

Minutes



Council

Date: 23 November 2021

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, J Guy, D Harvey, Councillor R Jeavons, M Kellaway, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, Councillor J Mudd, J Richards, M Spencer, T Suller, K Thomas, C Townsend, Councillor R Truman, T Watkins, R White, K Whitehead, D Wilcox, D Williams, G Berry, J Clarke, Y Forsey, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, H Townsend, J Watkins, A Morris, Hussain and Jones

Apologies: Councillors H Thomas, M Whitcutt, V Dudley and T Holyoake

1. Preliminaries

1.i Apologies

As above.

1.ii Declarations of Interest

None.

1.iii Mayor's Announcements

None.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of 28 September 2021 were approved as a true record.

3. Appointments

To consider the proposed appointments set out in the report

Councillor Harvey informed Council that the Appointment Sub-Committee had recently appointed a new Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability and a new Head of Adult Services, as outlined below. Councillor Harvey congratulated Paul Jones and Mary Ryan 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.

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	No of Vacancies / Re-appointments	Nominations Received
Marshfield Primary School	1	Richard White
Rogerstone Primary School	1	Yvonne Forsey
The John Frost School	1	Debbie Jenkins
Maes Ebbw School	1	Stephen Marshall
Maindee Primary School	1	Farzina Hussain
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon	1	Graham Berry
Bassaleg School	1	Laura Lacey
Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli	3	Shereen Williams Jonathan Gibbons Eirian Jones
Newport Nursery School	2	Carmel Townsend Asum Mahmoud
The Gaer and Masglas Primary School Parthership	4	Stephen Marshall Beverley Perkins Anne Drewett John Reynolds
Malpas Church in Wales Primary School	1	Robert Green
Bridge Achievement Centre	1	David Mayer

Council Strategic Director Role

Paul Jones, Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability

Head of Service Role

Mary Ryan, Head of Adult Services

Internal Appointments

Foster Panel: Councillor Davies to replace Councillor Berry

Champions

BAME Champion: Councillor Hussain to replace Councillor Rahman

Carers Champion: Councillor Guy to replace Councillor Berry

Outside Bodies

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: Councillor Lacey to replace Councillor J Watkins

Caldicot Drainage Board: Councillor Lacey to replace Councillor Berry

Newport Live: Councillor Hughes to replace Councillor Rahman

4. Police Issues

The Chief Superintendent Tom Harding and Superintendent Mike Richards were in attendance and provided an update on current local policing priorities, before inviting questions from Members.

The Mayor invited the Leader to say a few words.

The Leader was delighted to hear about the safer streets funding partnership recently put in place and congratulated Insp Cantwell and Insp George on their PCC award for partnership working.

The Leader went on to mention that the city centre was experiencing an increase in offensive materials being posted around the city centre along with fly posting in relation to

transgender people and was seeking assurance that the matter would be dealt with by the police. Chief Supt Harding assured the Leader that every single hate crime reported to police was looked into every morning and passed on to a trained officer who dealt with the incident accordingly and encouraged residents to report any incident as it was being taken seriously. Supt Richards also mentioned that the police had a transgender member of staff in place to address any issues appropriately.

The Leader had raised at the previous meeting the challenges raised in Malpas and was pleased to see that the police had increased their presence around St David's Hospice. The Leader was also delighted to hear that a moped had been impounded and that residents' concerns raised in relation to anti-social behaviour were also being addressed.

The Leader asked what assurances to residents on anti-social behaviour the police could provide and how to report this, as residents were often reluctant to contact police. Supt Richards assured the Leader that the police would be as responsive to these issues as possible to ensure that communities reported these incidents.

The Leader asked for clarification regarding the relationship that councillors had with the Inspector and whether elected members were entitled to monthly meetings with the Inspector. Supt Richards assured the Leader that it was to be expected that there was a good working relationship with councillors. In addition, there would be a new Inspector for Newport West by the end of the week, as there was a gap for a couple of weeks and Supt Richards apologised for this. Supt Richards would re-enforce the importance of regular meetings with councillors.

The Leader also raised the issue of members' personal security in the light of recent terrorist threats and the killing of Sir David Amess. The Leader had received support from Gwent police regarding a recent harassment issue but was disappointed that there was some disparity between the level of contact between police forces across Wales and Council Leaders. In some authorities, Leaders were contacted directly by the police, but this had not happened in Gwent and the Leader would have appreciated some assurance by the police. Chief Supt Harding apologised that the Leader felt her safety was not taken seriously. The Chief Supt had emailed the Chief Executive within three hours of the incident taking place and assured the Leader that support to any Councillors who were in a similar position would be provided by the police and was happy to circulate a copy of the email to the Leader. If councillors wanted the contact information this would be facilitated by the Chief Superintendent.

Councillors Questions:

- Councillor Harvey referred to a recent incident where a victim of domestic abuse dialled 999 at midnight and was not seen until 5am when it was light and felt that this was not acceptable and that the police should have come sooner. The estate had seen a recent murder and antisocial behaviour. In addition, properties were being targeted by a passer-by dropping a peg on a property as a marker for burglary. Supt Richards apologised about the recent 999 incident and assured the councillor that it would be raised with their control room. Supt Richards also thanked the councillor for the heads up on the burglaries and would raise this as a matter of priority with Insp Cawley.
- Councillor Jeavons confirmed that Insp Cawley met monthly with ward councillors and recently updated the councillor with regard to the joy riders on the SDR on a Sunday night. The Councillor however requested that this be escalated as it was still taking place and was a serious disturbance for residents. This happened during the early hours of the morning where drivers around the Lysachts Institute would stop and start at the traffic lights. Councillor Jeavons also requested the use of the 'Go Safe' van during these times. The Superintendent agreed to pursue the request of a Go Safe van to address this.

The Mayor confirmed that the allotted 30 minutes was up and that there was no time for any further questions.

Councillor Fouweather raised a point of order and asked the Mayor if it was fair that councillors did not have time to address their issues due to the questions put to the Chief Superintendent by the Leader.

Monitoring Officer advised that the 30 minutes were up for the Police Questions and that, if members were concerned about the adequacy of the time allocated for this item, then that was a debate for another time.

Councillor Routley raised a point of order and requested that they Mayor suspend Standing Orders to continue with the Police Questions.

The Monitoring Officer advised that it was not within the power of the Mayor to suspend Standing Orders to extend the question time, as that was a decision for the Council. Members could however move a procedural motion and put it to a vote whether to suspend the Standing Orders and extend the time for Police Questions. It was a matter of custom and practice that the Leader, had always been invited to speak and ask questions first.

Councillor M Evans mentioned that this custom and practice for the Leader to speak first was a recent decision. When Councillor Evans was Leader until 2012, this had not been the case.

The Monitoring Officer explained the process again. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Council would need to move a motion to suspend standing orders and extend the time for Police Questions. It would then be debated and voted upon.

In light of the above, the Mayor asked would someone like to propose a vote to suspend Standing Orders and extend the time. Councillor Mogford proposed the motion and Councillor Routley seconded the proposal.

Councillor Hourahine requested on another point of order that it was unreasonable to ask the police officers to remain to debate an internal matter for the Council. If the Council was to decide in due course that a longer period of time was required for police questions this would be up to the officers. The Councillor felt that it was unreasonable that the police officers stay whilst the discussion was taking place as they may have other priorities to consider.

Councillor Whitehead suggested that whilst it was unfortunate that other councillors did not have the opportunity to speak and that this could be raised again, the discussion was diverting from the council meeting and taking up the time of the police officers.

Councillor Fouweather suggested that as time was moving on that the police leave but expressed his opinion as previously that councillors should be allowed to question the police rather than the Leader having precedence.

The Monitoring Officer asked that the Mayor close the debate and either put the matter to a vote or close the police questions.

Councillor Routley withdrew his motion at this juncture, and it was agreed that the police questions end and that the police leave the meeting.

5. Notice of Motion: Motion for Newport City Council to declare a Climate Emergency

The Leader presented the following Motion to Council and reserved her right to speak later in the debate:

Declare an Ecological and Climate Emergency.

- **Newport City Council will continue the good work that we have started and reduce our carbon emissions to net zero carbon by 2030.**
- **Review the services we provide to ensure they support the city's journey to both net zero carbon and adapting to the impacts of climate change by 2050.**
- **Develop a clear Climate Change Organisational plan, in consultation with our citizens, for the next five years that will set out the actions we need to take to achieve this.**
- **Develop a city-wide Local Area Energy Plan, in collaboration with experts from the public, private and third sector to develop innovative solutions to decarbonise heat, electricity and local transport and realise local renewable energy production.**
- **Work with One Newport partners and the public to develop a city-wide Climate Strategy to enable city-wide net zero carbon and adaptation to climate change by 2050 and integrate best ecological practice into each area of the council's activity, allowing us to lead the city by example.**
- **Publicise this declaration of an ecological and climate emergency to residents and businesses in Newport and support and influence action by partners through partnerships and support and enable action by citizens to reduce their own carbon emissions.**

The Leader reserved her right to speak after the end of the debate.

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 Jeavons mentioned that the Council had made great progress over the last four years reducing carbon emissions by nearly 30%. This included replacing all streetlighting with low energy LED bulbs and introducing several solar PV systems across its estate. The Council would shortly be putting its ambitious climate change strategy out for consultation. With a commitment to net zero by 2030 or sooner.

Councillor Jeavons went on to say that the Council had a fleet of just over 200 vehicles, moving away rapidly from diesel and petrol vehicles. By the end of the year, 25% of the fleet would be electric, including all cars and small vans.

The Council was also working on more challenging bespoke plant and vehicles, and recently rolled out the first electric RCV in Wales, with a further five joining the fleet over the coming months. By 2030 the Council would have 100% electric fleet.

The replacement of cars and vans would save 75 tonnes of CO₂ per year. This was equivalent to the amount that 100 trees would absorb over 75 years. Each electric RCV saves 40 tonnes of CO₂ per year and the Council would target electric vehicle usage to the AQMA areas.

There were 21 charging stations at council buildings, 50 installed in our car parks for public use and the rollout of rapid chargers and residential charging was underway.

- Councillor Lacey informed colleagues that we were in an Ecological and Climate crisis and that it was not too late for elected members to put policy in place to have a positive impact on the city for now and for future generations to come.

Newport was only one council and one city alone, however, only a few years ago a motion was brought to the council to make Newport a Bee friendly city and what an impact that motion already had. There were not one but two endangered and rare bees

thriving in the City - the Shril Carder Bee could be found not only on the Gwent levels but also in St Julian's along with the silver sided nomad bee. In addition, local beekeepers noticed an increase in honey production this year thanks to the no mow May initiative as well as the creation of the wildflower meadows.

Councillor Lacey went on to ask members to support the motion put to them to once again make that impact for future generations to come.

- Councillor Forsey welcomed the climate change plan to reach net zero by council. Councillor Forsey encouraged walking and cycling whenever possible and suggested planned journeys wherever possible. Majority of journeys were less than one mile and walking would be a healthier alternative as the Council was planning more active travel routes.
- Councillor Davies mentioned that, as the previous Cabinet Member for sustainable development, this remained as an issue that she felt very passionate about and felt a moral imperative to move at a pace and protect the future of our planet.

Climate change was now affecting every country on every continent and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow.

People were experiencing the significant impacts of climate change, which included changing weather patterns, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. The greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are driving climate change and continued to rise to their highest levels in history. Without action, the world's average surface temperature was projected to rise over the 21st century and is likely to surpass 3 degrees Celsius.

It's clear that the poorest and most vulnerable were being affected the most. This is internationally, in countries such as Madagascar, where drought was entirely caused by climate change and the consequence was famine and disease.

At a more local level it was clear that those who were most deprived were more directly impacted, either living in areas where there are high recorded CO2 emissions or live-in inadequate housing that was ill equipped to deal with anticipated climate extremes. It was felt that everyone had a personal responsibility to take action.

Taking a corporate responsibility and developing a city-wide strategy would enable us as a city to become carbon neutral by 2050 had to be commended and Councillor Davies, therefore supported the motion.

- Councillor Whitehead suggested that the discussion around pollution had taken a back seat but needed to be raised as a matter of priority. The Councillor mentioned that the number of weeds hiding plastics at the Sainsbury's site to the Castle was staggering. The City Centre also had a lot of plastic on the entrance, this also needed to be addressed.
- Councillor M Evans mentioned that the Conservative group would support the motion and welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with the public, private and third sectors. He stressed how important it was that they provided innovative solutions and assistance to help the council to meet their aims and target. The public however needed to get on board with this. A fully integrated transport network running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with a reasonably priced and reliable bus service would be a considerable help but we were a long way from achieving this. It also needed to be recognised that a car for some people was a necessity and not a luxury. In order to allow low-income families to participate with affordable alternatives, significant funding would be required by the

government. It would not be easy, and we would all need to set an example and the rest of the world would need to play its part.

- Councillor Hughes summed up that most of us here this evening will be very much aware of the enormous harm that a 2~C average rise in global temperature is likely to cause our planet even compared to a 1.5°C rise.

We are a coastal nation and Newport is a maritime city-something which has favoured us in the past but raises serious challenges for our future, no corner of the world will avoid the consequences of climate change.

Limiting global warming will now take ambitious action on a national, local and individual level.

Newport has committed to net zero targets and is leading the way in several areas. Our talented and passionate staff do make us an organisation we can be proud of. We have made a good start and have made strong inroads however as discussed throughout COP26 much more urgent action needs to be taken to avoid the worst impact of climate change.

Declaring an Ecological and climate emergency will further strengthen our position in continuing to take effective action. As a council we will ensure that we take the actions highlighted and that our plans are consistent and effective in reaching our ambitious targets.

Our colleagues in Council have spoken about how we are making a difference and how motions passed are having a positive impact on our environment. Throughout the city people are making a difference and this Council is making a difference-we must ensure that momentum is not lost.

Councillor Hughes urged members to share and respond to the draft climate change strategy and help shape our cities response to these challenges.

We have so many activities throughout the city that we can be genuinely proud of-we are seeing our urban biodiversity thrive, new species returning and partnerships and communities engaging but the challenge ahead for humanity presents the greatest of challenges and this motion commits us all to doing what we can to meet the challenges support our ecosystems and achieve net zero.

Councillor Hughes stated that this motion sends a clear message that we do take these issues seriously and we will remain proactive in meeting our obligations to future generations.

Councillor Hughes was pleased to second this motion and asked colleagues in Council to support the motion also.

- The Leader mentioned that it was apparent that there was a cross party agreement on moving this motion and emphasised the role of partnership work. The Council had signed up to a sustainable travel charter. There was an opportunity for taxi drivers to use the Electrical Vehicles (EV) scheme available for them to test drive EV motors. Discussion was taking place on how to harness the natural resource along the M4 corridor from the River Severn. Some of the issues addressed by colleagues at this meeting were being addressed by the Council, such as weeding and litter picking. The Leader referred to the comments from colleagues of the opposition and thanked everyone for their support in this debate and it was felt that there was also a moral obligation to support the children within Newport for a more sustainable future.

Resolved:

The motion was put to the vote and was duly carried.

6. City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

The Mayor invited the Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation to present the report.

The Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation informed members that the report recommended that the Council resolved to approve and adopt a revised Public Spaces Protection Order ("PSPO") for the City Centre for a further period of three years, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was designed to prevent individuals or groups committing persistent anti-social behaviour in a public space where the behaviour was, or was likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. Only the Council could make a PSPO but both Police and Council Officers could undertake enforcement activities. Anyone who breached the PSPO could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or was liable to a fine in the magistrates' court.

The first City Centre PSPO for Newport was made in November 2015, following extensive public consultation and oversight by Scrutiny. The original PSPO was then replaced by a revised Order in 2018. The PSPO had to be reviewed every 3 years to consider whether there was a continuing need for the control measures.

In accordance with the legislation and the statutory guidance, the Council was required to consult with the Police and the wider community. The results of the engagement with key stakeholders and the public responses to the wider consultation were contained within the Report.

The current PSPO restrictions were mainly enforced by Gwent Police and Police colleagues had been involved in the review process and attended both Scrutiny Management Committee meetings. They were supportive of the continuation of the PSPO restrictions and were confident that these control measures would assist them to regulate the city centre more effectively.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered the Police comments and the consultation responses and were satisfied that there was a continuing need for a City Centre PSPO. They were recommending that it be renewed on the same terms as previously, but with the inclusion of one additional control measure relating to the dangerous use of e-bikes and e-scooters. However, the final decision regarding the adoption of any PSPO was a matter for full Council.

When considering the need for and the impact of any PSPO, the Council had to have regard to its public sector equality duty and its socio-economic duty and, therefore, a Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment was been carried out, which was also attached to this report. The proposed control measures were considered to be a reasonable and proportionate means of preventing or reducing the detrimental impact of this type of anti-social behaviour within the City Centre.

Councillor Truman moved that the Council resolved to approve and adopt the City Centre PSPO as set out in the report.

Comments from Councillors:

- As Chair of the Scrutiny Committee that reviewed the renewed PSPO, Councillor Lacey thanked the officers, external agencies and the committee members for the time that was

spent making sure that the order presented today was evidence based, demonstrating a necessary and proportionate outcome for what was needed within the city centre.

On coming to the conclusion to recommend the PSPO as presented, the Scrutiny Committee took advice from the officers, Head of Law and Standards as well as Gwent Police. All parties were strongly recommending the order as presented today. Councillor Lacey therefore supported the approval of this order.

- Councillor M Evans reluctantly supported the report and remained disappointed that there was not a complete ban on begging. While there were human rights issues, it was worth noting that residents had a right to visit the city centre without being asked for money, giving that providing money was often counter-productive and associations were available to assist the homeless. This therefore needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- Councillor H Townsend welcomed the action taken on e-bikes and e-scooters within the city centre but did not agree with the measures taken on the homelessness who she felt were being penalised. Councillor Townsend therefore did not support the motion.
- Councillor Ferris mentioned a recent conversation with a couple who did not visit Newport as they did not feel safe because of the aggressive begging. He also had a similar experience when collecting money for charity and was asked to move on. It was also not acceptable for electric scooters to drive at speed.
- The Leader referred to Cllr Lacey's comments regarding the evidence-based proposal and the data gathering exercise and put their proposals forward. This was not based on perception but factual evidence, which must be taken into account. There were various opposing arguments however, the Leader made it clear that there were continuing operations to support the homeless. The pandemic was transformational in how help was provided for the vulnerable and in what the Council was able to do. The Leader considered therefore that the report was reasonable.

Resolved:

That the Council adopt and implement the City Centre PSPO (2021-2024), as set out in the report.

7. Strategic Equality Annual Report 2020/21

The Mayor invited the Leader to present the above report to Council

Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council was required to report annually on the progress it made against the strategic equality objectives contained within its Strategic Equality Plan. The Equality Act also required Local Authorities to publish staff equalities data, which this report also contained. This Annual Report related to the first year of delivery against the Council's new Strategic Equality Objectives, published on 31 March 2020.

The new Objectives were developed in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders and were subject to extensive community engagement. The involvement of grassroots communities ensured that whilst our Plan delivered a strategic vision for equality in Newport, it also ensured tangible outcomes for communities on the ground.

The pandemic presented significant challenges in delivering against some areas of work, for example, in relation to customer services. However, other areas gained traction as a direct result of the impact of COVID-19. The Council's equality work this year had to be flexible, responding to emerging challenges, particularly around access to information, education and addressing race-based hate crime.

The impacts of the UK leaving the EU was deeply felt by our EU migrant communities this year and focus on supporting people to remain in Newport and protect their rights and entitlements continued. The Council had taken stock of the effectiveness of our monitoring arrangements throughout the year and took steps to improve them.

This year the Council continued to demonstrate its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in various ways including signing up to Race Council Cymru's Zero Tolerance to Racism Policy for Wales and Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter. We marked significant dates, including Pride Month, Black History 365, Refugee Week, Holocaust Memorial Day and Hate Crime Awareness Week. Earlier this year, £100,000 of funding was distributed to grassroots community projects as part of a Participatory Budgeting programme, and an Accessibility Stakeholder Group was established to advise on council projects with a focus on access for disabled people.

The Council have established a number of staff networks to better support our colleagues from minority backgrounds. The council now had a Diversity (ethnic minority), LGBTQ+ and Disability staff network. Analysis of the data for our workforce highlighted key areas for improvement, including improving the levels of recorded equality data, better aligning recording categories with census data, and understanding why levels of leavers were higher for particular groups (eg, people from an ethnic minority background and disabled people).

The council still had work to do to improve representation of minority ethnic staff at all levels of the organisation, and this would be a focus for our work during 2021/22. The Council established specific Recruitment and Representative Workforce working groups to progress this.

This Annual Report went to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and to Cabinet. This version included a sample of the graphics that would be used in the final published report and communications.

The Leader moved acceptance of the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report and invited the Cabinet Member for Assets and Resources to second the motion.

The Cabinet Member for Assets and Resources added that this report was a summary of the work undertaken during first year of our new Strategic Equality Plan. It set out the Council's commitment to a workplace culture and approach to service delivery that valued inclusion and diversity.

The Council would continue to progress this work over the next 12 months, and the Annual Report set out clear priorities for the next period based on a review of our workforce data and progress against our Equality Objectives to date.

Work this year was delivered against a challenging backdrop which resulted in an acute focus on inequalities and scrutiny of public services' response to the pandemic, particularly in supporting minority communities. A key strength this period was the increased engagement of key stakeholders, including both our grassroots communities and minority staff. This had not only informed the Council's response to COVID-19, but also its priorities during recovery and wider equalities work.

The Cabinet Member also noted that the report was also very well written by officers and was very comprehensive.

The council's Strategic Equalities Group had refreshed and now received quarterly highlight reports, it was attended by Elected Member Champions and Network Chairs and was notably more outcome focussed in its approach to supporting this work.

Resolved:

Council approved the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 20/21 for publication in accordance with statutory deadlines.

8. Annual Report of the Democratic Services Committee 2020/21

The Mayor invited the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee (DSC) to present the report.

Councillor Ferris highlighted that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 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.

This annual report covered the period from November 2020 to November 2021.

The Committee was politically balanced group which worked together in a non-partisan manner to consider various aspects of the Constitution and other matters that impacted on the governance of the Council.

The Report highlighted the important work carried out by the Committee last year. We met on four occasions during the past 12 months and continued to meet remotely in accordance with agreed Council protocols. It was anticipated that additional meetings would need to be arranged during the remainder of this year in order to complete our forward work programme in readiness for the May 2022 local elections.

Most of the work of the Committee was in relation to the review of the Council's governance and Constitutional arrangements, to meet the requirements of the legislative changes in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act. In particular, the committee considered the technology and protocols required for hybrid meetings, remote access and live broadcasting of Council meetings and the IT support required by elected members as part of the New Working Model. The Committee had overseen the development of a draft public participation and engagement strategy and intended to publish for consultation early in the New Year.

DSC had recommended to Council changes to the name, terms of reference and membership of the new Governance and Audit Committee, and recruitment was already underway for the new independent members of the Committee.

The DSC considered the IRP draft annual report and noted the proposals for a significant reset for all members' allowances as from May 2022 in the light of the significant changes since the previous allowances were fixed.

The Committee contributed towards the development of the national competency framework and induction training programme for new Councillors and a Democracy Handbook. All of this work would need to be completed in the next six months, together with a re-working of the Council's constitution and the production of a summary document. Therefore, it would be an extremely busy and important period for the Committee

The Committee was satisfied that adequate resource continued to be made available to fulfil the roles and responsibilities under the Measure and the new legislation. The DSC was pleased to note that, following successful appointments to the Democratic Services Manager position and the Scrutiny Adviser posts, the Governance Team was now up to a full complement of staff.

It was moved and duly seconded that the DSC Annual report should be noted and agreed.

Resolved:

That Council receive the Committee's annual report in order to meet the requirements of the Local Government Measure.

To note the content of the Head of Democratic Services Annual Report, as supporting evidence that the Committee has carried out its responsibility to review the adequacy of staff to support members.

9. Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21

The Mayor invited Councillor Hourahine to present the 2020/21 Standards Committee Annual Report to Council.

This was the eighth annual report, which covered the period from November 2020 to November 2021, and followed on from the last report presented to Council in November 2020.

This Annual Report had previously been presented to Council on a voluntary basis. However, as from May 2022, there would be a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for Standards Committee to make an annual report to Council. In addition, next year's Annual Report must include an assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their new duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within their groups.

The Committee met on six occasions during the last twelve months and the meetings were all conducted remotely in accordance with Council Protocols.

For the first time this year, Standards Committee was called upon to conduct a misconduct hearing and to impose a sanction on an elected member. This did not reflect well on the Council's reputation and, therefore, it was considered that this case should act as a salutary lesson for all members. Therefore, a full copy of the decision was attached to this Annual Report and would encourage all members to read and take note of the reasons for this decision.

No complaints were formally determined under Stages 1 and 2 of the Local Resolution Protocol and no complaints were referred to Standards Committee under Stage 3 during 2020/21.

The report confirmed that three complaints were referred to the Ombudsman about City Councillors during the last year and eight complaints were made regarding community councillors. Apart from the one misconduct case, the other complaints were not accepted for formal investigation, although the Ombudsman had written to two community councillors to remind them of their obligations under the Code and to warn them about not being abusive and disrespectful towards members of the public in future and not to bring their office into disrepute.

The training requirements for City Councillors, community councils and their clerks continued to be monitored and reviewed as part of the Committee's forward work programme, particularly as we move towards the next round of local government elections in May 2022.

During the past 12 months, two of the Committee's longest-serving independent members, Phil Westwood (the previous Chair of the Committee) and Tracey Britton, completed their second terms of office and the Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and dedication over the years. The Committee was pleased to welcome Richard Morgan, and Gill Norton as new independent members.

It was moved and duly seconded that the report should be noted and agreed.

Resolved:

To receive the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2020/21 and to note the forward work programme.

10. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Leader's announcements:

- **White Ribbon Day 2021**

This year's White Ribbon Day takes place on Thursday 25 November.

It is an annual event that marks the United Nation's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

This year we are asking residents, businesses, schools and community groups to sign up to the #30Challenge.

Its aim is to raise awareness of the 30 children every day in Gwent that are affected by incidents of domestic abuse at home where the police are called.

The #30Challenge could be something you do alone, with a few people from your household, or as part of a group. People, families, schools, organisations, sports teams and community groups can set their own challenges focusing on the number 30 and are urged to post their actions of support online.

Educational workshops and lesson plans are being rolled out in schools across Gwent to raise awareness of the importance of healthy relationships with children and young people.

Domestic abuse can take many forms including physical, coercive control, psychological abuse and financial abuse.

Together with our partners it is essential that we not only take a stand against such destructive behaviour but that we also encourage those experiencing it to seek help.

- **Climate change plan**

Climate change is one of the defining global challenges of our generation.

The Leader stated that we will all be aware of the outcomes of COP26 recently held in Glasgow, and the urgent need for us all to come together to limit global temperature rises and build a sustainable world for future generations.

As a council, we have already made a good start, reducing our direct and energy generating emissions by 29 per cent over the last three years.

However, we know that we have much more work to do, and I'm pleased that we have now presented our draft climate change plan for consultation.

The ambitious climate change plan sets out how the Council would work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and how we will use our services to support climate change action across the city.

It is centered around six key delivery themes:

- organisational culture and leadership
- our buildings

- our land
- transport and mobility
- the goods and services we procure, and
- our wider role

The Council is seeking the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders to help ensure we are taking the right actions, before we finalise the plan in early 2022.

- **Environmental award**

To continue in the same vein, the leader announced that she was incredibly proud to have accepted the Outstanding Organisation award on behalf of Newport City Council at the recent inaugural National Environmental Awards.

The award recognised the commitment and passion of our staff to deliver real change for our organisation and for Newport.

The Leader expressed her to those who work tirelessly and with passion to improve our environment and lower our carbon emissions, and to those who dedicate their spare time to supporting countless initiatives as volunteers in the city and beyond. This win was a reflection of their efforts and dedication.

- **Social worker national fostering award**

The Leader congratulated one of the Council's social workers who has been recognised for her outstanding work within fostering.

Lorraine Bird, a supervising social worker with our Foster Wales Newport team, has been awarded an excellence award for outstanding contribution by a social worker by the Fostering Network.

Her nomination was based on a letter of appreciation from one of the foster carers she works with, highlighting how she always goes above and beyond.

The Leader expressed her congratulations to Lorraine and the whole fostering team who do an amazing job for young people in Newport.

- **Levelling up/Community renewal fund**

It was recently announced that Newport has been awarded over £2.8million from the UK Community Renewal Fund (UK CRF).

Bids to the UK CRF were invited earlier in the year with the aim of supporting people into employment and investment in skills, local business, communities and place.

As a council we were pleased to be able to support partners in their applications and that we can now push ahead with several projects that will really make a difference in our local areas.

We will continue to bid for money from such initiatives to ensure Newport can benefit as much as possible.

- **Leisure centre**

Planning permission was granted earlier this month paving the way for the Council's vision of a new leisure centre for the residents of Newport to become a reality.

Work will now begin early next year to create a 21st century building that will house state-of-the-art facilities.

As well as a fantastic leisure offer, we are determined that the new centre should be built to the highest possible environmental standards.

We want it to be inclusive and to be used by people of all ages from across the city, so accessibility is also a key factor in its design and location.

We asked the public for their views on the development earlier this year and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The Leader was sure that, like her, they would watch the progress of the development with great interest and cannot wait for the day the doors open.

Leader's Questions

Councillor M Evans:

In February 2021, Councillor Fouweather asked if the Leader or Cabinet Members were in negotiation with Friars Walk regarding the soon to be vacant Debenhams, the Leader answered this question with a no. The Leader was then quoted in a BBC News article suggesting that the Council would work with the WG and the Newport Now BID to find a solution. Eight months later, a Freedom of Information request (FOI) revealed that no meeting with Friars Walk, Talisker Corporation had taken place. In addition, was the Leader also aware in advance that Admiral was closing in the City Centre.

Response:

The Leader advised that she could not control what the journalists had reported. There had been a number of meetings and the Leader the met with Chair of the Debenhams Group. There had also been ongoing discussions between senior officers and Talisker. These were technical discussions regarding commercially sensitive legal and financial issues and, therefore, were matters for senior officers not the Leader.

The Leader went on to say that she was very disappointed about the news that Admiral was closing their offices and only knew about this on the day when they issued the press release. Admiral contacted the Council at 9am that day to advise that a press release was being issued. Officers were continuing dialogue with Admiral, and they remained tenants responsible for paying rent on the building. Officers would also continue to work closely with Admiral to identify a new tenant to take over the Admiral building. Fortnightly meetings were in place to discuss the outcomes as they progressed.

Supplementary:

Councillor Evans referred to the advice that officers were dealing with these matters and felt that it was a recurring theme with a lack of joined up thinking. Councillor Evans mentioned the former Deputy Leader Councillor Ed Townsend worked tirelessly to get Admiral in the city. The Council had paid Talisker £375K alone this year, until September in subsidy payments in relation to empty shop units and £2M since January 2017. Did the Leader feel that there was an urgency to meet regularly with Debenhams as a matter of priority, it was also up to the Leader of the Council to progress these negotiations.

Response:

The Leader advised that the Talisker financial arrangements were a matter of public record through open and transparent Cabinet meetings and the investment subsidy agreement was also widely publicized and well documented. In relation to Admiral, Newport City Council found out the news in the same way as its neighbours regarding the other office locations and did not know in advance about the measures they were taking. This only involved however, the relocation of staff and not job losses. The council was working closely with businesses at a range of levels across authority. The Council was in constant communication with the Business Improvement District (BID), to encourage new businesses in Newport and the Council was also supporting start-up businesses.

At this point Councillor M Evans repeated his question and The Leader reminded him that officers were dealing with these issues.

A point of order was raised by Councillor M Spencer regarding the repeating of a question. The Mayor advised that the line of questioning was not going anywhere and invited the next question to the Leader.

Councillor K Whitehead:

Regarding the amount of Newport residents attending Cardiff and their Winter Wonderland and was the mindful that Newport could emulate this. The land opposite Friars Walk would be an ideal location for this. Could Newport City Council also set this up during the festive period.

Response:

The Leader welcomed the question and considered that it was the perfect opportunity to bring people to the City Centre. The Leader also mentioned the switching on of the Christmas lights and stalls and fair ground rides that would be located within the area by the Riverfront and the City Centre. The Leader welcomed any ideas that people may have for seasonal attractions throughout the year. However, the Council was limited for a site because of the development of new the leisure building, which was in the space that Cllr Whitehead mentioned. The Leader was keen to keep the footfall within the City Centre and was confident that in collaboration with the BID and other stake holders the Council would be able to provide these events.

Councillor Hussain:

Could the Leader provide colleagues with an update on the support available for businesses.

Response:

The Leader highlighted the excellent work the Business Support Team carried out within the Council. They had put together a short film on social media to advertise the support provided for small businesses and grants that was available, which was up to £250K. There was also significant support through this area.

Supplementary:

Had the WG made additional support available, if so, how much.

Response:

An announcement was made on the same day as Council that a £45M package for small businesses across Wales would be available as well as support training for sectors that were under supported, this was good news for those thinking of setting up small businesses within Newport. It was hoped that £1.5M might be made available to Newport and £10M across Wales for personal learning accounts to help people change careers. There was a real opportunity to support businesses and individuals.

11. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

Question 1 – Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor Mogford:

Considering Measures to Reduce (Toxic) Emissions Across the City.

With the new impetus to combat Climate change in Wales does the Cabinet Member have a plan or a vision to ensure that access to local recycling centres can be optimised in terms of distance and time taken.

A practical case in point is the five lanes recycling centre on the A48. Many residents are having to take the longer journey both in time and distance to the NCC recycling centre, which can be up to a 20 plus mile round trip rather than just a few miles in some cases.

In making it easier and quicker to travel to the nearest recycling centre does the cabinet member also see the potential for a reduction in fly-tipping on top of the beneficial reduction in vehicle emissions?

Response:

Monmouthshire County Council took the decision to close access to their Five Lanes Recycling Centre to Newport residents back in 2019; and while we regret the inconvenience caused to residents in the area, unfortunately it is for Monmouthshire County Council to decide on the access rules to their recycling sites, over which we have no control.

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan, detailed plans for a second household waste recycling facility to be built, in the east of the city, Also, all Newport residents receive a weekly collection of all common recyclable household waste, plus refuse and garden waste collections. A special collection is available upon request for bulky materials.

Finally, we have seen no correlation between fly-tipping and access to the HWRC. Fly tipping is a criminal activity that the vast majority of our residents would not entertain. A significant proportion of fly-tipping is carried out by commercial operators, who cannot not use the HWRC and have a legal obligation to dispose of their waste in line with relevant legislation.

Supplementary:

'In the future if the Council was interested in an agreement to joint fund facilities such as Five Lanes, we would be happy to enter into these kind of discussions'. This was in an email received on 25 September 2019 from Monmouthshire Council. Had this offer been taken up and would it be beneficial for the two councils to share in this facility.

Response:

The Deputy Leader advised that Monmouthshire Council had closed these facilities to residents in 2019. There had been conversations in the past, but these were not promising.

Question 2 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor Kellaway:

I have received a number of emails from concerned residents regarding the risk of flooding in Llanwern, you may recall the rain over the festive season in December 2020 which resulted in residents' homes being damaged and some residents being evacuated.

What reassurance can you and the administration provide to residents that they will not see a repeat of the overtopping of Monks Ditch and subsequent flooding of Llanwern village and wider area so all residents can at least look forward to a peaceful and stress-free Christmas.

Response:

We have carried out a thorough CCTV investigation to the drainage system along Station Road, and carried out numerous pipe repairs, root removal and jetting of the system to ensure an improvement in the performance of the system. We have recently received a high rainfall event which did not appear to have any flooding issues in the area, which we may have otherwise seen issues prior to the remedial works being complete.

This issue is highly reliant on water being able to discharge from the system in to the associated reens. If the reens downstream of the system remain in working order, then we are confident that the residents should not experience any issues in future. We have also issued two breach of condition notices on Redrow to ensure that the development proceeds in accordance with the approved details, particularly in relation to drainage. Redrow were

required to cease the provision of further hard surfacing and soil stripping until details of surface water drainage had been agreed and implemented. This is considered necessary in order to ensure that surface water run-off from the site does not increase issues of flooding for the village.

NCC are seeking Welsh Government grant funding to both reline some of the existing system and upgrade other parts to ensure better performance in the area

Supplementary:

Two or three years ago the Council was given £100K to upgrade the drains from the developer. Why was the money not utilised to fix the repairs sooner to avoid the flooding last year.

Response:

There was an original scheme in 2005 but the site was not developed for many years. When the site was developed, the original design did not meet the current standards due to climate change and would clash with multiple utilities, a more suitable design has since been progressed.

Question 3 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor Routley:

Will the Cabinet Member for City Services outline his political vision and leadership with regards to how he is going to build momentum going forward on road safety and the environment within Newport?

Response:

Newport City Council is committed to the delivery of the objectives set out in The Wales Transport Strategy which makes people and climate change a priority when looking at highways and transportation.

Focusing on road safety, Newport is working closely with Welsh Government in the delivery of the new national default speed limit of 20mph in residential areas, which is due to come into force across Wales in 2023.

The key objective is to make roads and streets safer for all users with greater priority to public transport and active travel as seen in recent projects around the city including Queens hill / Devon place.

With regard to the environment and the meeting of both the 2030 and Net Zero target of 2050, the authority, in collaboration with Welsh Government, is delivering publicly accessible Electric Vehicle Charge Points for the city and making good progress in decarbonising the Councils fleet.

We are also driving forward initiatives to deliver the benefits of a greener city for our communities and the encouragement of biodiversity, especially in the urban environment. We are currently out to consultation on our climate change strategy.

Supplementary:

Magor Road had 30MPH, then 50MPH and went back to 30MPH causing high levels of pollution. This also led to driver frustration. Would the Deputy Leader support the traffic order plan.

Response:

The Review by WG only considered 30MPH to 20MPH speeding restrictions. The speed limits on the rest of the roads referred to had been reduced to 50MPH from 60MPH and this was deemed appropriate.

Question 4 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor Forsey:

Many residents have commented on the ongoing construction work at the railway station. Can the Cabinet Member provide Council with an update on the progress of the Devon Place footbridge.

Response:

The Devon Place bridge project is to replace an existing subway, connecting Devon Place with Queensway beneath the Great Western Mainline railway.

The subway was unsightly, and the location of much antisocial behaviour including a number of serious assaults and muggings. This subway route was not safe and not suitable for a 21st Century City. Fortunately, the Authority were successful in obtaining funding for a new unsegregated pedestrian and cycle bridge; enabling Newport City Council (NCC) to decommission the existing subway. The funding for the development and implementation has been secured from Welsh Government via their Active Travel Fund, following a series of design development and feasibility stages. Although the work is not yet completed it is anticipated that the total cost of the project from development to delivery will be in excess of 9 million pounds. Part of the process has included effecting a permanent closure of the subway right of way,

One of the most technical elements was modifying the recently installed overhead electric line which was only recently commissioned. Construction phase began fully in August 2021. Early works included site clearance, hoarding installation, and removal of the Network rail owned Harvey Hood sculpture for repair prior to reinstallation close to the main station entrance. Further segments of the bridge will be delivered in the coming weeks as they are released from the fabrication workshop. The support structures above ground will start to be installed through December leading to the main lift of the bridge deck segments. These will be undertaken as a number of individual lifts during the scheduled Christmas railway closure. This closure begins on Christmas Eve and lasts for 72 hours. During this time the central supports, decks and link spans will be lifted into place.

Following Christmas and New Year the access ramps, steps, parapets and handrails will arrive on site to be gradually installed during the spring. Public realm works will follow and we should see the main structure in place by the end of March/April

Question 5 – Cabinet Member: Sustainable Development

Councillor Mogford:

Hundreds of studies have found harmful biological or health effects from exposure to radio frequency radiation at intensities too low to cause significant heating. The public at this time have no reason to believe 5G is safe.

5G masts are starting to pop-up all around Newport. Their range is very short and effectively cover 'line of sight'

How many of these masts can we expect to be given planning permission if the plan is to get full or significant coverage in Newport?

Following on, could the Cabinet Member attempt to reassure members that in rolling out 5G in and around the Newport area they are convinced that the risk to public health is below a threshold of concern? Have they engaged with Welsh Senedd on the matter at this time in seeking their own reassurance?

Response:

Most forms of telecommunication equipment development, including 5G masts, are permitted development. This means that the principle of the development was accepted and the local planning authority can only consider the siting and appearance of the proposal. Potential health implications would not be a planning consideration. All local planning authorities are governed by planning legislation, and Newport City Council cannot vary from this.

Radiation concerns associated with 5G masts fell under separate regulations. I was aware of media reports and some perceived health risks, but also aware of scientific research which has counteracted these claims with robust evidence. For example, last year, the UKs regulator, Ofcom, found no identifiable risks in its first tests since 5G technology was deployed. The World Health Organisation are of a similar view.

When a prior approval application for a 5G mast is submitted to the local planning authority, we ensure that the submission includes an ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) certificate. This certificate confirms that the equipment has been designed in full compliance with the requirements of the radio frequency public exposure guidelines of the ICNIRP. This certificate is a necessary part of the process, and without this, the local planning authority would refuse to consider the application.

The aim of the network providers is to create superfast connectivity to citizens and businesses in Newport and encourage inward investment however they do not undertake any pre consultation with us in terms of their proposals for mast sharing or the number of new masts required.

Supplementary:

Could the Cabinet Member reassure members that in rolling out 5G in the Newport area that he was convinced that the risk to public health was below the concerned threshold and had the Cabinet Member engaged with the Senedd to seek this reassurance.

Response:

With regard to the health risks to public the council was confident at this time that according to all research by Ofcom the technology was safe.

Question 6 – Cabinet Member: Social Services

Councillor Marshall:

The Newport City Council Corporate Plan makes a commitment to a reduction in the number of out of county social care placements. Can the Cabinet member give an overview of progress against this objective?

Response:

Over the past year we have despite the challenges of the pandemic been able to safely reduce the number of children who are looked after. Our teams have worked to support families and to provide the direct support needed to prevent children coming into care. This has included the development of our Baby and Me team to support parents at risk of losing their children because of the risk of significant harm pre-birth, the implementation of Family Group Conferences to create family solutions and the provision of a Rapid Response team to intervene at times of crisis and provide 24/7 support. We have worked to revoke the number of Care Orders by supporting the reunification of children with family sometimes many years after they first became looked after. We have supported family members and foster carers to care for children using Special Guardianship rather than remaining in care.

The table below gave the decrease in the number of children who are looked after since April 2020.

As At Date	Total CLA (inc UASC)	Total CLA (Excluding UASC)
31.03.2020	379	362
30.06.2020	378	359
30.09.2020	382	365
31.12.2020	376	362
31.03.2021	378	363
30.06.2021	373	359
30.09.2021	367	347

On 19 November 2021 we had 366 children in our care. We have with all our children in care focused on being able to meet their needs in the most effective way possible. For some children this will mean being in care but placed with family members and often this will mean being placed outside of Newport.

We have a small number of our foster carers who live just outside Newport so again while these are categorised as out of county the placement is still close to the child's original school and community. We also have a small number of children placed for adoption out of Newport and these again are part of the group constituting out of authority placement.

As of 30 June 2021, we had 22 children placed out of Wales. All of this group are either placed with family members or are awaiting final adoption orders. A further 98 children were in Wales but outside of Newport with most of this group being in Gwent or Cardiff. This total number of children has been static for the past year but examining the detail demonstrates there are good reasons for the children being placed out of Newport.

We have pursued work to try to ensure that when children do require foster care or residential care, we can care for them in Newport. We have slowly reduced our reliance on both Independent Fostering Agencies and external residential care. We will continue to do this as it ensures the safety, wellbeing and future needs of our children are met.

In order to do so we have increased and improved the provision of residential care in Newport. This has included the opening of Rose Cottage and Rosedale, improvements at Forest Lodge and Oaklands, and the closure of Cambridge House. We are currently working on the development of Windmill Farm and the annexes at Rosedale. Over the past eighteen months the number of children placed with out of authority residential providers reduced from 24 to 18. As well being the best outcome for our children this has brought a slow reduction in our spend on these sorts of placements. The total spend has reduced by almost £2 million some of which has then been repurposed to provide our own homes with considerable improvements in outcomes for our children.

Newport City Council staff have taken a proactive approach to ensuring we have a robust group of foster carers with a positive package of support including financial, material and emotional support. The launch of Maethu Cymru/Foster Wales has been interwoven with our local approaches to recruiting and then retaining foster carers.

In the past eighteen months we have seen a reduction in the number of children placed with Independent Fostering agencies from 72 to 58.

The work undertaken in all arenas of Children's Services contributes to this work and therefore meeting the commitment to reduce the number of children inappropriately placed out of county for social care placements.

The Mayor and Mayoress attended a recent Foster Care event and was happy to support this initiative.

There were no questions for Chairs of Committees. Therefore, the Mayor asked members to note the date of the next meeting and, there being no further business, declared the meeting closed.