

Minutes



Council

Date: 19 July 2022

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Reeks, S Cocks, E Stowell-Corten, Harris, A Screen, James, T Harvey, Howells, P Bright, Peterson, A Pimm, D Batrouni, Jenkins, P Drewett, Davies, Adan, M Pimm, C Baker-Westhead, Reynolds, Howells, A Sterry, Horton, J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Al-Nuaimi, D Harvey, M Kellaway, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, J Mudd, M Spencer, K Thomas, C Townsend, K Whitehead, J Clarke, Y Forsey, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, A Morris, Hussain and B Perkins.

Apologies: Councillors Jones, M Evans, D Fouweather and T Watkins

1. Preliminaries

1.i Apologies

The Presiding Member reported that apologies for absence had been received from members as shown above.

1.ii Declarations of Interest

None.

1.iii Presiding Member's Announcements

The PM thanked all staff for continuing their work during the heatwave. He also thanked the Dean for the Civic Sunday service on 26 June 2022 and reminded members about his message to AMs, PMs and Councillors about respecting their position in authority.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of 1 March and 17 May 2022, were accepted as a true record.

3. 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. The motion was seconded by Councillor Fouweather.

Resolved: That the appointments set out in the report to Council be agreed, together with the following additional appointments.

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	No of Vacancies / Re-appointments	Nominations Received
St Marys RC Primary School	Reappointment	Nicholas Clark
Lliswerry High School	Replacement	Cllr Mark Howells
Langstone Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Martyn Kellaway
Llanmartin Primary School	Replacement	Cllr William Routley
Bassaleg School	Replacement	Cllr John Harris
Bridge Achievement Centre	Replacement	Cllr Stephen Marshall
Caerleon Comprehensive School	Replacement	Cllr Claire Baker-Westhead
Caerleon Comprehensive School	Replacement	Cllr Stephen Cocks
Caerleon Lodge Hill Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Claire Baker-Westhead
Charles Williams School	Replacement	Cllr Stephen Cocks
Crindau Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Lauren James
Gaer & Maesglas Partnership School	Replacement	Cllr Dimitri Batrouni
Langstone Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Martyn Kellaway
Llanmartin Primary School	Replacement	Cllr William Routley
Malpas CiW Primary School	Replacement	Jonathan Gibbons
Marshfield Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Rhian Howells
Marshfield Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Allan Screen
Milton Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Tim Harvey
Milton Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Matthew Pimm
Monnow Primary School	Replacement	Neil Griffiths
Newport High School	Replacement	Cllr Lauren James
Rogerstone Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Bev Davies
St Andrews Primary School	Replacement	Cllr James Peterson
St. Woolos Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Pat Drewett
Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd	Replacement	Cllr Malcom Linton
St. Patrick's RC Primary School	Replacement	Cllr Alex Pimm

Head of Service Appointments

Council was informed that David Walton had been appointed by the Appointments Panel as the new Head of Housing and Communities.

4. 2021/22 Treasury Management Year End Report

The Leader presented the 2021/22 Treasury Management Year End Report. This report was reviewed by both the Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet and no comments or observations requiring the Council's attention were made. It was being presented at this meeting in line with full Council's responsibility for setting the Council's Treasury Management strategy and the various indicators and limits that managed this activity.

The report explained the Council's borrowing and investment activities in 2021/22 and its position against the indicators and limits set.

Regarding borrowing, a substantial difference can be viewed relative to the expected position. The Council had a long-term requirement to borrow and in pursuing an internal borrowing strategy, should normally have minimal investments (spare cash) which it invested over the short term.

Due to the on-going impacts of the Covid pandemic, following a second year of significant capital expenditure slippage, the take up of expected borrowing did not materialise. The 'need' to borrow was there and would happen but slippage meant that this did not materialise as quickly as expected.

This second year of significant underspending and the resulting increase in reserves, yet to be spent also meant that cash resources were much higher than expected. This allowed some small maturing loans to be repaid without re-financing and for spare cash levels to be high and invested.

As outlined in the report, this was a temporary position and as the Council now works to catch up on capital projects and with the financial support linked to Covid now ended, the council should firstly see cash resources and investments reduce, and then borrowing resume, in line with requirements over time.

Officers were undertaking a detailed review of the capital programme to gain a better understanding of delivery timescales; this would be reported in due course.

On the indicators and limits, the report highlighted one area where these were not met, which was unusual.

The indicator related to the Council's exposure to *interest rate changes*. Borrowing costs increase if the interest rate increases and our income from investing activities would reduce if the interest rate dropped.

Regarding the indicator however, it was noted that the issue was highlighted due to a different interpretation of the Council's LOBO (Lender Option Borrower Option) loans as variable interest loans rather than fixed interest rate loans. It was therefore more of a 'technical' issue as opposed to one caused by borrowing decisions made. Indeed, the report confirmed that given the nature of these LOBO loans, if the interest rate did increase; it was more likely to make a budgetary saving rather than being exposed to the risk of costs increasing.

Regarding the limit, this breach occurred because the amount invested was much greater than that envisaged when setting the indicator. Again, this was of no concern as the Council's budget target for interest receivable did not change and even if rates decreased; it would not impact on that budget.

It was noted that managing the Council's cash-flows was particularly challenging over these last two exceptional years, and the Leader thanked the Finance team for their work during this time.

Councillor D Davies seconded the report

Comments from Councillors:

Councillor Routley referred to page 52, section 9 in the report where it stated that no investments supported Russian Institutes directly and therefore asked were there any investments that were indirectly supporting Russian Institutes. The Leader advised that the appropriate officer would provide a written response.

Councillor Routley observed that under other debt activity, capital finances were raised for Glan Usk School and the Southern Distributor Road. The statement of accounts showed a liability of £39M to pay the operator and therefore asked could the finances be broken down between the School and the SDR. The Presiding Member allowed the question on this occasion and advised that a written response would be provided by the appropriate officer.

Resolved:

That Council noted and agreed the report on treasury management activities for the period 2021-22.

5. Welsh Language Annual Report

The Leader presented the document, highlighting that the Council was required to provide an annual progress report in compliance with the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This report provided a summary of key achievements during the year, and priority areas for future work. These were:

- Working with refugee, migrant, and minority ethnic communities to better embed Welsh language as part of a shared sense of identity across the city, particularly in the context of the development of our fourth Welsh medium primary school.
- Improved, developed, and began to deliver a new Welsh Language Skills Policy. Processes were implemented to allow delivery next year.
- Engaged and consulted with key stakeholders and our communities to inform the development of our new five-year Welsh Language Strategy which was passed with the full support of Council.
- Developed creative partnership arrangements outside of the public and voluntary sector to raise the profile of the Welsh language across Newport. This included working with the Dragons Rugby and Newport County AFC to promote the Welsh language.

The report also identified priorities for the next reporting period, including:

- Working with stakeholders and partners to deliver the new five-year Welsh Language Strategy and embed a performance monitoring framework to assess delivery of objectives.
- Further engagement with Newport's diverse communities to promote the Welsh language, raise awareness and visibility of the language, and continue to develop Welsh medium education and the inclusivity of the language.
- Embed our new performance management structure across the council
- Roll out our newly developed Welsh language training videos to all staff
- Continue to scope and consider Welsh language courses for lapsed speakers, or those that need a confidence boost

Comments from councillors:

Councillor Al-Nuaimi endorsed the report, which should be supported by all members and was very proud to see the difference achieved over the years. Interesting discussion took place in Scrutiny and Councillor Al-Nuaimi wanted to point out two things. Councillor Al-Nuaimi firstly thanked the Chief Education Officer for her clarification with regard to the surplus places in nurseries with a plan in place to promote Welsh in early years education. Secondly it was an ambitious target set by WG to have one million Welsh Speakers by the year 2050, regular reports should progress this yearly to achieve this target and how it was achieved.

Councillor Davies was aware that Education Officers were grateful for the support provided by the Welsh Language Officer and that Newport City Council had very positive feedback from WG. Councillor Davies wanted to therefore convey her thanks for this.

Councillor Hughes conveyed his thanks in Welsh:

Fel yr Hyrwyddwr Aelod Etholedig dros y Gymraeg am y llynedd rwy'n falch o gefnogi gwaith ein swyddogion wrth hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg ac wrth godi proffil y Gymraeg o fewn y cyngor ac ar draws ein cymunedau.

Drwy fod yn rhan o'r broses Grant Cymraeg yn y Gymuned roedd yn arbennig o galonogol gweld faint o ddiddordeb a cheisiadau eithriadol gan grwpiau cymunedol ledled Casnewydd i gynyddu'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg, ei hymwybyddiaeth a'i gwelededd ar draws holl ddinasyddion Casnewydd gan gynnwys y rhai sy'n newydd i'r Ddinas a Chymru.

Mae'r adroddiad yn tynnu sylw at rai meysydd o gynnydd gwirioneddol ynghyd â rhai blaenoriaethau allweddol ar gyfer y flwyddyn nesaf a thu hwnt ac edrychaf ymlaen at weld sut mae'r Gymraeg yn cael ei chroesawu gan holl ddinasyddion Casnewydd, a sut mae ein gweledigaeth o 'Gweld, Clywed, Dysgu, Defnyddio, Caru' yn cefnogi'r Gymraeg fel iaith fyw ym mhob rhan o fywyd ar draws y Ddinas.

In English

'As Elected Member Champion for Welsh language for last year I am proud to support the work of our officers in promoting the Welsh language and in raising the profile of Welsh within the council and across our communities.

Through being involved with the Welsh in the Community Grant process it was especially encouraging to see the amount of interest and exceptional applications from community groups across Newport to increase the use, awareness, and visibility of the Welsh language across all Newport citizens including those new to the City and Wales.

The report highlights some areas of real progress along with some key priorities for the next year and beyond and I look forward to seeing how the Welsh Language is embraced across all Newport citizens, and how our vision of 'See, Hear, Learn, Use, Love' supports Welsh as a living language in all parts of life across the city.

Sylwadau Cabinet y Cynghorydd Hughes

Councillor Hourahine reminded colleagues that this was a retrospective report that went to scrutiny and the next report would show a lot more progress that has taken place.

Councillor Batrouni, the new lead for Equalities and Welsh Language agreed with M Al-Nuaimi's comments as well as thanking Councillor Hourahine for his comments. Councillor Batrouni informed colleagues that 20% of people spoke Welsh in Newport with a 3% increase over the last two years, which meant that Newport City Council would fall short of the 2050 target as raised by Councillor Al-Nuaimi and assured Council that this would be monitored closely and reported yearly. The pandemic however dampened the ability for people to take up Welsh.

Resolved:

That Council approved the attached final monitoring report and agreed to publish it on the Council's website, in accordance with statutory deadlines.

6. Public Spaces Protection Order: PSPO - Dog Control

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Housing and Regulation was pleased to present the new Dog Control Public Spaces Control Order for approval.

Prior to 2015, dog control was managed under site-specific Dog Control Orders for different council-owned open spaces. From October 2014, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) as a new power to deal with antisocial behaviour, including irresponsible dog ownership.

This meant the pre-existing Dog Control Orders was phased out and replaced by PSPOs. Newport City Council's approach, in line with other local authorities, was to combine all matters related to dog control and behaviour into a wider Order, which would benefit all members of the community using council owned and managed land – dog owners and the wider public alike.

The Order was deemed necessary to manage irresponsible dog walking/exercising behaviour that had a detrimental effect on other persons' use and enjoyment of Public Spaces. This ranged from the failure to remove faeces to the uncontrolled behaviour of animals towards people, other animals and wildlife. Of particular significance was the need to control behaviour in areas of play activity, formal sports and in cemeteries, the occurrence of which generated formal complaints to the authority.

The control measures incorporated to the PSPO included banning dogs altogether from certain sensitive areas such as children's play areas, a requirement for dogs to be under control and on leads in certain other public places, and a general requirement for dog owners to clean up dog faeces.

In accordance with the legislation and the statutory guidance, the Council was required to consult with the Police, the general public and key stakeholders such as dog owner clubs and associations and have regard to any consultation responses before deciding to proceed with the PSPO.

The process of public engagement and consultation with key stakeholders was overseen by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Committee agreed to the public consultation exercise at its July 2021 meeting, following which an extensive consultation was carried out.

This included engagement with key groups including for instance sports clubs, sports governing body, kennel club, National Association of Funeral Directors, Wildlife Trust or RSPB.

In addition, banners and notices were produced and erected around the various sites and put on gates notifying the public. The link to the consultation was posted onto social media to help raise awareness. The result was showed a clear majority in favour of implementing the order.

The outcome of the consultation was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in January 2022. The Committee considered the consultation responses and was satisfied that wide engagement had taken place and that there was a need for the control measures included in the proposed PSPO and therefore recommended to council that the proposed PSPO be adopted.

A Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment was also completed. There were no negative outcomes associated with groups or individuals with protected characteristics, and the PSPO would contribute to the development of Green and Safe Spaces which was a key intervention for the Council.

The proposal was now to approve the Dog Control PSPO for a period of three years, as per the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's recommendation.

Comments from councillors:

Councillor Lacey agreed that responsible dog owners cleaned up after their dogs however, this report also related to irresponsible dog owners and therefore fully supported the dog.

Councillor Forsey attended Scrutiny when it was put before the members and also encouraged people to keep their dogs under control around children and in cemeteries and supported the report.

Councillor Whitehead fully supported the report and had campaigned against people not picking up after dogs and the resulting dangers. Councillor Whitehead questioned whether the council had the resources to police this Order.

Councillor Morris supported the report and agreed with Councillor Whitehead's comments and referred to irresponsible dog owners discarding their dog mess but asked about the practicalities of policing this Order and taking action. The Presiding Member advised that the information could be found in the report.

Councillor Davies referred to Beechwood Park, which was well used during lockdown and an had also seen an increase in dogs since lockdown, this meant there were increased incidents in people letting their dog off a lead and frightening children. Councillor Davies fully supported the report.

Councillor M Pimm commented that irresponsible dog owners took their dogs to larger parks with designated areas where dogs could run and suggested that it was a good idea to look at providing more dedicated dog running areas in parks.

Councillor Bright welcomed the report.

Councillor Cleverly also supported the report and suggested that more bins for dog litter be provided.

Resolved:

That, Council adopted and implemented the Dog Control PSPO for 2022 to 2025.

7. Democratic Services Committee Minutes

The Presiding Member had before the council the Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee and asked for seconder, Councillor Corten.

8. Questions to the Leader of the Council

Before Commencement with questions, the Leader made the following announcements to Council:

Coleg Gwent

Colleagues were aware that proposals to create a city centre college campus, providing first-class further education facilities, was taking another step forward.

Pre-planning consultation was launched ahead of an outline application being jointly submitted by the Council and Coleg Gwent.

The Council was working closely with Coleg Gwent and Welsh Government on its plans to bring further education provision into the heart of the city centre.

The Newport Knowledge Quarter would offer excellent learning environments for further and higher education helping to inspire generations of young people.

the Council is also submitting a bid to the UK government's levelling-up fund to support a National Technology Institute in a city centre location. Such an institute would deliver high quality, higher level technical education and training, which would be another valuable and much-needed asset for the city.

These developments were part of our masterplan for the city centre, regeneration projects that would deliver employment, learning and training opportunities, create a more diverse mix of uses and make Newport an attractive place to live in, work in and visit.

Details of the pre-planning consultation were available on the Council's website, and the Leader encouraged colleagues to take a look, share and submit their views.

Continuing on the skills and education theme, the Leader was pleased to advise that the latest community learning offering was launched ready for a September start. After a tricky few years, due to the pandemic we are very pleased to be able to present an extended and extensive offer – including essential skills, GCSEs, modern languages, British Sign Language, digital literacy and independent living skills, to subjects such as carbon literacy where learners could understand their carbon footprint and take steps to reduce their impact on the planet.

From next week, the Kingsway Centre would be home to a new pop-up library. The unit, located very close to the main library building, would ensure that we could continue to provide lending services, access to public computers and some family research resources, while improvement works were carried out on the central library and museum.

Following the completion of the work, some services based at the Information Station would be delivered from the newly refurbished building. The Council's contact centre staff would also be based there.

The move followed the decision to let two floors of the former railway station in Queensway to Tramshed Tech to create co-working space for start-up businesses in the digital, tech and creative sectors.

Upper floors of the building were already occupied by Cardiff University's prestigious National Software Academy making the former railway station home to the cutting-edge digital entrepreneurs of the future.

Our very own Pride Staff Network partnered with Newport Live and PROUD to launch the LGBTQAI+ Community Summer Art Project.

The Pride Staff Network were celebrating a year in formation by working on the project, which was supporting the community Pride event 'Pride in the Port' which would take place in September.

The project would allow community art to be showcased in celebration of 50 years of Pride in the United Kingdom and Newport's first ever community Pride.

As part of the project, they were asking for submissions of artwork that would form the special collection to be displayed at The Riverfront. The art could be in any form; a painting or sculpture, physical form or digital for online use and the subject of the artwork should be someone who's either Welsh or has strong links with Wales, and who openly identifies as LGBTQAI+.

Further details and how to make a submission was available on our website.

Earlier this month, the Deputy Mayor and Leader were honoured to welcome the Queen's Commonwealth Baton relay to Newport, hundreds of Scouts, Guides, Beavers and Brownies helped us ensure it was a very warm welcome!

The baton was making its way to Birmingham, host city of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and would have travelled 90,000 miles around the 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth before finishing its journey later this month.

Athlete Christian Malcom and boxer Sean McGoldrick joined the baton bearers, who had all been nominated for their contributions within Scouting and Guiding, as the striking baton made its way around the track at Newport Stadium.

After the relay, a range of activities including boxing, cycling, aerobics, tennis, squash, football, netball and table tennis were enjoyed by the young people and their leaders alike!

Since Council last met, the Leader was pleased to announce that we have received the official Purple Flag accreditation for the city's evening and night-time economy.

Similar to the Blue Flag for beaches, the Purple Flag scheme aimed to raise the standard and appeal of town and city centres between 5pm and 5am.

Areas awarded the Purple Flag were recognised for providing a vibrant and diverse mix of dining, entertainment and culture while promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and residents.

Highlights from Newport's submission included the invigoration of cafe culture during the pandemic, the proactive work being done around drugs and drink spiking, and the Newport Explorer signage.

There had undoubtedly been a significant change in the evening and night-time offer and atmosphere in the city centre, this was excellent news for businesses and was a tribute to the hard work of our licensing officers and partners, including Newport Now BID and Pubwatch.

Newport had an amazing mix of European-style café culture and traditional pubs, complemented by some excellent restaurants. The city also had fantastic independent businesses providing live music and entertainment.

On behalf of the Council, The Leader offered huge congratulations after not one, but two Newport wins in the prestigious National Teaching Awards for Wales.

Llanwern High won the first ever Betty Campbell Award for Diversity in the curriculum. Betty Campbell's family were at the event and Professor Charlotte Williams, who wrote the recent recommendations for exploring cultural heritage and diversity in the curriculum for Wales presented the award with Jeremy Miles.

The second award was 'New Teacher of the Year' - a category for teachers in years two and three of their career. This was won by Holly Gordon of Ysgol Bryn Derw. Holly also won the South Wales Argus award for the same category earlier in the year. The Minister for Education went to great lengths to stress Holly's expertise and the fact that Newport had the only ASD Special School in Wales.

Congratulations on such amazing achievements.

Questions to Leader

Councillor Routley:

Could more be done to promote anti-bullying strategies.

Leader:

It was important in all work that the Council undertook to promote respect. There was ongoing work in key areas with education partners and colleagues across the schools. Also, policies were in place, including how individuals should act in the workplace. As a learning authority, there was always room for further development.

Supplementary:

Councillor Routley mentioned that children were not resilient and asked was there a way to change the narrative. Was there opportunity to resolve bullying in schools and colleges and support an all-party push to take a brand-new approach on bullying in light of certain tragedies.

Leader:

The Leader reiterated that the Council realised the seriousness of bullying could happen at any age in any setting. The Leader mentioned that Councillor Routley was chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for People and had the opportunity to scrutinize this area and would be most appropriate to discuss in detail. In addition, the Cabinet Member and Chief Education Officer would also be available to delve into this issue should Councillor Routley want to debate these issues in detail.

Councillor Whitehead:

There was concerns around potential fires starting due to the hot weather, especially with the long grass and asked the Leader if there was any contingency or mitigation regarding this issue.

Leader:

There were measures in place as well as ongoing discussions. It would be remiss to not point out the work of the climate change strategy and the current severe hot weather was serious evidence of the way the climate was changing. No Mow May supported the natural habitat, in line with policies. There were however certain wards within Newport that Newport City Homes had responsibility for as well as Newport City Council and we should be mindful of this. In terms of the weather and plans to mitigate this, Civil contingencies had been meeting daily to discuss this and ensure continuity of domiciliary care in Newport.

Supplementary:

Councillor Whitehead hoped that all members took time to listen to residents and be alert and mindful during this time.

Councillor Morris:

Where were we on the issue of travellers and referred to temporary sites that were previously proposed to be in place for travellers ten years ago.

Leader:

There was a high level of public engagement at the time, which was an indication of the interest. From a WG perspective, they required Gypsy Traveller accommodation assessments and although it was stalled during Covid, it was underway. Some authorities had chosen not to address this, but Newport City Council was looking into this. The Assessment was resource intensive, and a lot of officers and officer time was involved in this. These officers were often also dealing with other housing issues. Other challenges around this was that summer led to an increase Gypsy Travellers attendance and these were being managed in line with existing policies.

Supplementary:

Councillor Morris also said that people were frustrated by the lack of progress and if the Leader could inject some urgency as residents and travellers would be happy for it.

Leader:

The Leader made the distinction between a transit site for those visiting during summer months for example and permanent site, where people would have to join the housing register to be allocated a fixed site. There was a lot of ongoing work in relation to eligibility and intense assessment of these applications, the Leader therefore assured Councillor Morris that the work was ongoing.

9. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

There were 10 written questions to the Cabinet Members:

Question 1 – Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member: Education and Early Years

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you

Response:

Thank you for your question.

I am the Cabinet member for Education and Early Years. You will find responsibilities that relate to this role are set out in Appendix 1 of Item 2 on our agenda today – Minutes of 17th May 2022. Members can find this on p.33 of the report pack.

My vision is the shared vision set out by the Labour administration in our manifesto commitments to the people of Newport. These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the Service Area plans will be developed.

I work closely with the Chief Education Officer, Sarah Morgan who is the Head of Service in this area and also with other senior officers. All elected members have been provided with details of the Executive Team and Heads of Service as part of their induction.

Question 2 – Cabinet Member: Community and Wellbeing

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you

Response:

Thank you for your question, I am the Cabinet Member for Communities and Well-being, my responsibilities relating to this role are set out in appendix 1 of item 2 on our agenda today - minutes of 17/05/2022, Members can find this on page 33 of the report pack. My vision is the shared vision set out by the Labour manifesto commitments to the people of Newport. These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the service area plans will be developed. I work closely with my Directors and Heads of Service for People, Policy & Transformation. All elected Members have been provided with details of the Executive Team and Heads of Service as part of their induction after the May election.

Question 3 – Cabinet Member: Strategic Planning, Regulation & Housing

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you.

Response:

Thank you Councillor Morris for your question.

I am the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing.

My responsibilities relating to this role are set out in the 17 May minutes Page 33 and also in appendix one of Item two in our agenda today.

My vision is the shared vision set out by the Labour Administration in our manifesto commitments to the people of Newport. These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the Service Area Plans will be developed.

I work with The Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability as well as working with the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate.

I also work with the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, The Head of Housing and Communities and on occasion The Head of Law and Standards.

I believe all elected members have been provided with details of the Executive Team as part of their induction.

Question 4 – Cabinet Member: Social Services

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you

Response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Morris.

I am the Cabinet member for Social Services - in a job share job share arrangement

Responsibilities relating to this role are set out in Appendix 1 of Item 2 on our agenda today – Minutes from the AGM of 17th May 2022. Members can find the responsibilities for the Cabinet Member for Social services in p.38 of the report pack.

My vision is the shared vision as set out by the Labour administration in our manifesto commitments to the people of Newport.

These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the Service Area plans will be developed.

I work closely with the Director Sally Ann Jenkins), the Heads of Childrens Natalie Poyner and Adult services Mary Ryan as well as other senior officers. On top of this all elected members have been provided with details of the Executive Team and Heads of Service as part of their induction.

Question 5 – Cabinet Member: Social Services

Councillor Mogford

It has been reported this week that “MORE than one in three children in Newport are living in poverty, new figures have found - making it the most impoverished local authority area in Wales.” SWA 13/07/2022.

Why, in the Cabinets Members opinion, is Newport making headlines again for the wrong reasons and therefore what actions are *they* taking at the council level to address this dire situation head on.

Response:

Thank you, Councillor Mogford, for raising this question.

We have a growing population in Newport and as the release of the ONS census data shows us the reason for that increase is growth in our younger citizens. The causes of child poverty and indeed poverty across all age groups are multifactorial. A range of factors including rising living costs, low pay, housing costs and inadequate social security benefits are key to why some people do not have enough resources and thus live in poverty. Universal credit is currently insufficient to lift those eligible for in work benefits out of poverty. Equally the social security system for those wholly reliant on benefits as a safety net does not provide sufficient support particularly for families with more than two children and for disabled people. Rising living costs impact more heavily on those dependent on social security and again have a very particular impact on children and disabled people. Responsibility for administering and implementing the benefits system rests with the Westminster Government.

Across Newport we have in place a broad swathe of services for children, young people and their families. These range from our universal provision for all children in schools to specialist interventions from children’s services for our most vulnerable families. Our Flying Start, Families First, Youth and Play services are all in place to meet the needs of our communities. We work with our partner organisations Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Police and a plethora of third sector organisations to deliver support, advice, guidance and direct interventions with families. As part of the recent restructure of our senior management team we have identified a need to enhance our Prevention and Inclusion services and hence a bringing together of provisions to create greater coherence and shared practice to avoid duplication. Some of our services specifically support families to ensure they have full access to appropriate benefits.

The continued regeneration developments in Newport are very welcome in generating employment and enhancing the wider environment for all our citizens and these will bring greater opportunities for all our citizens. However, some of our younger population will continue to be dependent on social security and particularly in work benefits. As the cost of living crisis continues the impact on our citizens and particularly children is of considerable concern. We will continue to do everything possible to support families to mitigate the impact of this nationally driven crisis.

Children should not be living in poverty in the 21st century and there are many factors which, sadly, mean that some families are living below the breadline.

We recognise that some families struggle financially and for some this has become even more difficult during the pandemic and, more recently, as the cost-of-living soars.

Newport City Council and its partners do offer a wide range of support to parents and carers throughout the city to tackle poverty and deprivation.

This includes help with bills, assistance in finding work or accessing training, childcare provision and support for food banks.

Prevention and intervention are two key elements of our fight against poverty and there are also some invaluable projects operating in the city. These include:

- Flying Start: funded by the Welsh Government, this provides free childcare, playgroups, before and after-school clubs in parts of Newport and help with childcare costs. This helps to support the wellbeing of children as well as ease the pressures on parents and carers.
- Families First: another Welsh Government funded programme that supports families, children and young people up to the age of 25 with the main aim of reducing the impact of poverty and supporting emotional wellbeing, through agencies working together and focusing on prevention and early intervention
- The Family Information Service provides advice and information on services to parents and, together with the childcare service, works with providers who can be an essential service for parents and carers who work. Grants are also available to childcare providers.
- Our play development team works with families through play, building resilience and positive relationships. The benefits include improving the emotional, social, and physical wellbeing of adults and children
- Food and Fun works with children in five sites promoting health meals and delivering physical activities.
- The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme operates in Bettws and is a multi-agency project ensuring families with children from birth to age 7 get the right support.

The council is also providing financial assistance to families both directly and through other organisations.

For example, a new capital grant has been established between the council and GAVO to support community groups and third sector organisations who are responding to food insecurity in Newport.

The funding covers community food initiatives, growing projects and collaborations which are experiencing challenges in meeting need due to inadequate equipment, premises or other factors.

A proposal to provide additional funding to community food organisations is also due to be considered in the coming weeks.

Practical help is available through our area hubs. Teams such as our community connectors work with individuals, groups and organisations across the Newport area to provide information, advice and support.

People can also apply for council tax reductions, discretionary housing payments and emergency assistance for essential costs.

Supplementary:

Councillor Mogford asked was the Cabinet Member blaming central government for making Newport the most impoverished area in Wales.

Response:

Councillor Hughes made clear his feelings on the subject in his response suggested that Councillor Mogford refer to this.

Question 6 – Cabinet Member: Organisational transformation

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you

Response:

Thank you, Councillor Morris, for the question.

I am the Cabinet member for Organisational Transformation.

My responsibilities relating to this role are set out in Appendix 1 of Item 2 on our agenda today – Minutes of 17th May 2022. Members can find this in the report pack.

My vision is the shared vision set out by the Labour administration in our manifesto commitments to the people of Newport. These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the Service Area plans will be developed.

I work closely with the Head of Law and Standards and Head of People, Policy and Transformation and other senior officers. All elected members have been provided with details of the Executive Team and Heads of Service as part of their induction.

Question 7 – Cabinet Member: Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you

Response:

Thank you for your question.

I am the Cabinet member for Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Responsibilities relating to this role are set out in Appendix 1 of Item 2 on our agenda today – Minutes of 17th May 2022. Members can find this on page 33 of the report pack.

My vision is the shared vision as set out by the Labour administration in our manifesto commitments to the people of Newport. These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the Service Area plans will be developed. I work closely with the Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability Paul Jones and the Head of Service for Environment and Public Protection Silvia Gonzalez Lopez.

All elected members have been provided with details of the Executive Team and Heads of Service as part of their induction.

Question 8 – Cabinet Member: Infrastructure and Assets

Councillor Morris:

Please can you explain in plain English your Role and responsibility, including your personal vision for the role and the names of the senior officers who report to you

Response:

I am the Cabinet member for Infrastructure & Assets.

Responsibilities relating to this role are set out in Appendix 1 of Item 2 on our agenda today – Minutes of 17th May 2022. Members can find this on p.33 of the report pack.

My vision is the shared vision set out by the Labour administration in our manifesto commitments to the people of Newport. These commitments will form the basis of the Corporate Plan from which the Service Area plans will be developed.

I work closely with the strategic director Paul Jones, the Head of city services Stephen Jarrett, Head of People, Policy and Transformation Tracy Mckim and other senior officers. All elected members have been provided with details of the Executive Team and Heads of Service as part of their induction.

Question 9 – Cabinet Member: Infrastructure and Assets

Councillor Mogford:

Could the Cabinet Member give their vision for the future of Public Transport within the City, and in doing so express a view as to whether our Public Transport Network as it stands is currently fit for purpose?

Response:

The Welsh Government's Transport Strategy Llwybr Newydd has the use of active travel and public transport as preferred choices to that of the private car and I share these aspirations.

The travel pattern changes through the pandemic have had a significant impact on bus patronage, and this is not unique to Newport, and the viability of services has been affected.

We have worked closely with Welsh Government throughout the pandemic and I'm pleased that services have been and continue to be supported by emergency funding. This support will allow for the changes in patronage to be better understood as we move forward.

The industry faces its own challenges, including supply of drivers.

I'd support the recent and ongoing initiatives in Newport such as the free fares trial and the Fflecsi scheme that allow us to provide services determine how initiatives and different services can benefit our communities.

I'd also note that our municipal operator is innovative in their approach, now running a number of electric buses with the associated carbon reduction those bring.

I'm keen to continue to work with the Burns commission for any benefits to public transport that can be made in the city and note this includes improvements to our rail offer.

You may also be aware that we have recently responded to a WG consultation on the future of the industry, changing from a predominantly commercial industry as it is now to a franchised system, asking for more detail on the proposals to ensure our communities have an effective public transport system in future.

Supplementary:

For clarification, Councillor Mogford asked if Councillor Lacey had more plans free initiatives in place to waive costs for people.

Councillor Lacey:

Councillor Lacey would provide a written reply.

Question 10 – Cabinet Member: Infrastructure and Assets

Councillor Mogford:

With the announcement of the new '20MPH legislation' coming into effect in the second half of 2023 and given that 'The new legislation will not apply a blanket speed limit on all roads, rather it will make the default limit 20mph, leaving local authorities to engage with the local community to decide which roads should remain at 30mph.'

Can the Cabinet Member give an update on any process for engagement with the 'Local Community'? Will these changes be fully funded by the Welsh government? If not, what will be the financial implication to the Council Budget.

Response:

Officers have been working with the Welsh Government on their initiative to change the default speed limit of 30mph in residential areas to 20mph.

Via WG, specialist consultants have mapped current 30mph speed limits across Wales and have provided all LA's including Newport, with maps showing the areas where they feel the criteria set to ensure consistency across Wales applies.

Newport has completed all its network assessments and submitted the data to Welsh Government for consideration and inclusion on their DataMapWales, which will show the 20 mph and 30mph exceptions for the city. It is anticipated that this data will be publicly available September 2022.

WG are currently working on a communications strategy, and we work alongside that strategy to seek to ensure that our communities are informed of the initiative.

As a Welsh Government initiative, they have committed to funding the implementation of the 20mph default speed limit for all 22 authorities across Wales and therefore there should be financial implications for the city council in implementing this new legislation.

Supplementary:

For clarification, Councillor Mogford asked in terms of a local process post the 20 MPH speed limit, would there not be a consultation with residents.

Response:

Councillor Lacey advised that a written response would be provided.

There were no questions for Chairs of Committees. The Presiding Member therefore thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting.