which future performance could be judged.

Councillor M Evans referred to the summary on page 44 of the Annual Report, outlining the major developments and achievements that year and suggested that there was room for improvement. The page in question was not descriptive enough and provided no evidence of what was being done. It was felt that there was a need to be more succinct and focus on what had been achieved. Councillor M Evans therefore advised that he would support the report but felt there was room for improvement and that in future there should be a list of achievements included

The report was seconded by Councillor Al-Nuaimi.

Resolved

That Council unanimously agreed the content of the annual report as a basis for the work of the Scrutiny Committees in the coming year.

9. Questions to Leader of the Council

The Leader gave the following announcements, before proceeding with questions:

The recent announcement regarding ORB Steelworks. This was very sad news for workers and their family, it was frustrating when our ability to influence such matters was limited.

The Council was to receive an employer recognition Gold Award from the Armed Forces. This supported individuals transferring from Armed Forces and Special Reserves.

The British Transplant Games was an outstanding success. Residents showed their support. It was reiterated by the Leader that Newport was only the second city in Britain to be a Donor City and receive an Award.

The annual Food Festival would take place on 5 October. The Council was grateful for the support of the businesses. The highlights would include chef demonstrations and street entertainers and the Leader was looking forward to judging the Teenage Chef competition.

Leaders Questions

Orb Steelworks

Councillor M Evans referred to the announcement that hundreds of jobs were under threat at TATA Orb Factory which was disappointing news for the workforce, family and wider community and thoughts were with them at this difficult time. Support was offered from AMs and MPs and a statement was given by Ken Skates, Wales Economy Minister who said that the Welsh Government would do everything it could to support individuals, the community and supply chain affected by the news.

Councillor M Evans did not recall anything being mentioned sooner by the Leader and asked what had the Council therefore done over the past few years and since the announcement to address their concerns.

The Leader agreed it was a blow for the city, however there was no prior warning from TATA steel about the decision or the challenges facing the business. The Council would now be

working with TATA and the Welsh Government to provide as much support as possible to those affected by the announcement.

In addition, Councillor M Evans asked the Leader to address what the Council had done over the past few years. The Council had an economic development department that would be expected to be involved in such matters, in addition, could the Leader also be more specific on what assistance would be offered to the employees now and in the past.

The Leader advised that the list of measures would be clearly ascertained and a response would be provided for the opposition Leader.

Councillor K Whitehead referred to the appointment of an interim Chief Executive which was a highly paid appointment and asked if a job sharing arrangement could be agreed in times of austerity.

The Leader advised that a Chief Education officer post had been shared once between two authorities but did not consider that the sharing of a Chief Executive post would be practical at this current time as the Council already had one of the lowest amount of staff in a senior position.

Councillor Carmel Townsend asked whether there would be a road safety strategy in place for Newport in view of the increasing traffic.

The Leader met with the G10 group to discuss traffic issues. As a result it was hoped that there would be increased spending in road safety for the M4. Consultation engagement would be in place to get plans and policies up to speed.

Councillor S Marshall asked the Leader how school attendance in Newport compares to attendance in other schools in Wales at Secondary School level.

The Leader was pleased to announce that Newport was at the top of rankings, seven out of 22 during 2018/19 which was above the Welsh Average which demonstrated a commitment from schools.

10. Questions to Cabinet Members

i. Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing

Councillor Ray Mogford asked the following question that had been submitted:

'From the 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2019, how much money has been given to Newport Council from the Welsh Government as part of the Homelessness Prevention Grant - and - what has this money been spent on?'

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing responded:

'The Council has been provided with funding under the Welsh Government's Homeless Prevention Grant programme which was linked to the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, recognising the additional pressures and burdens placed upon all Local Authorities in delivering the requirements of the act. The funding allocated and the scheme/services this was spent on is as follows:

2016/17 - £149,400

Staffing – NCC – Accommodation Officer roles – Working with the private rented sector

Homeless Prevention fund – NCC – Funding used to prevent homelessness and help to access alternative accommodation

Mediation Service – Llamau

2017/18 - £139,440

Homeless Prevention fund – NCC – Funding used to prevent homelessness and help to access alternative accommodation

Mediation Service – Llamau

Young Person’s Pathway Project – POBL Group – Staffing costs

Gwent Homeless Strategy Officer – Torfaen CBC – Funding across Gwent LA’s to employ an officer to undertake the review of homelessness in each area and to develop the Gwent Homeless Strategy

Civica Housing System – Civica UK – IT system

Night Shelter – Eden Gate

2018/19

Young Persons Shared Accommodation – Llamau – Staffing costs

Supported Lodgings Project – Llamau – Staffing and running costs

Night Shelter – Eden Gate

Intensive Outreach Service – Wallich

The funding is the awarded sum from the Homelessness Prevention Grant and does not include funding that the Council has applied for under separate cover for other interim schemes and initiatives.’

As a supplementary question, Councillor Mogford asked if a breakdown of the figures could be provided to councillors.

ii. Joint Question to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and City Services

Councillor Joan Watkins asked the following question that had been submitted:

‘Does the Cabinet Member for Education communicate with Gwent Police in respect of safe walking routes to and from Newport Schools.’

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded:

‘Safe Walking Routes to school is led, managed and mapped by City Services. Naturally where Service Areas and Cabinet Member portfolio’s cross (as in this circumstance) joint Cabinet Member briefings occur. This ensures that I am consistently informed of any issues and project work linked to safe routes and encouraging active travel. I will pass on to Cllr Jeavons to give you further details on the question you present.’

The Cabinet Member for City Services responded:

‘When assessing School Walking Routes, the Council has historically contacted the Police to establish any areas of concern through which the proposed route passes. The surveyor now utilises the Police.uk website, which holds a map based database of all Incidents recorded by street.

If the assessment identifies any areas of concern, the surveyor contacts the local policing teams to discuss the implications on the proposed route.’

Councillor Watkins asked a supplementary question with regard to a Freedom of Information Request submitted in August, The response received was that there had been no emails or discussions on safety for children walking to school received from this Council by the Police.

This would be investigated and a written response would be circulated.

iii. Cabinet Member for City Services

Councillor Ray Mogford asked the following question that had been submitted:

'Councils have power over local speed limits while the Government has control over the national limit.

Can the Cabinet member update this council on any initiatives with regard to reducing traffic speeds locally that that his department is involved in. Does the council plan at any stage to follow the lead set by Cardiff and Swansea in reducing traffic speeds limits in some residential areas? If so could the Cabinet Member give some examples?'

The Cabinet Member for City Services responded:

'Newport City Council, as Local Traffic Authority, have powers to vary speed limits on the local road network, including the introduction of 20mph speed limits where considered appropriate. Potential introduction or variation of speed limits in Wales are at present assessed in line with current standards set by Welsh Government Circular 24/2009 "Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales".

The Member will be aware that the First Minister confirmed on 7 May 2019 that the Welsh Government believe that 20 mph should be the default speed limit for residential areas. The Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, together with the Welsh Local Government Association, have taken forward work to identify the practical actions needed to implement such a default 20 mph speed limit across Wales.

The Council therefore awaits the outcome of Welsh Governments deliberation on the reduction of the national default residential speed limit and until such time will continue to manage the network within current Welsh Government standards.'

As a Supplementary Question, Councillor Mogford asked if the Cabinet Member would be attending the RGS Road Safety Conference at the Celtic Manor on 11 October. The Cabinet Member had been invited the previous year and would therefore look into whether he would be invited this year.

11. Questions to the Chairs of Committees

There were no questions to the Chairs of Committees.

12. Standards Committee Minutes

The Minutes would be agreed at a future meeting.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 26 November at 5pm in the Council Chambers.

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm