

Decision Schedule



Cabinet

TO ALL MEMBERS OF NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

Decision Schedule published on 12 January 2021

The Chair of Cabinet Member took the following decision on 8 January 2021. The decision will become effective at Noon on 18 January 2021 with the exception of any particular decision, which is the subject of a valid "call-in".

The deadline for submission of a 'Call-in' request form is 4.00 pm on 15 January 2021.

Reports relating to staffing issues/Confidential reports are not circulated to all members of the Council as part of the consultation/call-in processes.

Leader 01/21

Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2021-22

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The report presented the draft budget proposals for 2021/22. It was the subject of significant work over the last few months; much of it was done within a challenging context of very little or no information from UK or Welsh Government (WG) regarding core and short term Covid-19 related funding for 2021/22 and uncertainty coming out of Brexit. The Council only received details of its draft 'Revenue Support Grant' (RSG) on 22 December 2020 and given the significant uncertainties mentioned above, finalised proposals after that. The result of that was a slightly later start to budget consultation but the remaining budget-setting timetable was adjusted to maximise the time available for consultation, therefore residents, service users and stakeholders; such as the independent Fairness Commission, would have a four full weeks to take part in the consultation.

Details of the budget were shown within the report and its appendices. As always, both savings and an increase in local council tax were key elements of the proposed budget to ensure it was sustainable and able to maintain key services as best as possible for both Newport as a whole as well as the most vulnerable in our communities.

Section:

- 1 Our financial challenge
- 2 Setting the budget
- 3 Financial planning assumptions
- 4 Budget savings
- 5 Budget process and consultation
- 6 Risk, financial resilience and performance
- 7 Report review and statutory comments

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| Appendix 1 | Budget investments |
| Appendix 2 | New budget savings for consultation |
| Appendix 3 | New budget savings implemented under delegated authority |
| Appendix 4 | Budget savings previously approved |
| Appendix 5 | Budget savings for consultation – proposals |
| Appendix 6 | Demand models for social care |

Appendix 7	Fees & charges for consultation
Appendix 8	Financial resilience 'snapshot'
Appendix 9	Medium term financial projections
Appendix 10	Projected earmarked reserves
Appendix 11	Corporate risk register summary - Quarter 2

Decision

1. Cabinet agreed to the following draft proposals for public consultation:
 - i) Budget savings proposals in appendix 2 (summary table) and appendix 5 (detailed proposals), including the decision making point (either full Cabinet or Head of Service) for each one. Budget savings proposals in appendix 2 (summary table) and appendix 5 (detailed proposals), including the decision making point (either full Cabinet or Head of Service) for each one. This was with the exception not to proceed with the savings proposal for introducing parking charges to three park and countryside car parks - Glebelands, Christchurch (Local Nature Reserve) viewing point and Morgans Pond (off Bettws Lane) (proposal No STR2122/07).
 - ii) Approved implementation of the delegated decisions in appendix 3 by Heads of Service with immediate effect, following the usual Council decision making processes.
 - iii) A council tax increase of 5%, a weekly increase of £0.77 - £1.02 for properties in Band A to C, the most common bands in Newport, as set out in paragraphs 3.21 – 3.24.
 - iv) Proposed fees and charges in appendix 7.
 - v) The budget investments shown in appendix 1.
 - vi) The budget investment provision in schools of up to £4,937k, which was based on an assumed teachers/ NJC pay increase and provided for a fully funded increased funding requirement, based on that, plus the cost of new/ expanding school provision as noted in paragraph 3.14 – 3.20. Specifically here, Cabinet agreed to confirm and finalise this when there was certainty on Teacher's pay from September 2021 with the intention of retaining the objective described above, within the funding provision available.
2. Cabinet noted:
 - i) The position on developing a balanced budget for 2021/22, acknowledging that the position was subject to ongoing review and updates especially in light of the late announcement from WG in respect of the final 2021/22 funding.
 - ii) The medium term financial projections, assumptions contained within and that the projections contained investments required to implement the Corporate Plan promises.
 - iii) That initial Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments were completed for all those requiring one.
 - iv) The need to prioritise the development of a 'strategic change programme' in order to develop a long-term sustainable financial footing for services.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Head of Finance
Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 02/21

November Revenue Budget Monitor

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The November 2020 revenue position forecasted an underspend of £2,736k. This was an improvement on the September position (£1,679k underspend), and reflected the improved forecast position within schools and also lower than anticipated demand currently being experienced with adult social care as a consequence of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The bottom line underspend was inclusive of the £1.4m revenue budget contingency which was currently not required and accounted for just under half of the overall underspend. Other in year underspends were linked to some one-off budget savings this year due to significant delays in recruitment and far less miscellaneous expenditure being incurred than would have been ordinarily.

Undelivered MTFP savings had a significant impact on the overall service area position and represented the largest individual budget issue at this time. The performance on forecast delivery of savings was impacted significantly by the Covid-19 situation and whilst this position improved since that reported in September, there remained over £1 million of undelivered savings. It was very important that as much of this outstanding amount was delivered by 1 April 2021 to help both service area budgets in the current year but more importantly, next year 2021/22, especially given that new budget savings were likely to be required for full delivery from 1 April 2021.

Despite forecasting an overall underspend there remained key budget issues in a number of areas. The key areas of overspending included:

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| (i) | Undelivered 2020/21 and prior year budget savings | £1,033k |
| (ii) | Increased demand in social care | £725k |

These overspends were offset by savings against other service / non-service areas totaling £3,021k which resulted in an overall underspend of £1,263k. This was added the currently unused general contingency budget of £1,473k.

Whilst the level of forecast overspending across schools was an area of significant concern throughout the year, a forecasted underspend was now anticipated. Forecasts were reviewed in light of the impact of the pandemic; the reimbursement that the schools would receive from the Welsh Government hardship fund and one off funding received. Although it was pleasing to note that school forecasts had improved, they remained an area of concern given that £2.7m was transferred from schools reserves over the last 2 years to fund schools overspending. Many schools were still projecting an overspend in the current year and the projected overall school reserves as at the end of this financial year was £1,655k, representing around only 1.6% of schools budgets and so the ongoing sustainability of schools budgets was a key issue.

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| Appendix 1 | Overall budget dashboard – November 2020 |
| Appendix 2 | Revenue summary monitor – November 2020 |
| Appendix 3 | Schools funding and balances |
| Appendix 4 | Planned movement in reserves |

Decision

Cabinet was asked to:

- Note the overall budget forecast position and the significant overspending areas that was predominately resulting from undelivered MTFP savings impacted by the on-going pandemic; the risks associated with this and recommendation that Heads of Service (HoS) continued to focus on implementation of agreed savings;

- Note the planning assumptions within the forecast position and in particular, the uncertainty around (i) the ongoing impact that Covid would have upon service areas and (ii) funding support available from Welsh Government (WG) for the remainder of the financial year;
- Note the forecast movements in reserves;
- Note the significant financial challenges that had the potential to face schools in future should schools not manage within approved budget and the serious impact it was likely to have on the Councils other revenue budgets and reserves and that further work was in progress to review forecasts;
- Note that work was in progress to identify the impact of unspent budgets and grant funded areas to determine what needed to be carried forward to next year.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Head of People and Business Change

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 03/21

Capital Programme Monitoring and Additions – November 2020

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Council had an extensive capital programme, investing across the authority in areas such as schools, heritage assets, energy efficiency schemes, invest to save programmes and investing in the regeneration of the city centre. The report was built on the investment already approved by Capital with an additional £3,915k being added to the programme to further enable the delivery of the Councils Corporate Plan priorities, the majority of which was in relation to the acceleration of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (“City Deal”).

The November 2020 monitoring position highlighted the following:

- £337k net underspend on completed projects.
- £4,568k slippage from 2020/21 into future years
- Additions to the capital programme of £3,915k, taking the overall programme 2019/20 to 2024/25 to £210,638k.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the additions and amendments to the Capital Programme requested in the report (Appendix A)
2. Approved slippage of £4,568k into future years
3. Noted the update on the remaining capital resources (‘headroom’) up to and including 2022/23
4. Noted the capital expenditure forecast position as at November 2020
5. Noted the balance of and approve the allocation of in-year capital receipts

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Head of People and Business Change

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 04/21

Mid-Year Performance Analysis 2020-21

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 required Newport Council to have a Corporate Plan which set out its vision for how it would improve lives of the current and future generations. Newport Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22 identified four Well-being Objectives. To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, the Council's eight service areas developed their service plans which outlined how they would support and deliver the Council's objectives. Due to the COVID-19 crisis the Council created four Strategic Recovery Aims to support the Corporate Plan (Supporting: Education & Employment, Environment & Economy, Health & Well-being of Citizens and Citizens Post COVID-19). The report highlighted the progress made towards the Strategic Recovery Aims in addition to other important developments made by the service areas in the first 6 months of the year.

For the first six months of this financial year (April to September 2020), 94% of the actions identified in the service plans were 'In progress' with 5% of actions completed. For the performance measures reported it was noted that:

- 34 out of 91 reported performance measures were 'on target' in achieving delivery against their annual target;
- 9 out of 91 performance measures were 'short of target' in achieving delivery of their annual target;
- 15 out of 91 reported performance measures were 'off target' the delivery against their annual target.

Decision

Cabinet were requested:

1. To note the contents of the report
2. To receive a further update on the year-end position once the data was available
3. To take urgent action in conjunction with the Directors and Heads of Service to address areas of poor performance.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Head of People and Business Change

Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 05/21

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill – Performance and Governance Consultation

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill proposed to reform the legislative framework for local government electoral arrangements, democracy, performance and governance. This was an extensive piece of legislation covering the powers of local government, elections, performance and governance of principal Councils, and collaborative working by Principal Councils – the establishment of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). This was also the subject of a Cabinet Report on the December agenda.

The Minister for Housing and Local Government was seeking views on the draft guidance that would support local authorities to successfully discharge their duties as contained in the Bill and this report proposed a draft response to the consultation regarding Performance and Governance arrangements within Principal Councils.

Decision

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and agreed the consultation response for submission by the closing date of 3 February 2021.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Chief Executive and Head of People and Business Change
Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 06/21

Covid-19 Response and Recovery Update

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Covid-19 health emergency has been ongoing since March 2020 and has impacted all communities and businesses across Newport as the City has continued to adapt and respond to the necessary restrictions to minimise the spread of the virus. Newport Council's response has been to ensure continuity of services with our strategic partners, support vulnerable residents across communities, support businesses and ensure the safety of staff. This report provides an overview of what action the Council has taken to date and the progress against the Strategic Recovery Aims.

Since the last Cabinet Report, the Council and its partners continued to monitor vigilantly the Covid-19 cases in the City through its role at the multi-agency Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG), the Council's Emergency Response Team (Covid Gold) and liaison with Welsh Government (WG) and Public Health Wales partners. The Newport area was currently at the highest alert level.

Decision

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and noted the progress being made to date and the risks that were still faced by the Council.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Chief Executive and Head of People and Business Change
Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 07/21

Post Brexit Transition – Newport City Council

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

Since the last report to Cabinet on 16 December 2020, the UK Government and EU negotiators agreed a new trade deal and from 1 January 2021. The deal would enable businesses to trade tariff free with the EU but would end the freedom of movement into and out of the UK. Businesses trading with the EU would still have to ensure that they complied with the new regulations and there could still be some disruption at the borders in the short term.

New travel and migration rules also came into place, which required all current residents to ensure that they met the necessary requirements when travelling into and out of the EU area.

The Council was monitoring the situation since the decision was made throughout the Christmas period and was responding as required alongside its existing Covid arrangements. In the medium to long term, there remained many unknowns in terms the financial impact on the Council as well as the economy in Newport / South East Wales under the new arrangements.

Decision

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and noted the Council's Brexit preparations.

Consultation

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change

Implemented by: Chief Executive and Head of People and Business Change
Implementation Timetable: Immediate

Leader 08/21

Cabinet Work Programme

Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The Leader presented the Cabinet Work Programme.

Decision

Cabinet agreed the Cabinet Work Programme.

Consultation

Senior Officers, Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People and Business Change.

Implemented by: Cabinet Office Manager
Implementation Timetable: Immediate

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR J MUDD

12 January 2021

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
