

# Decision Schedule



## Cabinet

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### TO ALL MEMBERS OF NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

#### Decision Schedule published on 10 November 2021

The Chair of Cabinet Member took the following decision on 10 November 2021. The decision will become effective at Noon on 18 November 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 17 November 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.

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#### Leader 64/21

#### September Revenue Budget Monitor

#### Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The September 2021 revenue position forecasted an underspend of £7,978k. This forecast was inclusive of the continued financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and assumes full reimbursement of all significant costs and lost income during the entirety of the year. This followed confirmation from Welsh Government that the Hardship Fund would remain available until March 2022. Recently revisions were made to the terms of the Fund and although these changes were expected to have an insignificant impact upon forecasts at this time, areas would continue to be closely monitored as subsequent revisions to terms were anticipated following a review of infection rates during the Autumn.

Although there was an overall underspend being forecast, some service areas were reporting overspends against specific activities. In previous years these overspends related to demand-led activity areas, such as Social Services, however overspending this year was evident across both the People and Place Directorates. Given the inherent risks within demand led areas there was the potential that forecasts would worsen should demand levels increase.

More than offsetting these specific pressures were projected underspends in relation to Capital Financing, the general contingency budget, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Council Tax surplus and other non-service budget headings. A number of these underspends were one-off in nature and would not necessarily recur in future years.

The key areas contributing to the overall position were:

(i)	Undelivered 2021/22 and prior year budget savings	£556k
(ii)	Key demand led areas across Social Services	£229k
(iii)	Staffing and other service area underspends	(£2,525k)
(iv)	Capital Financing	(£2,739k)
(v)	General Contingency	(£1,373k)
(vi)	CTRS and Council Tax surplus	(£878k)
(vii)	Other non-service	(£1,248k)

The position in relation to schools was somewhat different in comparison to previous years, due to the higher level of surplus balances carried forward from 2020/21. To some extent, these balances were being utilised during 2021/22, which was reflected by the projected £2,150k overspend. The overall level of balances anticipated to be carried forward into the 2022/23 financial year remained higher than in recent years. Despite this, thorough monitoring needed to be maintained in this area, as three schools remained in a deficit position, and there was a possibility that this overall healthier position was only a temporary one.

The appendices to the report were as follows:

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

### **Decision**

That Cabinet:

- Noted the overall budget forecast position and the potential for an underspend position to exist at the end of the financial year.
- Noted the continued financial challenges being experienced by certain, demand-led, services and the need for robust financial management in these areas, as well as the level of currently unachieved budget savings.
- Noted the risks identified throughout the report and in the HoF comments, particularly in relation to future years and the lasting impacts of the pandemic.
- Noted the forecast movements in reserves.
- Noted the improved overall position in relation to schools, when compared to previous years, but also noted the remaining deficit positions for some schools and the risk of past issues re-emerging if good financial planning and management was not undertaken.

### **Consultation**

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

**Implemented by: Head of Finance**  
**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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### **Leader 65/21**

### **Capital Programme Monitoring and Additions: September 2021**

#### **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. This report was based on the investment already approved by Capital and the programme which had increased by an additional £2,065k.

The September 2021 monitoring position highlighted the following:

- £216k forecast net underspend
- £6,550k re-profiling of existing schemes/spend from 2021/22 into future years
- Additions of £1,931k in new projects and amendments to the capital programme of £132k taking the overall programme to £65,985k in 2021/22

## **Decision**

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the additions and amendments to the capital programme (Appendix A), including the use of reserves and capital receipts requested in the report
2. Approved re-profiling of £6,550k 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 September 2021

## **Consultation**

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

**Implemented by: Head of Finance**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 66/21**

### **Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

In May 2021 the Council's Cabinet agreed the new Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy for the Council. This report provided an overview of how the Council manages compliments, comments and complaints and the Council's performance in 2020/21. Complaints about schools were reported separately as they were subject to a distinct statutory framework; however, complaints were taken about Education services such as administrative processes ie, not receiving timely invites to Governor meetings.

This report provided an overview for the year 2020/2021, broken down by service areas and complaint types. The report highlighted key trends or themes drawn from the data for consideration. In 2020/21 the Council received 174 compliments, 3111 comments and 222 complaints. Through the council's process 208 complaints were resolved before going to the ombudsman and out of those the Ombudsman intervened with five. The Ombudsman expressed that the focus was not on keeping complaints to a minimum but giving customers various platforms in which to raise their concerns.

The report reflected on lessons learned for the council to improve and actions to deliver these improvements. More engagement with service areas would ensure a deeper understanding of the work of the Ombudsman including their powers and overall goals but also the importance of more structured training which would be beneficial at both employee induction and on-going annual refresher training.

## **Decision**

Cabinet considered the contents of the report regarding the process and performance of the Council's corporate compliments, comments and complaints annual report 2020/21.

## **Consultation**

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

**Implemented by: Head of City Services**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 67/21**

### **Covid-19 Response and Recovery Update**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

The UK and Wales was now into its 20th month (since February 2020) of the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, the crisis impacted all communities, businesses and services delivered by the Council and partners across Newport. Newport as a city had to adapt and respond as necessary to the restrictions to minimise the spread of the virus. The Council's priority was to ensure the continuity of services with our strategic partners, supporting the most vulnerable residents, support businesses and ensure the safety of staff and customers. The report provided an overview of what action the Council took to date progress against its Strategic Recovery aims and Wellbeing Objectives.

Since the last Cabinet report in September, Wales and the region continued to see positive Covid cases increase but hospital admissions remained lower in comparison to last year and the winter period. As the city and the Council entered into the autumn and winter period, there was likely to be further increase with the case rate which would have an impact on the hospital admissions. The focus over the autumn would be to get the over 50s, vulnerable and health and social care workers boosters, alongside vaccinating 12 to 15 year-olds across secondary school settings.

#### **Decision**

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

#### **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**

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## **Leader 68/21**

### **Post Brexit / Trade Agreement – Newport City Council**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

The UK-EU trade arrangement was in place since 31 December 2020. With the impacts of the global restrictions to manage the Covid pandemic and the implementation of the new UK-EU Trade arrangements the UK saw a number of economic sectors citing these impacts where there were issues in the availability and cost of goods and materials. The public sector including Newport Council was monitoring closely how wider economic impacts affected delivery of services, large scale projects and communities in the short term and the long term.

In June 2021, Newport Council submitted its bids to the Levelling Up Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund to the UK Government. In the Chancellors' budget announcement in October, Newport was unsuccessful with its Levelling Up Fund bid however was successful in securing over £2.8m UK Community Renewal Funding for seven projects in Newport.

Since the deadline (30 June) passed for EU citizens to submit their applications for EU Settled Status Home Office statistics (up to 30 June 2021) indicated 10,990 applications were made by citizens in Newport. 9,680 applications were concluded with 5,410 granted settled status and

3,620 granted pre-settled status. 1,310 applications were awaiting a decision not including applications received after the deadline.

**Decision**

That Cabinet considered the contents of the report and note the Council's Brexit response.

**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**

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**Leader 69/21**

**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: Governance Team Leader**  
**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR J MUDD

10 November 2021

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