

# Minutes



## Council

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Date: 28 September 2021

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Cleverly, P Cockeram, K Critchley, M Al-Nuaimi, C Evans, M Evans, C Ferris, D Fouweather, G Giles, J Guy, D Harvey, I Hayat, Councillor R Jeavons, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, Councillor J Mudd, M Rahman, J Richards, M Spencer, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, Councillor R Truman, T Watkins, K Whitehead, D Wilcox, D Williams, G Berry, J Clarke, R Hayat, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, Jones, J Watkins and A Morris

Apologies: Councillors D Davies, T Suller, M Whitcutt, R White, V Dudley, Y Forsey, T Holyoake and H Townsend

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### 1. Preliminaries

### 2. Minutes

The Minutes from 20 July 2021 were submitted for approval.

Councillor Routley referred to Item 7, Question four on page 16 of the Minutes, Councillor Matthew Evans' question to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture. Councillor Routley tried to raise a point of accuracy with Councillor Harvey but was overruled. He requested that this be noted in the Minutes.

#### **Agreed:**

That the minutes were approved as a true record, subject to this addition.

### 3. Appointments

#### To consider the proposed appointments set out in the report

The Appointment Sub-Committee recently appointed new Strategic Directors as outlined below. Councillor Harvey congratulated Sally-Ann Jenkins and Rhys Cornwall on their successful appointments.

Councillor Harvey moved the appointments set out in the report, as agreed by the Business Managers, subject to the additional appointments set out below.

**Resolved:** That the following appointments be agreed.

As Chair of Newport Transport Board Councillor Harvey declared an interest for the next appointment and invited the Leader to propose that Robert Greene, Assistant Head of Finance replace Owen James as a member of the Newport Transport Board. Councillor Fouweather seconded the proposal.

## **Governing Body Appointments**

<b>Governing Body</b>	<b>No of Vacancies / Re-appointments</b>	<b>Nominations Received</b>
Bassaleg School	1	David Williams
Bassaleg School	1	Richard White
Lliswerry High School	1	Roger Jeavons
St Julians Primary School	1	Mark Jenkins
Glan Llyn Primary School	1	Alison Harries
Caerleon Comprehensive School	1	William Routley
Caerleon Comprehensive School	1	Paul Warren
Clytha Primary School	1	Peter Bray
St Gabriel's RC Primary School	1	Clare Heath

### **Council Strategic Director Role**

Strategic Director – Social Services – Sally-Ann Jenkins

Strategic Director – Transformation and Corporate Centre – Rhys Cornwall

### **Internal Appointments**

Bridge Achievement Centre – Councillor D Mayer

### **Outside Bodies**

Compound Semi-Conductor (CSC) Foundry Scheme – Councillor D Harvey

Newport Transport Board – Robert Green

## **4. Police Issues**

Superintendent Mike Richards provided an update on current local policing priorities, before inviting questions from Members.

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank the police officers involved in a recent sponsored bicycle ride from Newport to Brecon, starting at Newport Central Police Station to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

The Mayor also attended Shaftesbury Youth Club to present award to the youth group and also wanted that those officers in attendance for their support in the community and hard work.

The Mayor invited the Leader to say a few words.

The Leader gave feedback on the positive policing activities held across the city. The Leader was delighted to attend the Newport Yemeni Community Association Funday, held in Pill and the Maindee Festival in Jubilee Park, it was nice to see a police presence and the Police Crime Commissioner presence at these events and these representatives were all engaged with the community and getting stuck into the activities. It was a positive reflection of the hard work involved with police participation, well done to everyone involved.

The Leader raised two issues, the first was in relation to the arson attempts in Malpas ward and in particular, there was concern at number of arson attempts in the field by St David's Hospice. What ongoing work was being undertaken by the Police and the South Wales Fire and Safety to prevent this.

The Leader referred to the anti-social use of off-road bikes within the Malpas and Bettws wards, how was this being addressed by both Police and Newport City Homes. The Leader

recognised that it was not just the police but wanted to know what was being done and wanted assurance that there was ongoing work to combat this.

Supt M Richards assured the Leader that he would look into the arson attempt at St David's Hospice. Through the joint working with the Fire Service, Local Authority and social landlords, including the three sectors across Newport through task meetings, an update would be provided to the Leader regarding the arson attempts and progress to date.

The situation regarding the off-road bikes was being looked at with partners as mentioned above. The issues around off-road bikes were being very closely looked at in a partnership approach.

#### Questions from Councillors:

- Councillor Marshall referred to residents complaining about the speed racers, noise pollution at on the SDR and Tesco, Cardiff Road who might have moved on from Tesco, Spytty. There were also concerns about the Maesglas shops re drug use and antisocial behaviour. And with reference to the Police Twitter post regarding the rogue traders, Councillor Marshall asked whether the Police could also inform ward members so that they could also notify residents of any Police issues. The Superintendent would discuss these issues with the local team and also was aware that the Maesglas shops were an issue. The Superintendent had not seen the Twitter post regarding rogue traders but would make sure that elected members saw similar tweets first.
- Councillor Rahman thanked the police for attending Maindee Festival and was attending monthly meetings with Insp Cawley, which was very fruitful. Councillor Rahman asked what was the Gwent Police's policy on low level drug dealing as residents were concerned in the Victoria ward that nothing was being done when they reported these incidents to the police. The Superintendent assured the councillor that there was no change in policy or direction and that there was a zero tolerance place for such activities.
- Councillor Spencer attended a Stop and Search presentation by the Police Crime Commissioner recently and asked if the presentation could be given to Newport Councillors. The Superintendent agreed that this present could be delivered via an all member seminar.
- Councillor Whitehead also referred to the arson attack near St David's Hospice and agreed with the Leader's comments and also mentioned that this occurrence did go on for quite a while. Councillor Whitehead also mentioned the removal of a gate near the canal which had caused increased antisocial activity near the hospice. The Superintendent would hold regular meetings to ensure that this was addressed.
- Councillor Harvey thanked the Superintendent for his kind words of thanks earlier and also wanted to thank Inspector Cawley who was always at the end of the phone. In addition, Councillor Harvey also gave a mention to two Community Support Officers, Robyn Hayes and Joanne Spiteri who were constantly patrolling the Alway area and looking at ways to move along the anti social behaviour, as well as putting prevention measures in place to close off 'drug alley'. Councillor Harvey did try the 101 number over the weekend but was on hold for an hour and in the end dialled 999 to report an incident. Councillor Harvey also wanted to mention Chief Inspector Sarah Greening who was on leave but was on the other end of the phone doing excellent work. There was a spate of motorbikes and bicycles being stolen and set alight, Councillor Harvey knew the perpetrators and would report these to Inspector Cawley. The Superintendent thanked Councillor Harvey for her thanks and feedback.
- The Deputy Leader thanked Inspector Cawley who provided monthly updates via Teams, which were very informative. Councillor Jeavons referred to Pontfaen Shops, where litter

bins were installed to prevent littering. Councillor also requested extra patrols by the police to address the antisocial behaviour. The Superintendent was aware of the antisocial behaviour at Pontfaen Shops and would provide the resources to address this issue.

## 5. **Notice of Motion: Edinburgh Declaration of Biodiversity**

**The Leader Presented the following Motion to colleagues and reserved her right to speak later in the debate:**

We Newport City Council **call upon** Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to:

1. Take strong and bold actions to bring about transformative change, as outlined in the IPBES global assessment report, in order to halt biodiversity loss.
2. Recognise the vital role of subnational governments, cities and local authorities, in delivering the 2050 vision of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the 2030 mission as set out in the Zero Draft document; and to explicitly place that recognition throughout the framework text, including the monitoring framework for the goals and targets.
3. Support the adoption at COP15, of a new dedicated Decision for the greater inclusion of subnational governments, cities and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; that builds upon and renews the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020) as endorsed under Decision X/22; and that significantly raises ambition for subnational, city and local implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework throughout the next decade.
4. Establish a multi-stakeholder platform that ensures representation of subnational governments, cities and local authorities to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

We, Newport City Council **stand ready** to meet the challenge of delivering, alongside Parties, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and play a stronger role in the implementation of the framework through a renewed and significantly stepped-up Plan of Action for subnational governments, cities and local authorities for the coming decade, and

That this Council resolves to support the Edinburgh declaration on biodiversity and authorises the Leader to sign the declaration on behalf of the Council.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hughes, who also reserved his right to speak.

No amendments were proposed.

### Comments on the motion from Councillors:

- Councillor Lacey informed colleagues that as the cities biodiversity champion it would be remiss of her not to speak in support of this motion today.

Newport was rich in both marine and terrestrial ecosystems and as elected members of this city it was their duty to do all they could to protect them.

Whilst the work carried out to make Newport a bee friendly city was vast and very successful it was not enough on its own.

The Council needed to work collaboratively with others to protect and enhance biodiversity, sharing best practice across these regions and taking forward bold and innovative action which would result in mutually beneficial outcomes for generations to come.

- Councillor Truman supported the motion to improve and preserve the environment.
- Councillor Whitehead supported the motion and agreed that biodiversity was very important and mentioned the increased reporting of Himalayan balsam that strangled the brook in Bettws and hoped that this would be addressed as part of this motion.
- Councillor M Evans informed colleagues that the Conservative group would support this motion, as well as supporting previous council initiatives such as the Bee Friendly motion that was brought to Council previously. Councillors needed to sing from same hymn sheet to tackle climate change at local level and should therefore support biodiversity like the rest of the world. Councillor M Evans therefore supported the motion.
- Councillor Hughes advised that this motion shared our deep concern about the significant implications that the loss of biodiversity and climate change had on our livelihoods and communities and that it impacted on every aspect of our lives.

Already we could see the impact almost daily on news headlines.

The world response thus far has been insufficient we must not look back at missed opportunities following Glasgow as happened with Paris.

By passing this motion the Council acknowledged that it must build on the good work already being done in the region by the Welsh Government, Councils and community groups.

In Newport we were determined and ambitious to address these difficult challenges and not pass on problems we had created to our children.

Newport's ambitions must be green because we had no other choice. If our children were to avoid having their futures dominated and blighted by the negative impact of climate change.

We depended on nature for our health, happiness and prosperity. Protecting our natural environment meant preserving it for our future generations and must maintain a healthy ecosystem and healthy environment.

The Gwent Levels that acted as a lung for our region. Life there was coming back to favourable standards thanks to amazing work by the Levels Board, RPSB and volunteers. 27km of open field ditches were restored and rarer species of wildlife was returning like the shrill carder bee.

Councillor Hughes asked colleagues to support this motion in their capacity as community leaders to put the environment first. As a united Council we could show that we cared and that we were positive about transforming and saving our natural environments.

- The Leader thanked all colleagues speaking in support of the motion. Some examples of the ongoing work with support from partnerships across the city included PSB, Lysachts Community Garden, Woodland Roots, Green and Safe Spaces Network, Green Caerleon, Maindee Unlimited, Pride in Bettws and many other groups across the city. Communities were working hard to maintain the biodiversity within Newport. It was critical that we continued this hard work and why the motion was essential to do in order to maintain this. The WG was the first parliament in the world to declare a nature emergency. The Leader shared a letter with colleagues from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, which commended the council on their contribution to maintaining

the bee habitat within Newport. There were so many actions that Newport residents could take as well as a strategic commitment, which would go far into the future.

**Resolved:**

The Motion was unanimously carried.

**6. Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21**

Councillor Lacey was pleased to present the 2019/20 Scrutiny Annual Report to Council.

Scrutiny is a function of Councils in England and Wales and was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000, creating separate Cabinet and Scrutiny functions in Local Authorities. The role of scrutiny was strengthened with the passing of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. This Act requires the Committee to report annually to the Council on the work that it has carried out in the past 12 months and its future work programme. Since the introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act, Scrutiny also has a statutory role to scrutinise the work of the Public Service Boards.

The underlying principle of Scrutiny arrangements is to ensure that the decision-making process is open, accountable and transparent.

The scrutiny function at Newport City Council is performed by four scrutiny committees. These committees are made up of Elected Members who are not part of the Council's Cabinet, along with co-opted representatives. These are Performance Scrutiny Committee for Place and Corporate, Performance Scrutiny Committee for People, Performance Scrutiny Committee for Partnerships and Overview and Management Scrutiny.

The purpose of this report is to apprise Council and other interested parties of the role of the scrutiny committees, and their work during the 2019/20 municipal year.

The annual report covers the period from May 2019 to April 2020. The Report highlights the important work carried out by Scrutiny during this period, despite the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 lock-down restrictions. The reporting period was challenging, with fewer meetings held in the first six months than usual, due to resource being focussed on the Council's response to Covid-19.

Despite this unprecedented event, the Performance Scrutiny Committees for Place and Corporate, and People have scrutinised performance including how the Council have adapted and responded to the challenges faced by services and communities due to the pandemic.

Both Committees have also received reports on the Cabinet's responses to the Recommendations the Committees previously made to the Draft Budget proposals, as part of Scrutiny's remit of measuring and assessing the Authorities impact and value.

Other reports considered include reports on Active Travel, the Youth Justice Service and Enforcement of COVID Business Restrictions.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee for Partnerships considered the Wellbeing Plan Annual Report presented by the Public Services Board and submitted their comments to be shared with the PSB.

Similarly, the Committee also scrutinised the performance against the Wellbeing Plan 2020-21 and submitted their comments to the Public Services Board for consideration. Health Board and Education Service partners presented a proposal for the transformation of Mental Health Services, and their Business Plan 2021-22 respectively, to the Committee for consideration and comment.

Actions planned for the reporting period were impacted by the pandemic, however Councillor Lacey was pleased to report that training for scrutiny members on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act was carried out to understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity.

Councillor Lacey looked forward to Chairing the Overview and Scrutiny committee for the remainder of the Municipal year, working alongside committee members in ensuring that they provide an objective and productive challenge to the decisions of the local authority. She took the opportunity to thank her scrutiny colleagues and Cabinet Members, Officers of the Local Authority and partners for their continued support.

The Leader seconded the report.

**Resolved:**

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

## 7. Questions to the Leader of the Council

### Leader's announcements

- **Fflecsi bus service**

Over the summer we were delighted to see the expansion of the Fflecsi bus scheme across the city.

Following the success of the first fflecsi pilot in Wales which launched in Rogerstone and St Julian's, a partnership between the council, Transport for Wales and Newport Bus meant a fleet of nine brand new buses were now serving the whole of Newport.

The fflecsi buses were improving access to public transport and enable residents to make a much wider range of journeys from early morning until late in the evening. Another step forward in our commitment to be a greener city.

- **Face to face services**

Following a very challenging year for delivering key services, the Leader was very pleased that a number of face-to-face services had now resumed.

Newport City Council's contact centre staff were now working from a temporary home at the Riverfront with appointments for residents with queries relating to housing, housing benefits, council tax and appointees available.

However, in line with Welsh Government guidance, council staff would continue to work from home wherever possible and we urge the use on our online and telephone services for the majority of queries.

Our longer-term plan was for these services to move to Central Library and Museum, right in the heart of our city centre.

- **Freedom Parade**

At the last council meeting, we were proud to award the Freedom of the City to the Royal British Legion in recognition of the role it played for the armed forces community for 100 years.

On Thursday 28th October we would formally mark this with as Freedom Parade through the city. The Leader wanted as many people as possible to get involved to help show our

appreciation of this amazing organization. The Leader asked those present to add the date in in their diary and look out for further details close to the time.

- **HMS Severn**

And continuing the military theme, we were also honoured to have HMS Severn, formerly re-affiliated with the city.

The ship last berthed at Alexandra Docks and exercised its Freedom of the City in late 2017 prior to its planned decommission.

However, due to Brexit, the Royal Navy did not sell HMS Severn, but decided to keep and re-commission her – she's even had a new coat of paint!

She would be returning to the city in November and representatives would be joining us for the Remembrance Parade and service. We look forward to welcoming the ship, her Captain and crew back to the city.

- **Leisure centre planning**

The Leader also reminded those present that the planning application for the proposed city centre leisure centre was now open for consultation and can be viewed on our online planning portal.

There had been an excellent and positive response to the original consultation – and the comments of our residents and partners are so important in this process.

It was expected to go before a full planning committee later this year when a decision would be made.

If given the go ahead it would be built to the highest possible environmental and sustainable standards and would be a purpose-built centre, with modern facilities, located on a key riverfront site.

## **Questions to Leader**

### Councillor M Evans:

Why did the Leader announce the Newport's Bid for City of Culture with a press release, without taking a formal decision through Cabinet, without consulting with residents or the opposition of political parties?

### Response:

The Leader advised that at this stage, it was only an expression of interest in the competition and that 19 other cities had also expressed an interest in the competition and therefore there was no requirement for a formal decision to apply for an expression of interest in a competition. The Leader was however delighted with the feedback from the creative community in Newport as well as elected members across the regions and our partners in neighbouring councils who also shared in our support of an expression of interest.

### Supplementary:

Councillor Evans repeated his question as above and mentioned the Conservative group had always consulted with the present Administration on all its decision making. Councillor M Evans said that the present administration acted as a one-party state rather than a democracy. The Conservative group would put their weight behind this expression of interest but felt it was a shame that the conservative group were not considered as part of the democratic process.

### Response:



The Leader suggested that if Councillor M Evans and any other interested parties wanted to gauge the level of interest in the competition, they should look at the supporting letters that were made available on council website which representative a range of groups and individuals across Newport.

Councillor Whitehead:

With regard to the unfortunate trend of speeding on the SDR bridge, did the Leader engage with Capita to run a health and safety review and if so, could the Leader update the council.

Response:

Leader advised that Capita was commissioned to undertake a review but did not have information to hand however would provide a written response.

Councillor Carmel Townsend:

Did the Leader believe that the 10% HMO threshold in more densely built inner city areas compared to 15% elsewhere was fair, or should Newport be looking at a far lower threshold for such areas where parking demands and other concerns were much higher.

Response:

Limits on HMO densities are part of our Planning guidance and are an indicator of what may be acceptable. The thresholds are in fact 15% within the inner core built up area, and 10% elsewhere but I would remind you that all applications are determined on their own merits and subject to assessment in their individual contexts. Well managed HMOs can provide accessible and affordable accommodation for a range of different residents and can integrate well into our communities. Our planning guidance is there to ensure that concentrations of such uses do not result in adverse impacts on our communities and as a former member of Planning Committee you are aware that applications were carefully considered and detailed justification provided for the decisions made. Many of the decisions to refuse permission are challenged at appeal for the reasons you mention, but evidence to support these concerns has not been available and we have been unsuccessful in defending such challenges. The Chief Planning Inspector also provided Planning Committee with some training on HMOs and this was useful for Committee Members when considering what would be when it came to the actual impacts of proposals.

Councillor Hourahine:

Could the Leader inform Council on how much the rise in National Insurance would cost the Local Authority and taxpayers in employment contributions.

Response:

The Leader mentioned that the question referred to the UK Government announcement regarding the increase in NI contributions to fund health and social care. A discussion took place the previous week at the WLGA meeting with Leaders. From April 2022 there would a contribution increase of 1.25% on employees and employers. This in effect meant a 2.5% increase on employment earnings. This would affect people in work and over employment age. Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) commented on this and advised that the combination of these factors made this unnecessarily complicated and that a simple increase in income tax would have been preferable. From April 2023 this contribution will no longer be NI based but would be part of a newly named tax called the health and social care levy. What it meant for NCC as an employer and for the residents of Newport was that because it was NI based the majority of payment would be met by those of working age. This meant that the increase created an annual £47M annual funding pressure for Local Authorities in Wales. This would place a significant cost on Newport taxpayers which was estimated at around £825 per year or Council tax rise of 1.5% to make up for the shortfall.

Supplementary:

Could the Leader break this down to individual households in Newport.

Response:

The Leader mentioned that the WG had put aside £40M to support social care which was welcomed. However, additional funding from central government was not available and there were no plans to reform social care. This would impact 16,000 households with the additional withdrawal of universal credit, leaving households £1K worse off per year.

8. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

There were four written question to the Cabinet Members:

Question 1 – Cabinet Member: Social Services

Councillor J Watkins:

Could the Cabinet Member please explain the Policy and the rationale behind it covering applications for a disabled parking bay for those suffering disability and needing the support of this facility.

Does the Cabinet Member consider it fair and meeting the needs of those needing to apply and what would be his/her views in terms of the Policy being discriminatory.

Response:

The provision of a Disabled Parking Bay followed a clear pathway with the policy and process available to all.

The policy and process to support the provision of a disabled parking bay had previously gone through a democratic process, which included a review of how the provision could be managed that would target those most in need within a set budget and allow for the services involved to schedule and manage the work required.

The applications for a parking bay have historically and under the current system consistently been oversubscribed and had not always been provided fairly. We recognised that the current system may not meet specific requirements from all individuals but there was no one system that would be able to meet all eventualities and the current process addresses fairness and ensured all requests were met using the established and agreed criteria.

The current policy and process allowed for a single yearly cohort, which included a three-month window of opportunity for those who presented as meeting an initial threshold to make an application for consideration. The reason for this system was to ensure the process was open fairly to all rather than being a 'first come first serve' service every year.

The streamlined approach that was now applied enabled us to review applications fairly and equitably so those most in need are considered for a heavily oversubscribed service. An ability to apply on an ad hoc basis or outside of the agreed criteria throughout the year would undermine an equitable approach. There were inevitably on occasion cases where urgency posed a challenge but in trying to ensure a fair and reasonable distribution of resources this was the most judicious use of resources and process.

The streamlined process allowed for City Services to manage the legal requirements which were costly and took time to implement. An ad hoc approach would be very difficult to manage against the background of the legal requirements and would increase overall costs plus potentially increase the time frame for a bay to be provided.

A single cohort application framework enabled an optimum use of a set budget and thus allowed for the provision of more bays. Processing a single bay at a time would significantly increase costs and therefore reduce the number of bays that could be provided overall.

Using this process we could coordinate more effectively removal requests against applications.

The provision of a bay was not a simply process of marking lines on the road, there were strict legal requirements involved with a Traffic Regulation Order which did not support a quick turnaround and was a high cost. The service cannot therefore be provided as an urgent and immediate need or on a short-term basis.

The policy and process was formally agreed through the democratic process and whilst it was recognised the current process may not be agreeable to all, we were striving to meet requirements in the most effective, efficient and fair way possible.

The provision of a parking bay was not a statutory service and the process in place therefore did not contravene any legislation. Newport City Council was committed to be providing a service within all the requirements but in order to offer an equitable this needed to be within the agreed process.

It was important therefore that when people make enquiries about the process that they were advised appropriately to reduce any level of expectation.

Supplementary Question:

Could Cabinet Member state on whether he felt that the policy supported the local authority rather than supporting a person with a disability.

Response:

Councillor Cockeram had been passionate about supporting disabled parking bays for people throughout the years. We could only do what we could to manage to provide funding through the safety at home grant and need based assessment. The council was doing all they could with the money available. Disabled parking bays were not a statutory requirement and most authorities did not provide this. It was difficult to put parking bays in places such as streets with terraced housing, where neighbours may object, however those with blue badges could double park outside a house.

Question 2 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor Mogford:

On the 16th April 2021 The South Wales Argus reported on the litter situation in Newport <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19265515.newport-updated-dramatic-rise-fines-litter-fly-tipping-city/>

Cllr Jeavons was quoted in that article saying litter and fly-tipping is created by “irresponsible individuals and the end result is a significant negative impact on our communities and a burden on council resources”. end of quote.

From a low base of prosecutions in 2019 and 2020 (seven and 61 respectively) it was claimed that in 2021 prosecutions had now risen by over 700%

Could the Cabinet Member update the council on the latest situation in the ongoing battle against littering, including:

- What are the current number of successful prosecutions for 2021?
- Has the burden on council resource increased or decreased?
- Where are the current litter 'hotspots' in the City of Newport and has that changed since April 2021

Response:

Tackling litter and fly tipping remained a priority for the Council, and even with all the issues and restrictions over the last 18 months, we saw an increase in action taken.

The latest figures we have for this year was 25 FPNs for either littering.

Regarding prosecutions, there was a huge backlog caused at courts by the pandemic, but in the past two months we had six cases heard at court, there were also another 26 cases with dates given for hearing at court in the next three months.

We also had 15 investigations ongoing

A major covert operation at the old LG access road, which was a hotspot for the last 20 years, resulted in a number of prosecutions, with some further court cases pending.

A number of other covert operations were ongoing across the city, but for obvious reasons would not be providing the locations.

In terms of litter, this administration was on track to double the number of litter bins across the city by the end of this year.

Supplementary:

The 'road to nowhere' which was the old LG Access road on the west side of Newport was not in use and was used very heavily for fly tipping. How would the fly tipping be removed?

Response:

The Deputy Leader reiterated that there were covert operations in place and that the old LG Access road was part of this and therefore no information could be provided at this time.

Question 3 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor Mogford:

The South Wales Argus reported on the 3 September 2020 an article on flooding

"Why Newport flood risk plan won't be published"

<https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/18694120.newport-flood-risk-plan-wont-published/>

In that article it was claimed that 'more than half of Newport has been identified as being at risk of flooding in a new council plan'

However, the actual plan will not be disclosed to the public even though 'Flooding is currently considered to be the greatest risk of an emergency occurring in the NCC area.

Also, four new flood risk areas have been identified

- Maindee
- Crindau
- Duffryn
- Lliswerry

In addition, most council wards will be affected by the plan due to the vast coverage of the flood risk.

Could the Cabinet Member give an update as to what measures have and will be taken in line with plan since it's sign off and how this tied in to the Section 19 report that has also been mentioned several times in full council. Could the Cabinet Member also give an update as to how the plan will have a positive impact on the Langstone Ward which amongst many other wards was severely affected by flooding at the end of 2020.

Response:

The council had a statutory duty to produce a plan making sure it had the appropriate arrangements in place to respond to flooding incidents in the city.

It was a UK government requirement that this plan was classified as "official sensitive", due to commercial and security reasons as the plan contains information such as reservoir mapping

However, all the information that was essential for the public to know was well documented and in the public domain and that included the flooding risks in the city as well as the responsibilities of all the agencies concerned.

The four new flood risk areas identified within the plan were informed by Natural Resources Wales as part of their communities at risk register. The Council was waiting for the data indicating the extent of the flood risk from the NRW and receipt of this work would commence to evaluate the severity of the flood risk and this would inform our planning and flood risk strategies going forward.

As previously mentioned, a section 19 report covered the conclusions of investigations by the various relevant authorities and will be published once complete.

Supplementary Question:

Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the sandbags that were strategically located within Newport.

Response:

Suitable locations were found Deputy Leader had received approval from the residents on where to place these sandbags. Work was ongoing and as soon as more sandbags were received work could proceed.

Question 4 – Cabinet Member: Licensing and Regulation

Councillor Mogford:

Pollution and the environment is devolved to Wales, and the Welsh Government has been keen to encourage the use of public transport

A Welsh Labour Government member has been quoted admitting "Every year, across Wales, air pollution contributes to almost 1,400 early deaths and costs the Welsh NHS almost £1 billion.

"We know that for some, even a short-term spike in air pollution can affect their health whilst long term exposure also increases your risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, dementia, lung cancer, diabetes and more." Going on to say "Cutting a reliance on cars was central to improving Newport's air quality, and pointed to measures in the Burns Report, which set out a series of ways of improving transport around the city after the M4 relief road was scrapped, as a way of doing this.

Seeing the effect of the queues on the M4 from a vantage point in Langstone and the associated spill over onto the local roads as a result, this is only exasperating the situation. At the same time there appears to be no solution to stop this happening week after week, month after month, year after year.

Could the Cabinet member update the council on where are the worst areas of air pollution in Newport and what actions are being taken to reduce the ongoing traffic issues and the number of deaths in Newport associated with the poor air quality

Response:

I would refer Councillor Mogford to the detailed information that I have previously provided at Council in response to questions about air quality management.

The worst areas of air pollution in Newport were clearly the 11 Air Quality Management Areas that the Council declared, five of which were located along the M4 corridor. The levels of nitrous dioxide recorded in those areas exceeded air quality objectives set by Welsh Government. However, those AQMA's were declared a number of years ago and, as I previously advised Council, the emission levels in all of those areas adjacent to the M4 were gradually reducing and are all moving towards compliance. In fact, the St Julian's AQMA is due to be revoked as it had not breached the air quality objectives for a number of years. Therefore, we were making good progress in reducing emissions and improving air quality.

Environmental Health would continue to monitor air quality and would update the Council's Air Quality Action Plan with actions to improve air quality in these AQMA's. A key part of the action plan would be to establish local action groups to engage with the local communities, because educating the public and encouraging changes in behaviour were essential if we were to reduce the effects of air pollution on public health. We were about to establish the first local action group in Caerleon and that would then be rolled-out across the other AQMA's. As I said previously, this was not something that the Council could address on its own.

The Council also published a sustainable travel strategy and was developing active travel routes. I outlined to Council previously some of the sustainable travel initiatives being developed, including the use of electric vehicles. Air quality, Climate Change and Carbon Reduction were all part of the same public health agenda.

With regard to traffic issues, the introduction of the 50mph speed limit on stretches of the M4 by Welsh Government undoubtedly had a positive impact in terms of air quality emissions. But traffic management and congestion on the M4 were matters for Welsh Government. Also, improvements in public transport as a result of the Burns Report would be developed at a regional level as part of a strategic transport policy. If Councillor Mogford had any question about particular public transport schemes, then he would need to raise that with my Cabinet colleague Councillor Jeavons.

Supplementary Question:

Who were the local action group referred to in the Cabinet Members response?

Response:

The Caerleon group was comprised of officers, councillors and members of the public, all of which had a big role to play in this and by meeting and involving residents would also help to make improvements.