

Agenda



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate

Date: Monday, 22 March 2021

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

To: Councillors C Evans (Chair), G Berry, M Whitcutt, I Hayat, J Richards, M Al-Nuaimi, C Ferris, M Kellaway and M Linton

Item	Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies</u>
2	<u>Declaration of Interest</u>
3	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th January 2021 (Pages 3 - 10)</u>
4	<u>Enforcement of COVID Business Restrictions (Pages 11 - 20)</u>
5	<u>Active Travel (Pages 21 - 30)</u>
6	<u>Conclusion of Committee Reports</u> Following the completion of the Committee reports, the Committee will be asked to formalise its conclusions, recommendations and comments on previous items for actioning.
7	<u>Scrutiny Adviser Reports (Pages 31 - 36)</u> a) Forward Work Programme Update (Appendix 1)

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Date of Issue: Monday, 15 March 2021

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Minutes

Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate

Date: 18 January 2021

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Evans (Chair), G Berry, M Whitcutt, I Hayat, J Richards, M Al-Nuaimi and C Ferris

In Attendance: Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance), Owen James (Assistant Head of Finance - Technical and Development), Amie Garwood-Pask (Senior Finance Business Partner (Budget Strategy)), Alastair Hopkins (Senior Finance Business Partner (Place & Corporate)), Paul Jones (Head of City Services), Rhys Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change), Tracey Brooks (Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing), Gareth Price (Head of Law & Regulation) and Neil Barnett (Scrutiny Adviser)

Apologies: Councillors K Critchley

1 Declaration of Interest

None

2 Minutes of the previous meetings held on 5 November 2020 and 19 November 2020

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 5 November 2020 and 19 November 2020 were **accepted** as a true and accurate record.

3 2021-22 Budget and Medium Term Financial Projections

Attendees:

- Paul Jones – Head of City Services
- Rhys Cornwall – Head of People and Business Change
- Meirion Rushworth – Head of Finance
- Owen James – Assistant Head of Finance
- Amie Garwood-Park – Senior Finance Business Partner

Finance and Non-Service

Proposal 9 – N/A – Increase council tax increase from 4% base assumption by 1% to 5%

The Head of Finance gave an overview of the budget position which had followed a similar process to previous years. The budget gap was £4.1 million in September of last year. Officers had then looked at planning savings down to half a million by the time the settlement was brought forward, and so the budget was almost balanced at this point. Grant funding received just before Christmas was £9 million better than expected. Population numbers were used as a large part of this calculation and the numbers being used for Newport historically had been too low. This had now been corrected and so we had received more money this year. Also, rather than it being phased in, the grant was made in full which had

made it significantly better for the council this year. The final budget would be set in February following feedback received and considered.

Members asked the following:

- Members commented that the report states the Council is £9 million better off than anticipated, but also states that “given all of these challenges, at least another £9 million has to be found by 2025 based on current planning assumptions and projections. It was then asked if that £9 million has not obviated the necessity to find further savings and if we are still in a challenging position.

It was advised that Cabinet will decide what it wants to do with the additional settlements that we received this year. There are a number of future budget pressures and budget investments that are required and need to be considered in the budget. Assumptions have been made about what the settlements will be in those future years, and those assumptions need to be considered before February’s Cabinet meeting and Council in March.

The Head of Finance then advised that based on the on the 1% increase in our RSG each year, the 4% on Council Tax each year and the pressures that have already been identified in those future years, we still have that £9million . The second figure of £9million for future years are purely coincidental. It was advised that we are still in a challenging position.

For additional context, the committee were advised that within the draft Cabinet report, included was the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the £9million is the budget gap for future year and around the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) plus 1% council tax each year. These are planning assumptions and not decisions at this point because it is in the future. The budget pressures that are identified in the MTFP for the future years lead up to that gap.

- Members commented on point 1.5 in the Cabinet report – **“The public sector has faced a prolonged period of real term reductions and funding levels for a number of years and core spending is still below 2009/9 levels, in real terms.”** Have we not really recovered from the 2008 crash?

It was advised that we still have not caught up. If we took our grant funding back then, and with rising inflation to where we are now, that would be our expected ground level.

- Members then queried point 3.16 in the Cabinet report – It alludes that there is hope of not allowing individual school reserves build up, but on page 48 it states that the decline in school reserves is a concern?

It was explained that school reserves have reduced significantly quickly over the last three years. There are 4-5 secondary schools that have individually large deficits. We are still on the positive side in school reserves but there are little left. There has been a underspend this year due to schools not physically being open because of Covid-19. Most of the Primary schools are overspending, but have positive reserves and will still do so after this year, but this is an area to keep an eye on. Members were also advised that there is ongoing work being done with deficit schools to ensure that they are bringing forward recovery plans. The draft Budget is planning to fund next years schools cost increases. The cost next year is uncertain but the intention is to confirm when it is known.

- Members asked for clarification in point 3.15 of the Cabinet report that states the draft Budget makes provision for schools to receive investment of up to £4.9 million, which represents a 4.6% growth in the schools budget. Is this a significant increase? Members then queried about the level of the budget compared to past years which had reduced from not increasing council tax and due to austerity, and asked if this was the reason we are currently behind.

Members were advised that it is a significant increase. The Head of Finance did not have the figures, but we have seen the settlements either reduce in cash terms or increase by not keeping up in real terms, which has been a problem. It is also linked with demand increases and budget increases from a growing city, such as new schools and demand for more social care. The grant funding is not increasing enough to cover the budget demands. It was also clarified that council account accounts for 25% of the council's funding, the RSG is the main issue.

- It is proposed to raise council tax by 5%, with the announced settlement we would still be in benefit if council tax was not raised. Would the Head of Finance advocate this, or is it not economically prudent?

Members were advised that this decision would be down to Cabinet. From a finance perspective, the Head of Service advised that Newport has lower council tax than almost all of Wales. Missing a year of increase would be problematic as it would take a long time to catch up.

- Members queried Objective No 10 on page 199 in the Cabinet report – **“Work with partner agencies and 3rd sector to provide advice and assistance to those with debts and financial problems.”** Is the service area confident that this action will be completed by the 1st March 2021 end date, and with some of the extra money to invest, could it be used to engage with people that do not normally face financial worries due to loss of income?

The Head of Service advised that this relates to council tax arrears, and for residents who contact us regarding their arrears, the Revenues Team make sure that where appropriate, they get referred to agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau. Residents are also made aware of the council tax reduction scheme and how to check if they are entitled.

The Chair thanked the invitees for attending.

City Services

Proposal 3 – STR2122/02 – Charges for non-household waste taken to Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)

The Head of City Services advised that currently the Council does not charge for materials under the waste regulations, but are allowed to charge for certain types of wastes. The proposal is to introduce a small charge for two items of waste, tyres and plasterboard.

Members asked the following:

- Members advised that they receive numerous complaints about tyres being dumped in their ward and it seems to be a problem throughout the city. Comment was then made that imposing a charge to take tyres to the HWRC might not be a wise thing to do as it could increase fly tipping.

Members were advised that if tyres are not charged at the point of disposal, then they are being paid for from their council tax. It is deemed that this is a fairer charge towards those who are disposing of more tyres. In terms of fly tipping, the Head of Service advised that it is mostly people that are involved in other forms of crime, such as white vans that charge to dispose of waste but do not have a proper duty of care. The Head of Service then advised the committee that there has been a lot of work this year in terms of surveillance and prosecution for flytipping, which will feed into next year.

- Has the additional waste and fly tipping that has been accumulated during lockdown created any additional pressures on the budget for the way services we are running?

Members were advised that waste that was usually produced in work is now being generated at home, so the Council have to provide more resources to do those collections. It has not put a strain on refuse collections as the most of the increase are recyclable materials, however extra food waste in particular has put a strain on the budget. The budget proposals that have been drawn together are under the assumption that at some stage life will return to normal, which could take a year or more but it is a risk if the patterns do stay the same, as domestic collections require more resources.

- Concern was raised about extreme weather events, which are happening more often. Are the service area confident they will have the capacity and financial ability to deal with this increased risk, and would more funding be needed?

The Head of Service advised that this is a challenge, especially for flooding. A concern is in terms of what council can do, and expectations from the public of what council can and allowed to do, can sometimes be greater than reality. Climate change has had a huge impact. Once we can maintain systems we have and carry along our current projections, we can look at making small improvements. It is not a budget issue as such, it is that often these events are point events. Members were then advised that the service area are always looking at ways to improve.

Proposal 4 – STR2122/05 – Streetworks – Increased Fees and Charges

The Head of City Services advised that this proposal is a specific significant increase for the fees and charges that utility companies pay whenever they dig up the road. This had been reviewed over the last two years and the proposal is to move the charges in line with neighbouring authorities. It will generate around £20,000 of income.

Members had no questions for this proposal.

Proposal 5 – STR2122/06 – Creation of pay and display car park Mill Parade

The Head of City Services advised Mill Parade car park was one of the few remaining highways car parks without a story. The service itself did not originally envisage as a saving, it was meant to try and resolve issues in the car park but it does generate income so it needs consultation. It was hoped that the proposal of the creation of a pay and display system would help resolve issues in the car park. The fees would be in line with the fees at Maindee car park.

Members asked the following:

- Comment was made that the charges may turn be a turn off for visitors, and asked if we could stay mindful where to ask people to park.

Members were advised that one of the issues for visitor to the Transporter Bridge Visitor Centre is there is nowhere to park, but this is an ideal place for visitors as it is so close to the centre. It would help free up space to use as a car park and stop it being used as a dumping ground.

Members queried if the first hour of parking could be free? The Head of Service advised that the savings are based on those charges.

Proposal 7 – New fees and charges within cemetery services

The Head of City Services advised the fees and charges come into two categories. The first is around public health funerals, which are funerals that the Council are legally required to undertake for people who have died and we are unable to track their family. Previous, this was outsourced to a private contractor but it is proposed for an operational change so the Council do those works ourselves. It will provide some savings but it is more operational and improving efficiency.

The second is a change of charges, as are there some that have not been updated in years. Example was given to the committee of test digging. This would be a small increase of income compared to other fees but it is listed to consulted as they effect the public They are relatively small income compared to the overall income generated from the cemeteries but listed to consult as they effect public.

Members asked the following:

- Members queried test digging and asked what happens if the Council's records are incorrect, somebody pays for the dig and then find out that there are 3 people in a grave, but there are only 2?

Members were advised that in those instances the charge would not be levied.

- Are the charges from the Council sent to the bereaved or to the funeral director?

Members were advised that it depends on the arrangement. Normally deals are arranged through the funeral director as a go between through people's insurance, but it can vary.

The Chair thanked the invitees for attending.

Regeneration Investment and Housing

Proposal 8 – RIH2122/04 – Information Station move to Central Museum and Library

The Head of Regeneration Investment and Housing advised that the decision to relocate the Information Station was taken previously, so this proposal relates to the savings associated with the move. The Council do not own the Old Station Building, it is owned by a company named Arch Co, and the Council have to pay rent for the Ground and First Floors. The savings made from not paying the rent have been taken to pay for the relocation works. The balance of the savings would be £117,000 by not paying the balance of the rent.

Members asked the following:

- Members were advised that the decision to relocate the Information Station was made in 2019 and is already tied up with the idea that we use the Ground and First Floor as an incubation type networking hub, so this in process of being delivered as a regeneration project.

- Members asked if there is any possibility of the space vacated being used, or for a linked purpose?

Members were advised that the Ground Floor is already been in process of securing an operator. Officers have been speaking to the firm all throughout lockdown to understand their position and make sure that their requirements have not changed, and they are still interested in the move.

- Members asked for clarification on whether the savings that will be made each year, are they for the life of the lease that we have on the Information Station, and will those savings be put back into the Central Library afterwards?

The Head of Service confirmed that it would be the balance of the remaining term, which is 7 and a half years. following the expiry of the council lease, it will be open for all existing occupiers to discuss a new lease with the freeholder. There has been a lot of engagement over what is provided in the new location of the Information Station and necessary budget to deliver those are in place.

- Members queried Budget Investment RIH9 – **Norse Joint Venture – Increased contract payment as a result of assumed 2% uplift each year from 20/21** and asked for a brief explanation of the payment. The Head of Service advised she did not have these details to hand but would send would send the details to the committee.

The Chair thanked the invitees for attending.

Conclusion – Comments to the Cabinet

The committee noted the Draft Budget Proposals relevant to the Place and Corporate Service Areas and agreed to forward the minutes to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.

The Committee wished to make the following comments to the Cabinet on the Proposals within the Place and Corporate Service Areas:

Proposal 3 – STR2122/02 – Charges for non-household waste taken to Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)

- The Committee were concerned that any charges could result in an increase of flytipping which would also burden the budget, and hope that there is a contingency plan in place in case this was to happen. A suggestion was made that extra investment would be used for the Pride of Newport to help concerns about increases of flytipping and to clean up any potential hotspots.
- Further investment suggestions were made for the service area to employ additional Enforcement Officers and more CCTV in known flytipping hotspots.

Proposal 5 – STR2122/06 – Creation of pay and display car park Mill Parade

- Members had a robust conversation and agreed with the proposal to turn this into a public car park, to improve security at the site. However, concern was raised in relation to the proposed charges and whether they would deter visitors. Some Members suggested one hour free parking, while others suggested free parking all day but with some sort of voucher scheme. A Member also stated that they would also welcome the views of the Ward Members.

- The committee acknowledged that this would not deliver the Medium Term Financial Plan income and it would be some time before the Transporter Bridge was re-opened as a visitor attraction. Therefore, they asked Cabinet to consider all of these issues when making a final decision on this budget proposal.

Proposal 8 – RIH2122/04 – Information Station move to Central Museum and Library

- The Committee praised the service the Information Station has provided the residents of Newport, but voiced concerns of any possibility that some services could be lost during the transfer. The committee wished to seek assurance that we maintain the range of services that are provided whilst completing the transfer.

Proposal 9 – N/A – Increase council tax increase from 4% base assumption by 1% to 5%

- The committee acknowledged the proposal for the increase. Members then suggested if some money from the future investments could be used to focus on engaging with people that do not normally face financial worries due to loss of income.

The meeting terminated at 5.45 pm

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Information Report

Scrutiny

Part 1

Date: 22.03.21

Subject Enforcement of COVID Business Restrictions

Purpose To ensure members are briefed on the work of Regulatory Services in relation to restrictions placed on businesses to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and help keep customers and workers safe.

Author Matthew Cridland

Ward City wide

Summary The officers of Regulatory Services [Commercial Standards], mostly Trading Standards and Licensing Professionals, have carried out advice and enforcement functions during the coronavirus emergency. This has involved inspections, patrols, issuing notices, closing businesses and taking licenced premises to review. The teams across the service have shown innovation, commitment and determination in their efforts to balance compliance advice and enforcement.

Proposal To update members in respect of the work of Regulatory Services in relation to restrictions placed on businesses to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and help keep customers and workers safe.

Action by Matthew Cridland

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Service of Law and Regulation
- Gwent Police

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Update Report:



Council Enforcement of COVID Business Restrictions

Introduction

In March 2020, Wales, along with the other nations of the United Kingdom, entered lockdown and the freedoms enjoyed by individuals and the rights for a business to operate, were curtailed in order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus virus.

Government identified that various agencies were well placed to ensure the laws were enforced.

- The police were made responsible for most restrictions on individuals. This involved limitations on people gathering and essential travel, amongst many similar rules.
- Councils accepted the responsibility for the many rules placed on the way businesses deal with members of the public; particularly in the retail setting.
- The Health and Safety Executive were responsible for issues such as services provided in the home and larger industrial factories.

The purpose of this report is to make members aware of the activities of council officers in their efforts to ensure that businesses operated safely during the periods of restriction and lockdown.

The report will seek to explain the various waves of business restrictions and the effect of these on the traders in Newport and the response of officers.

Summary of Outputs

Since 25 March 2020, officers have completed the following interactions:

- Provided businesses with advice on 2,500 occasions
- Completed 3,000 inspections
- Assessed compliance on 4,276 occasions (74% were compliant; 16% became compliant immediately after being advised; and 10% required further investigation)
- 45 Premises Improvement Notices were issued
- 7 Premises Closure Notices were issued
- 3 Licence Reviews Brought
- 5 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued
- 10 Compliance Notices were issued

This work has made Newport a safer place and the data not only shows the volume of work being done by our teams but also the fact that businesses really do need support 'to get it right' as only three quarters were compliant prior to intervention. Welsh Government made it a requirement for many notices to be published on the [internet](#).

Many of the inspections to licensed premises were with partners in the police and a special community safety warden has provided increased support in recent months.

Initial Lockdown

The initial lockdown in March 2020 saw requirements for many businesses to suspend trading. The types of businesses required to close included:

- Cafes and restaurants
- Shops selling non-essential goods
- Close contact service businesses such as hairdressers and beauty parlours
- Pubs and nightclubs

A number of businesses were allowed to remain open. These were businesses providing essential goods and services and included:

- Food retailers
- Supermarkets
- Takeaways
- Building supplies
- Car services and repairs
- Bicycle shops

These 'essential' businesses were permitted to trade as long as they undertook an assessment of the risk within their premises and took measures to minimise the spread of the infection. Measures included:

- Controlling the numbers of customers inside premises
- Controlling the queues to enter the premises
- Ensuring customers and staff socially distanced (staying 2 metres apart)
- Hygiene measures
- Adequate information and signage

During the early days of the lockdown, officers were required to work from home unless travel was identified as being 'absolutely necessary'. This was the period when rates of infection were very high.

The response from officers across Regulatory Services was to use the services' business database to identify all Newport's businesses and contact as many as possible, to ensure those required to close were closed and those permitted to open operated safely.

A 'duty line' was established and publicised through the council's media outlets. This provided members of the public with a reporting mechanism and allowed businesses an opportunity to speak to officers and obtain guidance on operating safely. Welsh Government quickly produced information describing how all businesses could establish safe systems of operation. The service then set up a 'Response Officer' system to ensure there was always an officer available to carry out a site visit immediately if a problem arose.

There were many calls and discussions at this early stage as businesses were confused as to which category they belonged. For example; if a business is known as a toy shop, but sells bicycles,

questions were asked as to whether it was a non-essential trader (toy shop) and should close; or an essential trader (bicycle shop) and could remain open. Then, if it opened, there was further confusion as to whether it was allowed to sell non-essential items. These were the issues that were being put to the duty officers.

At this time, officers carried out many surveillance visits to check whether 'closed businesses' were illegally open. Investigations discovered pubs operating from their beer garden and hairdressers operating 'at home'.

During this time, certain businesses and individuals took advantage of the pandemic in order to make money. Other businesses simply misunderstood their responsibilities to the detriment of their customers. The service dealt with the following issues:

- Consumer and business facing COVID scams.
- Consumers facing 'price gouging'. (A practice whereby a business inflates the price of goods in short supply and customers are then charged higher prices than those advertised).
- Consumers refused refunds for cancelled holidays and events.
- Businesses selling PPE with claims of protection that were untrue.
- Businesses selling hand sanitiser that failed standards.
- An individual selling counterfeit NHS merchandise.

Easing of Restrictions

As the spring became the summer and infections reduced, government was able to ease restrictions. This increased the complexity of trading safely and thereby the way in which enforcement was carried out.

Officers often dealt with issues on a sector-by-sector basis.

Essential Business Inspections: Officers began a programme of compliance audits at businesses such as supermarkets, mini-markets and food retailers. Issues encountered included:

- Failure to adhere to social distancing requirements
- Queue management
- Poor signage
- Hygiene safeguards
- Appropriate one way systems

Non-Essential Businesses: This group of traders was permitted to open in the summer and officers were concerned. These businesses had no experience of operating during the pandemic, so there was a risk they may make mistakes. In addition, the public were being allowed more freedom (and were quite excited to be out in the shops again) and there had been scenes of over-crowding when the shops opened in England a week or so earlier.

To ensure that there was a safe reopening officers engaged early with the shops in the city centre and the retail parks. In addition, there were conversations with the landlords of retail centres.

Advice and guidance was given and businesses committed to opening safely.

On the day of the opening officers attended all the major shopping sites in Newport and oversaw a calm and sensible reopening.

The media were particularly interested in the opening of Newport's Primark store (the scene of overcrowding elsewhere in the UK). Officers attended the shop and were confident that the systems inside the store were robust; but the key cause for concern, as expected, was the large group of customers queuing to gain entry. Officers spoke to the managers at the store, encouraged, and advised them how to organise the queue safely whilst not impeding the entry to other stores nearby and members of the public walking by. This action ensured that when the matter was reported by the press online; the story was not about people breaking the law; but was instead about people waiting patiently and safely to enter the shop.

Pub Gardens and Outside Hospitality: Initially pubs and similar licensed premises were only permitted to open for outside drinking and eating as long as patrons complied with social distancing.

The Licensing Team identified that 'out-of-town' pubs etc. would be well suited to this new open-air approach; but the same could not be said of the city centre businesses due to the proximity of busy roads. Discussions were held between officers in Licensing, City Services and Regeneration, which were then opened up to business groups and the police.

A project group then ensured that key roads were closed; namely, High Street, Cambrian Road and Market Street. This would allow a safe environment to city centre customers and visitors to the centre. Grants were also made available for street furniture and barriers.

Therefore, when the rules changed, city centre pubs were still able to trade.

It is with regret that within days of opening for outside drinking, one premises failed to obey the rules and opened as a nightclub. As hospitality reopened, nightclubs, due to the additional risks of mixing, consuming alcohol, dancing and cavorting, remained banned. A ban on loud music was also recommended to ensure people did not need to shout and thereby increase the risk of transmission.

Despite interactions with the business and its presence at most of the partnership meetings, one particular premises refused to heed the advice. This business was 'The Courtyard' a nightclub very popular with younger adults in Newport. The Courtyard ignored requests to shut their business by midnight and advertised the reopening of their club nights with social media flyers stating DJs would be playing until 2 a.m.

In the days that followed the event; the service received intelligence of broken rules. The music was heard from streets away and a social media video clip was circulated widely. The clip showed people intoxicated and dancing; social distancing was not evident in the clip; the DJs were clearly visible playing very loud music; and door staff were seen on the dancefloor observing the goings-on.

Officers seized CCTV and observed many breaches of the rules and focussed on the one issue. Whether or not the business was illegally operating as a nightclub. The CCTV observed late night opening; loud music; dancing; and drinking. It was determined to be a nightclub.

Officers requested the premises attend a Licence Review. The case was presented to committee and the licence was suspended for a 3-month period. The committee stating the premises 'had no consideration for its staff or its customers' safety'.

Barbers, Hairdressers and Close Contact Businesses etc.: When this group of traders was permitted to open, officers were again concerned due to the close contact in these premises that made social distancing impossible leading to the reliance on PPE. Government issued guidance that was enshrined in the regulations. Such businesses had new rules with which to contend.

- They had to operate by appointment only.
- They required tracing systems to be in place.
- PPE and face coverings were mandatory.
- Social distancing was required for those waiting.

Compliance was difficult with a number of businesses. Partly due to the guidance changing frequently and because the way many barbers operated was by walk-in appointments and often acted as a social hub. The new rules went against the entire business model. It was necessary to issue a number of improvement notices after education and encouragement had not achieved the right result.

Pubs and Cafes Open Indoors: In late summer pubs, restaurants and cafes reopened with many conditions. This reopening caused another major issue.

Restrictions put in place by government included:

- Social distancing
- People at a table needed to be from the same household (or support 'bubble')
- They required tracing systems to be in place.
- One way systems
- Hygiene safeguards
- Maximum capacity
- Serving time restrictions
- Many businesses found ways to comply with the new laws.
- Some pubs found it difficult and asked for help.
- Others ignored the laws.

Partnership working with the police became a real success story at this time. Joint patrols were commonplace and intelligence sharing was stepped up. It is a fact that the work of the council officers was made much easier due to the committed support from colleagues in Gwent Police.

Issues encountered included:

- Failure to social distance
- Mixing of households
- Poor tracing procedure
- Poor management of the systems in place

Many pubs were given Premises Improvement Notices and some ordered to close.

Colleagues in Environmental Health, responsible for investigating clusters of inspections identified many instances where an infected person entered a pub or bar and caused infections.

This issue led to the next major investigation.

In September 2020 at the Breeze Bar. CCTV evidence was viewed by Newport City Council Trading Standards, which showed the VIP area of the bar operating with disregard for the reasonable measures to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus. The CCTV highlighted the lack of social distancing and people mixing. The outcome of the breach of the Regulations resulted in NHS Public Health Wales stipulating that a number (cluster) of positive Covid 19 cases attended Breeze. Officers requested the premises attend a Licence Review.

The case was presented to committee and the licence was suspended for two weeks, conditions were also added to the premises licence.

Firebreak Lockdown

With infections rising towards the second wave, Government ordered a firebreak lockdown for two weeks starting on 23 October 2020. This reintroduced many of the main restrictions on businesses from the first lockdown. This time it was recommended that non-essential items were not sold at essential shops.

Officers again carried out patrols checking that businesses closed as required. Visits to essential premises continued.

Post Firebreak Reopening

This period saw considerable inspection work in the run up to Christmas. Shops seemed to be getting busier and officers stepped up their presence at licensed premises and food retail, particularly supermarkets.

Infection rates were still rising. A curfew was placed on alcohol sales at shops. Officers completed test purchase operations and fined a number of off licence premises.

Then in December, Government announced the latest lockdown.

Latest Lockdown

Again, all non-essential business were closed unless they could operate a click-and-collect service.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

- Usually legislation takes years to be implemented; but the restriction regulations are being drafted without the usual consultation; and officers have found out about new rules at the same time as the public, with mere days until implantation. Officers were required to adapt quickly and get the message out to the public and traders. Excellent support was available from the PR Team.

- The approach adopted by officers has been based as ever on the 4 E's approach to enforcement: [Engage. Explain. Encourage. Enforce]. This has allowed officers to create an environment where businesses can be coaxed into obeying the law and saving formal enforcement for those that are either persistent rule breakers or allow significant breaches to take place).
- Welsh Government enforcement funding was made available in October 2020. The funding has paid for 2 x Compliance Officers, 1 x COVID Marshall and 1 x Database Officer. By March 2020, these officers have completed 1,455 assessments of business compliance and provided advice on 185 occasions. They have been excellent additions to the teams and the work of the service would have been quite difficult without their superb and tireless contribution. The Trading Standards and Licensing Management Team decided that the resource would be best used as patrol officers carrying out high numbers of visits with the remit of – find a problem and report it – then Trading Standards Officers and Licensing Officers would carry out follow up work – thereby allowing the officers with the in-depth knowledge to focus on identified problems.
- Trading Standards and Licensing Officers have taken forward the enforcement programme. Initially, seven of their number left the service to support the COVID effort in other teams. For a significant period there was a small core group of officers and managers leading on this work; the commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism of these officers is commended. I am very proud to have worked with this group over the last year.
- I have no doubt their efforts have made Newport a safer place to live and work.

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Active Travel Update: Performance Scrutiny Committee - The Place and Corporate Committee 22nd March 2021

Page 21



Agenda Item 5

Active Travel Act:

'The **Active Travel (Wales) Act** 2013 aims to make **active travel** the most attractive option for most shorter journeys. Its purpose is to enable more people to undertake **active travel**, meaning more people can enjoy the benefits of **active travel**.'

Link to Active Travel animated video: <https://youtu.be/aqnX5ZstYWM>

How are Schemes considered?

Page 22 There are a number of platforms that we will engage with which enables us to consider future schemes:

- Local Transport Plan
- Public Consultation (Active Travel Network Map Review)
- Public Feedback, Anti-Social behaviour considerations

When reviewing which Schemes to take forward for funding it is important that:

Feasibility - of the route is taken into consideration

Connectivity - ensuring we are building a network of Active Travel routes that link to each other

Access - enabling walkers and cyclists of all abilities the opportunity to consider active travel journey's

Km's of route in 2014:

6.6km of cycle routes

(2.7km traffic free and 3.9km on road)

Km's of route to date:

20km +

The works have included bridges, crossing points, junction improvements and signage.

Current map: showing Existing Active Travel routes (Red) and Suggested Integrated Cycle Network (Blue). This map was created at the last consultation of 2015 and since then some routes have now been completed. This map will be updated as part of the forthcoming Network Map Review



Schemes completed: 2014 to date Funding 5 year total: £5.14 milion	Schemes currently in build: Funding 20/21 - £3 million	21/22 bids submitted to Welsh Government: Funding Core Allocation:£751K Funding Bids: £10 million (awaiting news on funding bids)
Cardiff to Newport	Devon Place Footbridge	Continuation of Devon Place footbridge
Lliswerry City Circular (missing link)	Fourteen Locks bridge link	Lliswerry Pond
Northern Corridor – Develop links through Shaftsbury Park and Caerleon cycle link. Route through Bettws Lane, Bettws Canal. Shaftsbury and Crindau link	Tredegar Park and Golf Course Link	Newport International Sports Village
Southern Corridor – Black Ash Park, installation of three bridges across Lliswerry Pil	Monkey Island	Bettws Canal Link
Resurfacing of Brick Yard Lane and Canal Towpath		City Centre routes
St. David’s School front entrance improvements		Continuation of Fourteen Locks Canal Centre
Coed Melyn		Continuation of Devon Place footbridge
Nash Road		
Corporation Road		
Re-surfacing of Canal Towpath from boundary to Allt-yr-yn		

Completed Active Travel Schemes and an artists impression of The Devon Place Footbridge:



Page 25

Coed-Melyn

Any Questions?



Devon Place
Footbridge
(artist
impression)



Fourteen Locks

Active Travel Network Map Review (ATNM) 2021

As part of the Welsh Government Active Travel consultation, Newport City Council are engaging with partners, public, people with protected characteristics and children to get more people to walk and cycle more.

The new **Active Travel Network Map (ATNM)** will help in creating a safe and attractive environment for walking and cycling in Newport.

3-stage process leading to statutory consultation:

In the initial stage (February / March 2021), we are looking for feedback from all stakeholders and public on the barriers that keep people from walking and cycling in their area. Based on this we will propose a first draft of the Active Travel Network Map for Newport.

The approved Active Travel Network Map will then go into statutory consultation with Welsh Government in Autumn 2021 before the final ATNM will be handed over to Welsh Government by 31/12/2021.

Link to ATNM animated video: https://youtu.be/zfJ3GZ_w-jl

Active Travel Network Map Review – how we are doing so far ...

To date we have received:

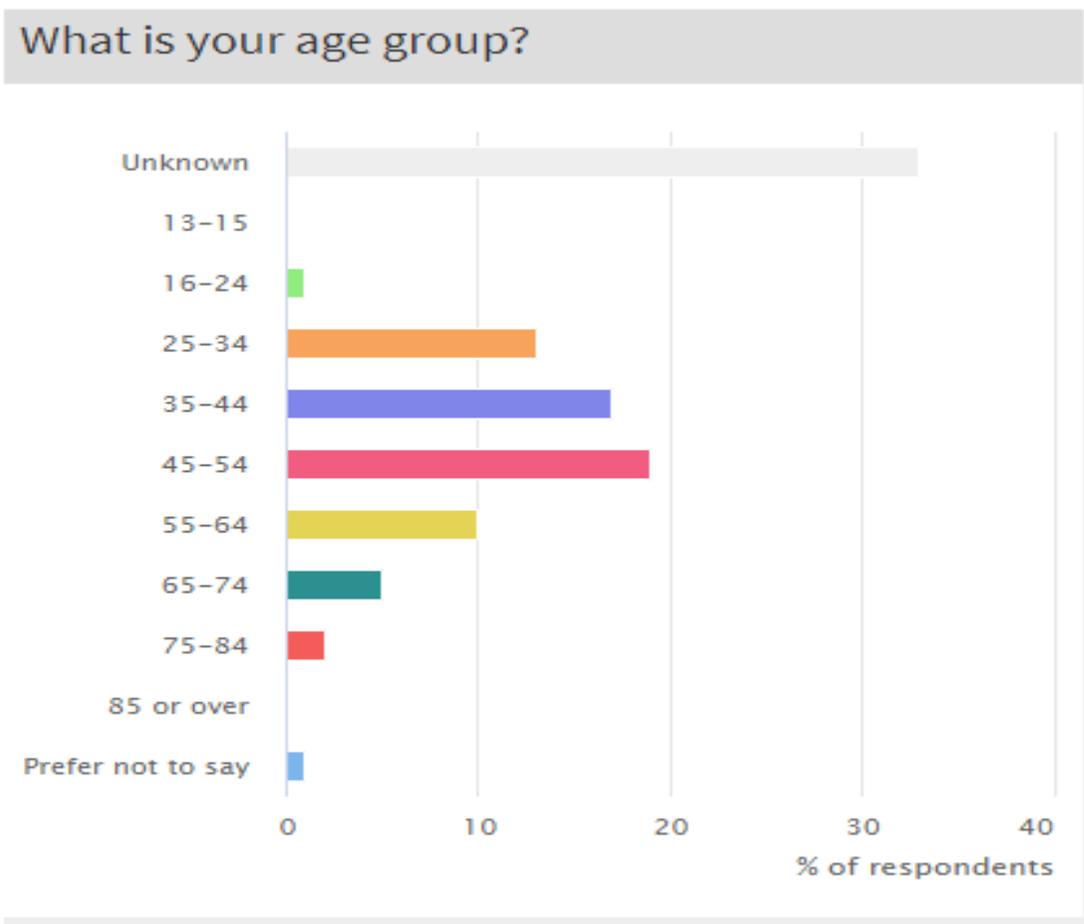
Visitors: **2383**

Total Contributions: **2167**

Comments: **412** (69 in 2017)

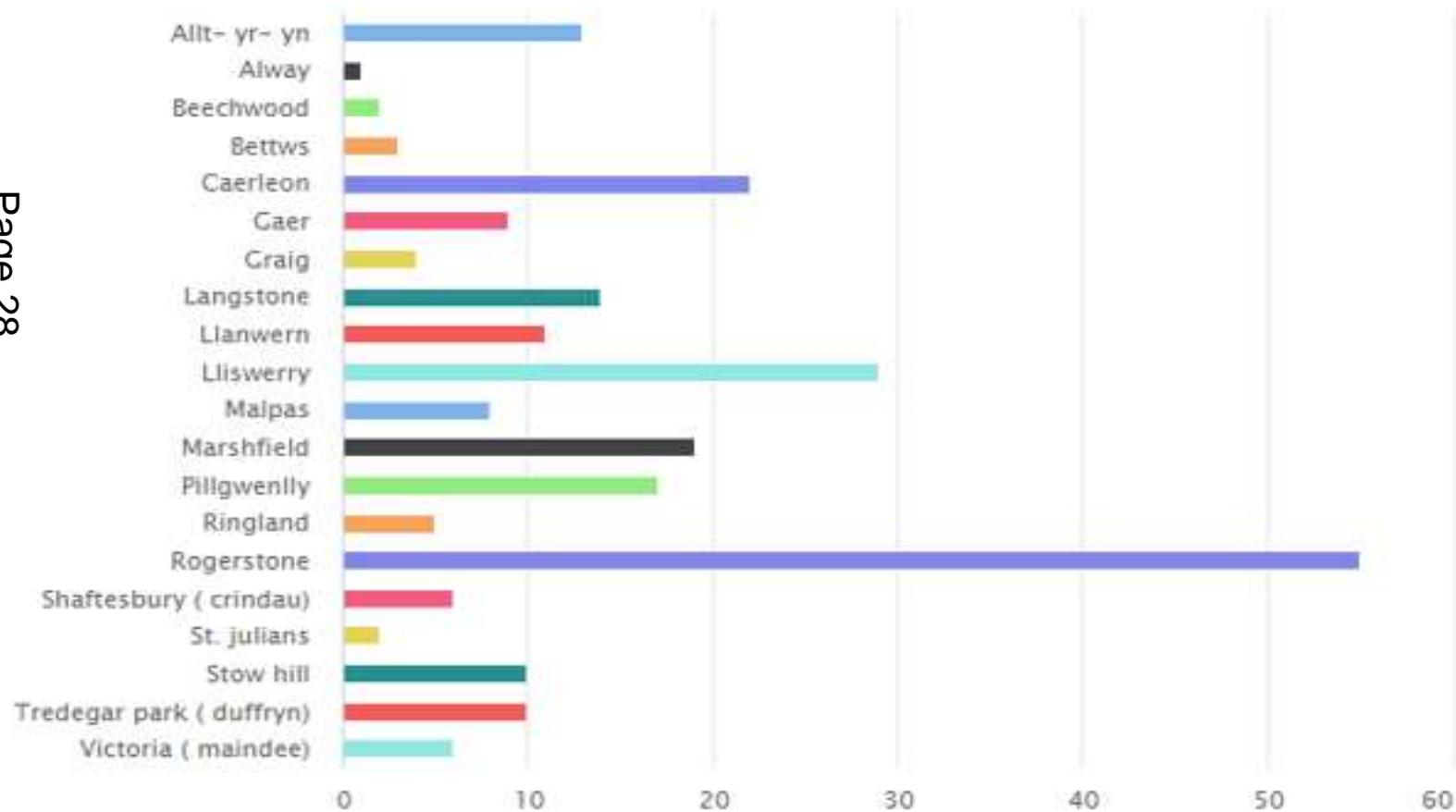
Agreements: **1755**

Page 27



Current geographical spread of responses:

If known, what town is this in?



What happens next?

Next steps are to increase engagement from Schools. Analyse all of the data to enable us to produce the first draft of the Active Travel Network Map for Newport and go back out for public consultation.

Once this is finalised we will submit our approved Active Travel Network Map into statutory consultation with Welsh Government.

Our deadline for submission is December 2021 therefore this is an opportune time for residents and members to comment and support shape the network for the next five years. We are currently at the initial stage.

Any Questions?

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Scrutiny Report

Performance Scrutiny Committee – People

Part 1

Date: 22 March 2021

Subject Forward Work Programme Update

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Role
Neil Barnett	Present the Committee with the draft work programme for discussion and update the Committee on any changes.

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

Committee's Work Programme:

- 1.1 Consider the Committee's Forward Work Programme (**Appendix 1**):
- *Are there any amendments to the topics scheduled to be considered at the next Committee meeting?*
 - *Are there any additional invitees that the Committee requires to fully consider the topic?*
 - *Is there any additional information that the Committee would like to request?*

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 The purpose of a forward work programme is to help ensure Councillors achieve organisation and focus in the undertaking of enquiries through the Overview and Scrutiny function. Effective work programming is essential to ensure that the work of Overview and Scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
- 2.2 Further information about the work programming process, including the procedures for referring new business to the programme, can be found in our Scrutiny Handbook on the Council's Scrutiny webpages (www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny).

- 2.3 The Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.

Forward Work Programme Updates

- 2.4 The Committee's work programme recommenced in September 2020 and is being reviewed in the light of the Council's recovery aims. The revised programme will be managed and implemented by the Scrutiny team under the direction of the Committee Chair.
- 2.5 The Committee agreed to keep a degree of flexibility within its work programme to enable the Committee to respond to urgent / emerging issues. This item is an opportunity for the Committee members to raise any suggested additions to the work programme.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The following information is attached:

Appendix 1: The current Committee forward work programme;

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

- **Forward Work Programme**

Consider:

- Are there any amendments to the topics scheduled to be considered at the next Committee meeting?
- Are there any additional invitees that the Committee requires to fully consider the topic?
- Is there any additional information that the Committee would like to request?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Corporate Assessment, and the subsequent [follow up assessment](#) provide background information on the importance of good work programming. Specific reference is made to the need to align the Cabinet and Scrutiny work programmes to ensure the value of the Scrutiny Function is maximised.
- 5.2 The latest Cabinet work programme was approved by the Cabinet on a monthly basis for the next 12 months and includes the list of reports scheduled for consideration. Effective forward planning by both Cabinet and Scrutiny needs to be coordinated and integrated in relation to certain reports to ensure proper consultation takes place before a decision is taken. A link to the Cabinet work programme is provided [here](#) to the Committee as part of this report, to enable the Committee to ensure that the work programmes continue to reflect key decisions being made by the Cabinet.

6 Risk

- 6.1 If proper work programming procedures are not put in place, the organisation and prioritisation of the work programme is put at risk. The work of Overview and Scrutiny could become disjointed from the work of the rest of the Council, which could undermine the positive contribution Overview and Scrutiny makes to service improvement through policy development.
- 6.2 This report is presented to each Committee every month in order to mitigate that risk. The specific risks associated with individual topics on the work programme will need to be addressed as part of the Committee's investigations.

7 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 7.1 Having proper work programming procedures in place ensures that the work of Overview and Scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services, contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and ensures that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There will be financial consequences for some of the reviews undertaken. These will be commented upon by the Head of Finance as the reports are presented. The preparing and monitoring of the work programme is done by existing staff for which budget provision is available.

7 Background Papers

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Cabinet Work Programme](#)
- The Corporate Assessment and [follow up assessment](#).

Report Completed: March 2021

Appendix 1

**Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate
– Forward Work Programme Update**

Monday, 7 June 2021 at 4pm		
Topic	Information Required / Committee’s Role	Invitees
<p>2020 - 21 Service Plan End of Year Review for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law and Regulation • People and Business Change 	<p>Performance Monitoring - holding the executive to account for the Council’s performance, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of outcomes and actions within service plans; • Scrutinising progress in improvements to areas of poor performance; • Assessing the extent to which performance objectives are contributing to the overall objectives and priorities of the Council including an update upon Corporate Objectives, Actions and Performance Measures. 	<p>Head of Law and Regulation;</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Law and Regulation;</p> <p>Head of People and Business Change;</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Community and Resources.</p>
<p>Draft 2021-22 Annual Forward Work Programme</p>	<p>The committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the draft Annual Forward Work Programme and determine if it wishes to make any amendments to the programme or if further information is required; • Agree the start time for the Committee meetings, and approve the proposed schedule of meetings for 2021-22 	<p>Scrutiny Adviser</p>

Appendix 1

**Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate
– Forward Work Programme Update**

Monday, 21 June 2021 at 4pm		
Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
<p>2020 - 21 Service Plan End of Year Review for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Services • Finance • Regeneration Investment and Housing 	<p>Performance Monitoring - holding the executive to account for the Council's performance, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of outcomes and actions within service plans; • Scrutinising progress in improvements to areas of poor performance; • Assessing the extent to which performance objectives are contributing to the overall objectives and priorities of the Council including an update upon Corporate Objectives, Actions and Performance Measures. 	<p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>Head of City Services;</p> <p>Cabinet Member for City Services;</p> <p>Head of Finance;</p> <p>Head of Regeneration Investment and Housing.</p>