Agenda

NEWPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYDD

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: Friday, 28 April 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

Item	**Wards Affected**

Contact: Samantha Schanzer, Scrutiny Adviser
Tel: 01633 656656
E-mail: Scrutiny@newport.gov.uk
Date of Issue: Friday, 21 April 2023

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Draft Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 3rd February 2023

Time: 10am

Venue: Committee Room 3 / Microsoft Teams

Present: Cllr P Hourahine, M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, P Bright, G Horton, L James, C Baker-Westhead and B Davies

Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate), Tracy McKim (Head of Policy, People and Transformation), Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance)

Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Advisor), Pamela Tasker (Governance Support Officer), Taylor Strange (Governance Support Officer)

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Routley and Cleverly in their capacity as Scrutiny Chairs for the Performance Scrutiny Committees – People and Place respectively.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

30th September 2022:

The Committee asked whether a response had been received in relation to their concerns regarding University student numbers. The Committee asked whether the University would be able to attend Committee and explain why student numbers were low.

- The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development would be providing an answer on this topic in due course.
- The Strategic Director stated that the Committee had no powers to call in the University, although an invitation could be extended, and that this topic could be brought to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

The minutes of the previous meeting held 30th September 2022 were **accepted as a true and accurate record**.

The Committee asked for clarification regarding the wording of the Scrutiny Annual Report verbal update.

The Committee asked when they would receive the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.

- The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that this report was with the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and would come to Committee for comments before it went to Council

The minutes of the previous meeting held 25th October 2022 were **accepted as a true and accurate record**.

4. 2023-24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

Invitees:

Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate)

Tracy McKim (Head of People, Policy and Transformation)

Meirion Rushworth (Head of Finance)

Budget Overview and Process

The Head of Finance introduced the report to the Committee and provided context regarding setting contingencies to manage risks and the points of note.

Questions:

The Committee asked for clarification regarding RSG sensitivity, where a large element of funding from Welsh Government was assumed to be a 3% increase on last year. The Committee also asked that as the percentage increase had now been clarified to be 8.9%, what did this mean in relation to the current size of the gap in funding.

- The Head of Finance confirmed that there was a 3.5% increase on the figure originally expected; the report that went to Cabinet in December 2022 stated the expected gap was £16 million at that time, but no school savings had been included. The extra settlement came to £11.7 million, which is an increase of just under 9%.

The Committee asked for an update regarding the current status of the deficit.

- The Head of Finance confirmed that the Cabinet would announce the final details and decisions in the upcoming Cabinet meeting.

The Committee asked whether the Cabinet would be looking to plug a gap of £15 million.

- The Head of Finance noted that the gap was much smaller than £15 million and the final budget to be announced in Cabinet meeting on the 15th February 2023.

The Committee asked how negotiations were going with partners and contractors in achieving savings, and queried the level of confidence that these savings could be delivered.

- It was confirmed that the Committee would be provided a written answer as it was not within this Committee's remit.

The Committee asked about streetlights and commented that budget savings seemed lumped into one and queried how much had been saved in budget maintenance.

- It was confirmed that the Committee would be provided a written answer as it was not within this Committee's remit.

Budget Public Engagement

The Head of People, Policy and Transformation introduced the report. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that:

- This was part of an all-year-round consultation on various things, with 40 activities last year.
- It was the highest level of response in several years and was the longest possible period of consultation undertaken.
- Activities undertaken included online surveys, a supplementary survey on bus Wi-Fi (with a more nuanced response option given for online surveys rather than just yes or no answers), social media promotions with 39 social media posts and press releases and promotion through schools. Consultations were also held with council staff, reflecting the significant number of staff live in Newport and other community events were attended.
- Several meetings had taken place with pre budget engagements in the Autumn to consult on the Corporate Plan and budget proposals.
- A response was also expected from the Fairness Commission, and trade unions had been met with through the Employee Partnership Forum. This was attended by service leads and trade unions, and chaired by the Cabinet Member.

Questions:

The Committee welcomed the pre-budget consultation.

The Committee asked for more information regarding the type of question asked and the level of detail included in the question. The Committee also asked what focus groups were involved as smaller savings such as the Shop Mobility saving of £7000 a year was a relatively small saving but could have a large impact on this organisation.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed the survey included questions to ascertain which services were important to residents but noted it was complicated, as much of what is important to residents is universal, whilst a lot of high-cost services are important to smaller groups of residents due to their needs. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed that managers were

aware of this when determining their budget proposals. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that given the scale of the savings required, it would be difficult to respond to all the feedback from residents whilst still making the necessary savings.

The Committee asked whether residents had been asked what was less important to people in terms of services they used as part of the consultation.

- The Head of People Policy and Transformation informed Committee that corporate front line services were generally less important to people, whilst the priorities were services for the most vulnerable people.
- It was noted that Newport City Council had a low corporate spend compared to other councils.

The Committee asked whether the consultation asked what services residents would be happy to pay for.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed that the public were not asked those kinds of questions.
- The Strategic Director stated that the service was developing the transformation programme to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, and this was a valid point to take forward.

The Committee noted it was a difficult task to balance the budget and commended the quality of the survey. The Committee asked for an outline of the engagement initiated with stakeholders before Cabinet met.

- The Chairperson noted that only work done up until this point could be scrutinised fairly.
- The Head of Finance confirmed that work on the final details on the budgets were currently in progress and could not be discussed at this point. The Head of Finance confirmed that this would be announced by the Leader at Cabinet with the Council tax rate to be the Cabinet's decision.

The Committee felt that many people did not know about the Glebelands parking charges and other proposals.

- The Strategic Director noted that it was a significant task to engage with all schools and that Finance and Education were working closely with individual schools regarding this. The Strategic Director did not feel that there was an issue with engagement in this area. The Strategic Director noted that if the Committee felt a written response was required, then this could be provided.
- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that there was service area specific engagement with service users and potential service users, giving the a number of examples; meeting with parents who accessed the Oaklands service, library staff speaking directly to users, schools being made aware through trade unions and the Employee Partnership Forum, and passing information to parents. Other stakeholders such as SRS, Newport Live, Newport Norse were engaged with separately.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed that this consultation had received the largest number of responses in memory.

The Committee again commended the quality of the survey and noted that the format of the survey presentation of proposals should be used in Performance Scrutiny Committees when considering proposals due to the ease of understanding they provided.

The Committee asked for more information regarding trade unions and the Fairness Commission.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed that many meetings had been held with trade unions directly and through the Employee Partnership Forum. The Fairness Committee responses had also been received and would be looked at.

The Committee asked for the number of social media posts and how effective the posts were, with reference to how many individuals the posts reached and what actions arose from the posts.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed that 39 social media posts were made. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation informed Committee that the figures requested could be provided to Committee if they wished.
- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation reminded Committee that the consultation was now closed but a reflective 'Lessons Learned' activity was always completed and Scrutiny attendance was also part of the consultation.

The Committee asked if data would be tracked from responses in relation to where the individuals lived.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation confirmed that location, age and the ethnicity of the person were requested as part of the completion of the survey.

The Committee noted that they would have liked to have seen the data assessed before it came to Committee and could this be done for in future budget cycles.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that as they had allowed the maximum consultation period, the brief turnaround time meant that the analysis of responses was not available in time for Scrutiny to consider.

The Committee noted that the consultation covered a population of 155,000, and responses measured half a percent with 900 responses. The Committee agreed that many activities had been undertaken to maximise engagement but felt that there could be a proportion of people living in the city who were affected by the budget that had not submitted their views. The Committee asked whether the results received offered a skewed view of the budget as these responses were likely not received in the same number.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation clarified that there were 1,300 responses received, and participation numbers are historically low which is challenging. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that this could potentially skew results but those who engaged were the ones largely affected.

The Committee asked whether residents in good financial positions were specifically engaged with, and whether Newport City Council undertook comparative review against similar Local Authorities for best practice on this approach.

- The Strategic Director confirmed that Newport City Council did look at other LA's processes. The Strategic Director felt that Newport City Council had improved in putting out consultations. The Strategic Director noted that there had been intelligence building on what mattered to residents a result of engagement, and this needed to be incorporated into how we adapted the proposals.
- The Strategic Director noted that it was fair to say that service users are the most likely to comment about it in consultation and that their responses matter most.
- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that residents are more interested in some proposals than others, and gave the examples of the city centre safety survey, which received 1,600 responses and the Perception of Newport survey where 2,000 people responded. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation felt that the way forward was to pick up wider intelligence to ensure that the Council's engagement with the public is only one part of the understanding.

The Committee asked that the Scrutiny Adviser summarise previous recommendations made on consultations and provide the information to Committee.

The Committee asked whether people completed the survey or skipped responses.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transfomation confirmed that while the full view was sought, people could skip on responses. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation informed Committee that this analysis of data was not complete yet but could be provided to Committee at a later date.

The Committee asked what percentage of the survey was fully completed.

- The Strategic Director confirmed that analysis would be done on this but was not ready at this time.

The Committee asked how the analysis was completed.

- It was confirmed that there were multiple feeds analysing the data.

The Committee asked whether the results of the consultation came back to Committee.

- It was confirmed that it would be provided to Committee as an information only update.

The Committee felt that there was a level of complacency in terms of responses from residents and it would be interesting to see how Newport's responses compared to other authorities ahead of next year's budget setting process.

- This is a topic that could be addressed in Lessons Learned. WLGA would also be consulted, particularly as when comparing consultation response a community with a similar makeup and urban areas would be required for a reasonable assessment.

The Committee asked how responses were fed back to the public.

- It was confirmed that the responses would be communicated back to the public as part of the transparency in decision-making. It was confirmed that a summary would also be included in the Cabinet report.

The Committee felt that more pre-consultation publicity should be given to future years' budgets.

Performance Scrutiny Committee (PSC) – Place Minutes

The Committee raised questions regarding page 52 where the PSC – Place had commented on whether some residents could pay more council tax, if they felt they could afford it.

- The Strategic Director informed Committee that council tax regulations confirmed that this could not be put in place.
- The Committee commented that maybe residents could donate to a library or another service in lieu of this.
- The Strategic Director stated that charities could take donations, but Newport City Council could not do this.

The Committee asked whether there would be a re-banding for private properties.

- The Strategic Director noted that there would be a review of council tax banding and there would be a brief note on this to be provided to Committee.

The Committee noted and endorsed the minutes from the Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place Committee.

Performance Scrutiny Committee - People Minutes

The Committee noted and endorsed the minutes from the Performance Scrutiny Committee - People Committee.

5. Conclusion of Committee Reports

The Committee welcomed the improved consultation, particularly the increasing methods of consultation through different channels and the inclusion of the pre-budget consultation, that took place prior to drafting budget proposals.

The Committee noted that it would be helpful to have access to consultation data before the meeting occurred, however the Committee appreciated the restrictions that the Council works within concerning availability of information that feeds into the budget setting process and statutory consultation timescales.

The Committee welcomed the Council's use of the longest consultation period possible but felt that there should be a period of advertising the consultation in advance of it happening.

The Committee felt that whilst resource should be focussed on people using the services impacted by the proposals there could be an expansion of engagement to those who have limited interaction with the Council and its services to capture a broader picture.

The Committee felt more face-to-face consultation should be used.

The Committee recommended that the results of the consultation be brought back to Committee as an information only update. The Committee also asked that a benchmark comparison of performance in engagement between Newport City Council and other Local Authorities be brought back to Committee. The Committee also asked that an update on the post-consultation 'Lessons Learned' (where the process of the consultation is reviewed to inform continuous improvement) be brought back to Committee.

The Committee recommended increasing engagement and participation throughout the year wherein residents could provide feedback on the impacts of the budget proposals.

The Committee also recommended that there be a greater attention focused on collecting and analysing data from individual calls and enquiries raised via channels like the contact centre or webforms.

6. Scrutiny Advisor Reports

Actions Arising (Appendix 1)

- The Scrutiny Officer on 2 outstanding actions which were the details of the 38 businesses who received grant funding and an update on the money set aside by the Council for regeneration projects and an update would be provided on these shortly.

b) Forward Work Programme Update (Appendix 2)

- The Scrutiny Adviser informed Committee that the item to be discussed during the next meeting (3rd March 2023) would now be pushed back to 28th April 2023 meeting at the request of the report writer.
- The Scrutiny Adviser asked Committee whether they would like to invite officers back to present the further information requested in this meeting on the now empty 3rd March 2023 meeting.
- The Committee felt that it would be more efficient to have 2 items on the 28th April 2023 agenda.

7. Date of the Next Meeting

 3rd March 2023 at 10am.

8. Live Event

The recording of the meeting can be viewed here.

Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: April 2023

Subject   Planning and Performance Policy

Author   Scrutiny Adviser

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

Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer:	Area / Role / Subject
Tracy McKim	Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Janice Dent	Policy and Partnership Manager
Shaun Powell	Transformation & Intelligence Manager

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1   Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

(i)   Consider the impact of the policy to deliver effective Planning and Performance arrangements to monitor and report delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 and ensure continuous improvement across Council services.

(ii)   Consider how this policy is informed by and adheres to legislative requirements set in the Local Government Act 2021; and

(iii)   Determine whether Committee wishes to make comments and recommendations regarding the policy.

2   Context

Background

2.1   In November 2022, Newport City Council approved the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 to deliver an "*Ambitious, Fairer, and Greener Newport for everyone".* The Corporate Plan supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the 5 Ways of Working Principles – Long-term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention

2.2   To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan the Council has a Planning and Performance Policy which provides an overview of the Council's approach to monitor and report against the delivery of the Corporate Plan and continuous improvement of Council services.

2.3   The policy being presented to the Committee is an update on the existing Planning & Performance Policy which was approved by the Leader of the Council in July 2020. Due to Covid restrictions at the time feedback on the Policy was received via email from Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee members. This is the second time a performance monitoring policy has been considered by committee, the first being a Cabinet Report which was circulated in 2020 to Committee to collect comments via email.

2.4   Since the policy was implemented, new legislation, the Local Government Act 2021, was introduced requiring public bodies to self-assess the effectiveness of its governance and performance arrangements. Additionally, the Council has also seen changes to the structure and governance arrangements, mainly that the number of service areas have increased from eight to eleven.

2.5   Following the implementation of this Act, and Welsh Government suspension of benchmarking due to the Covid pandemic, the national measures for local authorities (Public Accountability Measures) no longer apply. The Act now allows local authorities to set their own performance framework. In the interim, Welsh local authorities have been working with the Welsh Local Government Association / Data Cymru to establish a new mechanism which will enable local authorities to assess their performance with other local authorities in Wales.   A new self-assessment tool was launched by Data Cymru in April 2022, and where applicable, the Council will now be able to assess its performance with other local authorities.

2.6   The Council's Risk Management Policy will be reviewed separately by the Council's Governance & Audit Committee in May 2023.

Previous Consideration of this item

2.7   This Committee has not considered this item previously. However, a Cabinet Report was circulated to members for comment in 2020, and these comments can be seen within the report.

3   Information Submitted to the Committee

3.1   The Planning and Performance Policy is affixed as Appendix 1. The report includes:

- An introduction and background information to the policy outlining its purpose.
- An explanation as to the plan put forward to monitor and report against the policy, with consideration of legislative requirements and their impact and Newport's Strategic Plans. This section also highlights the importance of "evidence based planning and involvement" and financial and workforce planning.
- The policy provides an overview of the Council's governance arrangements (officer and democratic levels) and roles & responsibilities in how performance is monitored and reported.

- The Policy reflects the Council's strategic / operational planning and performance arrangements. Individual officer and finance performance arrangements are managed outside of this policy. These arrangements are referred to in the report, but it is the Council's Finance and Human Resources service which are responsible for these.
- An overview as to how Newport City Council monitors progress against its Plans, including an explanation of performance monitoring systems such as Management Information (MI) and RAG ratings. This section also details other key considerations in performance monitoring such as benchmarking, data quality and assessment, project and programme monitoring..
- An overview as to how Newport City Council will report, assess and adjust Plans as a result of its reviewing functions. This section includes information regarding Planning and Performance Monitoring Updates and their schedules, an explanation of Service Area Challenge Reviews, Deep Dive Reviews and an overview of key Performance reports and their purpose.
- Affixed as Appendix A within the report is a breakdown of the roles and responsibilities of different bodies within the policy.

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

  o Whether the policy is clear, concise, and understandable in its aims and processes going forward
  o Whether the policy presented enables effective and robust planning and performance arrangements to meet legislative requirements and deliver the Council's strategic priorities.
  o Whether legislative requirements have been considered in the creation of this policy

- Conclusions:

  o Is the Committee satisfied that it has had all the relevant information to base a conclusion on the inclusion of general information, data and specific technical information?
  o Does committee feel that any further information needs to be included?
  o Do any areas require a more in-depth review by the Committee?
  o Does the Committee wish to make any Comments / Recommendations?

Suggested Lines of Enquiry

4.2 In considering the Planning and Performance Policy, the committee may wish to consider:

- How will Newport City Council establish "other similar local authorities" and has it done so already?
  o How will Newport City Council assess performance against these similar local authorities?
  o How will this be incorporated into future performance monitoring?
- Are there any best practice or innovative strategies used by "similar local authorities" that Newport City Council has or will use?
- How will this policy maintain or improve upon the quality of planning and performance monitoring in future?
- What are the current struggles services areas face regarding planning and performance monitoring and how does this policy seek to improve them?

- How will the policy itself be monitored and reviewed?

Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
Long-term 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?
Prevention 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?
Integration Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.	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?
	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?
Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).	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?
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.	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   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.

5.1   The Planning and Performance Policy has links to all Wellbeing Objectives insofar that planning and performance monitoring strives to ensure the best and most efficient service delivery through checks and balances.

6   Background Papers
- The Essentials – Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015
- Corporate Plan 2022-27
- The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021
- Planning and Performance Policy and Risk Management Policy, Cabinet Report, 2020

Report Completed: April 2023

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Newport City Council Planning and Performance Policy 2023-25

Introduction and Background

The purpose of this policy is to encourage a strong planning and performance culture, whereby every individual is aware of their contribution towards the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 *Ambitious, Fairer and Greener Newport for everyone*.

In the delivery of the Corporate Plan and services, it is important for the organisation to understand how it is progressing in the delivery of its objectives and whether its services are providing best value.   It is also important that the organisation can depend upon having good-quality data and information to make well-informed decisions, self-assess its performance and deliver continuous improvement.

The [Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015](#) requires public bodies including Newport City Council to consider the long-term impact of our decisions. The Act places a legal obligation to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of the people Wales. To support the delivery of our objectives and the decisions we make, the Council is required to consider the *5 Ways of Working* principles.

| Long-term | Integration | Involvement | Collaboration | Prevention |

The **Local Government Act 2021** requires public bodies such as Newport City Council to keep under review the extent to which it is fulfilling the 'performance requirements' of the organisation, that it is exercising its functions effectively; using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and its governance is effective for securing the above. To demonstrate these requirements, Newport City Council is required to produce an annual Self-Assessment and a Panel Performance Assessment once every electoral term. Further information on these areas is outlined below.

Why have a Planning and Performance Policy?

Planning and performance are intrinsically linked and are key to enable the Council to achieve its mission. In the delivery of the Council's objectives (corporate / service / team / individual) it is important that we are able to translate these into tangible actions and measures which are able to demonstrate how well we are succeeding and their impact on the services, customers (internal / external), communities and other stakeholders that are involved in the Council. Newport City Council has adopted the principles ***Plan – Do – Review*** to support us in setting and delivering our objectives.
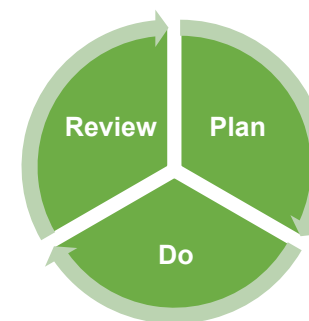
Plan

An essential foundation of any organisation is planning. Effective planning needs to be undertaken at all levels of the organisation whether it is delivering Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives, projects, Service Plan objectives or individual objectives. The *'Golden Thread'* in the diagram to the right demonstrates the connections between the Council's Corporate Plan and its service and team plans. Additionally the Council's Corporate Plan also supports wider regional and national strategies in Gwent and the South East region of Wales.

Each Directorate and service area is required to evaluate their performance and consider:

- Where they are now?
- What are the areas for improvement?
- Can our services meet the long term needs of the citizen / stakeholder?

In the setting of the Council's plans they will be supported by objectives, actions and targets to achieve their desired outcome(s). Below is an overview of how national, regional and local priorities influence our planning and the Council's key strategic documents to support these.

National, Regional, Local Strategies / Legislation

There are a wide range of national (UK / Welsh Government), regional and local priorities and strategies which influence and directs the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, Service Plans and other strategic priorities. The below is a summary of the key areas and how they influence and direct our planning priorities.
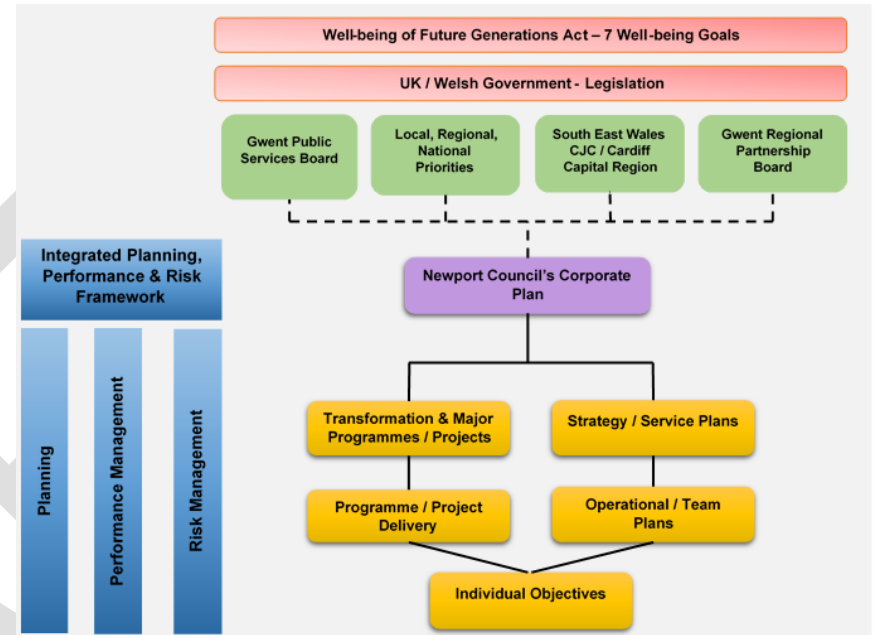
Well-being of Future Generations Act – 7 Well-being Goals	Newport City Council has to set its Corporate Plan and strategic priorities considering the Well-being of Future Generations Act seven Well-being Goals to make sure that all public bodies are working towards the same purpose. The Goals are: A Prosperous Wales / A Resilient Wales / A More Equal Wales / A Healthier Wales / A Wales of Cohesive Communities / A Wales of Vibrant Culture & thriving Welsh Language / A Globally Responsible Wales.
UK / Welsh Government - Legislation	The UK and Welsh Government will set legislation which public bodies such as Newport City Council have to implement in the delivery of its services. The development and implementation of any legislative requirement will be captured through strategic plans, service plans and risk registers.
Local, Regional, National Priorities	Across the Council we are involved in many local, regional and national priorities and activities which influence and direct the development and delivery of the Corporate Plan and service plans.

Gwent Public Services Board	The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) includes five Gwent local authorities and statutory partners Natural Resources Wales, South Wales Fire & Rescue, and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Other public bodies invited include Gwent Police (inc Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent), Public Health Wales, and University of South Wales. Full list can be found in the link. The Council's Corporate Plan and service plans support the delivery of the Gwent PSB Well-being Plan and Newport's Local Action Plan.
South East Wales CJC / Cardiff Capital Region	The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) / Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) covers ten local authority areas in South East Wales as per the Local Government & Elections Act 2021. The role of the CJC / CCR is to attract and deliver large scale regional development, regeneration, infrastructure, transport, and planning. The CJC / CCR also oversees the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund across the region. The Council's Corporate Plan and strategic priorities contribute towards this work.
Gwent Regional Partnership Board	The Gwent Regional Partnership Board consists of the five Gwent local authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisation (GAVO). The Board oversees health and social care delivery across Gwent to prioritise and integrate health, children and adult services to support citizens in Gwent. This work links into Social Services delivery and the Corporate Plan.

Newport City Council Strategic Plans

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan	To support the national Well-being Goals, every public body in Wales must set and publish its Well-being Objectives to maximise its contribution and carry out the sustainable development principle. The Council has set a five year Corporate Plan 2022-27 focused on four Well-being Objectives. Each Well-being Objective is supported by a number of Strategic Priorities (Steps) which contribute towards their achievement. This Plan will be supported by an annual Well-being Self-Assessment report to monitor and report its delivery.
Transformation & Major Programmes / Projects	Newport Council is responsible for delivering and supporting many programmes which contribute towards the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan but also in the improvement of services, assets, regeneration and other activities. These programmes and projects are subject to regular monitoring and reporting through the Council's governance and democratic arrangements.
Programme / Project Delivery	Programmes and Projects are supported by approved Business Cases and monitored through programme / project arrangements. Programmes and projects will be subject to regular reporting through the Council's governance arrangements.
Strategy / Service Plans	Service areas may have their own Strategy to monitor and deliver specific (statutory / non-statutory) areas of the Council's business e.g. Climate Change Plan, Strategic Equalities Plan etc. These plans are monitored and reported through their own internal mechanisms as prescribed in their Strategy / Plans.

Each service area in the Council also has a Service Plan which sets its 5 year objectives to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and improve the delivery of its services. Service plans monitoring and reporting will be outlined in the 'Do' section of this policy. Each service plan is approved through the Council's democratic process and subject to annual reviews / updates. |
| **Operational / Team Plans** | To support the delivery of their services, strategies and continuous improvement teams may also have their own operational and/or team plan. It is at the discretion of the service/ team managers to determine the best approach. |
| **Individual Objectives** | Every officer across the Council is expected to have their own individual objectives which contribute towards the delivery of their service / team plan, improve the delivery of an activity / service and/or their own personal objective(s). The Council's Human Resources team is responsible for this area and supports how officers should set / monitor then delivery of their objectives. |

Evidence Based Planning and Involvement

To support the development of the Council's strategic plans and documents, we will use the best available data and information available to help determine and prioritise the Council's work. The information and data used to support our decisions can range from a wide range of sources including (this list is not exhaustive):

- Regional and Local Well-being assessments
- Local statistical and performance data / information
- Other Council and organisational strategies
- Finance and workforce information
- Other public sector, not for profit strategies and data

It is also important that the Council involves and listen to citizens, service users, businesses, staff and other key stakeholders to inform, understand and obtain feedback before setting our strategic priorities and making decisions. The Council will use various approaches to involve as many people and ensure we obtain a wide breadth of feedback which may include:

- Consultation surveys such as questionnaires (Bus wifi / online surveys)
- Consultation events and workshops
- Citizen Panel
- Newport Council Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees
- Service User feedback questionnaires and surveys
- Social media and other forms of feedback.

The feedback received will be reported and considered as part of any democratic report to Council, Cabinet, and/or Cabinet Member(s) through the Council's Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (including Socio-economic Duty).

Financial / Workforce Planning

The Council's Finance Service is responsible for supporting service areas and managers and to safeguard the resources of the Council. Every year the Council sets its budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan. As part of the service planning cycle, officers need to consider the resources needed to achieve the Council's Well-being Objectives and their service area objectives, their income and cost drivers and comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders, and Procurement Policy to achieve best value.

The Council's Human Resources team is responsible for supporting service areas and managers to develop their workforce plans. The focus is for service areas to plan the workforce capacity and capability (skills / knowledge / culture) which the Council needs to deliver services in the short, medium and long term. These should be aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan, organisational strategies and Directorate / Service Plans.

DO – How NCC monitors progress against its Plans

To monitor the delivery of the Council's performance against its strategic plans (Corporate Plan, Transformation Plan, Directorate / Service Plans), service areas are required to undertake quarterly monitoring and reporting against their:

- Programmes and projects (Transformation Plan / Service area projects)
- Service Plan Objectives and Actions.
- Performance measures
- Risks (Covered through the Council's Risk Management Policy).

Management Information (MI) Hub

To enable officers to effectively monitor the progress of their delivery against the Corporate Plan, service plans and other strategic plans (where prescribed), the Council uses the MI Hub (InPhase) for officers to input quarterly updates against their actions and projects.

Service Plan Project / Action Monitoring

The Council uses Red, Amber, Green (RAG) traffic light system to assess if the action will be completed within the agreed target date. Officers are also expected to provide a percentage (%) completion against their action. To support action and project updates, officers are expected to provide supporting commentary including outcome(s).

RAG Status	Description
■	Project / Action is not on track to deliver with major issues preventing the action being completed by the agreed '***Target Date'***. Immediate management interventions is required to improve performance and escalation to Directorate Management Team and/or relevant Board.
■	Project / Action is mainly on track with some minor issues which could prevent the Project / Action being completed by the agreed '***Target Date'***. Management intervention(s) required to improve performance and close monitoring by the Head of Service / Service Management Team.
■	Project / Action is on track to be completed by the Agreed ***'Target Date'*** or has been successfully delivered.

Performance Measure Monitoring / Tolerances

Performance measures identified in service plans are expected to provide regular updates depending on their frequency of reporting e.g. quarterly, half-yearly, annually etc. Following the implementation of the Local Government Act 2021, national measures for local authorities no longer apply and local authorities are able to set their own performance framework which it will assess its performance against other similar local authorities in Wales. At Newport Council, the Council's Executive Board and Cabinet will agree a set of Key Performance Measures which it will assess its progress against the Corporate Plan and compare with the Welsh average / other similar local authorities in Wales.

At Newport City Council, there are range of measures which either have targets set or are compared against the previous year's performance. At Newport Council the following tolerance is set for all targets to be assessed against using RAG system:

RAG Status	Description
= > 15%	Performance is under achieving against Target or previous year's performance. Immediate management intervention and escalation to Directorate Management Board is required.
<15%	Performance is off target or Previous Year's Performance but within a variance of 15%. Management intervention and close monitoring by the Head of Service / Service Management Team is required.
	Performance is achieving / succeeding against its agreed Target or Previous Year's Performance

Benchmarking

Where applicable, Newport City Council will also benchmark performance measures with other local authorities in Wales. These will be reported once a year in line with Welsh Local Government Association / national guidance (If available).

Data Quality and Assessment

At the start of every financial year, service areas shall assess and set their targets ensuring that they follow the SMART principles:

Specific – Performance Measure is clearly stated, so anyone reading it can understand it and what it is measuring.

Measurable – Performance measures clearly state how they are measured and what data is used to support the calculation of the measure.

Achievable – Performance measure targets are set to reasonably stretch performance of the service but also consider the internal and external impacts.

Relevant – Performance measures support and demonstrate the delivery of the service plan, corporate plan and other strategic objectives.

Time Bound – Performance measures are regularly reported and targets can be achieved within required timescales.

The Council will also require service areas to self-assess the arrangements in place for officers to ensure robust and accurate data is provided when entering data into the Council's MI Hub. Independent reviews by the Council's Internal Audit team will also be considered to ensure service areas have the necessary internal controls and arrangements in place.

Programme and Project Monitoring

Programmes and projects identified in the Transformation Plan and service area plans should be following standard project management principles such as PRINCE 2, AGILE and other industry standard methodology.

Individual Performance Monitoring

For individual performance monitoring, officers will use the Council's iTrent 'Check In' system to set objectives and to discuss their performance. The Council's Human Resources team have separate policies and procedures in place that oversee the implementation and delivery of these arrangements.

Review – How do we Report, assess and adjust our Plans

Everyone in Newport City Council has a responsibility to monitor, review and report against their performance whether this is at Corporate, Service, Team or individual levels. The Council's Corporate Plan has set out four key principles which it has adopted to support the delivery of the plan and key decision making:

Fair and inclusive – We will work to create fairer opportunities, reduce inequalities in our communities, and encourage a sense of belonging.

Empowering – We will work with and support communities, groups, and partners to thrive.

A listening council – The views of communities, service users and partners will shape the services we deliver and the places you live in.

Citizen Focussed – Everyone who works and represents Newport City Council will put the citizen first, focusing on our core organisational values

Newport City Council also has a **People Plan** which sets out the values and expectations of officers to create and embed a fair and inclusive organisation which listens and learns from its successes and where improvements can be made.

Planning and Performance Monitoring Updates

In the delivery of the Corporate Plan and service plans, officers are required to provide **quarterly updates** throughout the financial year. This includes:

- Programmes and projects (identified in the service plan / Transformation Plan)
- Objectives and Actions (Workforce Development / service area objectives / risk mitigation actions / any other actions required in MI Hub e.g. Climate Change Plan)
- Performance Measures
- Risk Scores.

NCC has adopted the following reporting cycle:

Quarter	Period Covered	Report Recipients
Quarter 1	April to June	Cabinet Member(s) / Executive Board / Directorate Management Boards.
Quarter 2 (Mid-Year Review)	July to September	Cabinet & Cabinet Member(s) / Performance Scrutiny Committees / Executive Board / Directorate Management Team
Quarter 3	October to December	Cabinet Member(s) / Executive Board / Directorate Management Team.
Quarter 4 (End of Year Review)	January to March	Cabinet & Cabinet Member(s) / Performance Scrutiny Committees / Executive Board / Directorate Management Boards

NCC Governance and Scrutiny

The Council's governance arrangements have been structured to support service areas to deliver their objectives effectively and efficiently; to celebrate and champion success; and deliver continuous improvement.

The Council's Executive, Directorate and Programme boards are set up to have effective oversight and escalation points to enable well-informed decision making and to support officers through the process. The Council's Constitution outlines the delegated decision making at democratic and senior officer levels. To support the decision making process, the Council's Governance and Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committees are there to review, challenge and make recommendations prior to the decision making process.

Each of these strategic boards should be championing best practice, celebrating success and challenging under performance.

Roles and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix A of this policy.

To support these reviews the Council has established an officer led approach to scrutinise and assess service area's progress against their service plans.

As identified in the governance diagram above, each level of governance (Executive Board, Directorate Management Board etc) has a role and responsibility to assess, champion and challenge performance. In addition to these arrangements the Council also has officer led reviews such as:

Service Area Challenge Reviews

To support service areas, the Council's Executive Board regularly undertakes Challenge reviews. The purpose of these reviews is to provide an opportunity for Heads of Service and their Management teams to discuss their service area's performance and progress of delivery against their service plans, projects and other strategic priorities.

Deep Dive Reviews – Corporate Management Team

Where there is underperformance with a specific / set of performance measures and/or risks which are not improving, the Strategic Director and/or Head of Service may consider presenting to the Council's Corporate Management Team. The Deep Dive reviews are there to take a wider / organisational view and to collaboratively support and guide service areas to:

- Understand the root cause(s) of underperformance and impact on the service / stakeholders.
- Consider approaches undertaken by other high performing local authorities, public sector organisations and third sectors.
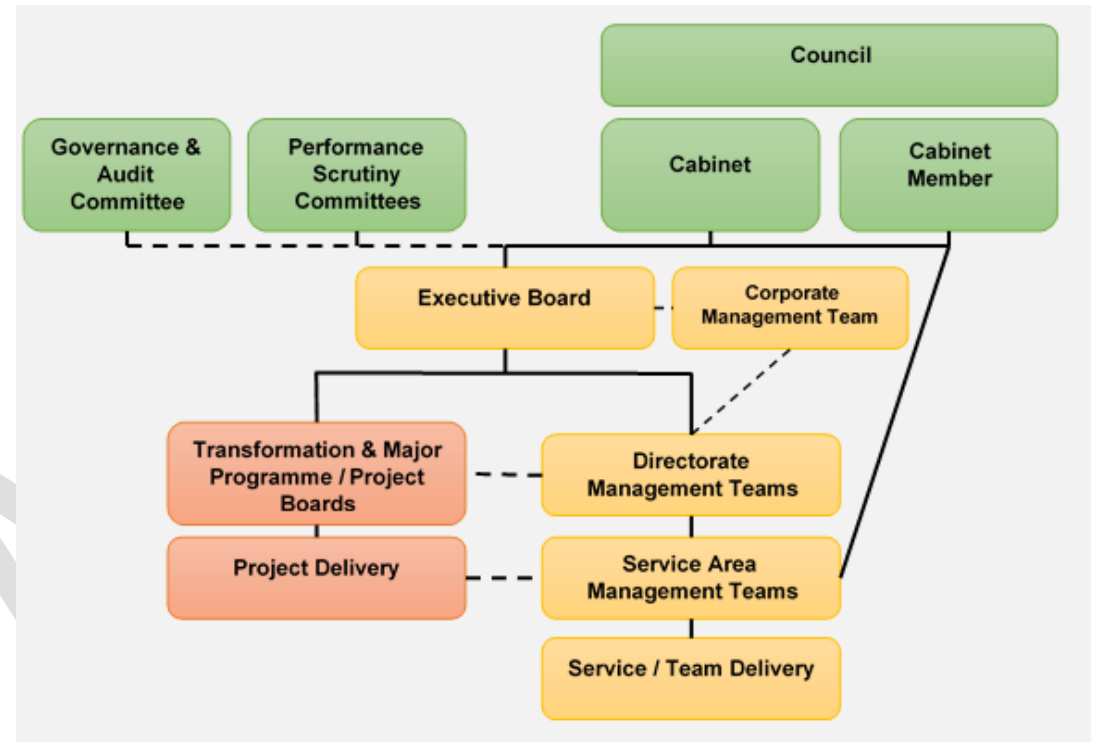
- Consider internal / external opportunities to improve performance and/or consider expected service standards e.g. request additional resources, review processes and procedures, explore alternative arrangements etc.
- Develop an action plan to improve performance and to report back on progress to Corporate Management Team / Directorate Management Boards.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council's Constitution sets out how planning, performance and risk is managed in Newport City Council. The roles and responsibilities within the council should be clear and transparent in terms of accountability across the whole organisation. Further information on Roles and Responsibilities can be found in Appendix A.

Reviewing our Strategic Plans

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its strategic priorities over the next 5 years. At the Mid-term point (2024/25) of the Corporate Plan we will evaluate our progress against the Plan and review any emerging opportunities, risks or threats and adjust the Corporate Plan as necessary.

Once a year (Quarter 4), service areas will review and update their service plans considering any emerging opportunities and risks considering the outcome(s) of the Council's budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and any other strategic priorities, new / emerging legislation and other internal / external factors.

NCC Key Corporate Performance Reports

Newport City Council produces and presents several corporate and topic-specific reports to the Council's Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee on performance. For topic specific reports e.g. Social Services Director Annual Report, Climate Change Annual Report etc, please refer to the relevant Strategy / Policy. Below are the key Corporate reports produced on the performance of Newport City Council, its service areas.

NCC Well-being Self-Assessment Report

As a local authority, the Council is required as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to produce an annual report on the progress against its Well-being Objectives and delivery of the Corporate Plan. Additionally, the Local Government Act also requires Newport City Council to produce a report on the effectiveness of its governance and performance arrangements.

NCC produces an Annual Well-being Self-Assessment Report which is presented to Full Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee. This report provides a strategic overview on the Council's progress against the Corporate Plan including Transformation Plan and its governance arrangements.

NCC Service Area End of Year and Mid-Year Reviews

During each financial year, service areas present a Mid-Year and End of Year performance review. The purpose of these reports is to provide an update on the progress of delivery against the service area plan which support the Council's Corporate Plan. The reports are presented to the Council's Performance Scrutiny Committees to assess. Heads of Service and their respective Cabinet Member(s) are invited to present the reports and consider feedback and recommendations. These reports also inform the Performance Scrutiny work programmes to review any specific areas of delivery and performance.

NCC Panel Performance Assessment

The Local Government Act requires local authorities once per election term to undertake an independent Panel Performance Assessment on the Governance and Performance arrangements. The purpose of these assessments is to provide independent assurance that the Council has effective and efficient arrangements in place to secure best value and ensure it can deliver its strategic priorities.

The timing and delivery of the Panel Performance Assessment will be set by the Council. Arrangements on the Council's approach will be presented separately to this Policy.

Other Corporate / Directorate / Service Specific Performance Reports

Newport City Council will also publish other annual performance reports which support:

- Delivery of specific strategies and/or corporate functions e.g. Climate Change Plan, Safeguarding, Finance, Information Risk Report.
- Requirements of specific legislative requirements e.g. Equalities Annual Report, Welsh Language Report, Social Services Director Report.
- Any other service and/or activity report as required e.g Internal Audit Annual Report / quarterly progress monitoring report.

It is the responsibility of the directorate / service area to ensure effective performance monitoring arrangements are in place to support these reports.

<u>Further Contacts</u>

Rhys Cornwall, Strategic Director of Transformation & Corporate

Tracy Mckim, Head of Policy, People & Transformation

Shaun Powell, Transformation & Intelligence Manager

Paul Flint, Performance & Programmes Manager

Meirion Rushworth, Head of Finance

Kevin Howells, Human Resources & Organisational Development Manager

Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Planning Responsibility	Performance Responsibility
Council	- Approving the strategies and plans included in the Policy Framework. Includes: - Public Services Board Well-being Plan - Newport City Council's Corporate Plan. - Other strategic plans / documents as prescribed. - Approval of the Council's budget and final accounts.	Receipt and approval of the Council's annual Well-being Self-Assessment report.
Cabinet	To agree organisational strategies and policies including: - Corporate Plan. - Public Services Board's Well-being Plan. - Any other organisational / strategic plan.	- Agree the Council's planning and performance framework and supporting policies. - Receive regular performance monitoring reports on the Council's performance and progress against the Corporate Plan. - To monitor any action taken in relation to the improvement of performance. - Consider the observations, comments and recommendations of the Council's Performance Scrutiny Committees and Governance and Audit Committee.
Cabinet Member(s)	- Approving any policy or policy documents relating to their portfolio. - Approving service area plans included within their portfolio.	- Monitor the performance of their service area plans including finance, performance measures and risk management. - Challenge and seek assurance / action on areas of underperformance. - Promote and champion good performance within their portfolio. - Oversight of progress of Internal Audit and External Regulator reports.
Performance Scrutiny Management Committees	Consultation and contribution on corporate strategies, plans including the Corporate Plan, Annual Report and Director of Social Services Annual Report.	- To hold the Council's Cabinet to account. - Monitor the performance and success of services and outcomes of policies. - Co-ordinate the programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committees and implementation of the work programme.
Governance and Audit Committee	- Contribute towards the Public Services Board (PSB) Wellbeing Plan by way of pre-decision scrutiny. - Approve the Council's Internal Audit Annual Plan.	- Review the Council's Annual Well-being Self-Assessment Report. - Reviewing and assessing the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the authority.
Executive Board	- Approve the Council's Corporate Plan prior to Cabinet / Council approval - Approve Council strategies and policies identified in the Council's Policy Framework before Cabinet / Council approval.	- Monitoring the performance of Directorate(s) and service area(s) Plans championing good performance and challenging under-performance. - Monitoring organisational finance, and human resources performance.

Role	Planning Responsibility	Performance Responsibility
		• Monitor the performance of the Council's Transformation Plan receiving regular reports.
Transformation and Major Programme & Project Boards	• Review and recommend Transformation programmes / projects business cases for Executive Board approval.	• Monitor the performance of Transformation Programmes and projects ensuring they are delivered on time, scope and budget. • Escalate (within agreed project parameters) decisions to Executive Board relating to programme / project delivery.
Directorate Management Team	• Review and agree service plans. • Review and agree service area project business cases (not including Transformation Plan). • Review organisational / Directorate Strategies / Policies identified in the Council's Policy Framework and/or service delivery.	• Monitoring the performance of service area(s) plans, championing good performance and challenging under-performance. • Monitoring organisational finance, and Human Resources performance. • Receive 6 monthly performance overview of partnership / Arm's Length Body arrangements
Corporate Management Team	• Overview of Corporate / Service Planning arrangements and delivery. • Review and scrutinise strategic planning development and policy.	• Review and scrutinise corporate policy development including performance and risk. • Overview of Corporate / Service performance arrangements and delivery. • Deep Dive reviews of performance measures.
Service Area Management team	• Develop and deliver service area plans.	• Deliver and report progress against service plan objectives, actions, projects, performance measures. • Report and scrutinise performance championing good performance and challenging underperformance. • Hold officers to account for service performance. • Monitoring and reporting of other corporate performance e.g. Finance, HR, project.
Chief Executive	• Oversight of the Council's strategic / financial planning arrangements. • Oversight of the Council's Transformation Plan and other strategic Plans.	• Oversight and hold to account organisational performance against strategic plans and other corporate priorities. • Determine methods of monitoring and activities to performance management of staff. • Champion and promote good performance and challenge underperformance.
Strategic Directors	• To deliver the framework for service plans as directed by the Chief Executive. • Agreeing service area programmes and projects.	• Oversight of Directorate and service area performance. • Holding Heads of Service to account on performance and progress against strategic plans and other corporate priorities. • Strategic Director of People to report annually (Social Services Annual Report) on the performance against Social Services Well-being Act.
Heads of Service	• Directing and oversight over the setting service plan objectives and actions for their service area.	• Accountable for performance and achievement of planned objectives / actions in their service area.

Role	Planning Responsibility	Performance Responsibility
	• Agreeing performance measures that support the delivery of their service plan objectives. • Agreeing and oversight of risks that prevent the delivery of the service plan and corporate objectives. • Setting Programme and project business cases.	• Responsible for keeping Directors and relevant Cabinet Members up-to-date with performance matters. • Sharing success stories and sharing best practice with others. • Responsible for addressing poor performance and mitigating negative outcomes. • Oversight in the performance and delivery of service area programmes and projects.
Service Managers	• Supporting Heads of Service in the setting of service plan objectives and actions. • Identifying performance measures and targets that are aligned to delivery of service plan and corporate objectives. • Set team plans and actions aligned to service plan objectives. • Set resources (Financial / Human) to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan and service plan objectives. • Draft and develop programme and project business cases	• Providing regular updates on the progress of delivery against service plan objectives / actions, performance measures, and projects • Oversee and deliver programmes and projects in their service / teams. • To raise areas of poor performance and implementing mitigating actions to improve performance. • Share success stories and areas of good performance in teams. • Ensure financial and non-financial resources are able to support the delivery of the service plans and Corporate Plan objectives.
All Employees	• Set objectives that support the delivery of Service / Team objectives. • Understand and contribute towards the objectives and actions set in the Corporate Plan, service plans and other strategic plans.	• Regularly monitor performance against objectives and actions through i-Trent check ins. • Support and provide information to service / team managers on delivery actions set in service / team plans. • Where applicable ensure performance data is accurately produced and submitted in a timely manner. • Support the delivery of actions identified through internal / external reviews of service area performance.
Performance & Research Business Partner	• Support Executive Board / Corporate Management Team in the development of the Corporate Plan and service plans. • Development and implementation of necessary policies and procedures that support the Planning, Performance and Risk Management policies. • Where applicable, support external regulatory reviews e.g. Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales and/or Estyn. • Provide advice, guidance and where applicable support planning, performance and risk. • Support Newport Intelligence Hub in the maintenance and administration of the performance management system.	• Support and prepare service area's quarterly update of their performance. • Support and draft the Council's annual review of performance against the delivery of the Corporate Plan including action plans • Support and monitor the delivery of performance against external regulatory reviews. • Ensure mechanisms are effective in providing accurate and timely performance measures. • Promote and champion best practice for good performance management arrangements. • Ensure corporate arrangements in place to quality assure performance measures.

Role	Planning Responsibility	Performance Responsibility
		• Support the monitoring of recommendations and actions from regulatory reviews.
Internal Audit	• Provide independent, objective assurance and consulting activity that helps the Council to accomplish its objectives to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.	• Provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment, governance arrangements and risk management processes
Audit Wales (External Audit)	• To provide objective assurance and consulting to support the Council in the delivery of its objectives • Provide assurance on how the Council manages and spend public money on the delivery of services and the Council's Corporate Plan. • Provide assurance that the Council is delivering services in accordance with statutory legislation and regulation.	• Assurance over the financial reporting and use of resources. • Risk based performance audits on the delivery of services and compliance with legislation / regulation. • Regulatory reviews of statutory functions and services to ensure compliance with legislation and regulation. • Follow up of recommendations / proposals for improvement of the Council's performance.
External Regulators (Care Inspectorate Wales / Estyn)	• Assurance that the Council has effective strategic planning and operational arrangements to deliver its statutory duties. • Promote and support schools and other educational establishments to have effective strategic plans which support the Council's Corporate Plan and delivery its statutory duties.	• Regulatory reviews of the effectiveness and efficiency of statutory services / functions. • Ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements. • Follow up recommendations and proposals for improvement in the performance of Council's services / functions.

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Information Report

Scrutiny

Part 1

Date: 28th April 2023

Subject   Budget Consultation

Purpose   To respond to OSMC by providing follow-up information on the points requested in their February 2023 meeting in relation to the budget consultation.

Author   Head of People, Policy and Transformation, Policy and Partnership Manager

Ward   City wide

Summary   The most recent round of budget consultation received almost 1,900 responses from a range of stakeholders. This compares well with neighbouring Gwent local authorities and other Welsh cities. Several 'lessons learned' have been identified and are set out in the report, which are intended to make future budget consultation more accessible, engaging and better promoted

Proposal   To inform Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Members on the budget consultation and lessons learned.

Action by Head of People, Policy and Transformation
               Head of Finance

Timetable Immediate

               This report was prepared after consultation with:

               Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

1   **Background**

The aim of the budget consultation is to create opportunities for extensive participation in the budget setting process and particularly to allow citizens potentially affected by decisions to "have their say". However, there is an important secondary consideration of minimising the costs of consultation within the context of making savings across the Council during a time of unprecedented financial pressures. This has meant we have looked to maximise the use of our existing resources and expertise, for instance using the Wi-Fi technology in local buses, whilst avoiding spend on consultation activities that might not be considered value for money.

The Finance and People, Policy and Transformation teams have now supported budget consultation work for a decade and working with our other service areas have developed insight and intelligence on the opinions and concerns of residents on a range of public service issues. We also want to serve the ambitions of the growing number of citizens who are taking part in new, more active forms of public engagement now being undertaken in Newport. For instance, the 1,200 plus people who have taken part in participatory budgeting events in the past 4 years, to allocate public funds to community projects. We would also emphasise that budget consultation runs alongside other forms of public engagement undertaken by the Council which amounted to over 40 activities in 2022/23 and more the 10,000 respondents, and which informs our intelligence and customer insight.

2   **Budget Engagement programme for 2023/24**

The budget consultation programme consists of a range of methods and forms of promotion:

- **Online Survey** – which included questions on all budget proposals. A new question format was used this year, which allows respondents to support the full saving / a smaller saving / no saving, rather than having to simply agree/disagree with the proposal. This provided richer data with the 'smaller saving' option being used extensively.

- **Bus Wi-Fi survey** – a supplementary budget consultation survey was run on bus Wi-Fi. This focused on asset rationalisation and the increase in Council Tax and encouraged respondents to complete the wider budget survey.

- **Social Media promotion** - the consultation was regularly promoted on Council social media, and this approach generated a high proportion of the responses. Partner organisations were also encouraged to promote the budget consultation in One Newport social media posts.

- **Newport Matters** – the January edition which went out to most Newport households and businesses carried a full-page article on the budget, including the context, the proposals, the budget setting process and links to the consultation web-pages and the freepost reply address.

- **School parents & teachers** – all schools were provided with budget consultation text to share with parents and teachers to promote participation.

- **Council staff** – employee communications promoted participation amongst staff.

- **Attendance at community events** – Council representatives attended Warm Welcome Centres across Newport including Ringland, Maesglas, Bettws and Gaer.

Representatives raised awareness to over 500 people at the Participatory Budgeting events

- **Service Area engagement** - Service Areas were supported to assess where additional engagement with service users and their families, directly, is needed. This has been undertaken by Adult Services and Children's services, based on the relatively high impact on vulnerable people. This was mainly face to face engagement.

- **Pre-budget engagement** – During the autumn pre-budget engagement on the relative importance of services was undertaken linked to the development of the corporate plan. In total over 850 responses were received, which contribute to our intention of budget engagement being an ongoing and cyclical process.

- **Fairness Commission response** – Finance and the Director's team supported the Fairness Commission to respond to the budget using their principles of fairness.

- **Trade Unions** – HR and finance liaised with the Trade Unions to facilitate their representations.

- **Newport Youth Council** – so that young people's voices were included in the consultation.

During the 2023/24 budget consultation just under 1,900 responses were received. This is a significant increase over the previous year, which was affected by the restrictions surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. In this year's consultation we were able to make wider use of Bus Wi-Fi Consultation technology as passenger numbers increased again. The availability of bus Wi-Fi consultation also enabled us to undertake pre-budget engagement on the prioritisation of council services.

Responses were as follows:

1. An online survey via the public Wi-Fi on Newport buses that received 653 responses.

2. An in-depth online survey, which received 820 responses.

3. In addition to completed surveys, around 400 representations have been received from organisations and were considered by Cabinet Members and Officers as part of the budget consultation

4. Of note, 865 responses to the pre-budget engagement exercise were received in September 2022. This takes total budget engagement for 2023/24 to 2,738.

A full demographic breakdown of survey responses is included in the following attachment which was appended to the budget report to Cabinet in February.

Public budget
consultation response

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3   Comparisons with other Local Authorities

Local authority area	Number of responses to survey for 2023/24 Budget
Newport	1,873 completed surveys In addition, 865 pre-budget responses were received Total 2,738
Blaenau Gwent	3,736 completed surveys (note – Blaenau Gwent count responses differently to Newport, recording attendance at events as participation. In previous years their responses have not exceeded 600)
Caerphilly	278 completed surveys
Monmouthshire	244 completed surveys
Torfaen	Not available
Cardiff	A total of 5,932 responses were received for the main survey, with 115 responses to the Youth survey.
Swansea	440 people completed surveys

4   Other consultation

A range of other consultation has been supported through 22/23. This totals over 40 activities and more than 10,000 respondents engaged with. This includes a period which where activities were still limited following the COVID pandemic.

We consulted with residents on matters such as Transport for Wales proposals, perceptions of and safety in Newport, the Climate Change Plan, Corporate Plan and Digital Strategy development.

We also support the Youth Council, 50+ forum and Citizen's Panel as outlined in previous reports.

5   Lessons learned

Whilst it was generally thought that the 2023/24 budget was successful in terms of responses and cost effectiveness, the following points are being considered and may be helpful to the Committee in forming a view:

Pre-budget engagement was undertaken to gain a better understanding of the relative importance of Council services, to give people a chance to comment on this and to raise awareness of the challenging financial context and forthcoming consultation.
A total of 865 responses were received in September 2022. Pre-budget engagement could be repeated in the coming year and integrated with other consultation activity throughout the year.

Consultation Format - the budget consultation is still primarily online, as this seems to suit the majority of people, however responses in all forms are accepted e.g. hard copy. For instance, we received picture responses from people with learning disabilities. Around 400 letters/e-mails were received in addition to the online survey, these often focus on one or two proposals that directly affect the respondent/their family. We can look to encourage other formats for responses in the future to make the consultation as accessible and appealing as possible.

The new question approach (allowing respondents to suggest a smaller saving) worked well and the smaller saving option was used extensively. This richer question format will be used in future budget consultation rounds. Appendix 1 lists the new questions that were used.

Face to face consultation should be used more extensively and be better advertised.

Promotion of the consultation - in response to the OSMC recommendation the budget consultation should be advertised and promoted in advance of its launch so that citizens are aware of it and can prepare to respond.

Schools - in previous years Scrutiny had suggested that schools could play a greater part in promoting the budget consultation. Consultation messages were sent to all Newport schools in a format they could easily use to disseminate to parents. This should be continued in future budget consultation rounds.

Equalities - the Senior Equalities Officer is now involved in budget consultation planning and shared details of the consultation through relevant networks, along with the Community Cohesion Manager and the Welsh Language Policy Officer. Bus Wi-Fi surveys are used to reach younger and more diverse communities. 'One Newport' partner organisation contacts are used to disseminate the consultation across a wide range of community groups. We can also make further use of city centre and public-building Wi-Fi networks to engage with a more diverse audience in the next round of budget consultation. This will also contribute to the OSMC recommendation of expanding engagement to people who have limited interaction with the Council.

FEIAs - The Policy and Partnership Team are working with Newport Fairness Commission to inform opportunities for training and guidance for managers responsible for completing Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessments (FEIAs).

Background Papers

OSMC considered the budget consultation arrangements in their meeting on February 3rd 2023

Appendix 1 – Questions asked in the Budget Consultation Survey

Q1a: What do you think the council should do with this saving proposal?

- Make the full budget saving
- Make a smaller budget saving
- Avoid making any budget savings for this service
- Not sure

Q1b: How important is protecting funding for this service compared to other services in the council's budget savings proposals for 2023/24?

On a scale of 1-5   with 1 of most importance and 5 of least importance

Respondents were also able to give comments on all proposals in their own words

Council Tax question

Respondents were asked, is the proposed increase to Council Tax:

- Too much
- About right
- Not enough
- Don't know

Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: April 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.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

3.1 The following information is attached:

Appendix 1: Action Sheet from Previous Meetings;

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.

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 Actions from Committee's which support the achievement of the Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Law and Regulation Service Plan, Objectives, Actions and Measures and the Wellbeing objectives:

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.

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

- o **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
- o **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: April 2023

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
ACTION SHEET

	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
1	Conclusion of Committee reports	Send comments and recommendations to officers	Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
2	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 – 18.04.23
3	2023/24 Budget Revenue and MFTP	Provide written answers to questions outside of the committee's remit on: - Partnership savings within Social Services and - Street light savings	Stephen Jarrett/Sally Ann Jenkins/Samantha Schanzer	Partnership Savings: COMPLETE Street light savings: COMPLETE
4	2023/24 Budget Revenue and MFTP	Provide further information on Council Tax bands	Meirion Rushworth/Samantha Schanzer	COMPELTE
5	2023/24 Budget Revenue and MFTP	Provide previous years' recommendations	Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE

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