

# Decision Schedule



## Cabinet

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### TO ALL MEMBERS OF NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

#### Decision Schedule published on 16 November 2023

The Chair of Cabinet Member took the following decision on 15 November 2023. The decision will become effective at Noon on 23 November, with the exception of any particular decision, which is the subject of a valid "call-in".

The deadline for submission of a 'Call-in' request form is 4.00 pm on 22 November 2023.

Reports relating to staffing issues/Confidential reports are not circulated to all members of the Council as part of the consultation/call-in processes.

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#### Leader 48/23

#### September Revenue Budget Monitor

#### Options Considered/Reasons for Decision

The September 2023 revenue monitoring position reflected a forecasted underspend of £3.500m, taking into account the contingency budget. This compared to an underspend of £3.044m reported in respect of July 2023, with the change in position largely due to a reduced overspend within Children's Services and an increased underspend within Capital Financing, partly offset by an increased overspend within Housing and Communities. Whilst an overall underspend was projected, it should be noted that service areas were collectively forecast to overspend by £3.484m, excluding schools. This significant service area overspending was offset by underspends in non-service areas, such as Capital Financing.

The most significant element of service area overspending was within Children's Services (£3.061m), where significant demand levels for, and individual cost of, out of area and emergency placements was the underlying factor behind this position. As well as this, Housing and Communities and People, Policy and Transformation were also projecting large overspends, the details of which were outlined further in the report. Partly offsetting the service area overspends was a significant underspend within Adult Services (£893k).

Schools were separately projecting expenditure in excess of budget totaling £5.368m. This expenditure comprises both planned, one-off, use of reserves, as well as a large element of recurring expenditure totaling circa £3.6m, which, for this year, would be offset by available surplus balances. Going forward, there was a risk that this level of recurring expenditure in excess of budget would result in certain individual schools entering a deficit budget position unless they make the savings required to balance their individual budgets. Therefore, close monitoring would be required during the remainder of this year to ensure that schools were managing their finances as required and taking action to ensure that deficit positions were avoided wherever possible.

Whilst an overall underspend was currently being projected, it was important to note that there were a number of risks that could result in the position deteriorating over the course of the year. For example, demand issues that were causing the service area overspending could increase during the year and place further pressure on services such as Children's Services and Housing and Communities.

The report also included 'invest to transform' funding requests to fund one-off costs associated with transformation projects and Cabinet were asked to review and approve these, as appropriate.

The appendices to the report are as follows:

Appendix 1	Overall budget dashboard – September 2023
Appendix 2	Revenue summary monitor – September 2023
Appendix 3	School balance outturn position
Appendix 4	2023/24 reserve movements
Appendix 5	Transformation Fund Bids

## **Decision**

Cabinet:

- Noted the overall budget forecast position outlined within this report, which was comprised of service area overspending, offset by underspends against non-service budgets.
- Noted the risks identified throughout the report and in the HoF comments, such as in relation to demand issues being faced.
- Noted the overall shortfall in the delivery of savings accepted as part of the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- Noted the forecast movements in reserves.
- Noted the overall position in relation to schools' budgets, acknowledging the risk that some individual deficit positions could emerge by the end of the financial year.
- Approved the virement within Adult Services, as detailed within the report.
- Approved the use of the Transformation Fund to cover the cost of internal and external resource requirements for the Transformation Programme, as set out in the report and Appendix 5 of the report.
- Noted the recommendation from the Head of Finance that replenishment of the Transformation Fund was made a priority for any underspend at the end of the financial year, in order to ensure adequate funds to be able to support savings proposals that would be critical for future years' budget setting processes.

## **Consultation**

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of Finance**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 49/23**

### **Capital Programme Monitoring and Additions Reports – September 2023**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

The Council had an extensive capital programme, investing across the authority in areas such as schools, heritage assets, energy efficiency schemes, invest to save programmes and in the regeneration of the city centre. This report updated the Cabinet on its capital programme and the predicted outturn for the 2023/24 financial year, and specifically.

- The starting capital programme budget for 2023/24 was £94.783m. This was revised to a budget of £84.9m at the September Cabinet meeting. This report requested approval to increase the 2023-24 budget by a net £5.464m to now be £90.333m
- Against that revised budget, costs were predicted to be £82.285m introducing a £8.047m net variance.

- Of this variance, service managers and budget holders confirmed that £7.997m related to delayed progress with schemes.
- Approval of slippage from this year to future years would be sought as part of the final outturn report.

### **Decision**

Cabinet:

1. Approved the additions to the Capital Programme requested in the report (Appendix A), including the addition of the Duffryn District Heating system and the retrospective use of the Capital Expenditure Reserve to fund this.
2. Noted the predicted capital expenditure outturn position for 2023/24.
3. Noted the amendments to the capital programme
4. Noted the available remaining capital resources ('headroom') and the earmarked usage of that resourcing.
5. Noted the inclusion of the Treasury Management prudential indicators, included within the report.

### **Consultation**

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of Finance**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 50/23**

### **Half Yearly Report on Treasury Management for the Period 2023/24**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

In line with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy, the Council continued to be both a short-term investor of cash and borrower to manage day-to-day cash flows. Current forecasts indicated that, in the future, temporary borrowing may be required to fund normal day-to-day cash flow activities and longer-term borrowing would increase to fund commitments in the current capital programme, as well as the impact of reduced capacity for 'internal borrowing'.

Up to the end of September 2023, the Council's net borrowing is £80.8m, a decrease of £10.6m on 31 March 2023 levels.

Governance and Audit Committee considered the report on 26 October 2023. The feedback provided during the meeting did not result in any subsequent changes to the report.

### **Decision**

Cabinet noted the report on treasury management activities during the first half year period of 2023-24 and provided feedback as required for the subsequent report to Council.

### **Consultation**

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of Finance**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 51/23**

### **Council Tax Premiums**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

This report set out the options for charging council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes. It set out the context to the consideration, focused on bringing more homes back into use when the city had a current shortage of properties and demand for accommodation was significantly outstripping availability of homes.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet noted the contents of the report and agreed that a public consultation on the introduction of council tax premiums was undertaken.

#### **Consultation**

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of Finance**  
**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 52/23**

### **Leisure and Wellbeing Project Update**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

Cabinet approved the delivery of a new Leisure and Well-being facility on land adjacent to the University of South Wales (USW) campus in February 2021. This decision followed a public consultation exercise which showed significant support for the development of a modern and sustainable facility in the city centre. Welsh Government approved grant funding as part of their Transforming Towns programme. A condition of this funding was that the Newport Centre be demolished in order to facilitate the delivery of a new Coleg Gwent Campus and these demolition works are nearing completion.

Work on the detailed design of the proposed facility was continuing with the intention to build an exemplar, sustainable and energy efficient leisure and well-being centre.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet noted the progress being made on delivering the new facility.

#### **Consultation**

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of Regeneration and Economic Development**  
**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 53/23**

### **Annual Digital Report 2022/23**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

Technology played a critically important role in effective and efficient service delivery for organisations. Newport City Council relied hugely on its IT systems for effective day to day operation. Effective service delivery during and after the pandemic, with greatly increased home working, demonstrated the robustness of IT systems. However, the organisation needed to improve its use of technology further. The development of the Council's Digital Strategy 2022-27 was an important step for the Council that was detailed further within this report. The strategy had four themes: Digital Transformation, Digital Skills and Inclusion, Data and Collaboration and Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity. These themes were developed to align with the Council's Corporate Plan.

The purpose of this report was to provide an assessment of the digital programme for the Council, especially its progress to date on the newly developed Digital Strategy 2022-27 and identify where action was required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements. This was the fourth Annual Digital Report complementing the Annual Information Risk Report which was now in its eleventh year. As detailed above, it was now the primary means of reporting on the Digital Strategy 2022-27 and was the first report to do this and introduce its themes.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet endorsed the Annual Digital Report 2022-23 and proposed actions.

#### **Consultation**

Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of People, Policy and Transformation**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 54/23**

### **Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Manager 2022/23**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

In April 2023 Cabinet agreed the Customer Feedback Policy, Compliments, Comments and Complaints for the Council. This report provided an overview of how the Council manages compliments, comments and complaints and the Council's performance in 2022/23. Complaints about schools were reported separately as they were subject to a distinct statutory framework, however, complaints about Education services such as administrative processes were included.

This report provided an overview for the year 2022/2023, broken down by service areas and complaint types. The report highlighted key trends and themes drawn from the data for consideration.

The report reflected on lessons learned for the council to improve and actions to deliver these improvements. For 2022/23 there was significant engagement with managers as a result of the newly updated Customer Feedback Policy - Compliments, Comments and Complaints. Employee complaint handling workshops and bespoke service area training sessions was delivered throughout 2022/23.

## **Decision**

Cabinet endorsed the Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2022-2023 and proposed actions.

## **Consultation**

Senior Officers, Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of People, Policy and Transformation**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 55/23**

### **Newport City Council Response to External Pressures Impacting Council Services**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

The report provided an update on the external pressures facing the council with the cost-of-living crisis continuing to be the main external pressure faced by our residents, communities, and services during this month.

Collaboration and partnership working was key to supporting our citizens and therefore this report provided information on how this way of working was enabling a greater access for our residents to support, advice and guidance.

## **Decision**

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

## **Consultation**

Senior Officers, Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Head of People, Policy and Transformation**

**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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## **Leader 56/23**

### **Cabinet Work Programme**

#### **Options Considered/Reasons for Decision**

The Leader presented the Cabinet Work Programme.

## **Decision**

Cabinet agreed the Cabinet Work Programme.

## **Consultation**

Senior Officers, Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of People, Policy and Transformation

**Implemented by: Governance Team Leader**

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**Implementation Timetable: Immediate**

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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR J MUDD

15 November 2023

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