

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 11 January 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Mudd (Chair), D Batrouni, J Clarke, D Davies, Y Forsey, D Harvey, J Hughes, L Lacey and S Marshall

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 December 2022 were accepted as a true record.

4 Replacement Local Development Plan - Growth and Spatial Options Consultation and Revised Delivery Agreement

The Leader introduced the Delivery Agreement, which set out the processes of plan preparation, making clear the opportunities and methods of engagement required by legislation, regulations and Welsh Government guidance. There was a requirement to keep the Delivery Agreement under review, a revision was needed when the preparation of the plan fell behind the approved timeline by more than three months.

The planned timescale slipped, and a revised Delivery Agreement was required to be approved by Welsh Government.

The reasons for the delay primarily related to recruitment issues but importantly there was a great deal of uncertainty around the implications of the Draft TAN 15 which had significant implications for Newport as currently drafted. Whilst the issue remained unresolved, delayed work on the RLDP could no longer continue.

The report also sought authorisation for the next consultation stage of the Replacement LDP in January 2023, on Growth and Spatial Options.

Should Cabinet endorse the revised timetable, Welsh Government sign off was required. Informal discussions were held with WG on the revisions and they indicated their agreement with the revisions. This meant that the RLDP would be due for formal adoption in February 2026.

In terms of financial implications, the staffing issues resulted in an underspend during the current year and figures indicated that despite the delay, the RLDP would be delivered within the project budget.

The Leader invited Councillor Clarke, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing to say a few words:

Councillor Clarke went on to say what was key, was the involvement of the Council and asked that should the decision go ahead, residents of Newport should be involved to participate in the consultation as well as stake holders. Councillor Clarke also mentioned that Newport was a listening Council. This could change Newport for the future and the more people that were involved could help with this change.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Davies mentioned two of the existing industries in Newport; SPTS had already commenced on the constructive of their new research and development and manufacturing site one based in Phoenix Park. The Deputy Leader referred to their webpage and their press release, where it was highlighted that the company was expanding in South Wales to tap into the region's attractive talent pool. Also mentioning that Newport was also home to some of the UK's leading universities and research institutes with strong semiconductor competencies and industry ties for collaborative research. The second company was IQE, which was already producing semiconductors and Councillor Davies also highlighted that their CEO was committed to continuous innovation and providing solutions that helped to propel the semiconductor industry forward and deliver technologies that would make a meaningful impact on our world. This investment and expansion in Wales helped continue to develop wafer processing for the high growth secular industries, this included 5G communications, electric vehicles, consumer electronics, data centres, medical devices and much more. This was an opportunity for our residents to provide their input. This was the start of something exciting for Newport.
- Councillor Harvey echoed Councillor Clarke's comments adding that it long journey and hoped that residents would provide their input, therefore the Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing and fully supported the report.
- Councillor Batrouni also agreed with Councillor Clarke and the Leader's comments. There was a need to consultation early and it was important so start thinking about these issues. The Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation went on to read out statistics from the last census. Along with Cardiff, Newport had the highest pupil per household in all of Wales. Newport had the second highest density to Cardiff. In addition, 28% of the Newport population worked from home. Nearly 50% of people travelled within 10KM for their place of employment. With these figures in mind, Councillor Batrouni welcomed and supported the consultation.
- Councillor Hughes mentioned that having decided to move to Newport 35 years ago, he has considered that Newport was the fastest growing city in Wales. Affordable housing was needed to encourage people to move to the city. The media also noticed the improvements in Newport, including development of riverside, and the university. There were steady market and regeneration programmes in the UK linking into Newport. Newport also had the ability to run national and international links. We had the International Convention Centre (ICC) as well as being called the Gateway City and soon to be a connected city. It was easy to criticise the city after years of austerity. Newport had a past, but it also had a bright future and people were choosing to come to Newport to live, as did Councillor Hughes. The Cabinet Member for Social Services hoped that people living in Newport would take part in the consultation.

- Councillor Forsey reiterated the comments above that Newport was listening council and a transparent Council and that it was important we were also a green council. Part of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RDLP) was the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), this included strategic environment assessment and wellbeing of future generations. The Strategic Development Plan (SDP) would define a green belt and would only allow development in exceptional circumstances, therefore there would be a strong protection for the green belt, which was important for our green areas. Whilst the Council welcomed growth and keeping Newport as sustainable as possible, the RDLP would provide this.

The Leader added that it was important to find out what the views of the residents were by approving the consultation. This was an informal stage and Newport was identified as a national growth area, which was a top tier of development plan for planning purposes in Wales. This set out the framework for our discussion and was important that people had an opportunity to put their views forward and welcomed the opportunity to encourage public to engage on consultation.

Decision:

Cabinet

1. Approved the Growth and Spatial Options paper to be taken through informal community consultation by officers.
2. Endorsed the continued preparation of the RLDP in line with the revisions to the Delivery Agreement and submission to Welsh Government.

5 Western Gateway

The Leader presented the report to colleagues. The Western Gateway Partnership was established in November 2019; a strategic partnership which aimed to deliver an economic powerhouse along the M4 and M5 corridor, driving growth on both sides of the Severn. As one of five cities, Newport was a key player in the success of the partnership and stood to profit from the benefits that greater collaboration would bring. As a partnership, there were nearly 4.4 million residents, approximately 160,000 businesses and in the region of 2.1 million jobs. We also enjoyed excellent connectivity with major motorways and roads, two airports and deep-water ports.

The last update was provided in February 2022 and since then the partnership was busy developing and embedding priorities and workstreams. As a Vice Chair of the Partnership, the Leader was proud of the way the partnership was growing and maturing and the real progress that was being made towards delivering on commitments.

The Leader was pleased to report that a new Prospectus was launched and identified five missions, all of which sought to deliver greater regional growth as well recognising the need to decarbonise our economy.

The first mission was to grow the regional economy by £34 billion by increasing productivity within the region. We know that the Western Gateway was already home to over 55% of the UK's high growth businesses, including our very own semi-conductor cluster in Newport, yet collectively we had a productivity level lower than the UK average. It was clear that there was a need to bridge this gap to ensure that the region fulfilled, and hopefully exceeded its potential. This involved working with supply chains and linking businesses together to make them more resilient and efficient.

The second mission was to grow international trade and exports by £4 billion. With our excellent connectivity and accessibility to multi modal forms of transport, Newport was an international gateway capable of securing direct access into international markets. We had a

global brand to offer which could lead to greater investment and increased exports for our businesses.

The third mission focussed on decarbonisation and becoming a world leader in green energy. We had all the core assets available to us, including solar, tidal and wind. The Severn Estuary alone had the potential to contribute up to 7% of the UK's energy needs. When this was coupled with the emerging excellence we had in the region in relation to hydrogen, we were starting to see the real potential for renewable energy generation. This would be transformational to meeting our future energy needs.

The fourth mission sought to improve connectivity between all businesses and communities across the region. It was important for people to be able to travel to access basic needs such as housing, work and education. We were currently looking at rail connectivity and how we can join up and address any gaps arising from improvements to the Great Western Mainline and the Cardiff Capital Region's Metro scheme.

The final mission recognised the importance of innovation and the need to support and grow super clusters within our high value sectors.

In order to deliver these commitments, the partnership board were always looking for opportunities to raise awareness of the region and promote the opportunities which existed. The first Western Gateway Conference was held on 8th March last year at the Newport International Convention Centre for Wales (ICCW) and was very well received. A Development Conference was held in November in Bristol and the partnership also had a presence at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum. Having a presence at international trade events helped raise awareness of Newport and the wider Western Gateway and provided us with access to investors which we would not have otherwise.

In terms of governance, the partnership updated its Governance and Assurance Framework to ensure that the terms of reference for the board remained up to date and appropriate. South Gloucestershire remained the accountable body for the partnership and secretariat staff.

The Western Gateway was principally funded by a capacity payment from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and £3 million has been secured for the next three years. An annual financial contribution of £10,000 was paid by Local Authority partners to support the work of the Secretariat.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Davies welcomed the fact that we were part of the western gateway and was one of the eight cities whose objectives were part of a cleaner fairer future. To deliver this to 4.4M people was inclusive and helped towards the goal of a decarbonised future. The Deputy Leader encouraged residents to visit the website, which set out the ambition for the Western Gateway. There was also encouragement for the development for the regional energy strategy to be carbon neutral by 2050. Councillor Davies also wanted to point out that it showed how well we were working in Newport to deliver a carbon neutral agenda by 2030 which was good practice, and this would feed into Western Gateway.
- Councillor Hughes who worked on regional groups within the city wanted to acknowledge the Leader's role in forging partnerships with the region and the significant impact it was having on improving the City. Whilst it was a regional initiative, Newport had played its part and was benefitting from these success stories. It was also promoting our city within the region and the decisions we made would make a significant impact. Councillor Hughes therefore thanked the Leader for her role.

- Councillor Marshall mentioned that Newport was a big player on a regional basis, sitting between England and Wales. Newport had a vibrant artistic scene and had great position geographically. It was an opportunity to look at what we could deliver for the partnership and the Cabinet Member for Social Services was looking forward to seeing the regional partnership progress Newport with these exciting projects. Councillor Marshall also echoed Councillor Hughes comments that it was good to have the Leader representing a strong voice for the city.
- Councillor Batrouni added that as a new councillor and resident to Newport that Newport had a negative vibe and it was welcoming to hear his Cabinet colleagues mention all the positive things about Newport. It was also important to remember that Newport was the gateway to Wales with links to London, the port, and the Roman history, there were so many things going well for us. Newport also had the greatest potential to fulfil the aims and objective of the Western Gateway prospectus. Our ambition also to be a data City also showed what we were going to delivery. Newport had the assets and the people as well as the leadership and show cities in the partnership what we could deliver.
- Councillor Harvey also thanked the Leader for promoted Newport and reiterated that Newport was the gateway to Wales and loved Newport, it was a wonderful place to work and raise a family.
- Councillor Lacey echoed the comments of colleagues adding that the Newport was a gateway city to many businesses and held a strategic position between two airports and deep-water ports and we were seeing technological businesses setting up in the western side of the city. The ICCW was bringing headlining conferences to the city. It was exciting to see growth with independent retailers over past few years. There was also well-paid jobs attracting people to come and live in Newport.

Decision:

Cabinet was updated on progress with the Western Gateway partnership and the potential benefits to Newport.

6 NCC External Pressures - Cost of Living

The important message the Leader want to send in relation to the above report was to encourage residents who were struggling, to contact the Council who could provide help and support for people to pay their bills and try to prevent them from getting into any financial difficulty.

As Chair of OneNewport the Leader was confident of the Council's strong partnerships across the city, and in turn, the commitment and passion of all partners to do all that they could at the cost-of-living summit held in November.

The Council's officers continued to facilitate community-based events across the city with a range of partners to provide advice and guidance on the support available from local and national sources, as well as supporting the Welsh Government initiatives including warm spaces and Claim What's Yours – all had a responsibility to sign post residents to this initiative.

Newport launched its warm spaces offer in December and the council were providing seven warm spaces its in own buildings, under the stewardship of Councillor Harvey, Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing. We were working with voluntary and community organisations who were currently facilitating another nine, with a further three launching this month. The council was working with GAVO to provide funding to support the running of

warm spaces and develop new offers with a particular focus on areas which were not currently well served. Full information could be found on the council's website.

Colleagues from across the council continued to support people through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Welsh Super Sponsor Team. We were at a period of considerable risk for both schemes as the initial hosting arrangements came to an end and the council awaited confirmation on whether initial accommodation hotels, procured through the super sponsor scheme, would be extended from March 2023. In December, UK government announced changes to the funding regime. The £10.5k support payments would not be extended and payments for new arrivals would be reduced to £5.9K. Payments to hosts would increase from £350 per month to £500 per month after a year of hosting. Local Authorities in England would also be given access to a £500 million fund to purchase accommodation for people from Ukraine, but this was not extended to devolved nations.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Harvey thanked officers for putting the warm spaces in place so promptly.
- Councillor Davies added that the document focussed on schools provision of breakfast clubs, food banks and uniform banks. The Deputy Leader also highlighted the thanks for teachers who put together food hampers for families and distributed to those families identified as most in need, especially during Christmas, providing Christmas meals. Councillor Davies was grateful that staff took the time to do this.
- Councillor Hughes regularly visited community church in Caerleon who in November, formed a project called Isca Haven. The project supported people in the community in need. This would not have happened without strong the partnerships within the community, church, food banks and the Council. The combination helped the group and it was important so stress that it was a team effort which was making a difference. The Cabinet Member thanked everyone that became involved in the project.

The leader highlighted the important element of this and that it was also important to acknowledge the role of the elected members within their wards.

- Councillor Marshall mentioned that it was fantastic to see members of the community, including business, staff and residents help out over the Christmas period and meeting and greeting people. The Cabinet Member also stressed that residents should not be embarrassed to contact the Council if they needed help. Community connectors were also in place to give advice and warm spaces were provided, these brought lonely people together to make friendships within the community. School staff were also a massive help in the community as were staff in local hubs.
- Councillor Clarke added that it was tough for Newport and thanked the Leader for her support. The Cabinet Member also echoed Councillor Marshall's comments that if residents were worried and needed help, the Council was there to support and look after them.
- Councillor Batrouni referred to the effect the cost-of-living crisis had and echoed the comments of colleagues regarding community partnerships. The long-term solutions were discussed in the previous agenda items and these previous items would fend off moments like this in our economy and make us more resilient.

The leader thanked all colleagues to take time to consider and read the report. The Leader also reflected on the contribution that officers made and their commitment across the whole of the authority. They gave their own time to support Newport residents and had fantastic examples where they went above and beyond to support residents. We were fortunate that officers were completely committed to public service to deliver for the people of Newport.

Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the report on the Council's activity to respond to the external factors on Newport's communities, businesses, and council services.

7 **Work Programme**

This was the regular monthly report on the work programme.

Please move acceptance of the updated programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the Work Programme.