

# Agenda



## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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Date: Friday, 3 February 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Hybrid Meeting

To: Councillors P Hourahine (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, L James, C Baker-Westhead, P Bright, B Davies and G Horton

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Item	Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies</u>
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>
3	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> (Pages 3 - 12)
4	<u>2023-24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan</u> (Pages 13 - 64)
5	<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.
6	<u>Scrutiny Adviser Reports</u> (Pages 65 - 74)  a) Actions Arising ( <b>Appendix 1</b> )  b) Forward Work Programme Update ( <b>Appendix 2</b> )
7	<u>Live Event</u> <a href="#">Please click here to watch the live event.</a>

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Date of Issue: Friday, 27 January 2023

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# Minutes



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

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Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Time: 10am

Venue: Hybrid Meeting

Present: Councillors P Hourahine (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, B Davies, G Horton,

B Owen (Chief Executive Officer), P Jones (Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability), R Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate), T Mckim (Head of People, Policy & Transformation), M Bleazard (Digital Services Manager)

N Barnett (Scrutiny Advisor), T Strange (Governance Support Officer).

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### 1. Apologies

Councillors L James and B Davies, S Jenkins (Strategic Director for Social Services).

### 2. Declaration of Interests

None.

### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

A committee member raised the issue of naming the committee member whose absence was incorrectly recorded.

A committee member noted that a recommendation was not recorded correctly and stated that the fortnightly community meetings with the Police should include other members of the community so that there is better integration. This is in reference to the meeting that took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022. When considering the Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 2021-22, the committee member referenced a previous concern, raised at a meeting of the committee in September 2021 when considering the Strategic Equalities Plan. The concern raised in the 2021 meeting was that community cohesion work taking place at that time between police and ethnic minority communities should include white people. The committee member would like this query reflected in the minutes when they raise the issue. As the report reflected the engagement work taking place in 2021, an up to date summary of current engagement work involving communities in Newport has been shared with the Committee.

A committee member noted that their request for a precise definition for “net zero by 2030” was not recorded in the minutes.

- The Chair confirmed that since it being a request that the answer will be given outside of the Committee once the Officer responsible has looked into it.

The minutes of the previous meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 were **accepted as a true and accurate record**.

#### **4. Draft Corporate Plan Wellbeing Themes 2022-27 (Pages 3 - 18)**

##### **Invitees:**

**Beverly Owen – Chief Executive Officer**

**Paul Jones – Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability**

**Rhys Cornwall – Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate**

The Chief Executive Officer gave an overview of the report and explained its purpose. The Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Directors and Head of Adult Services gave summaries of relevant area’s challenges and achievements.

##### **Questions:**

The committee noted that consultation feedback presented to committee should show both the positive and negative feedback and questioned the wording of the feedback survey to include as many public opinions as possible.

The committee noted a theme in the committee’s work regarding survey feedback, and requested alternative forms of securing feedback from residents, other than the surveys conveyed through wi-fi on buses and in public buildings in Newport.

A committee member felt that other cities were stimulating the economy more effectively than Newport and noted Newport had more work to do in this area. The committee member felt that they had not seen much in the way of impactful investment within Newport. The committee member noted the need for a focus on jobs.

- The Chief Executive Officer highlighted that all town centres were facing a contraction, and that Newport has a higher level of inward migration than others. The Chief Executive Officer also highlighted that a major focus is on how people access jobs, but they are aware of the challenges.
- The committee member expressed the hope for improvement in the next five years.

The committee welcomed the report and noted that Newport had a lot to offer as a gateway into Wales, such as the Transporter Bridge, the Newport Ship and Caerleon’s Roman site, which is a significant Roman site within Europe. The committee hoped that this would be included in the heritage offer.

- The Chief Executive agreed with the committee that Newport’s heritage is an asset, and noted in the plan that heritage has been looked at, with the economic strategy and cultural strategy picking up the heritage theme.

A committee member noted that there wasn't one specific way to improve the economy and felt that the focus should be on the 1% improvements and building on them. The committee member noted the difficult climate but felt that Council needed to pursue further opportunities.

- The Chief Executive Officer agreed that seeking creative channels to address these issues is key, and highlighted the partnership working with One Newport as an example of this.
- The Chair noted the question may be better suited for a different Performance Scrutiny Committee and asked for this to be taken forward.

The committee agreed that heritage needed more focus and suggested that bio-diversity could be increased by using spaces under bridges.

- The Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability highlighted that work has been done on bio-diversity with an update provided. The Strategic Director noted the requirement to make creative use of space to encourage bio-diversity across the city.

The committee highlighted the importance of maintaining the running of events in the city and highlighted the success of the recent 'Pride at the Port' event as they are important to inclusivity.

The committee requested that some of the terminology within the Plan, such as 'to become' and 'to create' could be reconsidered in order to better convey the achievements that have been delivered.

A committee member raised concern regarding the lack of university students in Newport despite the funding given to the university, and asked that these concerns be forwarded to relevant areas, for a response to be issued.

It was queried whether a committee member needed to declare an interest due to working for Caerleon Museum while they made a point in favour of the importance of Caerleon's historical heritage.

- It was clarified that whilst it is good practice to declare interests whenever they occur, this scrutiny meeting was for feedback on the report only. A declaration of interest when voting on the matter at Council would mean that the Member would not be able to take part in the decision.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending.

### **Conclusions:**

- The Committee noted the development of a Corporate Plan which delivers on key priorities for the citizens of Newport. Members were also pleased with the objectives.
- The Committee appreciated that consultation has continued via buses and internet surveys, and requested that there be more independent research on various groups in the city. Members felt that it would be beneficial to have officers in the city centre

to consult with different demographics on a face-to-face basis. They felt that this would allow more properly structured consultations to be carried out in order to have a complete view of both the issues and concerns which affect a lot of residents across the city. Members also felt that it could be good to be able to see the results of future consultations.

- The Committee requested if some of the terminology within the Plan, such as 'to become' and 'to create' could be amended to better reflect actions being undertaken to make what has been achieved much clearer to readers of the report.
- The Committee felt that more detail could be included in the report on the Heritage Offer, given Newport's many heritage sites, as this would support the aims of the Plan.
- The Committee raised concerns regarding a lack of university students in Newport and asked that information regarding the student numbers and support provided via funding are shared as a response from the relevant service area.

## **5. Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report 2021-22 (Pages 19 - 60)**

### **Invitees:**

**Finn Madell – Head of Corporate Safeguarding**

**Mary Ryan – Head of Adult Services**

**Natalie Poyner – Head of Children Services**

The Head of Corporate Safeguarding gave an overview of the report.

### **Questions:**

The committee asked how training was delivered.

- The Head of Corporate Safeguarding explained that the training is done primarily through E-Learning, with some school staff having completed face-to-face training sessions. The desire to reintroduce face to face training was noted, however they highlighted the focus should be on what the individual learners need.
- The Head of Adult Services also mentioned the difficulty in getting staff away to go to all day training conferences.

The committee was pleased to see that the Service Area had made significant progress which reflected previous comments and recommendations. The committee noted that the number of referrals had gone up by 14% in 3 years.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that while that number was true, 50% of referrals were sent to early intervention, and the number used to be higher. The Head of Adult Services then explained that in Adult Services there was an 80/20 split that were sent to early intervention and noted that carer needs are much higher.

The committee asked whether funding has been received from the Welsh Government for children leaving care.

- The Head of Children's Services advised that funding was received in July 2022, and advised that that Citizens Advice also sit within the office to support the Young Person Adviser to make sure that money is being spent as it should be.

The committee felt that more specific data was needed throughout the report to contextualise information given, such as percentages, so members could have a clearer picture of comparison. The committee also asked if it would be possible to find out from within the percentages how much of the figures are the same child being safeguarded multiple times, and how many are single incidents for children.

The committee asked whether a question that had been raised previously regarding objective training was addressed, and whether this was satisfactory focusing on how many hours they have completed, and whether it is enough. The committee member also noted that the number of those who have done the security training was given but not the percentage.

- The Head of Adult Services advised that every 3 years registered staff must re-register, however unregistered staff are encouraged to do the training.
- The committee member also asked whether staff training was up to date regardless of high turnover.
- The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they were.

The committee wished to thank the service areas for their work and noted that this specific area of work is extremely difficult.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance.

### **Conclusions:**

- The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers for their hard work. Members wanted it recognised that they appreciate that this specific area of work is extremely difficult.
- The Committee were pleased to note that the Service Area listened to the comments and recommendations that were made in last year's meeting and made the appropriate amendments.
- The Committee felt that more specific data was needed throughout the report to contextualise information given, such as percentages so Members can have a clearer picture of comparison. Members also queried if it could be possible to find out in the percentages of how many children in the figures are the same child being safeguarded, and how many are single incident children.
- The Committee asked that the area of focus regarding whether "the structure for the Newport Safeguarding Unit Structure and Individual Teams Key Priority Plans is appropriate to meet the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding matters" be

removed as it was outside of the Committee's expertise. (This is more so an action for Scrutiny to not include in future cover reports however the Committee wanted it noted).

- The Committee asked for an update regarding training progress be given to committee including more specific data to contextualise any information given, such as percentages to how many staff members have completed the training. Members also queried if it would be possible to have update on figures such as training and referrals received, on a half yearly basis

## **6. Conclusions of Committee Reports**

The committee asked that the minutes be changed so that conclusions be included at the end of each relevant agenda item.

## **7. Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

**Invitee:**

**Neil Barnett – Scrutiny Adviser**

### **a) Forward Work Programme Update**

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Forward Work Programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next committee meeting:

**Friday 21 October 2022 at 10am**, the agenda items; -

- Annual Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report 2021-22
- Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self-Assessment Report

**Friday 2 December 2022 at 10am**, the agenda item; -

- Planning and Performance Risk Management Framework

### **b) Action Sheet**

The Committee were advised that recommendations and comments from the previous meeting have been sent to Officers. The Committee were advised of the actions that are waiting to be completed, so the Scrutiny Adviser will chase information from officers.

# Minutes



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

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Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Time: 10am

Venue: Hybrid Meeting

Present: Councillors P Hourahine (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, L James, C Baker-Westhead, B Davies, G Horton

Cllr J Mudd (Leader), B Owen (Chief Executive Officer), R Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate), P Jones (Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability), S Jenkins (Strategic Director for Social Services), T McKim (Head of People, Policy and Transformation), P Flint (Performance and Business Research Partner)

S Schanzer (Scrutiny Advisor), L Thomas (Governance Support Officer), E Mayger (Governance Support Officer).

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### 1. Apologies

Cllr P Bright.

### 2. Declaration of Interests

None.

### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

A member voiced concern that his comments on attendance at fortnightly meetings with the police had been amended and sought clarification on who to raise this with. He wished it to be on record that his comment was specifically a reference to making sure members of the white community were represented in community engagement, and requested that the minutes be amended to state this.

- The Scrutiny Advisor advised that the minutes were not a verbatim record and only meant to capture the main comments and questions regarding reports, and that the recording was publicly available as a verbatim record.
- The Chair confirmed it would be raised again with the Chief Executive.

It was determined that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September would be agreed at the next meeting alongside the minutes of the current meeting.

### 4. Draft Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self Assessment Report 2021-22

The Leader introduced the report. The Chief Executive Officer and Strategic Directors gave overviews of their service areas and highlighted challenges and achievements.

### **Questions:**

A committee member felt that the report should provide more detailed information to Newport residents on the benefits of partnership schemes such as the Cardiff Capital Regions and Western Gateway partnership. The committee member asked what was being done to be more pro-active in making the City Centre more attractive to both investors and citizens.

- The Leader informed committee that the report was an overview of performance at a high level, and this is reflected in the level of detail included. However, the Leader informed committee that there are a number of ways that information is communicated to residents, including promotional material, and a resident's newsletter which members could also sign up to which provided updates.
- The Leader highlighted that Officers are committed to achieving improvement in the City Centre and whilst discussions were still ongoing, large strategic plans are complex, involving many stakeholders, and needed to progress sequentially. The Leader informed committee that due to the commercially sensitive nature of these discussions, further information is not available at present.

The committee queried why the latest air quality progress figures were not included in the report.

- The Strategic Director of Environment and Sustainability confirmed there was a lag whilst the figures were validated by Welsh Government but this feedback would be followed up, and the most up to date figures provided to the committee.

The committee was pleased to see the figures for the number of Active Travel journeys and asked how this was measured, and if there was any opportunity for residents to provide feedback that shapes the programme of improvements to networks.

- The Strategic Director of Environment and Sustainability explained the usage was measured by technology placed in situ in locations across the city infrastructure. The technology can detect and track numbers of users, and also identify whether users are walking or using bikes. The Strategic Director informed the committee that the Integrated Transport Network maps were available for residents to comment on routes and route plans.
- The Leader highlighted the success of the route across Gaer Fort which was an outcome following feedback from residents, and a prime example of successful resident engagement and participation.

A committee member felt that there was too much information included within the report. The committee member noted that targets needed to be shown in the report, as this will help to demonstrate progress made. The committee member also asked how many of the 20 commitments were complete and how many were ongoing, as they felt it was difficult to assess

this without including the measures in the report. The committee member asked what the Heritage Discovery Centre was.

- The Chief Executive Officer explained that the visitor centre at the Transporter Bridge would be the Heritage Discovery Centre once complete. The Chief Executive Officer agreed that this could be amended to be clearer, including the hub and spoke model that will feature the Discovery Centre as the central focus..
- The Chief Executive Officer explained that most commitments were complete and any outstanding would be carried forward.

The committee queried the status of the City Campus.

- The Chief Executive stated that progress was being made and that timescales were linked to complex dependent factors such as planning approvals, funding from Welsh Government , signing of leases, so timelines would be clearer when some of these steps had been concluded.

The committee noted that the target regarding empty homes being brought back into use was very low but had been exceeded. The committee highlighted that percentage given to show this didn't provide context and requested specific data be included. The committee queried what specific impact the pandemic had on households at risk of homelessness and how they were supported.

- The Leader informed committee that legislation had changed very rapidly during the pandemic, and that Newport City Council had been successful in providing emergency accommodation to some of the most vulnerable people in Newport at that time. The Leader highlighted the impact of lockdown on tensions within homes increasing hidden homeless. The Leader informed committee that there was significant increase across Wales in private sector landlords issuing eviction notices when the embargo on evictions ended earlier this year. The Leader added that the prospect of complying with new legislation and the increase in property prices meant many private landlords were selling their properties, impacting access to this type of accommodation for Newport City Council. The Leader acknowledged the work done by staff in supporting families throughout this challenging period.
- The Leader highlighted that an empty property could not be assumed to meet housing needs and that the council is limited in what can be done to compel private owners to bring their properties back into use. The Leader noted that some measures had been put in place such as increased Council Tax, and through making funding available to private owners to regenerate properties in some circumstances. The Leader also noted that the council worked with registered social landlords to tackle this issue..

The committee thanked the Officers for attending.

#### **Comments and recommendations:**

- The committee acknowledged the challenges and appreciated the hard work of staff.

- The committee felt that more information regarding partnership work could be included within the report to emphasise the benefits these partnerships bring to Newport City Council.
- Whilst there were conflicting opinions of committee members regarding whether the report contained too much or too little information, overall the committee felt that more data to contextualise any percentages given would be helpful.
- The committee felt that further clarity was needed within the report regarding the number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty homes back into use.
- The committee felt that references to the Heritage Discovery Site could be clarified.
- The committee asked for further information to be circulated to committee on the following:
  - The most up to date Annual Air Quality Monitoring Report
  - Local action groups involved with schools
  - The 38 local businesses who received grant funding.
  - The money reserved for regeneration projects.

#### **5. Scrutiny Annual Report 21-22 – Verbal Update**

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager provided a verbal update on the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.

The committee agreed to have the report distributed to them via email and to make comments and recommendations directly to the report author.

#### **6. Conclusion of the committee reports**

The committee wished for comments and recommendations to be recorded at the end of the relevant agenda item rather than at the end of the minutes.

#### **7. Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

The Scrutiny Advisor presented the Action Sheet and the Forward Work Programme.

#### **8. Date of the Next Meeting**

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 at 10am.



# Scrutiny Report

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Part 1

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023

### Subject 2023-24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Projections

Author Scrutiny Adviser

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

Role / Areas of responsibility	Lead Officer
Budget Overview and Process	Meirion Rushworth, Head of Finance
Budget Public Engagement	Rhys Cornwall, Director for Transformation and Corporate Tracy McKim, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

## Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

### 1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Consider:
  - the process undertaken for this year’s Draft budget proposals;
  - the public engagement undertaken for this year’s Draft budget proposals;
- (ii) Determine if it wishes to make any comments on the budget process or the public engagement to the Cabinet;
- (iii) Endorse the comments made by the Performance Scrutiny Committee – People, and Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate to be forwarded to the Cabinet.

### 2 Context

- 2.1 In accordance with the constitution, the Cabinet is required to consult on the proposals before recommending an overall budget and required council tax to the Council for approval in February.

Scrutiny Committees must be consulted as part of this process. The timetable for the consultation on the budget is as follows:

Cabinet agrees budget proposals as a basis for consultation	14 December 2022
Consultation period	14 December 2022 to 2 February 2023
Cabinet considers feedback from consultation and agrees final budget proposals and recommends resulting overall budget and council tax required to full Council	15 February 2023
Council approves the 2023/24 overall budget and resulting council tax level required	28 February 2023

**Structure of Scrutiny of the Budget Proposals**

2.2 Each Committee will meet to discuss the budget proposals in detail and formulate comments relating to their portfolio:

Committee	Date	Role
Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate	23 January 2023	Savings proposals within the Place and Corporate Service Areas
Performance Scrutiny Committee - People	24 January 2023	Savings proposal within the People Service Areas
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	3 February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination of comments from all Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>• Comments on the budget process</li> <li>• Comments on public engagement</li> </ul>

2.3 Recommendations from the Committee meetings on 23 and 24 January will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) at its meeting on 3 February 2023 to confirm the list of comments that will be submitted from Scrutiny to the Cabinet. The Chair of this Committee will be invited to attend the meeting of the OSMC where the Committee’s recommendations are discussed.

2.4 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to coordinate the comments from Scrutiny to ensure that there are no overlaps in what is being recommended and ensure that scrutiny as a whole provides a cohesive and consistent response to Cabinet. It also has overall responsibility for comments on the budget process, and public engagement, which it will be focusing on at its meeting.

2.5 At its meeting on 14 December 2022, the Cabinet agreed draft proposals for consultation. The full Cabinet Report and Appendices are available on the [website](#).

### 3 Information Submitted to the Committee

3.1 The following attachments are included for the Committee's consideration:

**Appendix 1** – Cabinet Report 2023/24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Projections (MTFP)

**Appendix 2** – The minutes from the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place from the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

**Appendix 3** – The minutes from the Performance Scrutiny Committee – People from the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

3.2 The Cabinet report (Appendix 1) contains background information on the budget setting process, financial planning assumptions as well as outlining the budget process and planned consultation. This is the focus of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's consideration of the budget.

### 4. Suggested Areas of Focus

#### 4.1 Role of the Committee

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

- **Assess and make comment** on the overall budget process and public engagement:
  - Is there evidence of links to the Corporate Plan and a strategic long term approach to budget;
  - Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessments – have these been completed consistently and used to develop the proposals?
  - Whether the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act Sustainable Development Principle has been considered in the proposals in terms of the need for long term thinking and planning?
  - Approach to public engagement - is there a cohesive and consistent approach demonstrated to how the public have been involved and consulted on the proposals.
  
- **Conclusions:**
  - Determine comments / recommendations to Cabinet upon:
    - Budget process;
    - Public Engagement;
    - Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments;
    - Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.
    - Any overarching issues emerging from the two Performance Scrutiny Committee meetings.
  - Agree to forward the comments of the two performance Scrutiny Committees to the Cabinet on the specific Budget proposals..

#### Suggested lines of Enquiry

4.2 Councillors have a fundamental democratic right to commission financial information and provide challenge to executives and officers about finances. Scrutiny councillors are not expected to be

financial experts, but they have a key role in ensuring **accountability** and **value for money** are demonstrated to the public.

- 4.3 The following has been adapted from Section 3.1-3.4: Source: Grant Thornton – Local Government Financial Resilience Review 2012 (“Towards a tipping point?”) to provide examples of the questioning and lines of enquiry that the Committee may wish to consider:

<b>Links to Strategic Planning</b>	How does the proposal contribute to the achieving corporate priorities?
	How do these proposals fit into an overall budget strategy / what is the long-term approach to budget at the Council?
<b>Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessments</b>	Have these been completed? Is there a consistent approach to competing FEIAs and have they been used to inform the proposals?
	Have any impacts identified within the FEIA been considered within the business case?
<b>Public Consultation</b>	How has the public been consulted on the budget proposals?
	Has there been a consistent approach to public engagement and involvement upon this year’s budget proposals?

#### **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

- 4.4 The Committee’s consideration of the Draft budget proposals should consider how services are maximising their contribution to the five ways of working. Below are examples of the types of questions to consider:

<b>5 Ways of Working</b>	<b>Types of Questions to consider:</b>
<b>Long-term</b> The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.	What consideration have you given to the long term trends that could affect your proposal or; how could your proposal impact these trends?
	How will the needs of your service users potentially change in the future?
<b>Prevention</b> Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.	What is the objective (or the desired outcome) of this proposal?
	How are you addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?
	How have the decisions, so far, come about? What alternatives were considered?
<b>Integration</b> Considering how public bodies’ wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other	Are there any other organisations providing similar / complementary services?
	Have you consulted with the health board, third sector, emergency services, businesses and anyone else you think might be impacted?

objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.	What practical steps will you take to integrate your project with existing plans and strategies of other public organisations to help us all contribute fully to the seven national well-being goals?
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).</p>	Who have you been working with? Why? Who have you collaborated with in finding out more about this problem and potential solutions?
	How are you co-working with other sectors?
	How are you using the knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence the Council's work?
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Involvement</b></p> <p>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</p>	How have you involved the people who are being impacted by this decision?
	How have you taken into account the diverse communities in your decision making?
	How have you used different / alternative methods to reach people and involve them?
	How will you communicate the outcome of your decision?

## Section B – Supporting Information

### 5 Further Guidance on the Scrutiny Role

- 5.1 The information in the following section has been taken and adapted from the [CfPS / Grant Thornton Guidance– “Raising the Stakes: financial scrutiny in challenging times”](#) (pdf) published in June 2014. The extracts reproduced here focus predominantly on Councillors’ role in the annual budget setting process.
- 5.2 For further information, Members are invited to read the publication, which includes more detail about scrutiny’s role in financial planning and management, as well as case studies and best practice examples. *(A link to the publication is provided in Section 7 of this report.)*

#### Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.3 Councillors and officers have a collective and individual responsibility for ensuring that a council’s finances are effectively managed. Within the Annual Budget process:

<b>Council</b>	Agrees the policy and budget framework.
<b>Cabinet/Executive</b>	<p>Cabinet agrees a series of proposals for public consultation, which form the draft budget proposals. Scrutiny must be consulted as part of this process.</p> <p>Responsible for proposing the policy and budget framework and key strategies, including the MTFP and annual budget. It has power to take</p>

	all executive decisions within the policy and budget framework agreed by the Council.
<b>Scrutiny Chairs</b>	<p>The Chair should encourage all scrutiny councillors to take a full part in scrutiny, including taking part in any agreed work outside of the formal meetings.</p> <p>Focus the Committee on their role in providing constructive challenge as a consultee in the budget process.</p>
<b>Scrutiny Councillors</b>	<p>The role of scrutiny councillors is to review policy and challenge whether the executive is making the right decisions to deliver policy goals and achieve Council's agreed objectives. Their role comprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing constructive challenge on the draft budget proposals and ensure that properly costed policy and budget proposals are implemented.</li> <li>○ Monitoring the service and financial performance of the council and its partners and examining the impact and implementation of cabinet decisions and policies</li> <li>○ Holding the council leader, cabinet and senior officers to account in how effectively they deliver a balanced budget.</li> </ul>
<b>Heads of Service</b>	<p>Within the policy and budget framework and decisions taken by executives, Chief Executives, Chief Finance Officers and Monitoring Officers have key responsibilities for the way Councils are run in terms of compliance with legal duties.</p> <p>Section 151 of the Local Government Act sets out requirements to prepare a prudent and balanced annual budget including maintaining reasonable levels of reserves and the role of the Head of Finance (as the designated 151 Officer) within this. Other members of the corporate management team are responsible for administering annual service budgets.</p>
<b>Finance Professionals</b>	Such as auditors and accountants, should identify how financial planning and management processes can ensure time and space for scrutiny to add value and make a difference.

### **Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment (FEIAs)**

- 5.4 Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments (FEIA) are a systematic approach to ensure that the Council takes decisions that balances the needs of people, local culture, the economy and the environment over time. FEIAs assist the Council in ensuring that our decision-making process is inclusive. They are used to look at the effect of any change to Council services or employment from everybody's viewpoint, to make sure that changes are fair and do not discriminate.
- 5.5 Officers have a responsibility to inform decision makers of all the relevant implications of any proposal and provide evidence on which they will base their decisions. FEIAs help decision makers understand service users, employees and other stakeholders' perspectives, and provide evidence that citizens have shaped the council's work. There is legal requirement to publish FEIAs.
- 5.6 Within the Budget proposal Business Cases, there is an indication as to whether or not an assessment is necessary for a proposal. The Performance Scrutiny Committees were asked to consider these during their discussion on the proposals within their remit.

5.7 The FEIA's are published on the Council's Equalities page on the [website](#).

## 6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Well-being Objective	1 – Economy, Education and Skills	2 – Newport's Environment and Infrastructure	3 – Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care	4 – An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council
Aims:	Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.	A city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.	Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.	Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

## 6 Background Papers

- [The Essentials – Well-being of Future Generation \(Wales\) Act](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#) which can be found under Item 5.
- [CfPS / Grant Thornton Guidance– “Raising the Stakes: financial scrutiny in challenging times”](#) including references to: Grant Thornton – Local Government Financial Resilience Review 2012 (“Towards a tipping point?”)

Report Completed: January 2023

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# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: 14 December 2022

### **Subject 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

**Purpose** To highlight key issues affecting the development of the Council's 2023/24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and present the draft proposals for the 2023/24 budget. Cabinet are asked to agree the proposals in order to commence the budget consultation process for this year. Consultation results will be reported back to Cabinet in February 2023, when Cabinet will agree a final budget and recommend the corresponding council tax level to full Council.

**Author** Head of Finance

**Ward** All

**Summary** This report presents the draft budget proposals for 2023/24.

Budget preparations this year have presented a distinct set of challenges, building on the unprecedented circumstances of the last few years and the drastic recent economic changes over a relatively short period of time. Councils are dealing with pressures on a scale never seen before. Inflation, soaring energy bills and increasing demand are resulting in significant budget shortfalls over the immediate and medium term.

As a result, the 2023/24 budget shortfall presented to Council in March 2022 has increased from £1.9m (£3.6m over the medium term) back then to £27.6m prior to cost reduction plans (£55.8m over the medium term) now, requiring the consideration of all potential solutions to balance the budget shortfall. Whilst the Office for Budget Responsibility predicts that inflation will start to fall sharply from the middle of next year, the unprecedented increases in inflation are expected to have a lasting impact as prices are not expected to return to previous levels.

Whilst the recent UK Government budget confirmed increased funding for public services over the next two years, the medium term outlook remains uncertain as it is unclear what, if any, of that increase will be passed onto Local Councils in Wales for 2023/24. The scale of the budget challenges will very likely still significantly outweigh funding increases, therefore, consideration must be given to how the Council is able to continue operating effectively for the residents of Newport whilst maintaining financial sustainability. With savings totalling circa £80m having already been identified over the last decade, it will not be possible to balance the 2023/24 budget through efficiencies alone. This means that required savings will impact upon front line service delivery.

Details on the draft 'Revenue Support Grant' (RSG) will not be confirmed until 14<sup>th</sup> December. Therefore, any updates to current funding assumptions will be provided to Cabinet in their February meeting.

The budget timetable has been adjusted to maximise the time available for consultation. Residents, service users and stakeholders, such as the independent Fairness Commission, will have seven full weeks to take part in the consultation.

Details of the budget are shown within this report. The report, along with the appendices, set out the draft budget pressures and investments, budget savings and increase in local council tax, which are key elements of the proposed budget.

### **Section:**

- 1 Background
- 2 Economic challenge
- 3 Financial planning assumptions
- 4 Budget savings
- 5 Budget process and consultation
- 6 Risk, financial resilience, and performance
- 7 Report review and statutory comments

### **Appendix:**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Appendix 1  | Budget investments   |
| Appendix 2  | New budget savings for consultation                                  |
| Appendix 3  | New budget savings implemented under delegated authority             |
| Appendix 4  | Demand models for social care  |
| Appendix 5  | Fees & charges for consultation                                      |
| Appendix 6  | Financial resilience 'snapshot'                                      |
| Appendix 7  | Medium term financial projections                                    |
| Appendix 8  | Projected earmarked reserves   |
| Appendix 9  | Corporate risk register summary - Quarter 2                          |
| Appendix 10 | New budget savings for consultation – proposals                      |
| Appendix 11 | New budget savings implemented under delegated authority - proposals |

## **Proposal**

### **1. Cabinet agrees the following draft proposals for public consultation:**

- i) Budget savings proposals in Appendix 2 (summary table) and Appendix 10 (detailed proposals).
- ii) As a starting point a council tax increase of 9.5% will be consulted upon, a weekly increase of £1.55 - £2.07 for properties in Band A to C, the most common bands in Newport, as set out in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.15.
- iii) Proposed fees and charges in Appendix 5.
- iv) The budget investments shown in Appendix 1, including those for schools.

### **2. Cabinet approves:**

- v) Implementation of the delegated decisions in Appendix 3 (summary table) and Appendix 11 (detailed proposals) by Heads of Service with immediate effect, following the usual Council decision making processes.

### **3. Cabinet notes:**

- vi) The position on developing a balanced budget for 2023/24, noting that the position will be subject to ongoing review and updates between now and the February Cabinet when the final budget is agreed.
- vii) The current position in the development of a 'Transformation Plan' for the Council and the HoF comments on the importance of that in relation to the medium/long term budget challenge and contributing to sustainable financial footing for services.

- viii) Further work is required to specifically review and manage the financial impacts of some key risks in 2023/24.

**Action by** Executive Board/ Heads of Service

**Timetable** Immediate:

Decisions subject to consultation include investments set out in Appendix 1, savings set out in Appendix 2 (summary table) and Appendix 10 (detailed proposals), fees and charges (Appendix 5), and schools funding position (section 3). These, along with the proposed council tax increase will form the basis of the consultation process.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Leader of the Council
- Chief Executive
- Strategic Directors
- Head of Law and Standards
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Signed**

# 1 Background

1.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) included within the Council's 2022/23 budget report, presented in March 2022, identified a potential budget gap of £1.9 million (m) in 2023/24 and £3.9m over the period 2023/24 to 2024/25. This report provides an update to reflect more recent information and the key planning assumptions made over the medium term. In addition, the report provides an overview of the Council's proposals for addressing the identified budget gap.

1.2 The external considerations impacting on the Council are key in the Council's financial planning. Budget preparations have presented a distinct set of challenges not only building on the unprecedented circumstances of the last few years but also the drastic economic changes over the last 12 months. This has meant that the budget gap estimated in March 2022 is unrecognisable in comparison to the budget gap that the council now faces. The key emerging cost challenges include:

- **Increasing inflationary costs** – the impact of specific elements of the consumer prices index (CPI) on council supplies and services; affecting both the Council's own direct costs and that of its key suppliers and service providers. Examples include the cost of food and fuel. The latest published CPI inflation rate is 11.1%. This is forecast to be 10.2% for Q1 2023 and 8.9% for Q2 2023;
- **Pay awards** – the impact of high inflation on actual and future potential pay awards. This relates to the Council's own pay awards (teachers and National Joint Committee (NJC)) as well as awards that will be passed on to the Council's commissioned services, e.g., the care sector;
- **Energy crisis** – this is expected to have one of the most significant cost implications for Council services in particular schools, street lighting, residential care, and the wider council estate;
- **Cost of living crisis** – the fall in real disposable income experienced since late 2021 has led to increasing requests for government support and demand on local services;
- **Labour market** – labour market challenges are increasing the cost of commissioned services in areas affected by labour shortages; in particular social care;
- **Increasing demand** - for services and therefore costs stemming from legacy issues coming from the pandemic period as well as population and demographic/ societal changes. These are most acute in the usual budget areas of social services and education; but also, now, housing services.

1.3 The impact of rising costs due to the rapid increase in inflation has led to the significant recalculation of the estimated costs faced by the Council in 2023/24. The table below outlines the key movements to the 2023/24 budget gap since March 2022.

**Table 1: 2023/24 budget updates since March 2022**

	2023/24		
	March 2022 £'000	Updates £'000	Revised £'000
Pricing - pay inflation & increments	5,391	6,312	11,703
Pricing - contract/ income	3,435	18,475	21,910
Demand - schools	1,561	(776)	785
Demand - social care	1,065	2,263	3,328
Demand - homelessness	0	3,500	3,500
Other	2,465	1,571	4,036
WG Revenue Support Grant	(10,046)	(1,815)	(11,861)
Council tax	(2,477)	(3,848)	(6,325)
Reserves transfer	563	0	563
<b>Budget Gap</b>	<b>1,957</b>	<b>25,682</b>	<b>27,639</b>

1.4 A key component of the Council's budget is the core grant funding received from Welsh Government, known as 'aggregate external finance' or more commonly as the 'Revenue Support Grant' (RSG). Whilst indicative allocations for 2023/24 were provided as part of the 2022/23 settlement, the draft RSG allocation for 2023/24 will not be known until 14th December. However,

despite this delay, it is evident that the financial outlook has drastically worsened since the budget position was shared with Council in March 2022 for the reasons outlined above.

- 1.5 The Council has recently approved its new Corporate Plan, and this will be supported by a Transformation and other key plans for delivery of the key outcomes within it. A review of these is now required to identify what, if any, additional financial impacts on current budgetary provision is required for delivery. Whilst the scale of the financial challenge creates some practical and other challenges here, it does not mean that these priorities cannot be met.
- 1.6 In balancing the budget over the last decade, savings have consistently been a large contributory factor to bridging the gap with around £80m of savings made over this period (£25m over the last 5 years). The need to identify and deliver such significant levels of savings become increasingly challenging at this stage because:
- lower levels of funding, from low relative council tax; means budgets are already lower than most other comparative councils, coupled with,
  - high levels of deprivation and a growing city is resulting in high demand for services and,
  - the ability to identify new savings, without significant service impacts, becomes more difficult against the backdrop of sustained savings requirements over recent years.

## **2 Economic Challenge**

- 2.1 This section outlines the key contextual areas and events, which influence the Council's medium term financial planning and within that, next year's budget. This year has brought some new and significant challenges over and above previous years, and this report highlights the continued volatility. The key contextual areas which have shaped the preparation of the draft proposals include:
- the economic challenge, in the context of major cost and demand pressures. This includes the UK national context, the annual spending review and what this means for WG funding
  - the local, Newport City Council, context given the draft RSG funding is yet to be confirmed
  - the Council's Corporate Plan, which drives priorities. These factors are explained in more detail below.

### **National Context**

- 2.2 The UK government's Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2022 announced on 17<sup>th</sup> November confirmed that the Government will deliver a plan to tackle the cost of living crisis and rebuild the UK economy.
- 2.3 The Office for Budget responsibility (OBR) confirm that global factors are the primary cause of current inflation. Although it is predicted that inflation will start to fall sharply from the middle of next year, the unprecedented increases in inflation are expected to have a lasting impact, as prices are not anticipated to return to previous levels. The Chancellor, during the announcement, confirmed that the economy is likely to shrink next year before recovering thereafter.
- 2.4 The key headlines, for local government, as set out within the Chancellor's Autumn Statement include:
- Existing departmental spending under the 2021 spending round would be maintained. Then departmental spending growth would slow significantly to 1% a year in the three years that follow.
  - Schools budget will increase by an extra £2.3bn a year in both 2023/24 and 2024/25.
  - There will be a £3.3bn increase in NHS funding over the next two years.
  - Although the government's energy price guarantee will be kept for a further 12 months, it has been confirmed that this assistance will not be available for public sector organisations.
  - The National Living Wage will rise by 9.7% next year to £10.42 an hour.

Based on the above and how 'consequential funding' for devolved governments works:

- Devolved administration funding would be increasing by around £3.4 billion over 2023/24 and 2024/25. This includes £1.2 billion for the Welsh Government, though on a 'consequential cash term', is lower at circa £800m. The extra funding are consequential of the increased funding, in England, of NHS, Schools and Social Care services.

2.5 In summary, at an UK level, the Budget and Spending Review outlined a scenario which:

- Maintained the 2021 spending round increase funding, and increased them further in the areas of health, education, and social care for the next two years, but still not at a level which keeps up with current inflation/price increases.
- Thereafter, slows down the growth in public sector funding significantly from 2025/26 onwards, which, even though inflation/price increases will have significantly reduced themselves, will continue to make for a very challenging scenario.

Keeping this in mind and thinking over the medium term will be key to creating a budget and transformation strategy which ensures sustainable services and financial stability.

### **Local Context**

2.6 The 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) set out a 3-year Government spending plan. The impact of that at an all-Wales level was funding increases for local government of +3.5% and +2.4% for the period covering 2023/24 to 2024/25. This announcement was made at a time when the economic and fiscal situation was very different and although the Autumn budget confirmed that the CSR assumptions will remain unchanged, it is evident that this is now significantly inadequate, even with the potential prospect for further increases announced in the CSR outlined above.

2.7 In addition, an estimate for some additional share of the total LG funding has been assumed given Newport's growing population, as evidenced by the 2021 Census data. The 2023/24 RSG funding distribution will be first to reflect the 2021 Census data and Newport is one of three Councils where it confirmed actual population was higher than the estimates used for previous year distributions. School pupil numbers continue to increase too. Both sets of data are key drivers of the distribution of the RSG, estimated at circa £2.6m and which is over and above the 'average' +3.5% increase outlined above. This is reflected in the MTFP and 2023/24 budget position.

2.8 The outcome of the draft announcement will be pivotal to agreement of the Council's 2023/24 draft budget as this accounts for the largest part of councils' funding. In Newport, the RSG funding makes up 77% of its net budget, with council tax at 23%. Given the Council's reliance on RSG, what happens to this grant is crucial, as any reductions cannot be easily offset by an increase to council tax. The scale of the budget challenge is very sensitive to changes, both current and future, to RSG funding as shown in table 5 and although multi-year settlements reduce the uncertainty, the constantly changing economic climate has the potential to make this a little more changeable. The fact that the draft settlement will not be known at the point of finalising this report increases the risk of the budget gap being impacted by the announcement, in particular with increased funding being available to the WG, following the recent Autumn Budget.

2.9 The Head of Finance (HoF) has set the council tax base (i.e. the number of Band D equivalent properties) for 2023/24 and it will increase by 0.21%. This council tax base is net of a 2% non-collection allowance. This practice is consistent with all councils across Wales and Newport's 'budgeted collection rate' is one of the highest in Wales. The net increase in available funding from the increased tax base is £140k and is reflected in the MTFP for 2023/24. The increase in the tax base may impact upon the share of WG funding received by the Council, as a consequence of the equalisation process that WG undertake. This will be confirmed at the draft settlement stage and will be reflected in the final budget to be considered by Cabinet.

## **Implementing the Corporate Plan**

- 2.10 The Council has recently approved its new Corporate Plan, and this will be supported by a Transformation and other plans to achieve the outcomes within it. The transformation plan is in the development stage and whilst this will form a key part of the strategy for addressing the budget gap it will not in itself deliver the quantum of savings required over the medium term. Therefore, further work is required to build a detailed delivery and implementation plan with potential savings.
- 2.11 As part of the Councils transformation plan, the Council are reviewing how we utilise our operational estate in the light of the changes implemented during the pandemic. The Council operates services from 73 assets throughout the City. These assets range from care homes to depots to Civic buildings, but do not include schools.
- 2.12 We also have commercial and non-operational buildings and land, and educational establishments/ schools. Of these there are several that are deemed to be essential and must remain within the estate. The remaining assets provide opportunities, including:
- disposal to achieve a capital receipt and revenue savings,
  - disposal to community groups or third sector organisations,
  - amalgamating services into one asset to create efficiencies,
  - repurposing to maximise an assets use to the Council.
- 2.13 The rationalisation programme would seek to identify and maximise its effect by prioritising those assets which would provide the greatest returns. These include buildings such as the Civic Centre and Mansion House. The Civic Centre has an annual revenue cost in excess of £750k in 22/23 rising to in excess of £1million in 23/24. Prior to the pandemic desk occupancy at the Civic had reduced and the building remains underutilised, and there is potential to accommodate other services, or to change its use.
- 2.14 As an example, the Mansion House, which currently houses the Registrar's Office, provides an opportunity for significant capital receipt as it is situated in a highly sought-after part of the City and would achieve circa £1million if disposed on the open market. To achieve this the Council would need to relocate those staff and services effected into another appropriate asset. This will not deliver revenue savings in the initial move but would deliver other efficiencies as buildings are used more effectively.
- 2.15 The Council will own other buildings which would also offer a potential capital receipt and reduce further maintenance and spending commitments. This would also support the Council's Climate Change Plan. It is proposed to progress with a programme of asset and estate rationalisation

## **Addressing the budget gap**

- 2.16 The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget every year. Therefore, there has been a need to consider all potential options for addressing the budget gap of £27m. This includes a review of all aspects of the budget. Ultimately, however, most of the budget gap will need to be identified through budget savings. Building on the levels of savings identified over the past decade (in the region of £80m) it will not be possible to balance the 2023/24 budget through efficiencies alone and so there will be a requirement for savings that impact upon service delivery.

## **3 Financial planning assumptions**

- 3.1 Whilst the above highlights the context for the Council's medium term financial plan, this section deals with the key assumptions affecting the MTFP and the budget for next year.

### **Increasing costs and demand**

3.2 Financial pressures and demands on our services have escalated significantly during the current financial year and, cumulatively, the pressures over the medium term are significant. The main issues include:

#### Inflationary Increases

- With inflation forecast to be 10.2% for Q1 2023, this is possibly one of the most important considerations in the setting of this budget. Unavoidable pay and inflationary cost increases, including schools, equate to £33.61m in 2023/24 and £76.91m over the three-year period to 2025/26;
- Aside from pay, key areas of concern are energy, fuel, and food. Forward purchasing arrangements for energy have largely protected the Council from the impact of energy price increases in the current year. That said, indicative increases for 2023/24 are substantial – 245% for gas and 137% for electricity. The position remains volatile and subject to change, however, based on current units purchased to date, there will be an estimated cost increase of £7.9m 2023/24.

#### Staff Costs

- Staff costs account for over half of all council costs. Sustained levels of high inflation have placed upward pressure on such costs as shown by pay awards in the current year exceeding the budgeted level of 4%. For 2022/23, the NJC pay award (which encompasses most Council staff), is an uplift of £1,925 across all pay scales, representing an average increase of 6.4%. An additional cost of £3.6m has been factored into the base budget for the 2023/24 budget to make good this shortfall.
- For NJC staff, a pay award of 4% has been assumed for 2023/24.
- An additional cost of £0.6m has been included in the base budget for 2023/24 to fund a 3.5% pay award for teachers agreed from September 2023 (+1% over and above existing budget provision for 2023/24).
- In September 2022, the new Real Living Wage (RLW) rate was announced at £10.90, which is a 10.1% increase. From April 2023, this will not be a significant cost as the pay award uplift at the bottom of the pay structure is comparable in percentage terms.
- Providers of commissioned services, such as social care and transport, are facing the same cost pressures as those faced by the council, and in the context of a 'fragile market', will need sufficient/appropriate funding. This is especially likely to be the case where National Living Wage is paid, which will rise to £10.42/hour following the recent UK budget.

#### Service Demand

- Alongside inflationary pressures, the Council is experiencing exceptional levels of demand and cost pressure in some areas; most significantly in Children's services linked to the number and complexity of 'in year placements' for children looked after. Demand pressures will need to be closely monitored across a range of services including homelessness and adult social care.
- The pandemic has exacerbated many of the existing challenges within social care including increasing demand for services coupled with significant workforce pressures. The fragility of the social care market and the ability to deal with such levels of demand is an issue.
- Significant pressures are evident in relation to homelessness. The main issues being the continuing large number of individuals/ households accommodated in temporary accommodation, partly as a legacy of the Covid period, and the lack of suitable accommodation options resulting in significant use of hotel and B&B options at a much higher cost than more traditional options. This is compounded by the inability of housing benefit subsidy to cover these costs as it is capped for short term accommodation; therefore, the additional cost falls to the council.

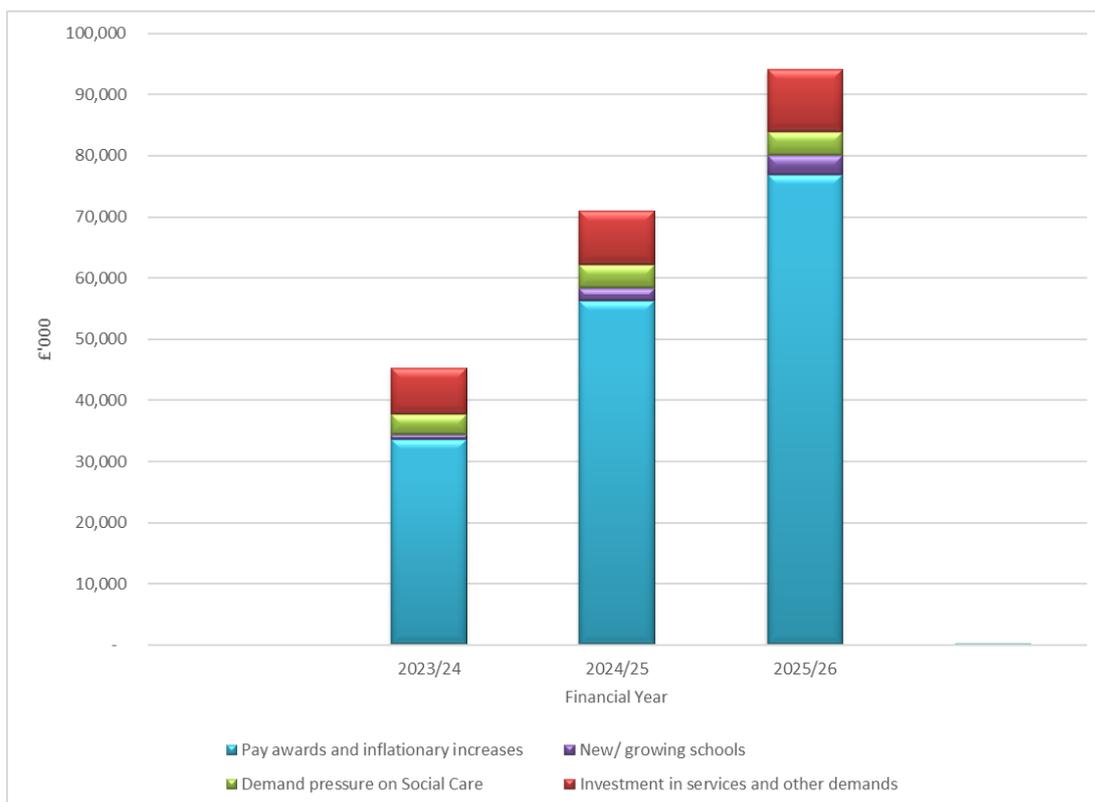
3.3 Detailed demand models for social care have been included within Appendix 4 and form the basis of the investments proposed for inclusion within the medium-term projections.

3.4 For 2023/24 specifically, the Council is currently planning to invest around £11.6m in the draft budget over and above an allowance for pay and pricing inflation. More details on proposed investments are included in Appendix 1 and some of the key items include:

- £1,951k investment in school budgets - £368k funding for new schools, £417k net increase in pupil funding and £1,166k for teachers pay and pension
- £3,360k for increasing demand in social care for both children and adult services and investment in children looked after
- £3,500k for homelessness provision to support WG directive to ensure that there are no rough sleepers in Newport.

3.5 Detailed investments will be agreed in the Cabinet’s February meeting and will be done so considering feedback from the public consultation. As well as the permanent investment in the revenue budget, the Cabinet will also approve one-off investments, such as in relation to implementation costs arising from savings proposals, funded from current reserves.

**Chart 1: Cumulative pressures by source**



3.6 The financial pressures facing the Council continue to accelerate over the three-year period with pricing and inflation accounting for £77m or 81% of total investment required over the next three years.

**Capital programme and financing**

3.7 Unfunded capital expenditure undertaken by the Council gives rise to a long-term and fixed commitment to fund the associated revenue costs for the provision of the repayment of that borrowing (Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)) and interest costs – together called ‘capital financing costs’.

3.8 The current capital programme, which includes previously approved contributions towards the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, is coming to an end, with a new five-year programme to be set for 2023/24. This new programme will be approved by Council alongside the revenue budget for 2023/24. The capital financing costs arising from the existing programme were fully funded as part of the 2021/22 revenue budget and, therefore, there is no requirement to make new revenue budget provision in connection with the current programme. It is important to note that a significant amount of slippage has occurred in delivering the existing programme and, as a result, a number of schemes are expected to be completed during 2023/24 and 2024/25. This means

that delivering anything in addition to those existing schemes, during the early part of the new programme window, would be challenging from a capacity perspective.

- 3.9 As outlined in the Council’s Capital & Treasury Management Strategy, and in accordance with its legal obligations, the Council should only commit to unfunded capital expenditure (i.e. that funded via borrowing and, ultimately, the revenue budget via MRP) where it is prudent, affordable, and sustainable to do so. In light of the incredibly challenging revenue budget situation facing the Council over the medium term, it would be difficult to argue that any new capital financing commitments, driven by new unfunded capital expenditure, would meet these criteria. Therefore, the draft revenue budget for 2023/24 and the MTFP do not include any revenue provision for new unfunded capital expenditure. Any new capital expenditure requirements from 2023/24 will need to be fully funded from external or existing resources, such as capital receipts or WG grants. In addition, service changes requiring capital investment, could be funded from savings or re-prioritised budgets which may come about as part of those changes.

### School’s funding

- 3.10 The MTFP identifies pressures relating to schools amounting to £10,395k in 2023/24, which equates to approximately 8.5% of the current schools’ budget. This is based on an assumed level of inflationary pay award and non-pay increase as noted above plus the additional costs of new/ expanding schools. For the full three-year MTFP period, assessed school pressures amount to £28m, based on current assumptions. These will, like other MTFP assumptions, need to be reviewed regularly and any actual proposed funding increases confirmed through the budget process. Table 2 below sets out the detailed school budget pressures over this timeframe.
- 3.11 Given the size of school’s budgets relative to the overall budget, Cabinet are aware that protecting the school budgets in its entirety would be extremely challenging on all other Council services. In that sense, the school’s budgets will need to contribute to balancing the overall Council budget. However, mindful of the additional funding the Welsh Government has received following the recent UK Autumn budget, in part a consequential of increased Education funding, this will be announced at the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> December when the draft settlement is known. This will allow a more considered view to be taken on this part of the Council’s budget, representing as it does, the single largest part of the overall budget.

**Table 2:** School budget pressures 2023/24 to 2025/26

	2023/2024 £'000	2024/2025 £'000	2025/2026 £'000
Teaching staff - pay award - 3.5% Sept 23 and 2.5% thereafter	3,628	3,217	4,337
Non Teaching school staff - pay award - 4% in 23/24 and 2.5% thereafter	875	899	921
Contract & Income Inflation	3,941	3,463	1,745
New and growing Schools	368	1,345	1,278
Secondary School Transitions	417	(124)	(114)
Other School investment	1,166	566	566
	<b>10,395</b>	<b>9,366</b>	<b>8,734</b>

### Council Tax

- 3.12 It is well documented that Newport’s council tax is low compared to others in Wales, generating 23% of the Council’s income. This council’s current year band B council tax rate is 15% lower than the Welsh average.
- 3.13 A range of council tax increases are being consulted upon although the position and figures set out within this report are based on a 9.5% increase within the MTFP in 2023/24. A 4% planning assumption for council tax increase remains thereafter. This is subject to consultation and a final recommendation to Council on the council tax level and will be confirmed in the Cabinet’s February 2023 meeting.

- 3.14 For contextual purposes, the table below shows the weekly increases in council tax based on a 9.5% increase. Given the low starting point on Newport's council tax, it will still be lower than most (if not all) of the neighbouring authorities, even if they have a lower level of increase. Newport City Council's proposed tax increase would maintain its position as one of the lowest in Wales.

**Table 3:** Scenarios illustrating weekly Council Tax increases

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Annual increase based on 9.5% increase	£80.56	£93.99	£107.41	£120.84	£147.69	£174.55	£201.40	£241.68	£241.68
Weekly increase based on 9.5% increase	£1.55	£1.81	£2.07	£2.32	£2.84	£3.36	£3.87	£4.65	£4.65

- 3.15 Given that over half of Newport's chargeable properties are banded A – C, most households would see an increase of between £1.55 and £2.07 per week based on a 9.5% increase.

### Summary of key budget assumptions

At this point, the following assumptions are included.

**Table 4:** Summary of key assumptions

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000
RSG increase <b>+3.5%</b> , <b>+2.4%</b> and <b>+2.95%</b> in line with WG multi-year settlement figures included within RSG	(9,296)	(6,598)	(8,304)	(24,198)
Increased share of the total RSG due to data changes showing increased relative spending need	(2,565)	-	-	(2,565)
Council tax increase <b>+9.5%</b> in 2023/24 and 4% thereafter	(6,325)	(2,853)	(2,968)	(12,146)
Budget pressures/ investments (appendix 1)	45,262	25,634	23,240	94,136

### Resulting budget position and sensitivity of assumptions

- 3.16 Given the significant inflationary and demand pressures identified during recent months, coupled with the currently unchanged indicative funding allocations, it is unsurprising that the MTFP gap over the medium term has grown significantly since the last update. The budget position in the current draft MTFP (Appendix 7) is unprecedented, certainly compared to previous years. Should any of the underlying assumptions change, there is scope for the position to change. The table below outlines the potential impact that changes to key elements could have:

**Table 5:** Sensitivity analysis – key projections

<b>RSG Sensitivity</b>	<b>£'000</b>
RSG growth +/- 1%	2,656
<b>Council Tax Sensitivity</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Council tax change +/- 1%	652
<b>Pay Sensitivity</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Pay inflation - NJC staff +/- 1%	1,100
Pay inflation - Teachers and soulbury +/- 1%	494
<b>Contract Inflation Sensitivity</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Contract inflation - +/- 1%	5,889

## 4 Budget savings

- 4.1 The identification of significant new savings is a requirement to balance the budget for 2023/24. The draft proposed savings identified for 2023/24 to date total £11,561k. The table below provides a summary of the savings by decision over the 3-year planning horizon.

**Table 6:** Summary of projected savings

Savings Decision Type	2023/2024 £'000	2024/2025 £'000	2024/2025 £'000	Staff Impact FTE
Budget savings for full Cabinet decision (appendix 2)	5,649	245	0	75.93
Budget savings delegated to officers (appendix 3)	5,912	39	0	20.1
<b>Total Budget Savings</b>	<b>11,561</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>96.0</b>

- 4.2 Under the constitution and our scheme of delegation, the Cabinet takes some budget decisions collectively. These proposals total £5,649k for 2023/24 and £5,894k over the life of the MTFP. Some lower level, operational and efficiency type budget proposals are delegated to Heads of Service for decision and implementation. These proposals, totalling £5,912k for 2023/24 and £5,951k over the life of the MTFP are listed in Appendix 3.

### Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments (FEIAs)

- 4.3 All budget proposals have been reviewed against our Equality and Welsh language duties, and, where appropriate, have had an initial Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment completed. The initial FEIA identifies potential negative or positive impacts in relation to protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and on Welsh language. These FEIAs will be further informed as a result of public consultation and developed in line with the new Socioeconomic Duty. FEIAs for all proposals requiring one can be found [here](#).
- 4.4 The identification of significant new savings is a requirement to balance the budget for 2023/24.

## 5 Budget process and consultation

- 5.1 This report presents the draft proposals for the 2023/24 budget. The report asks Cabinet to note:
- the position on developing a balanced budget for 2023/24, acknowledging that the position will be subject to ongoing review and updates.
- 5.2 The report also asks Cabinet to agree a series of proposals for public consultation. This includes:
- proposed budget investments in Appendix 1;
  - proposed savings in Appendix 2 (summary table) and Appendix 10 (detailed saving proposals).
  - proposed fees and charges in Appendix 5;
  - the position regarding the proposed school funding for 2023/24 in section 3;

### Budget engagement

- 5.3 In the wake of the pandemic and a general change to the way everybody works and lives, the approach to engagement has had to change. Traditional engagement methods are no longer as effective as they were, and levels of engagement have reduced. Despite this, a pre-budget engagement exercise was completed to establish citizens' views on the prioritisation of council

spending over the medium term. Almost 900 responses were received, and the results indicated that the public continues to place significant emphasis on: schools and education, children's services, city services, adult services, and homelessness support, but are increasingly concerned with the cost of living and climate action and community safety.

- 5.4 The proposed investments set out in this report have been identified with public engagement in mind, and citizens will now be invited to give their views on the draft budget and medium-term financial plan during the consultation period. Unlike the previous year, the Council faces severe financial pressures, and this is reflected in the consultation, which will focus on the proposed cost savings and proposed increase to council tax which are needed to balance the budget.

Below is this year's timetable for consulting on and approving the 2023/24 budget:

**Table 7:** Budget consultation timetable 2023/24

Cabinet agrees budget proposals as a basis for consultation	14 December 2022
Consultation period	14 December 2022 to 2 February 2023
Cabinet considers feedback from consultation and agrees final budget proposals and recommends resulting overall budget and council tax required to full Council	15 February 2023
Council approves the 2023/24 overall budget and resulting council tax level required	28 February 2023

## 6 Risk, financial resilience, and performance

- 6.1 A key driver in our budget strategy and MTFP framework is the need to manage the Council's general and financial risks, its financial resilience and performance. This next section looks at these issues and identifies how they are dealt with, whilst considering how they influence the Council's 2023/24 budget and medium-term projections.

### Risk

- 6.2 The Council maintains a corporate risk register, which is regularly reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet, as well as the Governance & Audit Committee from a procedural / risk management framework viewpoint. The Council's budget strategy and MTFP framework needs to reflect risks and incorporate appropriate financial mitigation, where required.
- 6.3 The quarter 2 corporate risk register reported to December Cabinet identified 16 risks that are considered to have a significant impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and legal obligations. Overall, 8 of these risks are severe and in many cases link the issues set out within the economic context and earlier sections of this report. In some cases, it is increasingly difficult for the Council to effectively prepare and quantify the financial impact of some of these risks until outcomes are known. There are several risks identified in the risk register that to fully mitigate would be unaffordable. In these cases, the risk is identified, and the Council needs to consider and assess how best to mitigate and continue lobbying WG to provide more funding in these areas, as these risks are not unique to Newport. These areas do, however, continue to be

monitored closely to ensure that where information is available these risks are considered and where appropriate factored into the Council's financial planning.

6.4 Three current risks with significant uncertainty are (i) stability of social services providers, (ii) pressures on adult services and (iii) pressure on delivery of children services and in the case of challenges facing social care have already been considered earlier in this report.

6.5 In the context of the challenging economic climate, whilst there are potential options to manage these risks, the likelihood is that the following areas if mitigation will be required to support the challenges set out above. Appendix 9 sets out the current risks included within the register.

- existing revenue contingency budget;
- existing revenue budgets not yet committed and could, in whole or part, be set aside to manage revenue budget risks in the short term;
- specific reserves earmarked for budget risks;
- investment in revenue budgets to mitigate risks on an on-going basis.

6.6 The HoF is required to independently assess and report on the adequacy of the budget (and council tax level as an integral part of this) and reserves in the context of the financial issues and risks facing the Council. The assessment of the risks mentioned here and how we plan and utilise the above options are key to this.

### **Financial Resilience**

6.7 A robust view is taken in managing budget risks and protecting the financial health of the Council. In that respect, the Council's financial resilience is a key consideration and Appendix 6 shows the current 'snapshot' of the key data and information showing an overview of the health of the Council currently. Key headlines include:

- *Earmarked Reserves:* Although the Council's reserves have increased in recent years, nearly all of these are earmarked for specific purposes. However, as a last resort they do provide some mitigation but use of them means that the original purpose would be affected and/or would result in a budget pressure to build those reserves up again, as well as delaying the identification of recurring mitigation for the identified budget gap.
- *Revenue Contingency budget – General Reserves:* The contingency base budget and other specific risk reserves held by the Council are taken into consideration when assessing the level of the general reserve and help to mitigate the risk to the Council. The general reserve is increasingly becoming too low, as the Council's net budget increases each year but can be maintained at that level at this point due to the overall level of reserves which, in the last resort, provide more than adequate financial mitigation, albeit with resulting impacts as noted above.
- *School budgets- Reserves:* Although the position in relation to school reserves has improved over the last couple of years, this is likely to be a temporary improvement due to significant one-off grants being awarded at the end of last financial year. The forecast net spend against school budgets this year will see reserve balances reduce to £10,141k the end of this financial year, though this could change in the last quarter as so often is the case with new grants received.
- *Current budget savings-managing the revenue budget – demands on the revenue budget:* The Council has identified and continues to monitor budget reductions of £800k in 2022/23 and whilst understandable delays in delivery is evident, HoS have confirmed they can and will be implemented. This is alongside delivering outturns within and under budget over recent years, despite the delivery of £25m savings over the last 5 years. This needs to be viewed within the context of continued significant demands which are faced by service areas, namely children's social care and schools, which have been highlighted throughout the year as part of the budget monitoring process.

The Council is developing a strategic transformation programme and has its 'transformation plan fund' (previously invest to save) reserve to fund the one-off cost of change. The programme is integral to developing ongoing financial sustainability whilst also ensuring key services can be delivered.

## 7 Report review and statutory comments

### 7.1 Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Planning parameters around inflation are incorrect	H	H	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Use of contingency, where required</li> <li>2 Use of reserves, where appropriate</li> </ol>	Head of Finance  Exec Board
Planning parameters around Welsh Government revenue grant are incorrect over medium term	H	M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of contingency, where required</li> <li>2. Keep the assumptions under constant review</li> <li>3. Use of conservative assumptions</li> </ol>	Head of Finance
Increasing budget pressures over medium term	H	M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage demand, where possible</li> <li>2. Keep MTFP under constant review</li> <li>3. Exec Board review all budget pressures within MTFP</li> </ol>	Exec Board

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

### Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The overall aim of the budget and MTFP is to ensure resource allocation is based on priorities, supports the delivery of the Council's soon to be developed change programme, saving proposals and protects the financial health of the Council.

### Options Available and considered

There are few options available as the Council is required to consult on its budget where decisions do not fall under delegated authority and therefore needs to agree the basis of its consultation.

### Preferred Option and Why

To consult on the new medium-term package of investments and savings to ensure a sustainable offering deliverable over the medium term.

### Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The budget report is seeking Cabinet approval to begin consultation on a range of budget savings, with final decisions on these to be made in the February meeting, and to approve others for immediate implementation by Heads of Service. The totality of savings is very significant and are required because of the challenges which all parts of the economy, including public services, are under, both in scale and speed. The scale of the challenges is explained in detail within the report.

As the report confirms, there is no budget saving attributable to schools budget at this time of writing and will be announced at the meeting, when the draft settlement is known. There is a prospect of further funding compared to what is included in this report, though can't be confirmed at this time. In assessing

this and the school's position at the meeting, the Cabinet must be cognisant of other pressures and issues, including feedback from the consultation, which this provides flexibility to address.

The current 2023/24 budget proposals included in this report is not 'balanced' with a residual budget gap of nearly £16.1m. The contribution to be potentially made by school's budget is not yet included and this should decrease when included / announced. An un-balanced budget at this stage, whilst not best practice, is in-itself, not an issue, but the Cabinet must agree a balanced budget in their February meeting and any residual budget gap that may exist then would need to utilise reserves to achieve that. In this and other general respects, a number of key considerations is recommended to be borne in mind in moving to a final budget in February, including; the importance of taking a medium-term view, the budget gaps which already exist in 24/25 and beyond, the potential prospect for reducing funding increases in future years, the time limited benefits and the impact of utilising reserves to generally balance the budget, the current relative low Council Tax level in Newport, within the aspiration of the Council's new Corporate Plan and the cost of living challenges. Of particular importance is

Delivering a more medium term, strategic approach to identify budget savings will be more important than ever in the context of the on-going challenges facing Local Government and this Council in particular. The development of the Council's Transformation Plan and associated implementation plans is key to this though it will need to be augmented by other approaches and plan to help ensure we deliver essential local services which are financially sustainable.

The Welsh Government will announce Councils 'Aggregate External Finance' on the 14<sup>th</sup> December and there is the real prospect, but no certainty at time of writing, of additional funding to that assumed at this stage given the increased funding received by the Welsh Government. If this was to happen, it will allow choices as the budgets moves to its final stage in February, given a 1% change is c£2.6m.

### **Comments of Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report at this stage. Cabinet is being asked to approve the draft savings proposals and council tax rate set out in the Report in order to deliver a balanced budget for 23/24 and as the basis for public consultation, where the relevant business cases will have an impact on service delivery and are not operational matters delegated to Heads of Service. Cabinet will then take the final decisions on those business cases in the light of the responses to the public consultation, prior to full Council approval of the annual revenue budget and council tax rate for 23/24. Relevant business cases have been the subject of fairness and equality impact assessments to ensure that the Council has regard to its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act and is acting fairly in terms of the impact of the proposed changes on service delivery. In addition, where specific proposals require more focussed consultation with staff and key stakeholders, this will be carried out prior to the implementation of any proposed changes. The setting of the overall base budget and council tax rate for 23/24 is a matter for full Council as these are non-executive reserved matters under the Constitution.

### **Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation**

This report describes the challenging financial position facing the council, its residents, staff, and businesses. The financial position for 2023/24 reflects the increasingly challenging situation in the medium term which is expected to impact on service delivery and meeting our public sector duties. Officers across service areas are working closely to support actions to enable a balanced budget across the council.

Public consultation will take place on the proposals as outlined in the report. Any direct impact on Council staff will require formal consultation with those staff impacted and the relevant recognised Trade Unions Officers. The Human Resources team are supporting senior officers and staff members during this period and will continue to do so during consultation period. Minimising the impact on staff will be a priority, however the scale of budget challenge will likely mean that the Council does have to make redundancies. Feedback from consultation, both public and staff, will be included in the report to Cabinet in February and decision making around proposals will consider relevant feedback.

The Fairness and Equalities Assessments undertaken will be amended following consultation with due consideration for ensuring we meet our public sector equality duties with all decisions.

## **Scrutiny Committees**

The constitution requires that Scrutiny Committees be consulted on Cabinet's draft budget proposals.

### **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

Long term - The medium term approach that is in place for financial planning within the Council is intended to bridge the gap between longer-term strategic aspirations and sustainable development concerns with the more immediate pressures of setting a balanced budget each year.

Prevention – Taken as a whole the proposed investments are geared towards sustaining preventative type services and focussing on some of the most vulnerable groups which should have the greatest impact over the longer term and will help to prevent negative outcomes getting worse.

Integration – The budget and medium term financial plan has the overall aim of balancing resource allocation across services to support the range of strategic priorities and the delivery of the Council's change programme whilst ensuring financial sustainability.

Involvement – The budget is informed by insight gained from public engagement work, including previous budget consultations. Pre-budget public engagement on the relative prioritisation of Council services has informed the proposed budget investments. Newport Fairness Commission along with other stakeholders will be engaged as part of the consultation.

Collaboration – Whilst the budget and medium term financial plan is a Council owned document it recognises that services are increasingly delivered in a collaborative public sector landscape with a greater emphasis on regional working e.g. through Corporate Joint Committees, Gwent-wide and South East Wales based partnerships.

### **Consultation**

Details included within body of the report

### **Background Papers**

October Revenue Budget Monitor  
2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

**Dated: 8 December 2022**

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**(FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2023)**

**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PLACE AND CORPORATE**

**Draft Budget Proposals 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan**

Invitees:

- Meirion Rushworth – Head of Finance
- David Walton – Head of Housing and Communities
- Silvia Gonzalez-Lopez – Head of Environment and Public Protection
- Stephen Jarrett – Head of Infrastructure
- Elizabeth Bryant – Head of Law and Standards
- Tracey Brooks – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
- Tracy McKim – Head of People, Policy and Transformation
- Alasdair Hopkins – Senior Finance Business Partner

The Head of Finance introduced a brief overview of the budget process and advised that at the moment there had been a change to reflect the level of savings. There was a £2million budget gap last year. In February 2022 the MTFP showed a £2million budget gap, in Spring 2022 inflation increased as well as food and fuel cost increases along with emerging budget challenges around Housing and Homelessness with Social Care also a big issue which moved the position.

The Cabinet Member report showed the movements with pay being increased by £6 million. There was an £18 million increase in contract inflation where energy was a big part of that, with Gas prices rising as well as Social Care contract inflation. There were budget pressures in Social Care with £3.5 million needed for Housing Area and Homelessness. There were budget targets for each area and there was a £12million of budget savings presented here to Committee. The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was confirmed in December 2022 and the budget gap was £16 million where the increase in RSG was about 9%. 50% of the budget proposals have been consulted and the other 50% was done under Delegated Authority.

**HC2324/01 - Library and Adult Community Learning Services**

The Head of Housing and Communities gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which included a change to services with a saving of £110,000 for the first financial year and £15,000 the following year. It is also proposing to reduce library opening hours, particularly a one-day closure at Rogerstone and Betts Libraries. A reduction in Malpas Library opening hours and to refashion Pill Library with a smaller library space and other areas of saving such as a reduction of staffing hours and a greater investment in digital borrowing.

Members asked the following:

- What will the function of Central Library be, and would other services be integrated?

It was confirmed that the Central Library would become a community hub and a coordination point, although those wider changes are former decisions to change services, not related to these proposals.

- What will happen to the staff affected, and would they be engaged with other services?

It was confirmed that this proposal was just about changing the way the building is used and using the staff in a more flexible way.

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- A Member referred to Appendix 10 where there was a £110,000 saving in year 1 with £88,000 worth of costs in that saving. What is the net amount?

The Head of Housing and Communities advised that in all the budget proposals, there is a recurring saving, so the one off cost would be against the recurrent £110,000 saving each year.

**HC2324/02 - Reduce financial support to the Shop Mobility scheme in 2023-24**

The Head of Housing and Communities gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to reduce the financial support to the Shop Mobility scheme from £17,000 to £10,000.

Members asked the following:

- A Member asked the value of this scheme and the benefits of the city centre or in terms of the access allowing people being able to get out and how was this being looked at, as the saving was noted to be a very small amount.

It was explained the service was looked at as a whole with the non-statutory functions being where the savings were achievable.

- Will this mean the service will end, or is there a replacement that will take up the service provision?

The Committee were advised that we do need to recognise that in order to make the necessary savings, we must look to these non-statutory budgets. It is not the intention to cease the service, but this is a component of the funding that Shop Mobility currently receive.

- A Member asked whether there was any data of how the service was used with the fall in traffic in the city centre due to the pandemic.

The Strategic Director stated that this data could be provided at a later date for the Committee and there was a wider public consultation taking place also.

- Query was made regarding the investment of £3.5 million for Homelessness provision and was the revenue locked in for each year.

It was confirmed that this figure would be locked in for each year as the landscape was pre and post covid was totally different.

- A Member commented on households continuing in temporary accommodation and would the situation improve.

The Head of Housing and Communities explained that the Housing system needed to be looked at as a whole with more development in the city. There was a plan to engage with the private rental sector to increase supply, to look at people in temporary accommodation and other issues they faced. A project was being looked at to develop a rapid re-housing transition. This was all very challenging and would take time to galvanise all the resources.

- How much funding had increased since Covid?

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The Committee were advised that the Social Housing grants have increased since Covid with an additional Welsh Government grant with other pots of capital funding also available. The funding pots were grants where distribution had not been agreed yet and this was a big challenge. A Member then asked whether the basic amount had increased and could it be supplemented. It was advised that this was a combination of things as in the Covid years the costs were picked up by Welsh Government and so this was a large re-adjustment.

- A Member commented that the £3.5million was the bottom line of what we have to find.

The Head of Housing and Communities explained that the extra money given allowed the Council to fulfil their statutory duties which have expanded and with the issues of supply in the city, more people had to be given temporary accommodation. The Committee requested a report on Housing's statutory duties to be presented to Committee which was agreed by the Strategic Director and the Head of Housing and Communities.

- The Committee queried the investment of £11,000 for a Homelessness Officer. Is this a new role?

The Committee were advised that this was for a new role, funded for 9 months which would take us through to the end of the year. The Strategic Director advised that this was an investment made last year, and is showing up now as a part investment this year.

**EPP2324/02 - Community Safety Warden Service Restructure**

The Head of Environment and Public Protection gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which included a saving of £169,000 saving a year.

Members asked the following:

- Is this a deletion of the service?

Members were advised that the service will remain, the proposal would be to reduce the service to half the number of staff the service area previously had. The service will still be 7 days a week, but with less hours and less face to face interaction.

- Do we know what the peak hours are? These would need to be covered.

The Strategic Director advised they do, reports have been conducted and the majority of the Warden service work is non statutory which is an area that can be reduced. Staff have been consulted with to discuss how the service can be made more efficient. The Head of Environment and Public Protection reiterated that at data is looked at and will focus on what is needed and based on what requests the service gets.

- Do we work with social landlords to mediate on issues that the Community Safety Wardens may get involved with? Have you spoken to them to see whether they would contribute to the service?

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The Committee were advised that we do, and we are revisiting the conversations with Registered Social Landlords on the contributions made to this. This is a model that works well already with Waste Enforcement. To date, the service is funded by the Council, however speaking to social landlords about contributions is something they could perhaps look at in the future.

- Members voiced disappointment to see reduction in services, but commented that this could be an opportunity to work more effectively with partners. Comment was also made that Rent Smart Wales seem to be inactive with anti-social behaviour issues, and should have more involvement. The Strategic Director advised that although the service area is trying to make a budget saving with proposed reductions, it should not result in a reduction of quality of the service.

**EPP2324/04 - Increased fees and charges within Environment and Leisure Services**

The Head of Environment and Public Protection gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to introduce higher fees and charges for services provided within the Environment and Leisure services including Parks, Cemetery, Countryside and Grounds services, where the Authority has seen significant increases in the supply chain for either the purchase of goods or operational costs such as maintenance, energy or fuel and has to pass these onto the customer, and also increase charges where these have been benchmarked against service provision elsewhere within the authority and/or other neighbouring local authorities.

- The Committee had no comments or questions on this item.

**EPP2324/05 - Introduce parking charges to four park and countryside car parks**

The Head of Environment and Public Protection gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to install pay and display meters in Glebelands, Christchurch viewing point, Morgan's Pond (off Bettws Lane), and Bettws Lane (opposite Newport High School).

Members asked the following:

- Could a £50,000 saving be generated from people paying fees?

It was confirmed that this was included and repairing equipment had been considered.

- A Member commented on some of the parking machines being covered up previously due to them being broken or vandalised.

It was something the team were aware of and there was going to be a move towards card payments and a payment app being looked at to be used to pay for parking and models varied with a slight charge back to the Council, so these issues had to be considered. There was a provision for charges which was not to be passed on to residents.

- A Member commented on the proposed areas being locked in the evening, for example Bettws area, as the bigger parks were locked at night time.

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Members were advised that the charges applied between 8am- 5pm in the evening and was not 24 hours.

- A Member stated that they did not support this proposal it as it was near green spaces, but they wanted to consider youth sports teams who used the parks, this was an issue at the Glebelands, and it would be great to see an exemption here.

Members were advised that the charges were £1 for two hours and £3 for up to 5 hours so the team were trying to keep charges down.

- A Member commented on the impact of parking on residents in adjacent streets and asked what was their financial projections for each car park and how many visitors were expected.

It was confirmed that there had been a lot of conversations around this and despite a worry there had been no displacement.

- A Member commented that there were reports of cars that had allegedly been hit on Waterloo Road while driving as there was now parking on both sides of the street.

Members were told that this was a difficult issue, but the park would be kept open as the other option was to shut the park which was not wanted. A breakdown of costs was looked at and there was a proposal per different side.

- A Member commented that there were more cars parked on the side than in the car park which was difficult, and it was important to ensure that we take neighbours views into account. It was also asked whether there was any return on investment and with the smaller car parks when would the charges return a profit.

It was noted that a breakdown provided to the Committee would help and that it was immediate in the first year of savings. In the first year after this it did vary from car park to car park such as an income per year of £50,000 excluding any yearly maintenance costs.

- A Member asked regarding subsidies with people using the leisure centre for 2 hours free, who provided this subsidy?

It was explained that Kingsway carpark was different as it was a long lease and there were some historic agreements with some businesses which did vary and elsewhere there were some parks which had business spaces so there were a number of concessions.

**EPP2324/06 - Household Waste Recycling Centre - Charging for non household waste**

The Head of Environment and Public Protection gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) need to accept household waste free of charge as the cost of collection and recycling / disposal is met through Council Tax charges. Although not required to, Newport City Council also accepts construction waste and DIY materials at the HWRC as these are commonly produced by residents. The Council incurs additional charges to handle and recycle these types of wastes and a small fee is proposed to offset these charges. Fees would be in place from 1st April 2023, payable at the

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time of booking with an appointment to attend the HWRC through the current booking system.

Members asked the following:

- Could these items be recycled and sold on to builders for rubble.

It was confirmed that all this material was recycled and there was a process for how it was recycled. For each material- rubble etc there was a small income but there was a lot of mixed material which had a lot more cost. The equipment, skips etc net of all the income received and this was taken into consideration.

- A Member asked whether we had the systems to do this and whether the manpower was there to be checking what people brought in.

It was noted that residents did follow the rules and the site was monitored. People were asked to bring in waste and it was charged at the time of booking. A size of a bag was not imposed as an average weight was used.

- Was there an expectation that there would be an increase of trade waste cost and were the amount of trips people made being recorded to investigate this activity.

Before the system was introduced it was hard to anticipate who was coming to the site as there was an increase in people using it. There were no limits in the number of times that people could use the site. It was a free available service so as waste was segregated this was not considered but it could be done if necessary.

- Has an increased of fly tipping been thought about?

It was confirmed that there was no evidence of any fly tipping, and these were systems introduced across the country and most people comply.

- Would be a charge to be paid before entry into the site, and if an item could be recycled would you get a refund on this item? Also, if someone made mistake then how was this rectified.

It was commented that this would be taken on board and considered.

- What sort of volume of materials were anticipated and was there a sliding scale of cost?

Residents were asked to assess this at the time of booking and therefore there was a charge, for example for each car tyre given.

- Who currently collects fly tipping on public land, as there were a lot of resident enquiries about this? Was there a capacity to handle all requests and was it flexible?

It was confirmed that the Council removed waste on public roads and investigated and took enforcement action where required. Non-Council land was the challenge where private landowners were not clearing their own land.

**EPP2324/08 - Charge for replacement (residual waste) bins**

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The Head of Environment and Public Protection gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to charge residents that request replacement of residual waste bins. Implementation of this would be in April 2023.

Members asked the following:

- Is the charge a flat fee or means tested?

It is a flat fee that reflects the administration costs associated with this activity.

- What if they've been stolen or damaged by youths such as being set on fire, is there any discretion?

There was a certain element e.g., a communal bin but in general it was up to the homeowner to look after the bin.

- A Member asked whether there was any consideration for stolen bins and was there any plans for these issues to be looked at.  
It was noted that the challenge was who really needed a new bin or was it genuinely stolen.
- A Member asked about the charges and liability where 2 bins were stolen from outside the front door, and another resident complained that their bins had been broken by the operatives collecting the bins. Was there any sort of leeway for these residents?

It was explained that the lorries have cameras, and the operatives were encouraged to handle them with care although accidents did happen so in that case residents would not be expected to pay to replace them. In other cases, it would be for the residents to take care of the bin.

**EPP2324/09 - Domestic Residual and Garden Waste Collection – 3 Weekly Collections**

The Head of Environment and Public Protection gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to move from alternate week domestic residual and garden waste collections to 3 weekly collections, in order to reduce cost and increase the recycling rate to achieve 70% by 2025.

Members asked the following:

- A Member commented on helping residents to recycle more and asked for an explanation for the thinking behind this proposal.

Members were advised that it was very important to recycle as there were recycling targets to be met. Sometimes residents did not have all the information to recycle correctly and there have been studies undertaken as to what was inside resident's bins. Every 5 years the Council provided a report on the composition of wheelie bin contents and there was already a lot of Councils doing this. There was a significant increase in recycling. 20 years ago, the recycling rate was 6% and now the rate was 67%. When we picked up mixed up mixed recycling materials there was a large cost to dispose of this. The Statutory targets stated that by 2024/25 the Council must hit a recycling rate of 70%. If not, the Council would have to pay an additional £200 a tonne for the extra waste. Current recycling collections still contained material where

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residents had been reluctant to recycle them. It was the case of changing the way people do waste.

- Are there going to be educational supports in place to supplement this change?

We are proposing to start this in a small trial first to see what it looks like before rolling out wider.

- A Member asked whether the financial costs of fly tipping had been considered as Newport was the worst local authority for fly tipping clearance. There had been materials all in the bins recycled with not a lot of reduction. There was a need to increase recycling and a behaviour change.

Fly tipping the Council dealt with was usually not by residents and all fly tipping was recorded so the amount recorded was high. If someone was struggling with their waste, there was help available where the Council could meet with those residents and so awareness needed to be raised.

- Do we have a waste strategy in place?

It was confirmed there is waste strategy and policy in place, and has been in place for 3 years.

- A Member asked about households with a large amount of people, and would this be looked at in relation to communal bins where neighbours could fill it up with items that shouldn't be put in there.

The Council were willing to be fair on this and the Council worked with registered social landlords and private landlords to see how to improve bin collections from blocks of flats.

- The Head of Environment and Public Protection confirmed there would be no redundancies to the team. We are increasing recycling rounds as we are reducing waste collection rounds, and some of the reductions will be on posts that are currently vacant.
- A Member asked whether the Council could pay Wastesavers to do this and was this contract looked at to make sure it was providing a good service.

It was confirmed that this would be looked at as part of the Council's waste strategy.

- A Member commented on issues with communal bins and the charges got passed on to the residents. It was then noted that on the continent these bins were managed more successfully where there was a pay as you go service where waste was tagged but this was not used in the UK. A common approach was needed to solve the problem with a specific analysis needed for each location so there was a number of things that could be done.

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- If you go to shops abroad, many of them have options to submit recycling for remuneration. Is UK Government looking to do anything similar and would that reduce our rates of recycling?

The Strategic Director confirmed this was a Welsh and English proposal and systems would collect this on a larger scale. The challenge would be that it would target more high value recyclables and local authorities needed to understand the detail of this proposal.

- A Member asked if the target was not reached it would be a 1% increase on council tax.

It was confirmed that there was environmental damage with this as consumers could not keep consuming and throwing away recyclables.

**INF2324/02 - Changes to Operational Practice and Procedures**

The Head of Infrastructure gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which included the reduction in the Levels of Water Management and Drainage Operational Service by 2 FTE operatives and one vehicle, and also the reduction of the gully emptying service by 2 FTE operatives and one vehicle.

Members asked the following:

- Where have other improvements been made elsewhere to have this reduction?

It was confirmed that the Council was fulfilling the function as we were with the changes to policy and procedures and a change to 12 monthly schedules.

- Would investment would be considered for flood alleviation as there was a concern about road flooding and drains being blocked. What was the impact of this on the proposal?

It was advised that in extreme weather events then we do have other operatives that we deploy to support on an ad-hoc basis, albeit other work capacity is reduced as a result during that time. However, there is a need to make savings and this is being offered as an option, with a reduced service being the impact.

- Are there any options to work with partners to mitigate this?

It was advised that as we are talking about adopted highways, then this is our responsibility.

- Comment was made about extreme weather conditions – recent floods at Malpas Road have occurred with current levels of maintenance, so surely these instances will increase in future? Has the cost of sending out a team to respond to this, in comparison to taking pro-active action as part of a schedule for clearing gullies?

It was advised that this is hard to quantify, some of the flooding is not caused by what the Council does or doesn't do, however we often have to deal with the impacts. In some instances we deploy external teams to support the response. Diverting our own teams result in an opportunity cost rather than a financial one.

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- Have we explored collaborative working with our neighbouring local authorities to try to mitigate our costs?

It was advised that from knowledge of colleagues working in other local authorities, they do not necessarily have the capacity to support joint arrangements. This would be challenging to manage, particularly in weather events as the prioritisation would become more of an issue. However, this is something that we can explore further in future.

- Have we reviewed our contracts with external providers to assess any time boundaries in response times that would help us?

It was advised that we don't have any long-term contracts, it is a seller's market, which is a real challenge to manage. As councils responding to emergency events, we need to move quickly and deploy in difficult circumstances whilst competing with other LA's usually needing the same services at the same time.

**INF2324/04 - Streetlighting Switch off 00:00 to 06:00 (excluding safety critical sites) and Reduction in Maintenance**

The Head of Infrastructure gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was with the exception of safety critical sites identified by road safety audits, all streetlights citywide are switched off during the hours between midnight and 06:00 hours in the interests of achieving energy and carbon emissions savings. The Head of Infrastructure then gave an overview of the Reduction in Maintenance proposal, which was that the reactive maintenance budget (£365k in 2022/23) is reduced by £100k to secure a saving on the levels of maintenance undertaken each year. This will require a comprehensive review of how we risk manage our assets to ensure that only low risk/ low impact maintenance is deferred.

Members asked the following:

- A Member stated that this was the biggest area of contention with a lot of concern being expressed by residents. There was concern from people regarding safety and crime and disorder which might have a significant quality impact on residents. The Member recommended that this proposal be reviewed due to the real impact on residents.
- What considerations have been given to areas of safety, resulting in the saving of £300,000.

It was confirmed that an assumption had been made of what was there due to knowledge of the network and that the top-level estimate could be moved as percentages of the network was considered with a detailed assessment to be done on areas. It was also based on other LA's assessments inclusive of bands of safety. A more detailed assessment is planned to arrive at a final position.

- A Member commented on the 50% of lights to be switched off and how we improve the safety of residents?

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The proposal mainly looked at the other half and in terms of the balance of safety this was mixed but other Councils have done this. This was not a statutory function so the Council did have discretion and lights would be on until midnight. A Member then asked was there only a legal obligation to light junctions? It was confirmed that the Council lit junctions and roundabouts as they were busy.

- A Member stated that this proposal was disappointing in the fact that funding for Improving Safety for Women and Girls in high-risk areas that had been implemented, now they will be switched off again under these measures. Was this now a waste of money? The Member also hoped that the Council worked with partners to identify any safety concerns as the perception of safety was also important.
- Will the street lights switch off at midnight every night, or could weekends be later?

The Strategic Director advised that that they will be set for midnight as a non-variable. The switch functions do not permit daily variations, however this can be verified for the Committee. Members then made comment that many workforces start at 6am, so they will be likely travelling to work in the dark, perhaps they need to be switched back on earlier.

- Members commented on seasonal differences which maybe needed to be considered as well as licensed premises which also have a late time of closing so this needed to be considered, as there could be an increase of crime.

**INF2324/05 - Fees and Charges – Fees increased by 10% rather than the standard 4%**

The Head of Infrastructure gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to increase the fees and charges made by the Infrastructure service area in carrying out its statutory duties above the standard annual 4% by a rate of 10% to meet inflation. This was to ensure the authority continues to deliver a sustainable service by recovering all its incurred costs for statutory and discretionary functions.

Members asked the following:

- A Member asked would these charges be fair against other authorities and would it take fines into account.

It was confirmed for Committee that Newport Council compared broadly compared to other local authorities. It was also confirmed that the cameras on M4 that have been switched back on were controlled by Welsh Government and the fees were paid directly to them.

**LS2324/03 - Reduce Staffing levels in the Registration Service**

The Head of Law and Standards gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which included which was to reduce staffing levels from 5 members of staff to 4 members. The provision was delivered through a scheme which had to be agreed with the General Registration Office (GRO) which required the service to have 5 members of staff. An application was to be made to approve the reduction of registrars. The impact of this proposal would be a reduction of appointments that would be made available. The service had a statutory duty to register births within 42 days and 5 days for deaths. The Manager of the Registrar service was happy that we could meet these targets. A diary service would

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make the booking of appointments a smoother process and people could cancel quicker to open up more appointments.

Members asked the following:

- A Member asked how the service was monitored currently.

The Head of Law and Standards stated that key indicators were monitored on a quarterly basis, and this was reported to the GRO to make sure levels were satisfactory. The manager regularly checked this, with current targets being 98% which was a required time scale.

- A Member asked about the capacity in the building including the civic centre and was it an unnecessary expense delivering it from one place.

The revenue savings had been looked at and these were minimal. The specific proposal included the new IT system being implemented and the service would be in target. Use of the Councils Assets would be commented on later in the meeting.

**FIN2324/01 - Reducing opening times in Customer Services with move to more selfservice**

The Head of Finance gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which included a move to a 3-day week for appointments. The Civic Centre reception to be reduced shouldn't have any impact because a later opening was still being maintained. The reduction did have a staffing impact.

Members asked the following:

- A Member commented on the impact of people who rely on the face-to-face service which was worrying.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the reduced face to face period was 3 days but the offer would still be there for those people, but the service would keep an open mind on the opening hours so would look at this and the staff rota and would be happy to be flexible.

- A Member asked how many were using the general number as a contact number and could this initially increase the flow of calls.

The proposal included the development in the team of the My Council service to facilitate those people who want to interact digitally with 2 years funding for this service.

- A Member asked about Digitisation where more people go online and how would we guide them long-term. Would we be digitally ready long term and could the system cope with new changes?

There was no knowledge of any issues with this and the service was keeping the contact centre and phone calls and developing the system.

**FIN2324/02 - Switching off phone and face to face channels for some transactions**

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The Head of Finance gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to switch off phone and face to face channels for some transactions and reduce the resource in the Customer Services team. The proposal also includes a joint saving with Digital to end the contract for call recording within the Contact Centre. Transactions such as bulky waste and fly tipping have been excluded from this list. A post will also be taken out of the team.

Members asked the following:

- Will the reduction in post be a person or a vacancy?  
This will be a reduction in a vacant post, with no-one at risk of redundancy. There was a high turnover in the team. It was fully staffed and 2 people in the team had gotten new jobs in the Council and were moving teams which happened regularly.

- Transactions via phone – which services will be impacted, and how are you improving those digital services?

It was confirmed that to improve the service there would be 2 posts funded for 2 years in the My Council Services team, which will focus on improving the current offer and extending into offering more digital transactions.

- A Member queried about the cancellation of the call recording contract, do we know how many calls are recorded and listened to as part of coaching and training, as well as being replayed back for legal purposes? Also, are there any legal implications to this?

The Head of Finance stated that they would provide this data at a future date as they were not aware of any legal implication of not recording calls. The service would work with IT partners and there were challenges in this budget, but we wanted to allow time for residents to get used to the new service.

- A Member commented on Cabinet reports and the RSG supplement announced in meeting itself as it was confirmed that there were 2 elements of savings £5million of Cabinet savings and £5million delegated savings. Comment was made that if we have an additional £11m then in theory cabinet could delegate savings without having to make further savings and increases to council tax to make up the difference.

Members were advised that schools savings were based on 50% pressures in schools – we do need to look at some of our key assumptions in light of new information, it needs to be refined at each stage. For example, pay assumptions will need to be reviewed again and is likely to be bigger than allowed for. Teacher's pay is still very uncertain and NJC staff may need to increase. So whilst there appears to be less of a gap, we will need to account for other budget pressures before coming to our final budget.

- A Member commented that in the report, it mentions earmarked reserves increased by £8m last year. As a last resort the reserves mitigate against the deficit, but means we cannot use them for the intended purpose and find the reserve again. In theory, could Cabinet pull a planned project and use that to offset other savings or increases in Council Tax?

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The Members were told yes, but as Head of Finance he would not advise this approach as this fills a gap for a single year and the problem is the same the following financial year. You then have to find the saving and replace the reserve, essentially doubling up.

**N/A - Increase council tax increase from 4% base assumption by 5.5% to 9.5%**

The Head of Finance gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to increase Council Tax from 4% base assumption by 5.5% to 9.5%. The Committee were advised that it was well documented that Newport's council tax was low compared to others in Wales, generating approximately 23% of our income. Newport continues to be one of the lowest council tax levels in Wales.

Members asked the following:

- A Member commented that they appreciate the fact that Newport was below average, but that this percentage increase at the time was unfortunate due to cost of living and rise in energy bills.

The Head of Finance confirmed that for Band A the increase was £2 a week which was not a lot.

- A Member commented on the extra RSG from Welsh Government and whether this could be used to reduce this council tax.

It was advised that this was for Cabinet to decide where they spend the money and make the recommendation to Council.

- Can anyone make additional contribution through Council Tax if they can afford it?

It was confirmed by the Head of Finance that this is not possible under current Council Tax regulations.

**RED2324/01 - Newport Live Management Fee**

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development gave a brief overview of the proposal to the Committee, which was to reduce the annual management fee paid to Newport Live for the operation of leisure services across the city. In 2014 the agreement was to reduce subsidy to zero by 2020. A 10% reduction was felt to be a reasonable start at this stage.

Members asked the following:

- How do Newport Live feel this will impact their service?

Members were advised that we have been in full consultation, and this has been part of the business plan since 2014. They have not formally told us of any direct impact, but with the closure of Newport Centre there may be some efficiencies through that.

- A Member questioned the years extra funding and could any be claimed back. It was confirmed that there had been 3 years of extra funding and there had been robust reasons for not reducing it before now.
- Is 10% enough and should we ask for more?

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It was noted that more would be ideal but it was mindful of it being a business that provided a service. There would be planning with Newport Live with a need to look at not being able to provide a subsidy at some point.

- A Member questioned the percentage of 10% and had any analysis completed.

It was confirmed that a copy of the accounts had been received and that 10% was considered to be reasonable looking at the picture and was manageable for the business.

- A Member stated that we need to recognise what some of the partners do for us. There is value to citizens in this service and we are saving in vast amount of other ways for our citizens.

**People, Policy and Transformation – Assets information**

The Head of People, Policy and Transformation advised the Committee that although her service area does not have any savings proposals out for consultation, they do have delegated savings, as well as fees and charges out for consultation. These charges included increasing in street naming and numbering and for room hire in the Civic Centre. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation also commented on the Council use of assets as there was a large capital receipt. It was important to take public views on asset rationalisation, such as could buildings across the city be used more effectively and should there be less assets? A project had been started to pull all this together.

Members asked the following:

- A Member asked for a list of the assets that the Council possess.

The Scrutiny Adviser confirmed that this request had already been on the list from a previous meeting. When the project has been completed, information will be provided to the Committee.

- A Member asked about budget investment in relation to the Norse JV- increased contract payment of £89,00 for this service this year.

It was confirmed that this was the NJC pay rise uplift which the budget had set aside for at the moment and when the joint venture had been agreed in 2004 which was a 2 tier pay system that the pay uplift would be honoured. This year the flat rate for NJC staff was a £1,925 pay award.

- A Member queried the Health and Safety investment, and asked whether these were new posts.

It was explained that this was part of a long-standing commitment to increase health and safety of the Council and the whole service had been restructured to make it better. Staff would always try to be redeployed, but there was a proposal to reduce funding in health and safety and there was a saving there also for next year. It was confirmed that there were more than two posts.

- Will these represent opportunities for staff at risk of redundancy?

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It was advised that under our job security policy we would always look to reduce vacancies first and offer support for staff who may be at risk of redundancy. We will provide the structure for the committee as follow up information.

The Chair thanked the Officers for attending.

**Conclusions:**

**Comments to the Cabinet on the following proposals:**

- a) The Committee noted the budget proposals relevant to the Place and Corporate Directorates and agreed to forward the minutes to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.
- b) The Committee wished to make the following comments to the Cabinet on the Proposals within the Place and Corporate Directorate:

HC2324/01 - Library and Adult Community Learning Services

- Although this sits outside of the consultation as it relates to previously made decisions, the Committee requested information regarding where co-located services will be sited in the Central Library when it re-opens.

HC2324/02 - Reduce financial support to the Shop Mobility scheme in 2023-24

- The Committee requested the available data regarding the individual impact on service users and the expected impact on business in the city centre. Members recommended that a review of the demand for the service be conducted before going ahead with the proposal.

EPP2324/02 - Community Safety Warden Service Restructure

- The Committee commented that whilst it is disappointing to see a potential reduction in the Warden Service, they do see an opportunity to work more effectively with partners, including statutory partners. However, Members recommended that reductions should not be made prior to discussion with partners about contributing towards funding the service so that it could continue at current levels. The Committee considered that alternative options could be explored with partners, including RSL's, to maintain provision.

EPP2324/04 - Increased fees and charges within Environment and Leisure Services

- The Committee accepted the proposal for the Increased fees and charges within Environment and Leisure Services, however Members feel that the increase should go up in line with the same amount of the Council Tax increase instead of inflation.

EPP2324/05 - Introduce parking charges to four park and countryside car parks

- The Committee commented that they would like the Service Area to consider the local youth sport teams that use the parks, which would especially be an issue with the Glebelands. Members commented that it was good to see exemptions, in cases such as these through engagement with local football clubs, as there are a lot of families suffering from cost of living.
- Members requested financial projections produced for each car park if charges are introduced, based on historical data on useage against each car park in the proposal.

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- Members requested a breakdown of the net cost and the timescales for returns on investment.
- The Committee spoke of concern about parking pressures in adjacent streets, especially if people try to park nearby to avoid paying fees and would like these pressures to be considered, especially in areas where there are parking restrictions in place such as residents parking.

**EPP2324/06 - Household Waste Recycling Centre - Charging for non household waste**

- The Committee requested that the service area consider what the process may be to issue refunds for exceptional circumstances when residents make a mistake on the online booking forms.
- The Committee requested clarification about the disposal of sanitary ware, for example when households wish to disposal of entire bathrooms; would these items carry this proposed charge.

**EPP2324/08 - Charge for replacement (residual waste) bins**

- The Committee queried whether there was any room for discretion in the proposed policy, as some residential areas in Newport have to store their residual waste bins on the street, which could cause an ongoing issue with them being damaged or stolen.

**EPP2324/09 - Domestic Residual and Garden Waste Collection – 3 Weekly Collections**

- The majority of the Committee felt that this proposal should not go ahead, and considered that this proposal was more supportive of achieving recycling targets than being a budget saving proposal. The Committee found that much of the information in the proposal itself related to increasing the recycling rates and encouraging to recycle more; however, it was noted that failing to meet these targets could have a further financial implications associated with performance related fines in future years. Members commented that the saving this currently offered was a small amount, but the wider financial implications were greater than the saving offered, as it would promote fly tipping across the city and the Council would have to use more resource to clean up areas
- Comment was made that if this proposal was to go ahead, then it was extremely important for residents to know that the recycling service would be able to cope with the extra amount of recycling being presented, as this could potentially make the proposal more acceptable to residents. Members also remarked that the current recycling service provision would benefit from reviewed and improvement. Further education to residents about what can be recycled would be also essential.
- The Committee requested that the provision for households of 5 people be reviewed, as they currently fall short of the threshold to get a large bin; with less frequent collections it would be difficult for these families to manage.
- The Committee recognised the difficulties that residents of flats sharing communal bins face, as they have no control over neighbours presenting waste. The Committee also raised some issues they are aware of with bin collections being missed for communal blocks. Members agree that a review with Registered Social Landlords

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and Rent Smart Wales is needed to manage communal bin collections and recycling spaces more effectively.

INF2324/02 - Changes to Operational Practice and Procedures

- The Committee commented that the Council should explore collaboration with neighbouring local authorities to try to mitigate our costs. Members also enquired whether there could be possible partnership work with Welsh Water and the Environment Agency to see if they are able to help facilitate more aspects of keeping drainage facilities running smoothly.
  
- Concern was raised that the team already have a difficult task dealing with flooding and blocked drains with the current provision, so the reduction of vehicles and staff would make this even more difficult. If conditions are escalating with the ongoing adverse weather, it could become a risk to resident's livelihood and safety. Crucial routes in the City Centre that shouldn't be blocked are getting blocked quite often, and these routes are needed to be clear to enable resident to get to work for the economic functioning of the city. Members commented that it is important to avoid putting residents at risk.
  
- Concern was raised about insurance risks. If the Council were to go ahead with this proposal, and damage was caused to resident's properties due to the reduced service, would the Council be liable for the damage? Concern was also raised about the Council potentially spending more money on external contractors, which would cancel out any proposed saving.

INF2324/04 - Streetlighting Switch off 00:00 to 06:00 (excluding safety critical sites) and Reduction in Maintenance

- Whilst the longer term savings were appreciated, the Committee recommend that this proposal should not go ahead, as the impact the reduced lighting will have on people would be too great. Concerns were raised about safety of residents travelling to work in the early mornings, road safety issues especially for taxi drivers, and that rates of crime, including burglaries could rise.
  
- If the decision to accept the proposal were to go ahead, the Committee hoped that the Council would work with partners to assess the impacts that could be caused, including the public's perception of safety. Members spoke of the importance of working with partners to identify potential and existing issues, especially in areas that contain licenced premises, as this could increase crime and disorder.
  
- Comment was made that the Council previously secured funding to support the safety of women and girls in the city, particularly in areas like parks, following consultation with residents, and now these lights will be switched off again under these measures.
  
- Members queried whether the street lighting hardware can be reprogrammed to turn off at a later time on Saturday and Sunday mornings, for example 2am instead of 12am, which could help accommodate the safety of the late night economy. Members also wished to note the seasonal differences in terms of when to switch on and off the street lights.

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INF2324/05 - Fees and Charges – Fees increased by 10% rather than the standard 4%

- The Committee recommend that the fees and charges should go up in line with the agreed Council Tax rise.

LS2324/03 - Reduce Staffing levels in the Registration Service

- The Committee were happy with this proposal on the provision that targets can still be met.

FIN2324/01 - Reducing opening times in Customer Services with move to more self-service

- The Committee felt that at this time they did not have the full information they required to make a decision on this proposal. Whilst the redevelopment of the Central Library and re-location of services there is not in scope as part of the budget consultation, and is a decision that has previously been agreed, the Committee felt that it would be necessary to see what the new services in the Central Library look like first before any decisions on opening times are made.
- Committee considered that whilst the staggered opening hours take consideration of residents with different requirements accessing the face to face service, they could cause confusion for some residents.

FIN2324/02 - Switching off phone and face to face channels for some transactions

- The Committee spoke of the importance of residents being able to communicate with the Council. Members requested information about how many calls received in the Contact Centre are recorded and listened to as part of coaching and training. Members also queried whether there are any legal implications of cancelling the call recording contract. Concern was raised about the protection of staff against abuse without calls being recorded.

N/A - Increase council tax increase from 4% base assumption by 5.5% to 9.5%

- The Committee recommend that this proposal should be reviewed to be lower, in view of the draft settlement figure, albeit with the understanding that the final figure has yet to be confirmed.

RED2324/01 - Newport Live Management Fee

- The Committee were happy with this savings proposal, and stated the service area were clear in its recommendation that further work be undertaken to support Newport Live to implement a more formalised Business Planning process.

People, Policy and Transformation – Assets information

The Committee wished to thank the officers for the information provided. Members requested if they could receive information on the revised structure for Health and Safety and also when finalised the list of assets that the Council currently holds.

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**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE**

**2023-24 Budget and Mid Term Financial Plan**

The Assistant Head of Finance gave a brief overview.

**Questions**

A member questioned why the forecast for inflation is higher than has previously been anticipated for the next coming years.

- The Assistant Head of Finance noted that inflation is forecast in recognition that it is still likely to be higher than in the previous year. The Assistant Head of Finance added that the issue of high inflation will be compounded beyond a single year as there will likely be further cost increases and funding decreases.

A member asked whether there had been any consultations with the schools regarding proposals.

- The Assistant Head of Finance informed the member that an overview of the budget was given to schools and members of the unions in the prior week at the School Budget Forum. This forum includes a wide cross-section of stakeholders that will formally input to the consultation if they wish, however any school or individual can also add to the consultation as part of the process.

The member followed on to ask about the different pressures faced by schools such as energy costs increases, and if any in-year budget gaps would be remunerated.

- The Assistant Head of Finance noted these points were also discussed in the aforementioned School Budget Forum. Schools understand which elements are being funded in the proposals, and which would be absorbed by schools. These in-year increases would not be remunerated, however Cabinet would decide on the costs that will be met on an ongoing basis.

A member asked if Heads of Service could give context regarding the expected impact of the proposals for residents in Newport.

- The Strategic Director of Social Services outlined that there will inevitably be impacts from savings proposed, but the focus is to ameliorate the impact of these savings that we need to make whilst working as effectively as we possibly can.

**Investment Proposals:**

A member queried the funding gap in relation to the Aspire Project.

The Head of Prevention and Inclusion detailed the plans to remodel and re-establish the aspire project to progress from the current legacy arrangement, and to make it more secure by identifying funding streams with Education. Currently, there is an ad-hoc arrangement between education and youth service but that there needs to be a more robust arrangement in place including looking at an alternative provider who can oversee the contract in its entirety, rather than the current ad-hoc arrangement.

**DRAFT SCRUTINY COMMENTS – EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES**  
**(FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2023)**

A member asked for more information about the proposal concerning Additional Learning Need staff, and how this would affect ALN places in Newport schools.

- The Assistant Head of Education informed the member that funding is sourced through grants however it is unclear how much they grant funding will be available in the next year

A member asked if there was a reduction of ALN places, then where those children would be placed.

- The Assistant Head of Education confirmed that there were no plans to reduce ALN places.

A member asked for clarification regarding the Housing Benefit technical overpayments.

- The Assistant Head of Finance informed committee that this was due to exceeding accepted threshold levels of errors in claims to the DWP, and there had to be some planning done to ensure funds were available to meet costs where thresholds were exceeded. The Assistant Head of Finance assured members that there is work ongoing to try and stay within the thresholds, but some things are not always within the Council's control.

A member asked whether underfunding had caused an issue.

- The Assistant Head of Finance explained that the requirement to house everyone was expensive when resources such as bed and breakfasts had to be used to meet increasing demands on the service. The Assistant Head of Finance noted that historically, the DWP funding received does not cover the full costs of housing people, which leads to a gap in funding accommodation, particularly for temporary accommodation. The Assistant Head of Finance highlighted that this was not a new pressure, but the gap between Local Housing Allowances set by the DWP, and the true costs in housing people is something that needs addressing. There was some additional assistance during covid, but these high costs of emergency housing remain.
- 

A member asked what was being done to reduce the threshold below the £600,000.

The Assistant Head of Finance confirmed that the benefits section has moved and there will be changes to arrangements. There is a lot of work going in to manage the budget pressure through improvement of processes. The team are under extreme pressure as they are also administering lots of grants and schemes over and above the HB claims.

A member asked if the Heads of Service work with Newport City Homes to tackle the pressures of temporary housing.

- The Strategic Director explained that the service does work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords, and private landlords on strategic approaches, but also in day to day work. This is relevant in Education, Social Services, Housing and more. These relationships do exist.

The Chair noted a lag in the DWP funding being paid to housing and benefit services, and asked that more information on this be provided to committee.

**DRAFT SCRUTINY COMMENTS – EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES**  
**(FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2023)**

The Head of Adult Services wanted to highlight the importance in the range of partnerships that are there to make sure as peoples needs develop that they are able to keep them in their homes, which is an effective preventative approach to homelessness.

**Savings Proposals:**

**CS2324/04 - Oaklands and short break provision remodelling**

A member asked what the impact would be for children, fosterers and wider service in Newport due to the proposed savings for Oaklands respite support.

- The Head of Children's Services noted that the intention is to minimise the impact on the service by reducing, not ceasing to provide the service. It was noted that Social Service will explore other options for funding if and when possible to seek to re-introduce higher levels of provisions. The service is reducing rather than closing, if other monies become available, for example through WG, then the provision would be revised accordingly. The Head of Children's Services acknowledged that there would be an impact, and explained that it would be a needs led service in future.

A member expressed concern regarding the reduction in short break services, and another committee member commented that the service was a lifeline for some service users, therefore the service should not be stopped.

A member commented that the reduction of service provided by Oaklands would lead to higher cost pressures in other areas where some children may have to go into full time care, and these displayed costs could also impact on health services.

A member asked what the centre provision would look like in the best-case scenario, and whether volunteers be considered to sustain current levels of service.

- The Head of Children's Services informed the committee that the proposal is proposal isn't to close Oaklands, but to reduce the offer in terms of number of nights available. These are a highly skilled workforce offering an expert level of care, so any volunteers would need to be qualified to this level in order to support effectively. The Head of Children's Service noted the proposal was Monday to Thursday provision from 19 places to 11.
- The Chair noted that it was 21 to 11 places.

The committee expressed strong concerned on the impact on residents due to the reduction of services in the Oaklands and short break services savings proposal. The committee were concerned about the impact not only directly on the residents who accessed this service, but the residents who were able to foster with the assistance of this service and felt that it could have an impact on the number of foster carers within Newport. The committee also felt that there would be long term financial impact due to increasing pressures in other areas such as the care service and the health service. The committee recommended that this be reviewed and reconsidered.

**CS2324/05 - Staffing across Children's Services**

**DRAFT SCRUTINY COMMENTS – EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES**  
**(FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2023)**

A member asked what was meant in terms of reduction of staff.

- The Head of Children’s Services informed the committee that vacancies would be removed as the first option, as part of the Council’s job security policy.
- The Strategic Director was confident that this saving could be achieved in this way.

**AS2324/01 - Adult contracts; commissioned services**

A member expressed the importance of the Growing Space service for residents in Newport, and questioned what would happen to the Growing Spaces partnership.

- The Head of Adult Services noted that a considerable contribution was made to the partnership by the Council, which was proposed to be reduced. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that the service would be continued through other funding streams with a reduced contribution from the Council. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that the service would continue but on a reduced level.
- The member questioned whether the service would be able to continue working from Tredegar House.
- The Head of Adult services confirmed that this would be the decision of Growing Space as it would continue to operate with a change in capacity.

A member noted that meetings had been held in which the impact of cuts to Growing Space funding were presented.

A member asked for clarification regarding the financing for Growing Space and whether the Council could assist the charity in securing additional funding to bridge any gaps.

- The Head of Adult Service noted that it was not an easy proposal to put forward but the Council were looking to mitigate the proposal, such as through relationships with mental health services. The Head of Adult Services informed the committee that this would be supported going forward in relation to helping them securing further grant funding where possible.

The committee stressed the importance of supporting local initiatives.

The committee stressed the importance of Growing Spaces and strongly raised its concern the impact that limiting the service would have on residents who need to access these services. The committee further raised concern on the impact reducing the service would have on future finances and services such as the health and care sectors. The committee recommended that these cuts be reviewed and reconsidered.

**AS2324/04 - Short breaks service for older adults (formerly known as day opportunities)**

A member felt that a £500,000 reduction in funding would have a severe impact on the short breaks service.

A member asked for clarification as to whether this was in reference to Spring Gardens.

**DRAFT SCRUTINY COMMENTS – EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES**  
**(FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2023)**

- The Head of Adult Services confirmed it was regarding the Annex of Spring Gardens, not the residential home.
- A member asked whether that part of Spring Gardens would be closing all together.
- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they would look to mitigate by potentially using part of the residential home or something else. The Head of Adult Services reminded committee that this was out to consultation for public commentary.

A member asked how carers will be supported after these cuts.

- The Head of Adult Service assured committee that they would continue to work with carers and all those attending short breaks as they have a right to a service. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that mitigation would be done by going back to look at how else the people currently using the service could be supported individually.

A member emphasised that they believe that residents will suffer heavily as a result of these cuts.

- The Strategic Director of Social Services assured committee that everyone is working to make savings in the face of difficult circumstances, whilst understanding that these changes will have an impact. The Strategic Director acknowledged the difficulty in this proposal but emphasised that work was done with families on an individual level to ensure that the care and support needed would be provided.

The committee were very concerned about the saving proposal regarding the short breaks service for older adults (formerly known as day opportunities). The committee felt that the reduction would have a severe impact on the service and all those who access it. The committee recommended that this be reviewed and reconsidered as the saving proposal was too large.

### **EDU2324/05 - Educational Psychology Savings Proposal**

A member asked if there were enough educational psychologists.

- The Assistant Head of Education noted that there is a shortage of educational psychologists nationally. The Assistant Head of Education acknowledged whilst this proposal would have an impact on output, for example, preventative work, there is enough staff capacity remaining to complete statutory requirements.

The Chair asked that if schools require additional services how was this achieved.

- The Assistant Head of Education informed the committee that there is a team of educational psychologists on staff, but that individual schools could seek help further afield if they had the funds to do so.

### **Fees and Charges**

A member questioned what the justification was for raising costs.

**DRAFT SCRUTINY COMMENTS – EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES**  
**(FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2023)**

- The Strategic Director informed committee that these were directly linked to the cost of services due to inflation.
- The Strategic Director assured the committee that for most service users, these increased costs would not be reflected in what they pay.

## **6. Conclusion of Committee Reports**

The committee appreciated that there were hard decisions to be made given the current climate.

The committee asked for further information explaining the lag between costs incurred and DWP payments received by the Council be provided.

The committee stressed the importance of Growing Spaces and strongly raised its concern on the impact of limiting the service would have on residents who need to access these services. The committee further raised concern on the impact reducing the service would have on future finances and services such as the health and care sectors. The committee recommended that these cuts be reviewed and reconsidered.

The committee expressed strong concern on the impact on residents due to the reduction of services in the Oaklands and short break services savings proposal. The committee were concerned about the impact not only directly on the residents who accessed this service, but on foster carers who played an important role with the assistance of this service and felt that it could have a detrimental impact on the number of foster carers within Newport. The committee also felt that there would be a resulting financial impact due to increasing pressures in other areas such as care services and the health service. The committee recommended that this be reviewed and reconsidered.

The committee were very concerned about the saving proposal regarding the short breaks service for older adults (formerly known as day opportunities). The committee felt that the reduction would have a severe impact on the service and all those who access it. The committee recommended that this be reviewed and reconsidered as the saving proposal was too large.



# Scrutiny Report

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

### Part 1

Date: January 2023

### Subject Scrutiny Adviser Report

Author Scrutiny Adviser

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

Invitee:	Role
Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Adviser)	Present the Committee with the Scrutiny Adviser Report for discussion and update the Committee on any changes.

## Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

### Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Action Plan**  
Consider the Actions from previous meetings (**Appendix 1**):
  - *Note the responses for the actions;*
  - *Determine if any further information / action is required;*
  - *Agree to receive an update on outstanding issues at the next meeting.*
  
2. **Committee’s Work Programme:**  
Consider the Committee’s Forward Work Programme Update (**Appendix 2**):
  - *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 topics?*
  - *Is there any additional information that the Committee would like to request?*

## 2 Context

### Background

- 2.1 Attached at **Appendix 1** is the Action Sheet from the Committee meetings. The updated completed actions are included in the table.

- 2.2 Any actions that do not have a response will be included on the Action Sheet at the next meeting to ensure that the Committee can keep track of outstanding actions.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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](http://www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny)).
- 2.5 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 Update**

- 2.6 The Committee's draft work programme was set in August 2022, including estimated timescales for when the reports will be considered by the Committee. This programme is then managed and implemented by the designated Scrutiny Adviser for this Committee under the direction of the Committee Chairperson.
- 2.7 Attached as **Appendix 2** is the Committee's Forward Work Programme Update. The Committee is asked to consider:
- *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 topics?*
  - *Is there any additional information that the Committee would like to request?*

### **3 Information Submitted to the Committee**

- 3.1 The following information is attached:

**Appendix 1:** Action Sheet from Previous Meetings;

**Appendix 2:** Draft Forward Work Programme

### **4. Suggested Areas of Focus**

**Role of the Committee**

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

- **Action Sheet from Previous Meetings - Appendix 1**
  - Consider the responses to the actions from the meeting;
  - Are you satisfied that you have received the necessary information?
  - Are there any further issues arising from the responses that you would like to raise?
  - For the actions that do not have responses – these actions will be rolled over to the next meeting and reported back to the Committee.
- **Draft Forward Work Programme - Appendix 2**  
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 topics?
  - 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. Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 This report relates to the Committee’s Work Programme, Actions from Committee’s and Information Reports that support the achievement of the Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Law and Regulation Service Plan, Objectives, Actions and Measures and the Wellbeing objectives:

<b>Well-being Objective</b>	<b>1 – Economy, Education and Skills</b>	<b>2 – Newport’s Environment and Infrastructure</b>	<b>3 – Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care</b>	<b>4 – An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council</b>
<b>Aims:</b>	Newport is a thriving and	A city that seeks to protect and	Newport is a supportive city	Newport City Council is an

	growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.	enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.	where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.	inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.
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## 7 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

7.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 which came into force in April 2016 sets the context for the move towards long term planning of services.

### 7.2 General questions

- How is this area / policy affected by the new legislation?
- How will this decision / policy / proposal impact upon future generations? What is the long term impact?
- What evidence is provided to demonstrate WFGA has been / is being considered?
- Evidence from Community Profiles / other data?
- Evidence of links to Wellbeing Assessment / Objectives / Plan?

### 7.3 Wellbeing Goals

- How are the Wellbeing goals reflected in the policy / proposal / action?
  - *A prosperous Wales*
  - *A resilient Wales*
  - *A healthier Wales*
  - *A more equal Wales*
  - *A Wales of cohesive communities*
  - *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*
  - *A globally responsible Wales*

### 7.4 Sustainable Development Principles

- Does the report / proposal demonstrate how as an authority we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principles from the act when planning services?
  - **Long Term**  
*The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs*
  - **Prevention**  
*How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives*
  - **Integration**  
*Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies*
  - **Collaboration**  
*Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives*
  - **Involvement**  
*The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.*

## 8 Background Papers

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#)
- The Corporate Assessment and [follow up assessment](#).

Report Completed: January 2023

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
ACTION SHEET**

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1	Conclusion of Committee reports	Send comments and recommendations to officers	Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
2	Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 21-22	Confirm whether previous committee recommendations regarding the membership of the fortnightly group that meets with Gwent Police was taken forward.	Janice Dent/Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
3	Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 21-22	Provide committee with a copy of the exit survey given for comments and recommendations.	Janice Dent/Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
4	Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 21-22	Provide an answer regarding the expanding the network of Councils.	Janice Dent/Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
5	Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 21-22	Confirm whether information given was a typo or provide an explanation to committee regarding the information.	Janice Dent/Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
6	Annual Corporate Self-Assessment Report 2021-22	Provide the most up to date version of the Air Quality Monitoring Report	Paul Jones/Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE

7	Annual Corporate Self Assessment Report 2021-22	Provide details of the local action groups involved with schools and mitigations	Paul Jones/Samantha Schanzer	CHASED 22.12.22
8	Annual Corporate Self Assessment Report 2021-22	Provide details regarding the 38 businesses who received grant funding	Paul Jones/Samantha Schanzer	CHASED 22.12.22
9	Annual Corporate Self Assessment Report 2021-22	Provide an update regarding the money set aside by the Council for regeneration projects.	Tracey Brookes/Samantha Schanzer	CHASED 22.12.22

# Scrutiny

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

### Draft Work Programme: June 2022 to May 2023

Meeting	Agenda Items
24/06/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welsh Language Annual Report</li> </ul>
29/07/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual Digital Report</li> <li>▪ Digital Strategy</li> </ul>
09/09/2022	<b><u>POSTPONED</u></b>
23/09/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report</u></b> – To consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Whether the Annual Report reflects a true and fair account of the council’s progress towards achieving the objectives defined in the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 for the period in question – 2021 – 2022.</li> <li>○ Whether the Annual Report highlights the ongoing commitment to Equalities effectively and focuses on appropriate successes and highlights successes and good work</li> <li>○ Whether the Annual Report highlights the ongoing commitment to equalities effectively and focuses on appropriate areas for development</li> <li>○ Whether it wishes to provide comment and recommendations on the Annual Report to Cabinet.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b><u>Climate Change Plan Report 2022-27</u></b> – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To consider whether information submitted is adequate in providing understanding of the work being undertaken and progress being made.</li> <li>○ To consider whether an annual reporting cycle is adequate to monitor performance relating to the work being undertaken and progress made.</li> <li>○ To provide comment and recommendations on the Climate Change Plan Annual Report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>Annual Information Risk Report 2021-22</u></b> – To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide an assessment of the Council's information governance arrangements, identify key risks and agree the action plan.</li> <li>○ Highlight the importance of information governance to the organisation, the risks faced and the current level of risk.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
30/09/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>Corporate Plan Draft Wellbeing Themes</u></b> – To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider the Draft Well-being Objectives and strategic priorities of the Council to support the Well-being of Future Generations seven Well-being Goals.</li> <li>○ Provide comment and recommendations on the draft Corporate Plan themes which will form the Corporate Plan for 2022-27.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b><u>Annual Corporate Safeguarding 2021-22</u></b> – To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider how the Council is carrying out its corporate safeguarding responsibilities and make comment or recommendations to Cabinet.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
25/10/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self-Assessment Report (new LGEA requirement).</u></b></li> <li>▪ <b><u>Scrutiny Annual Report (Verbal Update).</u></b></li> </ul>
02/12/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>Cancelled.</u></b></li> </ul>
03/02/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>2023/24 Revenue Budget and MTFP</u></b> – To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Receive the comments and recommendations made by the other Scrutiny Committees and question the Officers on any issues with Budget Process and Public Engagement.</li> <li>○ Make recommendations to the Cabinet relating to the Budget Process and Public Engagement</li> <li>○ Confirm the final list of comments to be forwarded to the Cabinet for information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
03/03/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><u>Planning and Performance Risk Management Framework</u></b></li> </ul>
28/04/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TBD</li> </ul>