

Minutes



Formal Council Questions and Responses

Date: 3 August 2022

1 **Question to the Leader: 2022/08 - Tackling Child Poverty and Deprivation in Newport**

Councillor C. Townsend asked:

The recent newspaper article relating to the level of child poverty in Newport, repeats the existing reporting of the city having the highest level of deprivation in Wales.

This includes the comments made by Cabinet Members back in 2020 in terms of the replacement of the local development plan.

Notwithstanding the state of the national economy, could the Leader of the Council outline the strategic focus her administration is taking to address this issue head-on?

Irrespective of whether Members are part of the ruling group, or the opposition. Could the Leader also give a commitment for an annual, all-member seminar (on top of scrutiny consideration), so that the issue of driving down deprivation in Newport is not lost collectively by the full council?

The Leader responded:

Thank you, Councillor Townsend, for raising this question.

We know from recent ONS data that Newport is on track to have the fastest growing youth population in Wales. This coupled with the current and growing cost of living crisis means that Newport is facing significant challenges in how it can support its residents, and how services can be smartly distributed to ensure the greatest reach to those in greatest need.

Locally we are supporting a multi-agency strategic approach, headed up with the newly established Prevention and Inclusion service area. We will ensure services continue to respond to crisis yet also embed an improved effective early intervention approach. Improving family wellbeing, functioning and aspirations, can be achieved with the right support at the right time, and the service area brings a renewed focus to achieving this. Aligning many of the universal support services under one umbrella will provide greater opportunities, reduce duplication and bring improved co-ordination to the swathe of services available to residents in Newport. Support is available on debt, childcare and increasingly so, foodbanks as they struggle to cope with the rising living costs.

Evaluating good practice, creating seamless pathways and sharing learning will all be priority actions to develop a robust early intervention model. As the service area becomes more established a clear communication strategy will be developed for families to access on what support is available and how to access it. This will include information, signposting and links for people to self-refer themselves for support.

It will be our mission to build an inclusive service area supporting individuals and families to remain safe and independent in their own homes whilst supporting them through some of the most serious challenges currently facing them.