

Agenda



Newport City Council

Date: Tuesday, 23 April 2024
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Council Chambers - Civic Centre
To: **All Members of the City Council**

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Item	Wards Affected
1. <u>Preliminaries</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. To receive any apologies for absence.ii. To receive any declarations of interest.iii. To receive any announcements by the Presiding Member.	
2. <u>Minutes (Pages 5 - 26)</u> To confirm the minutes of the last meeting.	
3. <u>Appointments (Pages 27 - 30)</u> To consider any proposed appointments.	
4. <u>Members Schedule of Remuneration 2024/25 (Pages 31 - 58)</u>	
5. <u>Pay and Reward Statement (Pages 59 - 86)</u>	
6. <u>Strategic Equalities Plan 2024 - 2028 (Pages 87 - 112)</u>	
7. <u>Amendment to Constitution - Scheme of Delegation for Assets (Pages 113 - 120)</u>	
8. <u>Questions to the Leader of the Council</u> To provide an opportunity for Councillors to ask questions to the	

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Date of Issue: Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Leader of the Council in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Process:

No more than 15 minutes will be allocated at the Council meeting for questions to the Leader of the Council.

The question must be addressed through the Mayor or the person presiding at the meeting and not directly to the person being questioned.

9. Questions to the Cabinet Members

To provide an opportunity to pose questions to Cabinet Members in line with Standing Orders.

Process:

No more than 10 minutes will be allocated at the Council meeting for questions to each Cabinet Member.

Members must submit their proposed questions in writing in advance in accordance with Standing Orders. If members are unable to ask their question orally within the allocated time, remaining questions will be answered in writing. The question and response will be appended to the minutes.

The question must be addressed through the Mayor or the person presiding at the meeting and not directly to the person being questioned.

Questions will be posed to Cabinet Members in the following order:

- i. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years
- ii. Cabinet Member for Community and Wellbeing
- iii. Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing
- iv. Cabinet Member for Social Services (for Adult and for Children Services)
- v. Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation
- vi. Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Bio-Diversity
- vii. Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Assets

10. Questions to the Chairs of Committees

To provide an opportunity to pose questions to the Chairs of the Committees in line with Standing Orders.

Process:

No more than 10 minutes will be allocated at the Council meeting for questions to each Chair.

Members must submit their proposed questions in writing in advance in accordance with Standing Orders. If members are unable to ask their question orally within the allocated time, remaining questions will be answered in writing. The question and response will be appended to the minutes.

The question must be addressed through the Mayor or the person

presiding at the meeting and not directly to the person being questioned.

Questions will be posed to Committee Chairs in the following order:

- i. Scrutiny Committees
 - a. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
 - b. Performance Scrutiny Committee – People
 - c. Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate
 - d. Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships
- ii. Planning Committee
- iii. Licensing Committee
- iv. Democratic Services Committee

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Minutes



Council

Date: 29 February 2024

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors S Cocks, E Stowell-Corten, J Harris, A Screen, L James, T Harvey, M Howells, P Bright, J Peterson, A Pimm, D Batrouni, D Jenkins, P Drewett, B Davies, S Adan, M Pimm, C Baker-Westhead, J Reynolds, A Sterry, J Jones, G Horton, J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, D Fouweather, D Harvey, M Kellaway, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, J Mudd, M Spencer, K Thomas, C Townsend, T Watkins, K Whitehead, J Clarke, Y Forsey, J Hughes, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, A Morris, F Hussain and B Perkins

In Attendance:

Apologies: Councillors C Reeks, R Howells, P Hourahine and J Jordan

1. Preliminaries

1.i Apologies

Councillors Jordan, Reeks, Hourahine and R Howells.

1.ii Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared an interest in Item 6: Councillors Corten, Marshall, Horton, and Linton

1.iii Presiding Member's Announcements

The Presiding Member led a minute's silence for former Councillor Sally Mlewa who sadly passed away earlier this month. Sally Mlewa was Councillor for Rogerstone Ward during 2012-2017. The Presiding Member passed on his thoughts to Sally's family and friends.

The Leader also added that Sally was part of the 2012 intake and that it was a pleasure to work alongside her. Sally was incredibly intelligent and diligently dedicated herself to Rogerstone ward. Sally was also a preacher and gave many of her colleagues' comfort and strength with her wise words.

Councillor M Evans agreed that she was a passionate and intelligent woman who had made a difference.

Councillor Morris observed that Sally's achievements were astonishing and that he was proud to be her friend.

Councillor Whitehead recalled the support Sally gave him when he joined the scrutiny committee.

Councillor Reynolds had attended Sally's funeral and was in awe at all of Sally's achievements. Councillor Reynolds reflected on how much she would be missed.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 January 2024 were accepted as a true record.

3. Police Issues

The Presiding Member introduced Superintendent J White of Gwent Police, who provided Council Members with an update on police issues within East, West, and Central Newport including tackling organised crime, thefts in shops, and e-bikes.

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to address Superintendent White.

The Leader offered her thanks to Gwent Police on behalf of the Council regarding the collaboration shown in relation to a number of public protests recently. The Leader was pleased to see the police city centre team working with protestors and passed on her thanks. The Leader asked for clarification on work being done to address knife crime in Gwent, following the recent publication of an article on this topic, and asked how councillors could support residents to access the facts regarding the work being done across the region. Superintendent White confirmed that Inspector Welti had been given the portfolio regarding public engagement and the Police were benchmarking other forces to understand the level of knife crime issues being experienced. Street surgeries were being conducted to support communications. Inspector White considered this visibility within the community combined with transparency and working alongside councillors and stakeholders to get the message out to the community as being the right way to take this forward. As Superintendent of Newport, positive news was something that would be pushed further as well as conveying positive news at Council.

The Leader also mentioned that there were still safety issues relating to Almond Drive that were reported at last Council and asked if this could be picked up outside the meeting with Superintendent White.

The Leader thanked Superintendent White and staff for their support following recent security incidents she had experienced.

Councillor Cockeram thanked Police for their work in Shaftesbury.

Questions to the Police raised by Councillors:

- Councillor Mogford had read online that some children were going to school on e-scooters and there was a near miss relating to this. Councillor Mogford asked if there was a police liaison with schools and if the police were aware of this happening. Superintendent White advised that the police were committed to bridging the gap with funding police officers as school liaison until the end of the academic year. The police would also consider how to maintain the gap longer term. Chief Superintendent Carl Williams was leading this and there was currently engagement with school liaison officers as part of an All-Wales approach including tackling e-scooters and knife crime. Preventative work to make sure young people did not get involved in criminal activity is key and the Superintendent would update Council on this matter. Changes around the sale and management of e-scooters would also be required to tackle the issue, taking a preventative approach.

- Councillor Batrouni commended police for their work concerning bikes. At a recent ward surgery with Maesglas and Gaer, residents had a fear of being hit by bikes. Councillor Batrouni asked if more could be done in relation to public engagement and building intelligence. The Superintendent agreed that engagement was important and took this on board.
- Councillor Forsey referred to an incident that took place in Belle Vue Park on 22 January, where the park was cordoned off for some time. Councillor Forsey wanted to pay thanks to the park ranger, Rob Brown who came across someone who was seriously unwell, whilst locking up the park and stayed with the person for two hours until paramedics arrived. Councillor Forsey asked if there an update on the wellbeing of this person. The Superintendent was aware of this and mentioned that it was in relation to a medical episode and not anything criminal.
- Councillor Fouweather had received a number of concerns from residents regarding males trying car doors and front doors in the early hours of the morning. Councillor Fouweather requested additional patrols to address this. The Superintendent assured Councillor Fouweather that this would be picked up. There was a sharp increase in this type of crime, but this was not unique to Newport, and was also happening in Cwmbran.
- Councillor Whitehead referred to the escalation of bad behaviour in Ogmores Crescent, with a car having been set on fire. Councillor Whitehead asked for reassurance that this was on police's radar. Superintendent White would contact Inspector Welti and added that the police were looking to reinvigorate community partnership task meetings. This was a weekly meeting in the fire station with partners such as the Council, South Wales Fire and Newport City Homes taking a collaborative approach to addressing community issues. If there were spikes in issues, then this would be picked up in the partnership meetings.
- Councillor M Howells mentioned issues at Pontfaen shops as previously reported and whilst this had been addressed through engagement with officers, this may re-occur now that the evenings were getting lighter, and therefore asked how councillors could get ahead of this. Superintendent White mentioned that the council had recently employed Paul Davies, ex Chief Inspector, now working with the community safety team, as the Community Protection Manager was keen to improve collaborative approaches with wardens visiting the respective areas within Newport. Joint patrols would be undertaken including at Pontfaen Shops.

Councillor M Howells was also sorry to hear that the Leader had experienced a security incident and with the recent funding for raised security for MPs asked what could be done to provide further support for councillors working in the community. Regarding security for members, Superintendent White added that this needed to also be extended to community councillors who had the same issues. Superintendent White asked councillors to reach out and contact their local inspector and sergeant if there were any concerns. The Superintendent understood that councillors needed to be visible within the community for residents and if there were any issues, councillors must tell the police and they would receive the tailor-made advice and guidance they required.

- Councillor Marshall mentioned bikes in the Maesglas area causing a nuisance and asked what could be done to address this. Councillor Marshall also mentioned motor vehicles in Maesglas retail park where drivers would perform car rallies, and asked if this could also be addressed. Finally, there were a group of young people that loitered around Lidl's throwing items at people causing intimidation and Councillor Marshall had come under attack himself with people throwing stones at him. Superintendent White confirmed that addressing car meet ups has been very successful in other areas and the same tactics can be applied here. Mobile cameras and surveillance support can be provided to provide assurance for residents.

- Councillor James passed on her thanks to the police on behalf of residents regarding Wheeler Street and residents were also meeting with police this evening. Councillor James also echoed comments about aggression in the community, and referred to an assault she experienced in October which had left her feeling unsafe working in the ward. The Superintendent was sorry to hear about the incident and assured her that measures would be put in place to support councillors.

4. Council Tax and Budget 2024/25

The Presiding Member reminded members of the Council's procedural rules in relation to proposed amendments and advised that there was an alternative budget proposal to amend the Council proposal which was circulated for information.

The Presiding Member invited the Leader of the Council to present the Council Tax report, approved by the Cabinet on 14th February 2024, for the 2024/25 financial year.

Leader's comments on the proposed budget

The Leader said that the Cabinet continued to develop the Council's budget in a very challenging environment. Whilst inflation decreased over the year, the legacy of the covid pandemic, societal issues and the cost-of-living crisis were significant issues affecting the Council services.

Within that context, several key issues had to be addressed in the budget, including:

- The demand on Council services continued to increase, particularly in housing services and children's social care. There continued to be huge pressure on the most vulnerable families, individuals, and communities.
- The Council's spending levels were historically lower than comparable Councils in all service areas. The increased capacity required to deal with increasing demand for services and support must be acknowledged.
- The Council has a vast amount of infrastructure and assets it is responsible for, and this is integral to delivery of services. Additional funding was required so that these could be maintained.
- Inflation increases must be considered. Newport is a Living Wage employer, and the budget continued to ensure the external organisations the Council works with also pays a living wage.

The budget consultation was extensive with nearly 1,400 public responses received for the draft budget. The summary responses from the consultation and the minutes of the meetings with scrutiny, schools' forum and unions were included in the papers. On those budget savings specifically consulted on; the consultation confirmed that almost all of them met with the majority or relatively high levels of support and agreement with the public.

The funding increases and decisions on budget investments recommended would ensure:

- Increased school funding – both by investing more funds over and above cost inflation increases and by not making savings from school budgets. The Council is investing nearly £10m into school budgets for increased costs and increased pupil numbers.
- Continued support for the most vulnerable families and individuals in communities. Investing nearly £12m in homelessness services, social care and additional learning needs budgets for cost increases and higher demand.

- The need for investment in highway infrastructure and assets for service delivery. Direct investments in these areas and the capital financing budgets contributed towards this.

The budget proposed £4.5m of new savings of which nearly £4m were efficiency savings with no service impacts. The consultation confirmed that residents understood and agreed with the vast majority of those savings.

Councils across the UK are finding it difficult to deliver more services with the funding available to them. Savings which do not have significant impact on the services provided are becoming harder and harder to find.

The overall budget therefore struck a balance between increased funding for some areas with new savings and ensured that residents continued to pay one of the lowest rates of council tax across Wales and the UK. It represented a relatively small increase of £1.75 to £2.26 per week for those houses in Newport's most common bandings and the council tax reduction scheme continued to support those households who were eligible.

Today, Newport has the third lowest rate of Council Tax in Wales and has maintained that position for many, many years. Council Tax was not higher, in relative terms, to other Councils and the Council had recommended and implemented £70m of savings over the last decade. Demand for much needed services which help the most vulnerable individuals and families have increased significantly over the last decade and in particular over the last three or four years, which funding levels have not kept pace with.

The Council has met the challenge of that increasing demand and found significant savings over that time. In the context of continuing increases in demand for services here in Newport, and savings found over the last decade, the increase in Council Tax of 8.5% is needed.

Producing a balanced budget was a difficult process and the Leader thanked Cabinet colleagues and the officers who worked tirelessly to ensure that Cabinet was able to propose the balanced budget and Council Tax recommendation being presented today. The Leader and Cabinet colleagues believed that this was a fair, sustainable, and responsible budget, prioritising the most vulnerable residents and therefore asked the Council to support the report.

The Leader reserved the right to speak after the debate.

Councillor D Davies seconded the proposal and also reserved the right to speak after the debate.

The Presiding Member announced that an alternative budget had been submitted and declared an interest in relation to the proposed alternative budget. The Presiding Member therefore announced that he would vacate the chair and invited Cllr. Screen, as Deputy Presiding Member, to take the chair for the next part of the meeting.

Cllr. Fouweather raised a point of order with regard to the appointment of the Deputy Presiding Member and in particular stated that Cllr. Screen had never been appointed to that role. The meeting was adjourned at 5.54pm in order to enable officers to investigate the matter.

The meeting was reconvened at 6.19pm. The Monitoring Officer advised that members would need to elect a chair to replace Cllr. Cockeram for the next item of business.

Cllr. Evans proposed that Cllr. Screen should chair the meeting in Cllr. Cockeram's absence. This proposal was seconded by the Leader. A vote was conducted, and it was agreed

unanimously by Council that Councillor Allan Screen should take the chair during Cllr. Cockeram's absence.

Councillor Screen then took the chair of the meeting.

The Deputy Presiding Member invited Councillor M Howells to speak on the alternative proposed budget.

Councillor Morris seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak after the debate.

Councillor Lacey suggested that Councillor Sterry declared an interest as he lived in Thompson Avenue, which was included within the alternative budget.

Councillor Sterry therefore declared an interest as a resident of Thompson Avenue.

The Lliswerry Independents' Proposal

Councillor M Howells presented the Lliswerry Independents' alternative budget proposal to Council for debate and agreement. He said that the principle of the budget proposal is to bring the council tax increase closer to inflation because residents are saying that they are really struggling with rising costs and the cost-of-living crisis. The alternative budget proposes to increase council tax by 4.63% instead of the 8.5% proposed by Cabinet. The amendments to the budget aren't significant and it is hoped that colleagues have had a chance to consider them in detail prior to the meeting today.

Councillor Howells went on to state that the motion made the following proposals:

- To remove the role of the presiding member and revert to the Mayor chairing the council meetings, saving £9k.
- Reduce the publication of Newport Matters from 2 monthly to 4 monthly. This will not only save costs of £21k it will help to reduce the Council's carbon footprint by reducing the amount of paper we use. It might be possible to prepare some digital content to replace the reduced posted service.
- To remove the Leader's car and reduce the driver budget accordingly. The Leader should be able to travel to engagements by themselves and doesn't require a car and chauffeur. This would save £17.5k. The Mayor should retain their car and driver as asking them to travel themselves and robe and de-robe by themselves would be more challenging.
- To remove the proposed new Newport Live contract manager with a saving of £65k. At Scrutiny, no evidence was forthcoming that the contract is not working well or that the post is needed for betterment and therefore is considered too much of a luxury whilst cutting other posts are being cut from budgets elsewhere.
- To delay the implementation of the closure of the Civic centre for 2 days per week. This will require additional investment of £91k. There is an ongoing asset management review which is looking at all the council's assets and what best ways we can streamline them. The saving proposed here is being considered prematurely and without undertaking a thorough audit of all Council assets and the best use of them. There is no data on how many people work at the Civic Centre for 5 days each week and cannot work from home. Until we properly understand the impact of this decision, more work should be done in line with the ongoing asset management review.
- To re-instate the maintenance of the watercourse at Thompson Avenue, spending £30k. The decision to remove this work as part of budget savings last year will have a devastating impact on flood risk to hundreds of residents and should be reversed.
- Councillor Howells went on to say that the bulk of the saving in the proposed alternative budget is because of a bold proposal to use some reserves to help with the challenges currently being faced in Children's Services for the next two years. It is understood that reserves are for a rainy day and shouldn't be used long-term to prop up continued revenue costs. However, as part of this proposal, officers would be tasked

with producing a sustainable strategy that moves away from using out of area placements in children's social care within the next two years. This is realistic and we want better for our looked after children. It also is in line with the Welsh Government's aspirations to remove profit from the care of looked after children by 2027.

Whilst the use of reserves isn't always ideal, there is currently a forecasted underspend in 23/24 of circa £2.3 million which is likely to replenish the reserves in the first year in any event, so the use of reserves is small and time limited and it is the right time and circumstances to do it.

It is proposed to keep the majority of the investments proposed by the Cabinet, with the exception of investing £700k in capital maintenance as opposed to £1.2m. Up until the final Welsh Government settlement there was a proposal for £500k in this area, and it is proposed to increase that by £200k overall to £700k.

Comments of Councillors on the proposed amendments:

- Councillor Mogford did not support the 8.5% increase in council tax and therefore supported the alternative budget, as he felt that the Council had to find ways to be creative in saving money and reducing the impact on residents. Councillor Mogford asked if the Leader needed to declare an interest in using a Civic car. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this was not the case as the car was owned by the Council and used for Civic duties.
- Councillor Whitehead congratulated Councillor M Howells on his hard work in providing an alternative budget and felt that there were similarities to the original proposed budget. Councillor Whitehead considered that residents' opinions should be taken on board and took priority and therefore supported the alternative budget.
- Councillor Marshall opposed the alternative budget and highlighted the risks to the proposals in relation to earmarked reserves for Children's Services and to the Council's capital programme. Councillor Marshall also mentioned the statutory responsibility to provide emergency placement for young people when required and that we must not forget this as a corporate parent. The Council tax reduction would also affect the support for social services provision, which was in high demand.
- Councillor Hughes opposed the alternative budget which he felt exposed vulnerable young people in care. This was too important a budget to get wrong and therefore did not support the alternative budget.
- Councillor D Davies noted with concern the use of £4.28M in reserves to bring out of county placements back. Social Services worked hard to ensure children stayed in the city, which did reduce costs. In addition, a school had been created for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Councillor Davies therefore did not support the amendment.
- Councillor D Harvey did not agree with the use of reserves as outlined in the alternative budget and thought that report indicated that the Section 151 Officer did not support the budget. Councillor M Howells mentioned that the Section 151 Officer had met with Llisbury Independent members, and he thought the Section 151 Officer was satisfied that the proposed alternative budget was balanced. Councillor D Harvey read out the alternative budget – *The proposal to utilise earmarked reserves to fund the £2.264m Children's Services out of area placements pressure for a two-year period will result in the Capital Expenditure Reserve reducing by £4.528m. Utilising reserves in this way reduces the scope to support emerging capital expenditure pressures, should they emerge over the medium term. Should such pressures be unavoidable, this would potentially create an unfunded pressure upon the Council's capital programme. Whilst it has been suggested that future revenue underspends could be used to replenish*

reserves, this is not guaranteed and cannot be relied upon. Councillor D Harvey therefore concluded that she did not support the alternative budget.

- Councillor Lacey sought clarification regarding funding for infrastructure and felt that the proposed alternative budget put pressures on the capital programme. Councillor Lacey did not support the alternative budget.
- Councillor Clarke disagreed with the alternative budget, referring to the use of reserves, and that the same pressure could still exist in two years. Councillor Clarke also mentioned a recent survey that showed residents supported receiving Newport Matters. Councillor Clarke also suggested that by removing the Civic drivers there was a potential to create a threat to the security of the Leader, in light of discussions that took place under Police Issues.
- Councillor Cocks referred to the effect the alternative budget would have in relation to the cost of living and therefore did not support the report.
- Councillor Sterry mentioned that the Council had £144M in reserves and that the proposed alternative budget was only considering using £4.5M of those. Councillor D Harvey asked for a point of order as reserves were savings for a disaster. Councillor Sterry added that the Council was in a state of disaster and referred to feedback, where 70% of residents said the council tax increase was too high. In summary Councillor Sterry recommended their proposed council tax increase was more in line with inflation and asked councillors vote for the alternative budget.
- Councillor Corten did not support the alternative budget.
- Councillor Batrouni referred to out of area placements and transformation, which was costly and time consuming and therefore did not support the alternative budget.
- Councillor D Davies asked for a recorded vote on the alternative budget. Councillor Mudd, D Davies, D Harvey, Lacey, and Clarke supported this.
- Councillor Forsey listed a number of UK councils that had submitted section 144 notices, declaring themselves bankrupt. Councillor Forsey felt that the alternative proposed budget was focused on the short term and risky as the reduction in reserves increased the risk of capital funding being affected. Councillor Forsey therefore did not support the report.
- Councillor Mudd spoke to the amendment and referred to a recent Newsnight programme which was described the challenges facing public service provision, as ‘the bedrock of society’. There was a significant risk of bankruptcy for councils including in Wales if prudence was not exercised. The way that reserves were managed and calculated was explained in the appendices and the Leader urged Llisbury ward members to look at this. The Leader welcomed that the Llisbury Independents had provided an alternative budget, but she could not support it. The Leader added that the Council needed to deliver on much needed capital support going forward including a new primary school in the Bettws area.
- Councillor Morris considered that Councillors had a choice in raising the tax by 8.5% or by 4.6%. Councillor Morris felt that the alternative proposed budget was not putting vulnerable people in danger.

Councillor M Howells concluded by saying that it was great to hear the debate around this and that colleagues gave the budget full attention considering the impact of decisions on the citizens of Newport. This should not be a rubber stamp exercise of a proposal from officers but a full debate on the impacts the decisions would have.

Councillor M Howells said that he heard the comments around utilising earmarked reserves and the risks that presented and referred colleagues to the comments from the Section 151 Officer in the alternative budget proposal. He referred to the officer's comments regarding utilising reserves in this way, which reduced the scope to support emerging capital expenditure pressures, should they emerge over the medium term. He said that his emphasis was on "should they emerge". Councillor M Howells also considered that the Section 151 Officer had also referred to future revenue underspends that could be used to replenish reserves, as this was not guaranteed and could not be relied upon. He noted however from the last Council meeting that there was £41million of underspend in the last five years. Therefore, it was prudent and sensible to use a small number of reserves such as this. The minimum was likely to be £2.5M and a maximum of £4.7M. There was nearly £140M of reserves built up by good robust financial management.

Councillor M Howells said that the Section 151 officer dealt with risks in the original cabinet proposal. A small amount of risk was appropriate, and we must be bold.

Councillor M Howells said that using a small amount of reserves would help our residents out whilst a proper plan was put together to deal with the pressures on children's social care. He considered it a sensible policy to use a small number of reserves (less than 4%) in a time limited way to ease the financial burden on residents who were feeling the pinch right now.

Councillor M Howells also drew attention to the Section 151 Officer's comments which stated that by reducing the proposed rate of council tax increase to 4.63%, the Council was unlikely to improve its position, relative to other councils, in terms of the rate being one of the lowest in Wales. There was an element of unhappiness that Newport had one of the lowest council tax rates in Wales and a desire to put up council tax above inflation to catchup with other councils.

Councillor M Howells felt that the Council should be proud to have one of the lowest council tax rates in Wales. It was the reason people were moving to Newport in their droves and why Newport is the fastest expanding city in Wales. Increasing the council tax risked stifling growth considering the burden that higher rents and mortgages had recently on the housing market.

Councillor M Howells felt that the council tax increase was set to 8.5% and a budget was then set to match it, rather than looking at what was needed and then setting a budget increase that naturally flowed from that. This was backed up by the fact that the budget was prepared with a proposal of 8.5% which cabinet was satisfied balanced the difference between investment and spending. Further funding had come from Welsh Government which could be used to reduce that increase and the resulting burden on residents. But instead, further investment was made with no decrease of council tax for residents. Councillor M Howells fully supported investment in services but not at a cost burden to residents.

Budgets were hard to balance but, on this occasion, Cabinet had failed to consider what officers proposed to them.

Councillor M Howells felt this was a more realistic rate increase and proper scrutiny of spending residents' money was required.

Councillor M Howells also requested a recorded vote on this issue.

The Monitoring Officer gave a role call for a recorded vote:

	Councillor Name	Apologies	For	Against	Abstain
1	Adan, Saeed			X	
2	Al-Nuaimi, Miqdad			X	
3	Baker-Westhead, Claire			X	
4	Batrouni, Dimitri			X	
5	Bright, Paul			X	
6	Clarke, James			X	
7	Cleverly, Janet				X
8	Cockeram, Paul	Temporarily absent			
9	Cocks, Stephen			X	
10	Davies, Bev			X	
11	Davies, Deb			X	
12	Drewett, Pat			X	
13	Evans, Matthew		X		
14	Forsey, Yvonne			X	
15	Fouweather, David		X		
16	Harris, John			X	
17	Harvey, Debbie			X	
18	Harvey, Tim			X	
19	Horton, Gavin			X	
20	Hourahine, Phil	X			
21	Howells, Mark		X		
22	Howells, Rhian	X			
23	Hughes, Jason			X	
24	Hussain, Farzina			X	
25	James, Lauren				X
26	Jenkins, Debbie			X	
27	Jones, John		X		
28	Jordan, Jason	X			
29	Kellaway, Martin		X		
30	Lacey, Laura			X	
31	Linton, Malcolm			X	
32	Marshall, Stephen			X	
33	Mayer, David			X	
34	Mogford, Ray		X		
35	Morris, Allan		X		
36	Mudd, Jane			X	
37	Perkins, Bev			X	
38	Peterson, James	X			
39	Pimm, Alex			X	
40	Pimm, Matthew			X	
41	Reeks, Chris	X			
42	Reynolds, John			X	
43	Routley, William		X		
44	Screen, Allan			X	
45	Spencer, Mark			X	
46	Sterry, Andrew		X		
47	Stowell-Corten, Emma			X	
48	Thomas, Kate			X	
49	Townsend, Carmel		X		
50	Watkins, Trevor			X	
51	Whitehead, Kevin		X		

	Total	6	11	32	2

Following the roll call vote the amendment was defeated.

Cllr. Cockeram returned to the chair and invited comments on the substantive motion.

Comments of councillors on the substantive motion:

- Councillor Drewett felt that this was a prudent budget and therefore supported the proposal for housing and community, transformation, environment, and public protection. Councillor Drewett felt that the budget was made with due diligence considering the cuts the council was facing.
- Councillor Spencer supported the substantive motion as families were struggling to pay bills and once the 8.5% was explained to residents they understood the reason for the increase.
- Councillor Evans made comparisons to spending by the Council in the past and present and also referred to the council tax increase. Councillor Evans felt that the increase was staggering and therefore did not support the budget.
- Councillor Clarke commended Councillor M Howells on the alternative budget and made reference to no alternative being provided by the main opposition party.
- Councillor Routley referred to the cost of living and also felt that he could not support the budget.
- Councillor Batrouni referred to capital investment that would determine the success of the city. There is a growing population in Newport and now is not the time to cut capital expenditure. Councillor Batrouni therefore supported the budget.
- Councillor Cocks felt that there was a UK wide crisis and therefore supported the budget.
- Councillor Corten mentioned that the proposed budget was doing the best for our city and supported the budget.
- Councillor Hughes referred to struggling costs and energy bills faced by residents and felt that this budget was supporting people of Newport through education.
- Councillor Fouweather referred to the Council Tax increase and added that he would hold to account the Leader about the poor state of the roads in Newport that needed repair and therefore did not support the budget.
- Councillor Mogford referred to services being provided and felt that the council could do better, such as repairing potholes.
- Councillor Lacey supported the budget, and felt it was right to prioritise schools, social care and the most vulnerable. Councillor Lacey also mentioned the infrastructure maintenance backlog of work of £90.4M in relation to road infrastructure and welcomed the £500K investment within her service area, and therefore supported the budget.
- Councillor D Davies noted that £80M savings were made over last 12 years. Citizens had a right to a good quality of life and the right to access quality jobs, outstanding education and to be able to live safely within their homes. This was why Cabinet strived to set a balanced budget, but this meant increasing the council tax. Across Wales, the cumulative average increase in council tax amounted to 8.25%. This did not account for

the different starting points where the majority of residents across Wales already paid a higher council tax and Newport residents who lived in an equivalent banded property. What the residents elsewhere received was more funding available for schools, social services, and street cleansing, where grant funding was minimal. The proposed increase would in the long-term increase revenue and funding to benefit residents of Newport. This equated to £1.50 per week. With this increase and prudent management of spending, the Council was able to spend additional £10M for schools. Therefore, Councillor Davies welcomed the proposes in the budget, which included a new primary school in Bettws.

The Leader thanked colleagues for their contributions to the debate and gave her closing comments. The Prudential Code required the Council to ensure the financial decisions were affordable, prudent, and sustainable and the Leader felt that the budget before Council today was exactly that. The Leader thanked Council colleagues for their comments and thanked senior officers for their hard work and effort to provide a budget that continued to support and deliver services across the city. The Leader also thanked partners and stakeholders for responding to the consultation, including Scrutiny Committee colleagues, headteachers, the schools' forum, trade unions and members of the public for engaging in the consultation. In addition, the Leader thanked officers for supporting ward meetings, which enabled residents to come out and engage in discussion on the budget proposals. The Leader reflected on the comments made by colleagues and also reflected on balanced and fair comments made by members of the public, referring to comments from one member of the public in relation to council tax who stated they were fine with the increase, but the money needed to go on services they actually used, such as improving roads. The proposals before colleagues would deliver on this, and this budget struck the all-important balance. The Leader added that Council would protect and deliver for the people of Newport.

The Presiding Member asked for councillors to place their votes.

There was a majority vote supporting the council budget, with 31 for, 8 against and 2 abstentions.

The Council therefore resolved:

That Council -

Revenue budget and Council Tax 2024/25 (section 2 - 6)

- 1 To note the Cabinet's budget proposals for the financial year 2024/25;
- 2 To adopt those budget proposals as the Council's budget for 2024/25;
- 3 To note the Head of Finance's recommendations that minimum General Fund balances can be maintained, in the short term, at a level of at least £6.5million, the confirmation of the robustness of the overall budget underlying the proposals, subject to the key issues highlighted in section 5 of the report.

Medium term financial plan (MTFP) (section 3)

- 4 To note the MTFP and the potentially significant financial challenges over the medium term in the context of funding challenges and increasing demand within service areas.
- 5 To agree to the implementation of the three-year financial plan as set out in the report;
- 6 To note and approve the Council's reserves strategy and transformation fund protocol as set out in Appendix 6 of the report and to approve the planned use of earmarked reserves, as set out in Appendix 5a of the report, including the proposed use of the Transformation Fund.

5. **Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25**

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to present the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25.

The Leader stated that this is an annual report focusing on the Council's capital expenditure plans, the financial impact of those in terms of borrowing, and investment strategy for the year.

The Council was asked to approve both strategies for the year, including the prudential indicators and limits within them.

It was noted that both the Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee considered the report in their most recent meetings. Governance and Audit Committee endorsed the proposed strategies, with no concerns raised.

It was also noted that this version of the strategy was updated to reflect the announcements made in Cabinet on 14 February, in relation to additional annual sums investment and an increase in borrowing capacity.

In terms of the report itself, there were a number of key points to draw Council's attention to the 5-year capital programme was managed on a rolling basis, meaning that a new year (2028/29) was added to the programme.

The programme itself continued to reflect the challenging financial circumstances and, as such, continued to comprise ongoing and previously approved schemes, as well as annual sums (for activities such as asset maintenance and highway maintenance).

Whilst there were no new schemes being included, the programme, especially in 2024/25, was still significant and contained a number of the Cabinet's highest priority schemes such as new school projects, the Transporter Bridge project and new leisure and wellbeing provision.

Beyond the £7m new borrowing headroom recently agreed by Cabinet, there was no new borrowing headroom to be approved at this point. The programme included indicative new borrowing from 2027/28 onwards, which, if still affordable nearer the time, would be available to pursue new schemes, such as the next wave of school development projects under the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

Until the point at which that new borrowing could be formally approved, it meant that capital headroom (which was used to pursue new schemes or address cost increases on existing schemes) was limited to the new borrowing headroom, those amounts already held in specific earmarked reserves and uncommitted capital receipts. As a result, careful prioritisation would be required when making new commitments from the headroom and every opportunity would need to be taken to boost it via one-off sources, to continue to respond to emerging pressures as and when they arise.

Whilst there was no new large-scale borrowing included in the next few years of the programme, previously and recently approved borrowing would be incurred over that timeframe and would increase the overall Capital Financing Requirement and the Council's level of debt.

The borrowing limits proposed in the report took this into account and the revenue consequence of additional borrowing (e.g. interest payable on loans) is already budgeted for, following the budget investment made in 2021/22 and planned for 2024/25. The programme

proposed was affordable, prudent, and sustainable, based on current information and assumptions.

In terms of Treasury Management, the report detailed the Council's approach to borrowing and investing.

It confirmed that the Council would continue to pursue an internal borrowing strategy, by using available cash resources to defer external borrowing for as long as possible and only undertake borrowing in advance of need where there was a clear financial rationale for doing so.

It was important to highlight the large refinancing requirement the Council had during 2024/25, which saw a handful of large loans repaid and new loans taken out in their place. The strategies reflected a prudent assumption of the capital financing cost that this replacement borrowing resulted in.

For investing, the Council continued to prioritise security, liquidity, and yield, in that order and would strike an appropriate balance between risk and return.

A minimum investment balance of £10m was still required, which was currently being met via three covered bond investments and continued to be the case for the next few years.

The Head of Finance's commentary within the covering report directly addressed the question of affordability, prudence and sustainability and confirmed that the proposed strategy and programme met all of those criteria.

Councillor Davies seconded the report.

The majority of councillors supported the report, with two abstentions.

Resolved:

That Council -

- Approved the Capital Strategy (Appendix 2 of the report), which incorporated the approved capital programme, and the borrowing requirements/limits needed to deliver the approved programme.
- Approved the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators, the Investment Strategy, and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2024/25. (Appendix 3 of the report)
- As part of the above:
 - Noted the increasing debt, and corresponding revenue cost of this, in delivering the rolling Capital Programme, and the implications of this over both the short and medium-long term with regard to affordability, prudence and sustainability.
 - Noted the Head of Finance comments that borrowing needs to be limited to the extent that it stabilised the Capital Financing Requirement over the long term and did not add future pressure to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, and the recommended prudential indicators on borrowing limits to achieve this.
 - Noted the feedback provided by the Governance and Audit Committee on 25 January 2024 (paragraph 8).

6. National Non-Domestic Rates - Discretionary Relief: High Street Relief Scheme 2024/25

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to present the final report which dealt with the legislative requirement for Council to formerly adopt the Welsh Government's Retail, Leisure, and Hospitality Rate relief scheme for 2024-25.

This scheme was fully funded by Welsh Government and provided a 40% reduction in business rates due by businesses that met the criteria set by Welsh Government. This scheme was set out in Part A of the report.

The report also included a proposal to extend the Newport City Centre Local Rate Relief Scheme for one year.

Initially, the scheme was introduced in April 2022 and was intended to conclude on 31 March 2024.

This is a local scheme which was fully funded by the Council and provided additional financial support in the form of a 25% rate reduction for City Centre businesses that operated in the retail, Leisure, and hospitality sectors.

The Newport City Centre Local Rate Relief Scheme that Council was considering extending was unique to the City Centre.

This innovative scheme was designed to assist existing businesses to remain viable and also incentivised new businesses to open in empty city centre retail units.

To date, the scheme has helped more than 100 businesses, and provided additional financial assistance to city centre businesses.

Due to the fact that there was less expenditure to date than anticipated, it is possible to fund the proposed extension to the scheme from unspent funds originally set aside for this purpose.

Councillor Davies seconded the report.

Comments of Councillors:

- Councillor Fouweather said that this was good news, but the results would be reflected in how many businesses would remain and thrive as well as how many new businesses this would attract to the city centre.
- Councillor Thomas welcomed the report and considered that all measures within the report supported new and existing businesses.
- Councillor Horton felt that this support for businesses was helpful. He therefore supported the report and felt that individuals should actively support Newport by spending within the city.
- Councillor Bright referred to the Corn Exchange, a brand-new venture opening this weekend with a capacity for 500 people to come into the city centre and therefore welcomed the report.

The report was unanimously supported.

It was therefore Resolved:

That the Council –

- a) Adopts the Welsh Government's Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief Scheme 2024-25 as set out in this report and in Appendix 1 thereto.
- b) Extends the Newport City Centre Local Rate Relief Scheme so that the scheme, as described in the report and in Appendix 2 thereof, operated during the 2024-25 financial year; AND
- c) Delegates to the Head of Finance the authority to take such decisions as may become necessary to enable the operation of both schemes, including but not limited to:
 - i. the setting-up and operation of an appropriate application procedure.
 - ii. the power to determine whether or not an individual application was within the scope of the scheme; AND
 - iii. the power to revoke a grant of relief in circumstances where an applicant no longer qualified for such relief according to the scheme.

7. Questions to the Leader of the Council

Before Questions, the Leader gave the following announcements.

Leader's Announcements

Royal Visit

The Mayor and the Leader welcomed Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Princess Anne on a recent visit to the Newport Ship and the transporter bridge earlier in the month.

Both are key parts in the story of Newport. They show the city's heritage as a trading port and an industrial city. They evoke memories of the past and amazing work is taking place so that they can be enjoyed and celebrated by generations to come.

At the Newport Ship centre, Her Royal Highness was given a tour of the works, from the initial excavation through to the current day, as well as future plans. She also became the first person to sign the Centre's brand-new visitor book.

Students and professors from Cardiff University were on hand to talk about some of the artefacts that were found during the excavations, and how these have been conserved.

Her Royal Highness was also able to step back in time to experience what life was like on the ship, thanks to a virtual reality headset which the project team has developed in conjunction with researchers at Swansea University.

The Leader paid tribute to former councillor Charles Ferris and thanked him for his work and continued work to support heritage assets in Newport.

Her Royal Highness has a keen interest in engineering, so naturally a visit to the city's engineering icon, the Newport Transporter Bridge, was necessary.

It was amazing to be able to include staff, volunteers, The Friends, and local students in the visit who were all able to share their involvement in our cultural gems. Her Majesty was extremely interested in their work.

Additionally, in other cultural news, the Leader had welcomed Benji Webbe as a guest to the Civic Centre and showed him the murals as part of a tour of the Civic Centre. Benji Webbe is the Leader of Skindred who recently received Best Alternative Must Act at the MOBO

Awards. The Leader congratulated Benji and his band members on their success and MOBO Award.

Electric cleansing vehicle

The Leader made reference to the electric street washer which is active in the city centre - harnessing the power of renewable energy to help clean the streets of Newport.

The Addex Electra 2.0 Hydro Street Washer is the latest addition to our electric vehicle fleet. The Council is currently trialing its use to see what impact it has on cleaning schedules. This was important as there was a lot of queries about street cleansing. The Street Washer runs on 100% electric power and is estimated to save around 22,500 kgs of CO2 annually when compared to a diesel-powered equivalent.

As well as running on clean energy, the vehicle does not use chemicals so reducing impact on paving, while still delivering the same results as a manual jet wash.

Using the street washer in key areas will also free up cleansing operatives to help cover more of the city.

Equipment like this has the potential to tackle an issue we know is important to residents, in a way that is better for the environment and streets and helps tackle the climate and ecological emergency.

Cosy Cinema

Newport is set to get a new leisure experience with the development of Cosy Cinema in one of the empty retail units within Chartist Tower. The Leader recently went along to see the progress on the project which is due to open later this year.

Fifteen pods are being created which can accommodate up to six people for daytime film viewings and overnight stays can also be booked.

The exciting venture has already been a big hit at two other two sites, but Newport's will be the largest venue so far and the only one that is indoors. The business, started by former Newport RFC player John Colderley and his wife Sian, won the backing of two of the panel on BBC's Dragons' Den, including former footballer Gary Neville.

The Leader said that she is pleased that the Council is able to support this project, with funding also coming from the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Development Bank of Wales.

This is an exciting development for the city centre, something different and new. It will be great for Newport residents but will also attract more visitors from further afield which will inevitably benefit other local businesses.

City and town centres are changing, and Newport is leading the way. The city centre is moving to a more vibrant mix of independent traders, shops, fantastic music and hospitality venues and residential use.

Lunar New Year

The Leader was delighted to work with the Newport Chinese Community Centre and Newport Live to bring a spectacular Lunar New Year Celebration to the city centre earlier this month for the first time.

Titled 'The Dragons Are Coming!', the event featured performances, workshops and activities all celebrating the spirit of the Lunar New Year. The city centre streets were brought alive with energy and excitement thanks to mesmerising lion dancers. Mr Mayor was delighted with the performance which is available to watch on YouTube.

It was amazing to see families and communities come together, and we hope to deliver more positive events like this in the future.

The Leader had visited the cultural hub in Pill, which was derelict two years ago but commitment from volunteers to provide this facility was outstanding and the Leader was pleased to see that it has been transformed. The Leader Congratulated everyone involved and said that she looked forward to seeing it open soon.

In addition, the Welsh Final for the Rotary Youth Speaks was held on 15 February and the standard was incredibly high in this debating competition. St Joseph's intermediate team were runners up and Jo Wakeman, Year 9 won the best opposer. In the senior year competition, Pheobe Lonagan, Year 13 of Llanwern High, won the best proposed. This was a Wales wide competition, and students of Newport were doing incredibly well. The Leader passed on her congratulations and thanked the teachers who enabling this to happen.

Tredegar Park

Plans to improve Tredegar Park have taken a major step forward with a proposal to buy the freehold of the park land from its owner.

Currently, the Council leases the land for the purposes of providing playing fields and a recreation area for the city. However, the lease comes with a number of restrictive conditions attached. Purchasing the freehold will give the council greater autonomy in developing the park in line with the wishes of Newport residents.

Last summer, extensive consultation with residents was carried out to find out what improvements they would like us to make to the leisure offer in the park.

Response to the survey was good, with just under 850 responses received. They reflected a strong community interest in enhancing the park's recreational offer. Further information regarding this is on the Newport City Council website. This was a great opportunity, and the purchase of this land protected the site in perpetuity for the citizens of Newport.

Capital funding for the project will come from Newport's allocation of the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund, under the 'communities and place' priority. The Council is looking at how it can deliver the priorities identified in the consultation as part of the overall package of investment into the park, as well as the revenue costs associated with operating and maintaining these elements over the long term.

Tree planting

The Leader made reference to the challenge that we have faced due to ash dieback disease which is predicted to infect almost 80 per cent of ash trees in the UK.

Following a survey, trees along 4km of Bulmore Road had to be removed, along with other trees that would be weakened as a result of the work. All the dangerous trees have now been removed and we thank residents for their patience while this work was carried out.

The Leader said that she is pleased to be working with veteran's charity Green Task Force Cymru to carry out replanting along the road. While the road does look a bit bare, some trees – including hazel and hawthorn – will regrow from the coppice stumps that were left and should look very different in the spring and summer.

Questions to the Leader

Councillor M Evans:

The Welsh Transport Minister Lee Waters said in a written statement on 20 February that there appeared to be some inconsistencies in the way highway authorities have applied the guidance to make exceptions and change the speed limit on some roads from the default

20mph back to 30mph. Yet the Council said that it consistently applied WG Guidance, they cannot both be right. Lee Waters said that residents should contact their council to tell them if they think roads should return to 30mph. Now that this revised guidance was received, would the Leader taking into account the views of residents to get main roads back to 30mph, and if so, how would this be done.

Response:

The policy referred to was widely debated across the UK and caught the attention of the media and continued to be debated.

The Minister gathered evidence to support his policy and better understood the impact of this. Evidence showed that drivers were driving more slowly, and this would lead to a reduction in road traffic collisions and fatalities. In terms of the impact of the policy itself, there was a growing evidence base which was starting to demonstrate the impact of this.

Regarding the application of the implementation of this, the Leader suggested that Councillor Evans might recall when he asked this previously at Council that although it was mis-reported in the press, the video of the recording of the meeting and the minutes showed that the Leader clearly stated that it said it would be reviewed as a city council and in line with the growing evidence base and this would also be the evidence base collected at local level. The Leader received quite a few queries from members of the public, some expressing concerns, some not happy but others welcomed the policy. Guidance would be considered by Welsh Government, and it was helpful to have this further guidance.

The Council met regularly with the Minister and Deputy Minister and would be happy to listen to what they said about guidance. It was important also to listen to residents. We gave a commitment to continue to review the implementation of this and it would be reviewed going forward. What was particularly good about this was the improvement of the Council website which would make it easier to engage with residents.

Councillor Morris:

Referred to the state of the city centre and how it affected the residents of Newport. Councillor Morris felt that it was thought of as an embarrassment. With this in mind, could an all-member seminar be arranged that councillors on what was being done in the future and residents could benefit from feedback.

Response:

The city centre has its challenges, but all members voted on the National Non-Domestic Discretionary Rates Relief Scheme to help businesses in Newport. This is a city centre in transition and not in decline. As a local authority, we have a number of regulatory and statutory powers to drive change, but we are limited by financial constraints. The property within the city centre, is not within public domain but privately owned. There are measures in place to address this and incentivise change through grant schemes and loans, and we also have enforcement measures in place.

We have to consider how we can all be brand ambassadors for the city centre and amplify the opportunities for the city and its businesses.

Considerable transitional steps have been made with significant housing increases within the city centre, a mix of tenures comprising privately owned, rented and social housing properties.

We have supported businesses such as Newport Market and the iconic Mercure Hotel. Regeneration does not happen overnight, it takes time, hard work, and effort.

The High Street and market regeneration has been a catalyst for investment in that area and Saturday would see the opening of the Corn Exchange as a community owned venue for the benefit of Newport.

The Leader agreed with Councillor Morris that a strategy was needed. There was a plan for the city centre and the Council had delivered on most of the objectives that were set out in that plan.

The Leader said that she was pleased to report to colleagues that consultation had been secured for a place making plan for the city centre. Consultation will take place for councillors and residents. The development stage of the place making plan is about to launch and will be taking this forward very shortly. Everyone would have an opportunity to respond.

Supplementary:

A follow up question would be put in writing.

Councillor Drewett:

In May 2022 Labour was elected by the citizens of Newport to deliver a manifesto based on community wealth building and social value. Could the Leader provide an update on implementation and share supporting evidence?

Response:

We are committed to community wealth building and this strategic commitment can be found embedded in the Corporate Plan. We are a living wage employer and companies we work with are required to pay the living wage as well. This is done through our procurement, and we are able to deliver social value to citizens. In a recent meeting, Cabinet considered the Newport Themes and Outcomes report which presented that in the first six months, £1M was secured which benefitted the citizens in Newport. A large proportion of this was made up by employees hired or retained to work on contracts. As an anchor institution, we should all value what is happening for residents.

8. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

Question 1: Question to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Assets

Councillor Fouweather:

Can the cabinet member report on the progress that she has made with regard to reviewing the 20mph speed limit on all arterial routes into the city?

Response from Councillor Lacey:

As you will be aware from previous correspondence, Newport City Council has consistently applied Welsh Government guidance when considering where the “place criteria” would dictate the defaulting of the speed limits to 20mph, and exceptions where the 30mph speed limit should remain.

The Deputy Minister for Climate Change has advised local highway authorities that Welsh Government is reviewing how the “place criteria” has been used across the whole of Wales, with a view to whether further guidance is required by local highway authorities in the excepting of certain roads.

During November 2023, a series of meetings were held, led by the WLGA to gather feedback on the application of the exceptions guidance by highway authorities’ officers. The aim was to gain a better understanding of how the exceptions guidance had been applied, whether the officers had encountered any difficulties when applying it and how that feedback could help shape any revisions to the exception’s guidance going forward.

Therefore, until the review is completed and revised guidance is received on the use of the “place criteria” in the setting of excepted speed limits in Wales, there are no immediate plans to revisit the original assessment of any roads within the city.

I provide a link to a recent Welsh Government statement which includes preliminary speed data since the 20mph roll out and information on Welsh Governments ongoing review into the exceptions process, which may be of interest.

The link provided for inclusion in the minutes can be found here:

[Reduced speeds on 20mph roads a ‘turning point’ says Deputy Minister \(gov.wales\)](#)

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Fouweather felt that this would be a disappointment to the residents of Newport by comparison to Cardiff which had arterial routes of 30mph.

Response:

A full review had taken place and as an example, Western Avenue residents wanted 20mph. This was not an easy process, but the Council needed to listen to feedback.

Question 2: Question to the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation

Councillor Mogford:

In December 2023 the South Wales Argus ran an article which outlined: - *“The council’s contact centre received 148,362 calls in the first three quarters of 2023. From July, more than one in three callers hung-up the phone due to lengthy wait times.”*

Could the Cabinet Member share what measures have been or are being put in place since December to improve the quality-of-service levels at the Council’s Contact Centre and at what level is the CM involved in ensuring real improvements are made to these services in their portfolio?

Response from Councillor Batrouni:

As Councillor Mogford had mentioned this information is available in the public domain, as the Council and public expect an excellent service.

At the moment the average waiting time is 6 minutes and 52 seconds; we receive around 700-800 calls a week and at peak times, a thousand plus.

In terms of actions, before December 2023, we commissioned an independent review into the contact centre and the compliments and complaints procedure to ensure that the systems in place are working within response times and whether we are meeting the expectations of Councillors and residents. We look forward to that review concluding next month. An interim review briefing took place earlier this month to discuss the results and there are ongoing actions.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Mogford was surprised by the large number of calls that came into the Council and did not know the nature of the calls by breakdown. It is a huge challenge to cope with this demand, what methods are being used to try to reduce the large number of calls.

Response:

Councillor Batrouni mentioned that we needed to increase the online presence and we are seeing just over 80% of our new website being used. However, there was still an increase in demand and pressure. Part of the work being carried out was to improve the website, led by myself and officers; that was phase one and we were rolling out phase 2 to improve other parts of the website. There was also an App to make online access more efficient, speedier, and more accessible to residents so that they can resolve matters as quickly as possible.

There was no other business.

The Presiding Member declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified



Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 23 April 2024

Subject Appointments

Purpose To agree the appointment of Council nominees to committees and outside bodies.

Author Governance Team Leader

Ward General

Summary In accordance with its terms of reference within the Constitution, Council is responsible for appointing the members of Council Committees, and the Council's representatives on outside bodies. The current vacancies and nominations received are set out in the attached report.

Proposal Council is asked to receive and approve the nominations for representatives, as listed in the report

Action by Governance Team Leader

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Council Business Managers
- Head of Law and Standards

Signed

Background

In accordance with its terms of reference within the Constitution, Council is responsible for appointing the members of Council Committees, and the Council's representatives on outside bodies. The current vacancies and nominations received are set out below.

Any vacant appointments / nominations received after the publication of this report, will be announced at the Council meeting by the appropriate Business Manager or Group Leader.

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	Appointments/ Resignations	Name
Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed	Resignation	Elin Maher
Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed	Appointment	Janice Dent
Llanwern High School	Appointment	Tim Harvey
Lliswerry High School	Resignation	Roger Jeavons
Lliswerry High School	Appointment	Nazrul Islam
Lliswerry High School	Disqualification	Glen Wilkins
Lliswerry High School	Appointment	Allan Morris
Pentrepoeth Primary School	Appointment	Joseph O'Connell
Milton Primary School	Disqualification	Mark Moore
Milton Primary School	Appointment	Laura Lacey
Ringland Primary School	Resignation	Stacey Drew
Ringland Primary School	Appointment	Meryl Echeverry
High Cross Primary School	Appointment	Bev Davies
Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli	Resignation	Jonathan Gibbons
Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli	Appointment	Lucy Binnarsley

Proposal

Council is asked to receive and approve the nominations for representatives, as listed in the report.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The appointment of individuals to serve on outside bodies is a Local Choice function under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Functions and Responsibilities) (Wales) Regulations 2007. The Council has determined that responsibility for this function shall rest with Full Council unless delegated by the Council.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

Local issues

There are no local issues as this report relates to the Council's processes.

Scrutiny Committees

Monthly update reports allow the Scrutiny and Cabinet work programmes to be better coordinated. The Scrutiny team and Members are currently developing new ways of working through the new Committees, and continually reviewing the work programmes to focus more on risk and ensure all scrutiny activity has a defined purpose and constructive outcome.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

This does not apply to this procedural report.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

This procedural report does not impact on Children and Young People although certain reports contained in the programme may do and will need appropriate consultation and comment when they are presented to cabinet.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This is a procedural report but reports contained within the programme will need to show how consideration has been given to the five things public bodies need to think about to show they have applied the sustainable development principle put into place by the Act.

Consultation

As set out above

Background Papers

Newport City Council Constitution

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Functions and Responsibilities) (Wales) Regulations 2007

Dated: 16 April 2024

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Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 23 April 2024

Subject **Members Schedule of Remuneration 2024/25**

Purpose To approve the Members Schedule of Remuneration for 2024/25.

Author Head of Law and Standards.

Ward All

Summary The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) is the body tasked with setting the remuneration levels for councils in Wales. The IRP makes determinations in relation to basic and senior salaries, and also the rates and conditions for expenses paid by public authorities.

The IRP has published its Annual Report for 24/25. The IRP has determined that the basic annual salaries for elected members should be re-based at £18,666 to continue to ensure that remuneration is linked to average salary levels. This represents a 6.06% increase in the basic salary. Senior salaries are also increased and re-set in line with relevant comparators.

The increases in basic salaries will take effect from 1st April 2024 and backdated payments will be made to members. Any changes to additional remuneration for senior salaries will be payable as from the date of appointment of the post-holders at the Council AGM on 21st May 2024. The names of the relevant senior salary holders will be added to the Schedule before it is published.

Council is now required to formally approve and adopt the Members Schedule of Remuneration for 24/25 as set out in Appendix 1.

Proposal **That Council approves and adopts the Members Schedule of Remuneration 24/25 as set out in Appendix 1.**

Action by Head of Law and Standards

Timetable To publish and submit the schedule of remuneration for 2024-25 by 31 July 2024.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Democratic Services Committee
- Head of Finance
- Head of People Policy & Transformation.

Signed

Background

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) is the body tasked with setting the remuneration levels for councils in Wales. The Panel makes determinations in relation to basic and senior salaries, and also the rates and conditions for expenses paid by public authorities. The IRP's determinations for payments to be made to elected members as from 1st April 2024 are set out in the latest Annual Report, which was published in February 2024.

Summary of Proposed Changes

In summary, the IRP has determined that the basic annual salaries for elected members should be re-based at £18,666 in order to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of all Wales 2022 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office of National Statistics, which was the latest figure available at drafting. Senior salaries are also increased and re-set in line with relevant comparators.

All other Determinations for 2023 to 2024 will still stand and should be applied in 2024 to 2025, including those covering co-opted members.

The increases in basic salaries will take effect as from 1st April 2024. Any changes to additional remuneration for senior salaries will be payable as from the date of appointment of the post-holders at the Council AGM on 21st May 2024.

Revised Schedule of Remuneration

The attached Schedule of Remuneration at Appendix 1 has been updated with the IRP's changes. The Council is required to publish the revised schedule and submit this to IRP by 31st July 2024. Council is asked to approve the revised schedule, which will be updated with post holder names following the meeting of Full Council on 23 August 2024, before being published and submitted to IRP in line with the deadline.

Consultation

The IRP's draft report was shared with the Democratic Services Committee as part of the consultation process.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The determination to increase basic and senior salaries incurs an increased cost and the relevant budget for 2024/25 for this was increased to take account of this. This is an increase that the Council must deliver to meet the IRP's determinations.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

There is no direct link to Newport's individual policies or plans as this is a national issue about payments to Councillors.

Proposed Action

That Council approves and adopts the Members Schedule of Remuneration 24/25, as set out in Appendix 1.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Provision was made within the 24/25 budget for the anticipated basic and special responsibility allowance increase based on an advance copy of the review board findings. As always, there is a degree of uncertainty in the actual costs which is affected by a number of things; for example, how many roles attracting senior salaries will be in place, how many members join the LG pension Scheme, which members claim travel and other expenses and make use of the other allowances available to support them in their duties. These expenses/allowances have been very minimal in the past and the Council is required to report these annually on the Council's website for each member.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. The IRP has statutory power under Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to set Members Allowances. Democratic Services Committee have previously expressed the opinion that the amounts of basic and senior salaries should be prescribed by the IRP and not left to the discretion of individual councils. The latest IRP Report and prescribed scheme removes most discretionary elements but there is still some element of local discretion.

The basic salary for all Members is increased to £18,666, which is an increase of slightly more than £1,000 compared with 2023/24. The IRP has re-based the level of allowances to take account of inflationary increases and increases in average salaries in Wales. Senior salaries have also been increased on the same basis by an equivalent amount. Allowances for co-opted members and rates for travel and subsistence remain the same.

The only remaining discretionary element of the Members Allowances Scheme is in relation to the whether the Council decides to pay civic salaries to the Presiding Member, Mayor and Deputy Mayor and senior salaries to Chairs of Committees. The Council has previously determined to pay these discretionary allowances and the amounts are, therefore, fixed at £27,999 for the Mayor, Presiding Member and committee chairs and £22,406 for the Deputy Mayor.

Further details of the IRP's determination are set out in the annual report document embedded below.

Council, is therefore, required to formally approve and adopt the proposed Scheme of Remuneration for the financial year 2024/25. There is no requirement for any Member to declare a personal interest, as there is a general dispensation for the approval of Members allowances.

Comments of Head of People Policy and Transformation

This report seeks Council to approve the members schedule of remuneration for 2024/25. This basic allowance for members recommended in the report has been determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. There are no specific issues in the response in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 or the Well-being of Future Generations Act, although those appointed to Cabinet posts in particular will need to consider the principles of the Act as part of any decision-making process.

There are no staffing or specific HR or equalities issues arising from the report, while a Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment wasn't required to be completed as this affects elected members only.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

No FEIA was undertaken as the report affects elected members only.

Background Papers

IRP Annual Report 2024/25



IRP

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[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2024 to 2025 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

Dated: 27 March 2024

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

February 2024

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Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting the decisions and determinations on pay, expenses, and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2024.

This has been a year of change for the Panel, with one longstanding member leaving us and the appointment of two new members. I would like to thank Helen Wilkinson for her contribution over the years to the Panel and wish her well for the future.

Earlier last year we were able to appoint two new members to bring our current complement up to five. I welcome Dianne Bevan and Kate Watkins to the Panel and thank Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Bev Smith for their continued contribution throughout the year. You can find out more about our Panel members on our [website](#).

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 8 (The Measure), which gives the statutory authority for the Panel's work, allows the appointment of a minimum of 3 and up to 7 members.



Frances Duffy
Chair

Detailed information about the members, our Strategic Plan, our deliberations and supporting research and evidence can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

Executive Summary

Last year we published our first Strategic Plan. This covers the period from 2023 until 2025 and sets the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions. The key elements are set out below under Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel.

With a strengthened Panel, we were able to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. Our evidence plan is available on our [website](#) in line with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.

Our goal continues to be to ensure that levels of remuneration are fair and reasonable. We agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities within the context of average Welsh earnings. This has meant using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings within Wales (ASHE) published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) as the main benchmark for setting remuneration.

The Measure states that “the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities” of its decisions. The Panel considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities’ budgets. Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel were mindful of the heightened economic and fiscal strain on Principal Councils.

In reaching our decision to continue the link between the remuneration of elected members of Principal Councils, National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities and the average earnings of their constituents (ASHE), the Panel remain of the view that a fair and reasonable remuneration package will continue to support elected members and not act as a barrier to participation. This is an important principle, underpinning our considerations on appropriate remuneration. This was widely supported in both our engagement meetings and the consultation feedback.

In line with our commitment to simplifying reporting and compliance, the Panel this year looked at the reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. Currently each Community and Town Council must report annually to the Panel, and publish on its website, the details, and names of each councillor in receipt of any expenses. In previous years we agreed that in respect of costs of care and personal assistance allowances, it would be inappropriate to name individual councillors, and that it would be sufficient to simply list the total amounts paid and the total number of recipients.

The Panel feels that it would be appropriate to extend this to the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. This will give the right balance between public accountability and individual privacy, and we hope will encourage all to accept the payments they are entitled to. This was positively received during our consultation and engagement.

We will provide a new template report for use from September 2024 and will continue to monitor the level of payments made.

We continue to receive queries regarding the PAYE treatment of the mandatory allowance for working from home (£156 per annum) and the option of a flat rate of £52 a year for consumables. We are updating our guidance on this issue which should help give clarity to local clerks.

We are also mindful of a continuing, albeit reducing, number of Community and Town councillors who decide to forego all or part of their entitlement. We strongly believe that councillors should be reimbursed for expenses they necessarily incur whilst carrying out their duties or receive a contribution to help defray these costs. We reiterate that the basic payments are mandatory and should be made available to all councillors who are entitled to receive them. Any decision to forego these payments must be a personal and individual choice.

The final area that the Panel considered, was the method of calculating payments made to co opted members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Following feedback on last year's Annual Report and queries raised through the year by some co opted members and by several Heads of Democratic Services, the Panel took evidence from the correspondents on the impact of both the increase in numbers of co opted members and the changing nature of working patterns. This showed that the current arrangement of either a half day rate for anything up to 4 hours and a full day rate for anything over, was insufficiently flexible to reflect the patterns of working now more normally in place, mainly due to more online or hybrid working.

In our draft Report, the Panel proposed that the relevant local officer should have the flexibility to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate and when to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings. There was quite a wide range of views on this during our engagement meetings, but the overall feedback is that this change would be supported. **Therefore, the Panel agreed that this flexibility should be given and that decisions on whether an hourly or daily rate might be appropriate are to be made locally.**

Finally, the Panel is aware of feedback that our website can be difficult to navigate and that finding the right Determination to deal with a specific issue is not always straightforward, especially for newly elected members or officials. We have therefore updated the links on our website and created a new link to a page setting out all the current Determinations that should be applied. It will be updated every year when the Final Annual Report is issued, and we hope this will be easier to navigate than having to refer to every year's Report.

This is supported in our newly updated [Guidance](#) (previously called the Regulations).

Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Our Role:

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected and coopted members of the following organisations:

- Principal Councils – County and County Borough Councils
- Community and Town Councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees
- Corporate Joint Committees.

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes.

We make determinations on:

- The salary structure within which members are remunerated
- The type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- Whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- Arrangements in respect of family absence
- Arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

Our Aim:

- Supporting local democracy and giving communities their voice, through setting up an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, which encourages inclusion and participation.

Our Goals:

- Our Determinations should ensure that levels of remuneration are fair, reasonable, represent value for money for the taxpayer, and are set within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales.
- Our Determinations should support elected members from a diverse range of backgrounds, and levels of remuneration should not act as a barrier to participation.

Our Strategic Objectives:

- To make evidence based Determinations
- To use clear and accessible communications
- To proactively engage and consult
- To simplify compliance and reporting
- To work collaboratively

The Panel:

Frances Duffy (Chair)
Saz Willey (Vice Chair)
Dianne Bevan (Member)
Bev Smith (Member)
Kate Watkins (Member)

Further information on Panel members can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

Methodology

Deliberations and Determinations for 2024 to 2025

As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence based decisions.

This year we prepared an evidence and research paper to pull together the various sources of information that the Panel considered in making its Determinations. This provided a wide range of data, evidence, and contextual factors to inform the Panel's decision-making process in relation to its Determinations for the 2024 to 2025 financial year. This included:

- Data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings)
- Annual Consumer Price Index Housing (CPIH) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rates Benchmarks, including councillor remuneration in Scotland
- Research on councillor workload, views and attitudes to remuneration and diversity (Welsh Government)
- Findings of Senedd Cymru Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (2019)
- Data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
- Data on local authority finances

The full set of evidence and research considered, is available on our [website](#).

In line with our updated Communications and Engagement Strategy, the Panel held a number of discussions with key stakeholders which provided an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. It also provides an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel may need to consider in respect of its decision making.

The Panel engaged directly with key stakeholder representative groups including the Welsh Local Government Association, Principal Council Leaders Group, Heads of Democratic Services committee, One Voice Wales, Society for Local Council Clerks and North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. The Panel also held an online seminar in November for Community and Town councillors and local Clerks. This was well attended, and we received good feedback on our work. In particular, the Panel noted the question of remuneration for Youth Representatives and agreed to review this in the future.

This year the Panel focused on three main issues – affordability, payments made to co opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. The Panel would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and Responses to the consultation on our Draft Report.

Consultation: Summary of responses

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on Friday 13 October 2023 for an eight week consultation, which closed on Friday 8th December 2023. The consultation period was extended to Wednesday 20 December 2023, to allow more time for all respondents to submit feedback.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer six questions using an online survey or by return email. A total of 44 responses were received online, whilst 12 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The Panel engaged in a number of stakeholder meetings during the consultation period to gather important feedback. The Panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation. A summary of responses is included in the report below.

The website link and Pdf version of the draft report was sent to:

- One Voice Wales
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Society for Local Council Clerks
- Principal Councils
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- National Parks Authorities and
- Community and Town Councils

Determination 1: Basic salary for elected members of principal councils

Determination 2: Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils

Determination 3: Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Determination 4: Payments to national parks authorities and fire and rescue authorities

Determination 7: Compensation for financial loss

No comments/responses were received directly, in respect of the above Determinations. However, during our engagement sessions, the Panel heard concerns about lack of payments to Youth Representatives on Community and Town Councils and disappointment that the Panel had not raised the remuneration levels for co opted members on National Parks Authorities. These are issues that the Panel may consider in future Reports.

Determination 5: Payments made to co opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

There were only a small number of responses regarding this proposal; One response agreed with the proposal in respect of changing working practices and supporting the introduction of an hourly rate and another recommended that guidance issued in respect of the hourly payment is clear as to when it should be applied.

Another strongly supported the principle of authorities being able to be flexible to suit their own requirements.

Determination 6: Community and Town Councils Mandatory payments

Payment for extra costs of working from home and Set payment for consumables

Two Community Councils requested that the proposal to make the £156 payment to Councillors mandatory be changed to allow Councillors to opt out of the payment as in previous years.

Two Community councils fully supports inclusivity and appreciates that the payment may assist elected members but feels very strongly that it should not be mandatory.

The Panel reaffirms individuals are able to opt out of receiving mandatory payments. Any opt outs should be declared in writing.

Determination 8: Reporting requirements

It was agreed that the reporting of the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims as global sums, rather than individual listings, gives the right balance between public accountability and individual privacy.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer six questions via an online survey or by return email. A total of 44 responses were received online, whilst 12 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The Panel attended stakeholder engagement meetings during the consultation process to gather and receive feedback.

Summary of responses to online questionnaire

Question 1

Uplift of remuneration using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

The Panel is fully aware of the current constraints on public funding and the impact its decisions will have on the budgets of Principal Authorities. The Panel is also mindful of our Aims and Objectives to provide a fair and reasonable remuneration package to support elected members and to encourage diversity of representation. We therefore propose to uplift their remuneration based on the average earnings of their constituents.

Do you think that the Panel has struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives? If not, do you have other suggestions?

Responses

55% of those who answered this question agreed that the Panel have struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives. 21% did not agree whilst 19% had no opinion on this question.

Some respondents highlighted that it was important to attract a diverse range of candidates to stand for election and that more needed to be done to increase diversity.

Another proposed that the report showed the recommended increase as a percentage uplift, similar to pay awards, so that the public understood in terms of transparency.

Question 2

Local flexibility for payments to co opted individuals

The Panel has received evidence that it would be more cost effective and fairer to provide for flexibility in paying those who are co opted to serve on committees of principle councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The Panel has therefore proposed there should be flexibility for the relevant local officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a few short meetings.

Do you agree with this proposal? If not, do you have any suggested alternatives?

Responses

64% of those who answered this question agreed. 11% did not agree whilst 19% had no opinion. An hourly rate was thought to be more cost effective and would provide flexibility to attend shorter meetings with officers when needed. The principle of authorities being able to be flexible to suit their own requirements was strongly supported by one individual.

Question 3

Encouraging sustainable travel

The Panel would like to ensure that we support environmental sustainability in our decisions about remuneration. We are aware that there are schemes in many bodies in Wales which encourage sustainable travel and we have advised that, if possible, elected members should be encouraged to participate in these schemes.

Do you have any examples of good practice or other ideas of ways in which we might use our powers to encourage more sustainable travel among members?

Responses

Of those who responded to this question, 34% provided examples of good practice to encourage more sustainable travel. Holding online meetings would be useful in achieving environmental sustainability, however it was also proposed to hold meetings in person as well as online.

Other suggestions included the provision of public service timetables in council buildings can help in terms of encouraging alternatives to private car use and encouraging vehicle sharing between members who are attending the same meeting. An example provided was an authority having an area map that showed where each NPA member was located, to encourage car sharing.

Question 4

Awareness of the entitlements of representatives

The Panel has seen evidence of a lack of awareness amongst local elected members of the payments to which they are entitled. We would like to find out if this is a significant issue, and if so, we will aim to raise awareness further, targeted at areas where this may be a problem.

What steps does your council or authority take to make its members and co optees aware of their entitlements?

Responses

The comments stated that members are informed of their entitlements by email from the Clerk on appointment, included in a briefing pack that newly elected members receive and discussed at the time of budget preparation and at the annual general meeting.

However, we also received examples of there being a culture of members not claiming entitlements and some members being pressured into completing an opt out form. An individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to their proper officer to do so. Each community and town council principal authority must ensure that it does not create a climate which prevents persons accessing any monies to which they are entitled that may support them to participate in local democracy.

Question 5

Publication of consolidated sums

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by 30 September each year, and also publish this on their website. The Panel have provided a template return for clerks to use. The Panel have discussed and considered changing the requirements for Community and Town Councils when submitting their statement of payment returns. The Panel's aim is to simplify administration and encourage Councils to ensure all mandatory payments are made to individual members.

The Panel proposes that from September 2024, the returns need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home, the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

*Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?
What are the reasons for your view?*

Responses

There was overwhelming agreement to the proposal of the statement of payments being published as a global sum. 11% did not agree and 2% had no opinion on the question. Respondents agreed that publishing a global sum would be administratively easier and provides confidentiality of members. It also reducing any embarrassment should a member wish to claim. However, it was highlighted that Councillors should be seen to have received the payments, so that residents can see where the money has been spent.

Question 6

In future reports, we are thinking of allowing consolidation of the travel and subsistence expenses of members of principal councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities and would be interested in your views.

*Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?
What are the reasons for your view?*

Responses

Just under half of the respondents agreed that the payments for travel and subsistence should be published as a global sum. 13% did not agree and 28% had no opinion on the question. This proposal would help to avoid individual identification and or potential prejudice for those who need to claim. However, those who disagreed stated that a breakdown of all expenses allows transparency into councillor activity and allows resident scrutiny and transparency that all activities are justified.

Panel's determinations for 2024 to 2025

Following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation the Panel now makes its final determinations.

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils: Determination 1

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment, and no changes are proposed for 2024 to 2025.

The Panel is fully aware of the current constraints on public funding and the impact its decisions will have on the budgets of Principal Authorities. The Panel is also mindful of our Aims and Objectives to provide a fair and reasonable remuneration package to support elected members and to encourage diversity of representation.

The Panel also noted that in previous electoral cycles, the remuneration of councillors fell far behind the key benchmark of Average Hourly Earnings in Wales (ASHE) and a significant uplift was therefore required in 2022.

The Panel has therefore determined that for the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 it is right to retain the link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. **The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of all Wales 2022 ASHE. This will be £18,666 as set out on Table 1.**

Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable ("the cap") will remain in place.

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. No changes to banding are proposed this year.

The basic pay element will be uplifted in line with ASHE and this uplift will also apply to the role element of Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4. Where a Band 5 is paid, there is no increase to the role element as this remains temporarily frozen. The increase in the basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out on Table 1.

Group A

- Cardiff
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils (Group A)

Description	Amount
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 leader	£69,998
Band 1 deputy leader	£48,999
Band 2 executive members	£41,999
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

Group B

- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Carmarthenshire
- Conwy
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Newport
- Neath Port Talbot
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils (Group B)

Description	Remuneration
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 leader	£62,998
Band 1 deputy leader	£44,099
Band 2 executive members	£37,799
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999

Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

Group C

- Blaenau Gwent
- Ceredigion
- Denbighshire
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Torfaen
- Isle of Anglesey

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils (Group C)

Description	Remuneration
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 leader	£59,498
Band 1 deputy leader	£41,649
Band 2 executive members	£35,699
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members. All current Determinations are published on our [website](#).

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to be aligned to Band 3 and will be set at £9,333.

The salary of a vice chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,667.

There are no other changes.

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 4

The three national parks in Wales: Eryri (Snowdonia), Pembrokeshire Coast and Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The three fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government reorganisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

In line with the Panel's decision to increase the basic salary of elected members of principal councils, the remuneration level for ordinary members of both NPAs and FRAs is also increased in line with ASHE. The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a principal council Band 3 senior salary. Their role element will therefore increase accordingly. Deputy chairs, Committee chairs and other paid senior posts will remain linked to a Band 5. This means the role element of their pay will continue to be temporarily frozen. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of NPAs and FRAs is set out on Table 2.

Table 2 – Payments to National Parks Authorities

National Parks Authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£5,265
Chair	£14,598
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£9,005
Committee Chair or other senior post	£9,005

Table 2 – Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities

Fire and rescue authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,632
Chair	£11,965
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,372
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,372

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, are available on our [website](#). Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

Payments made to co opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The current Determination (made in the 2022 to 2023 Annual Report) states that co opted members of the relevant bodies should be remunerated on a day or half day basis. In addition, the relevant officer may decide on the total number of days remunerated in a year and set a reasonable time for meeting preparation.

The Panel has noted the changes to working practices, put in place during Covid and now becoming more routine, that has meant a move towards more frequent use of online meetings and or training courses, often short, as well as more regular committee meetings. The panel also received feedback from Heads of Democratic Services raising this issue.

The Panel considered moving to an hourly rate instead. This would better reflect new ways of working and hours actually worked. However, the Panel recognised that this may not always be appropriate, especially to cover in person meetings scheduled to last several hours.

The Panel therefore determines there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings. The Panel will also provide guidance of good practice examples. The amounts are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
Chairs of standards, and audit committees	£33.50	£134	£268
Ordinary Members of Standards Committees who also chair Standards Committees for Community and Town Councils	£29.75	£119	£238
Ordinary Members of Standards Committees; Education Scrutiny Committee; Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	£26.25	£105	£210

Community and Town Councils

The Panel continues to mandate payments for the extra costs of working from home and payments for office consumables. There is no change to the Determination made last year.

Mandatory Payments: Determination 6

Payment for extra costs of working from home

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power, and broadband) of working from home.

Set payment for consumables

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

It is a matter for each council to make and record a policy decision in respect of when and how the payments are made and whether they are paid monthly, yearly, or otherwise. The policy should also state whether and how to recover any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year.

Compensation for Financial Loss; Determination 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year. Previously, the Panel determined that an appropriate level of payment should be set at the daily rate of ASHE. To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now set at £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

Reporting Requirements; Determination 8

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by the 30 September each year, and also publish this on their website. The Panel have provided a template return for clerks to use.

The Panel have discussed and considered changing the requirements for Community and Town Councils when submitting their statement of payment returns. The Panel's aim is to simplify administration and encourage Councils to ensure all mandatory payments are made to individual members.

The Panel proposes that from September 2024, the returns need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home and the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

Payments to Community and Town Councils

Type of Payment	Group	Requirement
Extra costs payment	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory £500 for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or chair	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or deputy chair	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Financial loss	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory
Extra costs payment	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or chair	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or deputy chair	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Financial loss	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory
Extra costs payment	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or chair	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or deputy chair	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Financial loss	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory
Extra Costs Payment	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Mandatory for all members

Senior Role	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Financial Loss	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Costs of Care or Personal Assistance	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Mandatory
Extra Costs Payment	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
Financial Loss	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Mandatory

There have been no changes made to payments for undertaking senior roles; allowances for Travel and subsistence; Care and Personal Assistance or Attendance allowance. All current Determinations are published on our website.

Summary of Determinations for 2024 to 2025

Determination 1:

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will be set at £18,666.

Determination 2:

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this.

Determination 3:

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £9,333.

The salary of vice chair will be £4,667.

Determination 4:

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased.

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on our website. Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

Determination 5:

For co opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, payments, the Panel proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

The full and half day rates remain unchanged from 2023 to 2024. The only change is the stipulation of hourly rates.

Determination 6:

Members of Community and Town Councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power, and broadband) of working from home. And Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables. Therefore, there is no change from last year.

Determination 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year. The Panel determined that this payment should continue to be linked to the daily rate of ASHE. To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now set at £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

Determination 8:

The Panel has determined that from September 2024, the returns due from all Community and Town Council need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home and the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

All other Determinations set out on our [website](#) remain valid and should be applied.

Contact details

To request a printed version of the Annual Report please [email us](#) or write to:

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This Annual Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our [website](#).



Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 23 April 2024

Subject Pay and Reward Policy 2024/25

Purpose To brief Council on the annual Pay and Reward policy

Author HR and OD Manager

Ward N/A

Summary The Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a “pay policy statement” on an annual basis. The legislation outlines a number of statutory requirements which must be included in any pay policy statement.

The Pay and Reward Policy outlines the current position in respect of pay and reward within the Council. It will be reviewed and reported to Council on an annual basis to ensure it meets the principles of fairness, equality, accountability, and value for money for the authority and its residents.

The Pay and Reward Policy 2024/25 has been reviewed and no changes are proposed this year outside of the normal increases in values. It should be noted that amendments have been made to some provision in 2023/24 with the appropriate agreement, these amendments are reported to cabinet and subsequently Council. This statement will come into immediate effect once fully endorsed by Council.

Proposal Council are asked to review and agree the Pay and Reward Policy in order to meet the statutory requirement for a pay policy statement to be approved and published by Council on an annual basis.

Action by Chief Executive/Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Deputy Monitoring Officer – Assistant Head of Legal Services
- Section 151 Officer - Head of Finance
- Cabinet

Signed

Background

The Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a 'pay policy statement' on an annual basis. Items which must be included in the statutory pay policy statement are as follows:

- A local authority's policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer
- A local authority's policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of 'lowest-paid employees' and its reasons for adopting that definition)
- A local authority's policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers
- A local authority's policy on other specific aspects of chief officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additional to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency.

The Act also specifies that the pay policy statement:

- must be approved on an annual basis formally by the full Council meeting (the responsibility cannot be delegated to Cabinet or a sub-committee)
- can be amended in-year
- must be published on the authority's website (and in any other way the authority chooses)
- must be complied with when the authority sets the terms and conditions for a chief officer.

The Act requires an authority to have regard to any statutory guidance on the subject issued or approved by the Secretary of State or Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Government issued statutory guidance on "*Pay Accountability in Local Government in Wales*" in March 2012 and the Public Services Staff Commission published further supplementary guidance in December 2016.

Pay and Reward Policy

The Council recognises that, in the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to secure and retain high quality employees dedicated to the service of the public; but at the same time needs to avoid being unnecessarily generous or otherwise excessive pay and reward.

The Council's Pay and Reward Policy, initially approved in March 2012, was developed to meet the statutory requirements contained in the Localism Act 2011. However, in the spirit of transparency, the Council took the opportunity to take a wider view and include information relating to school-based employees. Local authority schools are specifically excluded from the Localism Act's statutory requirements. However, as employees in community maintained and voluntary controlled schools are employees of the Council, reference has been made to school-based employees within the Pay and Reward Policy. It is recognised that the pay decisions for these employees are delegated to school Governing Bodies by legislation and that each school is responsible for publishing its own Pay Policy. For the avoidance of doubt, the relevant school Pay Policies are the definitive version of policy for school-based staff engaged by the governing body of the respective school.

Subject to approval by full Council, to meet the requirements of the Localism Act, the Pay and Reward Policy attached will be published on the Council's website. In addition, in accordance with the provisions of Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note setting out salary and remuneration information for Council posts where the full-time equivalent salary is at least £60,000.

Updates since April 2023 (last pay policy approval)

Pay Awards –

During 2023/24 financial year all pay awards were agreed nationally and implemented by the council. Some of the pay awards were subject to national negotiation and some strike action took place which meant the council was unable to implement the proposed pay awards at the point they were effective. However, subsequent and later agreement was reached between each negotiating body and where applicable back pay was processed for the retrospectively agreed pay awards.

Where a pay structure falls below the Foundation Living Level, the Council applies, and increases pay with a supplement to ensure all of our workforce receive at least the Foundation Living Wage (FLW) level each April. Often this supplement is not required as the bottom points of the pay structure are above the FLW level, however in previous years, given pay awards have been agreed retrospectively and back dated, sometimes this can mean that the national agreement on pay is delayed, and the supplement is paid whilst negotiation continues. If this is the case in 2024/25 then the Council will implement the supplement until such time as the 2024/25 pay awards are agreed. This has been common practice for the council for a number of years.

Apprentice Pay -

In September 2023 the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation considered a report to increase the rate of pay for apprentices employed by the council which was approved. The rate of pay for all Council apprentices will follow the Foundation Living Wage level, reaffirming the council's commitment to maintaining living wage levels.

Pay Relativities within the Council

The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid Council employee and that of the Council's Chief Officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures set out in the Pay and Reward Policy. The Council's lowest paid employee is paid on spinal column point 1 of the NJC for Local Government Workers (or the rate of the FLW if applicable).

As part of its commitment to pay transparency, and following the recommendations of the Hutton Review, the Council will publish information on pay relativities on an annual basis in the Pay and Reward Policy. This information for **2023-24** is as follows:

Multiple of Salary	Ratio
• the multiple between the annual salary of the lowest paid Council employee and the Chief Executive (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio	1 : 6.8
• the multiple between the annual salary of the lowest paid Council employee and the average Chief Officer (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio	1 : 4.6
• the multiple between median earning of Council employees and the Chief Executive (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio	1 : 5.0
• the multiple between median earning of Council employees and the average Chief Officer (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio	1 : 3.4

Note:

- i) Column 'Ratio' provides the pay ratio as per the requirement of the Localism Act 2011
- ii) These figures exclude remuneration for appointments within organisations for which the Council provides a payroll service but is not the employer.
- iii) These figures exclude remuneration for joint appointments where the Council is not the employer

The Gender Pay Gap

In accordance with the Equality Act (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017, the Council is required to publish its gender pay gap information on its website and upload them onto a national Government website by 31st March each year.

Newport City Council has traditionally had one of the smallest gender pay gaps from amongst local authorities in Wales and compares favourably to the national averages. Our gender pay gap report is published on the Council's transparency page each year [here](#) and will be updated in April 2024. Implications are also considered in the Strategic Equalities Annual Report.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no financial implications contained in the updated *Pay and Reward Policy*, as the policy confirms the current pay and reward arrangements in place in the Council and is retrospective to the in year changes being reported for 2023/24.

Risks

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure to comply with statutory requirement to approve and publish a "pay policy statement" on an annual basis	H	L	Produced an updated <i>Pay and Reward Policy</i> which meets the statutory requirements and which is recommended for approval by Council	Chief Executive / Head of People, Transformation and Policy

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Pay and Reward Policy forms a key part of the Council's newly adopted People Plan 2023-28. The strategy underpins the Council's Corporate Plan and strategic objectives - how employees are rewarded for their contribution is directly linked to the delivery of the council's key aims. The updated Pay and Reward Policy will ensure, when approved, that the Council complies with the statutory requirement to publish a "pay policy statement" on an annual basis.

Options Available and considered

The options available are as follows:

1. For Council to agree the updated Pay and Reward Policy
2. For Council to not to agree the updated Pay and Reward Policy.

Preferred Option and Why

For the Council to agree option 1 to meet the statutory requirements for a 'pay policy statement' to be published on an annual basis

Comments of Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance)

The Council's budget is based on the overall pay structures in place, as outlined in the updated *Pay and Reward Policy*, with costs incurred in relation to the payment of salaries, enhanced rates and mileage

being met from within existing resources. There are, therefore, no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer (Assistant Head of Legal Services)

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 to approve and publish a statement on its Pay Policy on an annual basis and must have regard to the guidance produced by the Welsh Government in relation to this. The requirements of what the statement must contain are set out above. The policy must be approved by full Council on an annual basis and before 31st March before the financial year to which it relates in order to comply with the statutory requirements; therefore, once the Cabinet has approved a policy, it will need to be referred to full Council for adoption. Once adopted, the Pay and Reward Policy will need to be published and the Annual Statement of Accounts will also need to include details of the remuneration of individual Chief Officers, to comply with the requirements of the Audit (Wales) Regulations.

Comments of Head of People, Policy & Transformation

The comments of the Head of People, Policy and Transformation are considered within the main body of the report. The report outlines how the sustainable development principle has been considered in developing the Pay and Reward policy.

Scrutiny Committees

N/A

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

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

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement for an FEIA for the annual pay policy review as this looks back on the year previous and is subject to national negotiations.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

The Pay and Reward Policy contributes to the well-being goals for a more equal Wales and a prosperous Wales. The policy demonstrates how employees are rewarded for their contribution to the organisations local and national priorities and will ensure the Council complies with the statutory requirement to publish a “pay policy statement” on an annual basis.

The five ways of working have been applied when considering this proposal. The Council is required to publish a Pay Policy Statement each financial year and this updated policy meets this requirement.

Long Term - This policy provides a framework for decision making on pay and allows the Council to demonstrate its key approaches to pay and reward for employees, ensuring resources are managed effectively both in the short and longer term.

Collaborative – As part of this policy, the Council’s intention is to continue to develop collaborative working on a planned and strategic basis with local authority partners and other public and third sector organisations. In addition, the policy provides the public with the Council’s policy on all aspects of pay and reward, including senior posts and the lowest paid posts, explaining the relationship between remuneration for senior post holders and other groups.

Integration – This updated policy outlines the Council’s approach to pay and reward of its employees in the interests of openness and transparency and is in place to prevent problems and issues occurring with any decisions made in relation to public sector pay. The policy also forms a key part of the Council’s People and Culture Strategy. The strategy underpins the Council’s Corporate Plan and strategic objectives - how employees are rewarded for their contribution is directly linked to the delivery of the council’s key aims and objectives.

Involvement – This policy was developed with the involvement of key stakeholders including trade unions

Prevention – The Councils pay and reward policy will support the workforce aspirations of the Council in the future aiming to prevent any long standing workforce impact.

Consultation

As outlined within the report

Background Papers

Pay and Reward Policy 2023/24

Gender Pay Gap report 2022/23

Strategic Equalities Plan

People Plan 2023-28

Dated: 13th March 2024

Introduction

Newport City Council recognises the importance of remuneration decisions that are appropriate, transparent, provide value for money and reward employees fairly for the work that they perform. This policy statement sets out the Council's key approaches to pay and reward for our employees.

Aims of Policy

To outline Newport City Council's approach to the pay and reward of its employees in the interests of openness and transparency.

Scope

To provide the public with the Council's policy on all aspects of pay and reward, including senior posts and the lowest paid posts, explaining the relationship between remuneration for senior post holders and other groups.

School Based Employees

Employees who are appointed and directly managed by Head teachers and/or Governing Bodies are not required to be included within the scope of Pay Policy Statements as the provisions in the Localism Act (2011) only apply to employees appointed and directly managed by the Council. This reflects the requirements contained within the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (2006) where school-based staff are considered to be employees of the Council, yet the appointment and management of this staff group is discharged to the Governing Body.

In the interests of consistency and transparency, the pay related data set out within this Pay Policy Statement includes information relating to those who are appointed and managed by Head teachers/Governing Bodies. Schools are required to develop their own Pay Policies.

To be read in conjunction with

Annual Statement of Accounts
Job Evaluation Scheme
School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document/School Pay Policies
Market Supplement Guidance
Early Retirement and Redundancy Payments Guidance
Out of Hours/Additional Duties/Detriment Schemes
Travel and Subsistence Policy

Principles

This is Newport City Council's 2024/25 annual Pay and Reward Policy for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. This Pay and Reward Policy provides the framework for decision making on pay and in particular decision making on senior pay.

The Council recognises that there is public interest in public sector pay and therefore the importance of being transparent in its decisions relating to pay. It is recognised that senior posts in the Council are accountable for delivering the current strategic objectives of the organisation, including demonstrating value for money and the role that senior leadership plays in the quality of service delivery. The context of managing resources effectively and appropriately is of importance to the Council and transparency on pay is therefore appropriate to publish for public scrutiny.

In accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Revised Guidance issued by the Welsh Government in December 2015, Newport City Council is required to publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year detailing:

- a) The Council's definition of senior posts
- b) The Council's definition of lowest paid employees
- c) Reasons for adopting these definitions
- d) The relationship between the remuneration of senior posts and that of the lowest paid employees

In addition to this Pay and Reward Policy, remuneration reporting is included in the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. The finance home page can be found [here](#).

The Council's senior posts are defined as:

Chief Executive
Strategic Director – Social Services
Strategic Director – Environment and Sustainability
Strategic Director – Transformation and Corporate Services
Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)
Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Head of Law and Standards (Monitoring Officer)
Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Head of Children's Services
Head of Adult's Services
Head of Prevention and Inclusion
Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Head of City Services
Head of Environment and Public Protection
Head of Housing and Communities

POLICY**1.0 Legislative Framework****1.1 General**

In determining the pay and remuneration of all its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Equality Act (2010), Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (2000), the Agency Workers Regulations (2010), Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (2006) where relevant, and the National Minimum Wage Act (1998).

With regards to Equal Pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council aims to ensure that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that pay differentials can be objectively justified using equality proofed job evaluation mechanisms which directly relate salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

1.2 Pay in schools

Employees who are appointed and directly managed by Head teachers and/or Governing Bodies are not required to be included within the scope of Pay Policy Statements as the provisions in the Localism Act (2011) only apply to employees appointed and directly managed by the Council. This reflects the requirements contained within the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (2006) where school-based staff are considered to be employees of the Council, yet the appointment and management of this staff group is discharged to the Governing Body.

In the interests of consistency and transparency, the pay related data set out within this Pay Policy Statement includes information relating to those who are appointed and managed by Head teachers/Governing Bodies. Schools are required to develop their own Pay Policies.

2.0 Responsibility for Pay Decisions**2.1 Responsibility for the Approval of the Pay and Reward Policy**

The Council's Pay and Reward Policy incorporates the statutory provisions of the Localism Act (2011) in relation to pay policy statements. Approval of this statement and of any amendments to it is therefore a matter for full Council and cannot be delegated to any sub-committee.

2.2 Responsibility for Council Pay Structure and Employment Terms and Conditions

As per the Council's constitution, overall responsibility for Council policy in relation to pay and grading structures, and employment terms and conditions rests with the Cabinet, with specific policy decisions delegated to the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation.

The exception to this is the matter of senior pay structures, where any proposed changes are a matter for full Council.

2.3 Delegated Authority

Managers should be aware of their delegated levels of authority. Delegations for decisions on pay cannot be further delegated below these levels:

Decision	Delegated level of Authority
Remuneration packages above £100,000 per year	Full Council
Starting pay above grade minimum for the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service	Appointments Committee
Market Supplement for the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service	Appointments Committee
Performance related pay increases for the Chief Executive	Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council in consultation with the Head of People, Policy and Transformation (Human Resources)
Performance related pay increases for the Strategic Directors	Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of People, Policy and Transformation (Human Resources)
Pay progression through Head of Service grade	Strategic Directors in consultation with the Head of People, Policy and Transformation (Human Resources)
Starting pay above grade minimum for all grades below Head of Service	Head of Service in consultation with Human Resources
Market Supplement for posts below Head of Service	Head of Service in consultation with the Head of Law and Standards, Head of Finance and Head of People, Policy and Transformation (Human Resources)
Pay progression through all grades below Head of Service	Head of Service in consultation with Human Resources
Additional duties payments below Head of Service	Head of Service in consultation with Human Resources
Salary detriment	Head of Service*
Early release of pension	Head of Service*
Planned overtime payments	Head of Service

Decisions marked with * are subject to a formal business case and consultation with the Head of Finance and Head of People, Policy & Transformation. Any dispute will be determined by a Strategic Director.

The Head of People, Policy & Transformation is responsible for ensuring that the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme (where applicable) and pay processes have been applied. Human Resources is responsible for overseeing any decision on pay to ensure that they are made in accordance with the delegated authority levels and are compliant with the terms of the Pay and Reward Policy.

3.0 Terms and Conditions of Service

The Council's employees are employed on a number of different terms and conditions dependent on the role that they fulfil:

Employee Group	Terms and Conditions
Chief Executive	Joint National Council for Chief Executives terms and conditions except for pay which is determined by a local performance related pay arrangement
Strategic Directors and Heads of Service	Joint National Council for Chief Officers' terms and conditions. Strategic Director pay is determined by a local performance related pay arrangement, Head of Service pay is subject to annual incremental movement through the grade
School Teachers	Head, Deputy, Assistant Head teachers and all other classroom teachers employed directly by the Council (as opposed to those employed by the Governing Body of a voluntary aided school) are paid in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document (STPCD).
School Improvement Professionals and Education Psychologists	The Soulbury Committee determine pay arrangements and National Joint Council for Local Government Service Employees terms and conditions apply for all other contractual entitlements
All other employees (including school-based staff other than teachers)	National Joint Council for Local Government Service Employees apply, supplemented by the Newport City Council Single Status Pay and Grading arrangements

4.0 National pay bargaining arrangements

The Council uses nationally negotiated pay spines for the relevant groups of employees as the basis for its local pay structures. The Council remains committed to adherence with national pay bargaining in respect of the national pay spines and any increases negotiated in the pay spine.

Employees on all terms and conditions will receive a pay award where this is negotiated nationally by the relevant negotiating committee.

5.0 Process for grading posts

The Council utilises the Newport City Council Job Evaluation scheme as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the majority of employees including non-teaching staff in schools. The pay and grading

structure was agreed through a collective agreement with the recognised trade unions and implemented with effect from 1st April 2015.

The pay grade of posts on Soulbury and Teachers' pay will be determined in accordance with the national and local agreed terms.

The pay grade of JNC posts is through the Hay job evaluation scheme.

6.0 Senior Management Remuneration

For the purpose of the Council's Pay and Reward Policy, senior management means 'Chief Officers' as defined within Section 43 of the Localism Act (2011). The posts within the Council's structure identified by the statutory definition are set out below:

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director – Social Services
- Strategic Director – Environment and Sustainability
- Strategic Director – Transformation and Corporate Services
- Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)
- Head of Children's Services
- Head of Adult's Services
- Head of Prevention and Inclusion
- Head of Law and Standards
- Head of Finance
- Head of People, Transformation and Policy
- Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
- Head of City Services
- Head of Environment and Public Protection
- Head of Housing and Communities

The current salary ranges for these posts can be found in Appendix B.

6.1 Recruitment and appointment of Chief Officers

The Council's policy and procedures with regard to the recruitment of chief officers is set out within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. When recruiting to all posts the Council will take full and proper account of its own Recruitment Policy and Procedures, Job Security and Diversity Policies. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed chief officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

Where the Council remains unable to recruit chief officers under a contract of employment, or there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive chief officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider and utilise engaging individuals under 'contracts for service'. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the Council is able to demonstrate the maximum value for money benefits from competition in securing the relevant service. The Council does not currently have any chief officers engaged under such arrangements. Any substantive chief officer appointment made under a contract for service is subject to the approval of full Council in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution.

6.2 The role of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is the senior officer who leads and takes responsibility of the organisation. The organisation has a turnover of £275m and is responsible for a wide range of services employing some 5500 staff.

The role of the Chief Executive is a full time and permanent appointment. Post holders are selected on merit, against objective criteria, following public advertisement. They are appointed by the Council's Appointments Committee. The Chief Executive works closely with elected members to deliver Newport's corporate plan. The Chief Executive routinely works evenings as well as the standard Monday to Friday business week. The Chief Executive also heads the 'on call' arrangements particularly to cover emergency planning requirements.

6.3 Chief Executive Pay

The remuneration for the Chief Executive is set out in Appendix B, and the Chief Executive may receive additional payments for any of the elections where they are the Returning Officer.

Details of the Chief Executive's remuneration, including any additional payments are published in the annual accounts of the Council and can be accessed [here](#)

The Chief Executive is a member of the LGPS pension scheme and details are disclosed in the remuneration report. There have been no increases or enhancements to the pension outside of standard arrangements.

The notice period for the role is 3 months.

6.4 Proposals to change the Chief Executive's remuneration

Where the Council proposes to change the Chief Executive's remuneration and the proposed change is not commensurate with a change to the salaries of the authority's other employees, it will consult the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) about the proposed change. The Council will provide the IRPW with all relevant information regarding its proposed change and will have due regard to any IRPW recommendations on the proposals.

The Council is required to declare whether or not any referrals have been made to the IRPW. To date there have been no referrals made to the IRPW regarding any aspects of the Chief Executive's salary in the Council's Pay and Reward Policy.

The Council will have regard to any recommendation received from the IRPW when performing its functions under section 38 or 39 of the Localism Act 2011. This may include any recommendations from the IRPW in relation to a policy within the Council's Pay and Reward Policy regarding severance packages.

6.5 Joint Appointments

The Council's intention is to continue to develop collaborative working on a planned and strategic basis with local authority partners and also with other public sector organisations. Therefore, when senior vacancies arise, including at Chief Officer level, the views of elected Members will be sought as to whether consideration of a joint appointment would be appropriate. If Members are supportive, discussions will take place with partners and neighbouring authorities to determine whether the posts can be reconfigured as a joint appointment, instead of automatically being filled on a like for like basis.

If a decision is made to progress with a joint appointment, both parties will need to reach agreement on the salary and overall remuneration package for the post, and the proportion to this which each party will pay. Where the Council will be the employer of the joint appointee, the determination of salary and other pay arrangements will be in accordance with this Pay and Reward Policy.

Any joint appointments at Chief Officer level will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

7.0 Pay Relativities within the Council

The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid Council employee and that of the Council's Chief Officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out in this Pay and Reward Policy. A copy of the Council's grades for NJC posts is published on the external webpage under the transparency section [here](#).

The lowest paid persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council are employed at spinal column point 1 of the National Joint Council pay spine for Local Government Services which is currently £11.59 per hour (at the time of writing this policy). At any point if the lowest spinal column point within the NJC pay spine falls below the foundation living wage rate, a pay supplement will be applied to 'make up' to the foundation rate. The £11.59 rate is currently predicted to be below the foundation living wage rate of £12.00 from the 1st April 2024 and so, currently a supplement will be applied from April. This supplement will be applied until the NJC pay award for 2024/25 is agreed. When the pay award for 2024/25 is agreed, if the rate of pay of the NJC bottom pay spine continues to be below the foundation living wage the supplement will be adjusted and paid. If the bottom NJC rate is above the foundation living wage the supplement will be removed.

The Council employs Apprentices (and other trainees) it was agreed in October 2023 to amend the salary of Council apprentices to the same level as the Foundation Living Wage.

The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid employees and the Council's Chief Officers is regulated by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out in this Pay and Reward Policy.

The salary utilised for the Chief Officer calculations of all the pay multiple data is £142,639.

As part of its commitment to pay transparency and following the recommendations of the Hutton "Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector" (2011), the Council will publish information on pay relativities on an annual basis. The information for 2023/24 is as follows:

Multiple of Salary	Ratio (A)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the multiple between the annual salary of the lowest paid Council employee and the Chief Executive (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio 	1:6.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the multiple between the annual salary of the lowest paid Council employee and the average Chief Officer (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio 	1:4.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the multiple between median earning of Council employees and the Chief Executive (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio 	1:5.0

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the multiple between median earning of Council employees and the average Chief Officer (full-time equivalent basis) as a ratio 	1:3.4
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Note:

- Column A provides the pay ratio as per the requirement of the Localism Act 2011
- These figures exclude remuneration for appointments within organisations for which the Council provides a payroll service but is not the employer.
- These figures exclude remuneration for joint appointments where the Council is not the employer

Gender Pay

In relation to the gender pay gap, the Council's Gender Pay Gap 2023 report outlines the gender pay gap between men and women in the Council. As at April 2023 the Council had a mean gender pay gap of 1.18% and a median gender pay gap of -0.18%. There is no bonus paid to any employee, therefore no bonus gender pay gap exists, information on our pay gap reporting and quartiles can be found [here](#)

8.0 Starting Pay

New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade for the post. Under exceptional circumstances, and where there are compelling and evidenced reasons to support the decision, a new employee may be appointed to a higher increment. Exceptional reasons may include the need to secure the best candidate and/or having regard to the knowledge, skills and competencies of the individual as well as their current and previous remuneration levels.

All requests to appoint above the minimum of the grade must be agreed by the relevant Head of Service in consultation with their HR&OD Business Partner before any salary offer is made to the candidate. In the case of Chief Officers all requests to appoint above the minimum of the grade must be agreed by the relevant Appointments Committee of the Council.

In addition, all remuneration packages for Chief Officers with a value of £100,000 or more must be approved by the full Council. The remuneration package will include salary, performance related pay, fees or allowances and any benefits in kind.

9.0 Annual Pay Progression arrangements

Pay structures for all employee groups are attached at the appendices as follows:

Appendix A: NCC NJC Salary Structure with Effect from 1 April 2023 (Applicable to National Joint Council for Local Government Employees)

Appendix B: Chief Officer Pay Scales

Appendix C: Soulbury Pay Scale

Appendix D: School Teachers' (Qualified and Unqualified) Pay Ranges and Leadership Group Pay Spines

The pay progression arrangements for the relevant employee groups are outlined below.

9.1 NJC for Local Government Employees

Increments will be paid on 1st April each year until the maximum of the level is reached subject to the following:

(i) In exceptional circumstances, increments may be accelerated within the grade at the discretion of the authority on the grounds of special merit or ability, subject to the maximum of the level not being exceeded in accordance with Head of Service delegation. This will only occur after careful consideration of equal pay requirements and consultation with Human Resources.

(ii) Employees with less than six months' service in the grade by 1st April shall be granted their first increment six months from the actual date of their appointment, promotion or re-grading. All future increments will then be paid on 1 April.

NB: Any action under (i) or (ii) shall not interrupt the payment of subsequent increments on 1 April.

9.2 Chief Officers – Chief Executive and Strategic Directors

The Chief Executive and Strategic Directors will not be paid any annual increment. Any progression within these salary ranges will be based solely on performance in accordance with the agreed performance related pay arrangements.

9.3 Chief Officers – Heads of Service

Increments will be paid to Heads of Service on 1 April each year until the maximum of the level is reached subject to the following:

(i) In exceptional circumstances, increments may be accelerated within the grade at the discretion of the authority on the grounds of special merit or ability, subject to the maximum of the level not being exceeded in accordance with Head of Service delegation. This will only occur after careful consideration of equal pay requirements and consultation with Human Resources.

(ii) Employees with less than six months' service in the grade by 1 April shall be granted their first increment six months from the actual date of their appointment, promotion or re-grading. All future increments will then be paid on 1 April.

NB: Any action under (i) or (ii) shall not interrupt the payment of subsequent increments on 1 April.

9.4 Employees on Soulbury salary scales

Increments will be paid on 1 September each year until the maximum of the level is reached subject to the following:

(i) In exceptional circumstances, increments may be accelerated within the grade at the discretion of the authority on the grounds of special merit or ability, subject to the maximum of the level not being exceeded in accordance with Head of Service delegation. This will only occur after careful consideration of equal pay requirements and consultation with Human Resources

(ii) Employees with less than six months' service in the grade by 1 September shall be granted their first increment six months from the actual date of their appointment, promotion or re-grading. All future increments will then be paid on 1 September.

(iii) Structured Professional Assessment points will be paid in accordance with the provisions of the Soulbury Committee and the Council's Soulbury Guidance note.

The small group of employees who remain subject to the local agreement reached in June 2005 for employees within school improvement posts are employed on 'spot points' and are therefore not entitled to receive annual increments.

9.5 Withholding an increment

For all employees in posts subject to incremental progression, an increment may be withheld due to poor performance. This will only apply where formal capability procedures are being followed in accordance with the Council's Capability Policy. Any increment withheld may be paid subsequently if the employee's performance improves.

9.6 Teachers and School Leaders

Progression for teachers paid on the main or upper pay ranges will be in accordance with the provisions of the STPCD (Wales) 2023; any pay movement, where awarded, applies from 1 September each year. Teachers employed on the Leadership spine (Head Teachers, Deputies and Assistant Head Teachers) are eligible to progress within the pay range for their post on 1 September each year until the maximum point is reached. Progression is subject to meeting the requirements for movement set out in the STPCD (Wales) 2023.

10.0 Pay on Promotion or Transfer

10.1 Move to a new post at the same level

Where an employee moves to a new permanent post at the same level, they will normally be appointed on the same salary point and retain the incremental date (where this is relevant) from their original post.

10.2 Pay on promotion

Where an employee receives a promotion, they will normally be appointed on the minimum point for the new post subject to them receiving a minimum of one increment above their current spinal point in their pre-promotion post.

All requests to appoint above the minimum of the level must be agreed by the relevant Head of Service, in consultation with their HR&OD Business Partner before any salary offer is made.

In the case of Chief Officers all requests to appoint above the minimum of the grade must be agreed by the relevant Appointments Committee of the Council.

11.0 Allowances: Overtime, Bank Holiday Working, Night Work, Standby

Employees on all terms and conditions, other than Chief Officers and teachers, may be paid allowances, where appropriate, in accordance with the relevant provisions of their terms and conditions of employment as supplemented by local agreement.

Chief Officers and teachers are not eligible for such allowances but are expected to undertake duties outside their contractual hours and working patterns as is commensurate with their salary level without additional payment.

12.0 Additional Payments – All Employees

Employees on all terms and conditions may be eligible for the following additional payments unless otherwise stated:

12.1 Additional Duties Scheme

There may be occasions when an employee is asked to carry out additional duties at a higher level to those of their substantive post for a period of time. In such circumstances an additional payment may be made in line with the Council's Additional Duties Scheme, which can be found [here](#).

N.B. Under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (Wales) 2023, there are no provisions which allow for the payment of honoraria to teachers.

12.2 Professional Fees

The Council does not pay or reimburse professional/registration fees with the exception of one designated Environmental Health post in order to retain NCC's accreditation status as a training centre with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

12.3 Market Supplements

Within a diverse workforce encompassing highly skilled professional and technical roles the Council recognises there may be occasions where market forces produce a situation where, in exceptional circumstances, the Council may offer an additional temporary supplement to the pay of a post.

The Council has a Market Supplement Scheme for Local Government Service employees to ensure that requirement for any market pay supplements is objectively justified. With the exception of teachers, the Scheme may apply to other posts within the council.

Supplements are subject to regular review and can be withdrawn where no longer considered justifiable.

12.4 Additional Payments under the STPCD (Wales) 2023

The STPCD (Wales) 2023 makes provision for the following additional allowances/payments for teachers, subject to the necessary criteria being met:

- Teaching and Learning Responsibility Allowances
- Special Educational Need Allowances
- Recruitment or Retention Incentives and Benefits
- Payments for participation in continuing professional development undertaken outside the school day, out-of-school hours learning activities, activities relating to the provision of initial teaching training and / or additional responsibilities and activities
- learning activities

Where the Council has centrally employed teaching staff, it may make use of the above allowances, subject to meeting the relevant provisions of the STPCD (Wales) 2023.

12.5 Travel and Subsistence Expenses

The Council's Travel and Subsistence Policy seeks to ensure that no employees will be financially disadvantaged whilst undertaking duties which take them from their normal place of work. Employees will be reimbursed additional travelling or subsistence expenses incurred in the course of their work in accordance with this policy, subject to evidence of expenditure being produced. Details of the current rates for travelling and subsistence expenses can be found [here](#).

13.0 Returning Officer

The Council has agreed that the Chief Executive undertakes the role of Returning Officer in respect of local and national elections.

The Returning Officer is an officer of the City Council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst appointed by the Council, the role of the Returning Officer is one which involves and incurs personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from their duties as an employee of the Council. As Returning Officer, they are paid a separate allowance for each election for which they are responsible.

Other Council staff may undertake duties on behalf of the Returning Officer, e.g. polling clerks, count supervisors, etc. They will receive separate payments for these duties based on their role in any election process.

14.0 Employee Benefits

In addition to an employee's salary, the Council is able to offer a comprehensive range of benefits designed to enhance the work / life balance of our employees. The current benefits include:

- the Local Government/Teachers' Pension Schemes as applicable
- annual leave entitlements in addition to bank holiday entitlement
- The option to purchase up to one week of additional annual leave
- learning and development opportunities
- flexible working arrangements
- employee wellbeing schemes, such as counselling
- childcare vouchers
- cycle-to-work scheme
- car lease scheme
- technology purchase scheme
- discounted gym and leisure membership
- use of the Vectis card scheme to provide retail discounts
- access to financial support and advice
- pay advance facility
- advance loans for sustainable rail and bus travel
- access to shared cost additional voluntary contributions schemes.

15.0 Detriment Arrangements

15.1 All employees except Teaching staff

The Council has a non-contractual Detriment Scheme for those employees whose posts are downgraded as a consequence of implementing structural change. This can be found on the Council's Intranet. Detriment arrangements will not apply where the move to a lower graded post is voluntary.

15.2 Teaching Staff

There are specific statutory arrangements in place for teachers whose posts are downgraded as a result of implementing structural change or because of the implementation of school reorganisations. These provisions are outlined in the STPCD (Wales) 2023.

16.0 Termination of Employment

16.1 Payments on Termination

Where an employee's employment is brought to an end on grounds of redundancy or early retirement, they will receive payment on termination of their employment in accordance with the Council's Redundancy Payments and Early Retirement Guidance and discretions relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme policy. This guidance sets out the Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment of all employees, prior to reaching normal retirement age. It includes the Council's discretions in accordance with the following statutory regulations:

- The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006
- The Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007, The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions & Savings) Regulations 2014
- The Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2010 and Teachers (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations.

Chief Officer severance packages above £100,000 must be agreed by full Council. The severance /redundancy package includes any redundancy payment, contractual notice period and full cost of early release of pension (as required under Regulation 68 (2) of the Local Government Pension Scheme).

Payments to the Chief Executive falling outside these provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the Leader and Deputy Leader.

Other payments to other Chief Officers falling outside these provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation.

16.2 Re-employment following termination

The Council will not re-employ ex-employees who have been made voluntarily redundant (or left in the "efficient exercise of the service") until a period of 24 months from their leaving date has expired. The same restriction will apply in respect of the placement of such ex-employees via employment agencies or as self-employed consultants under a contract for services. For the avoidance of doubt this restriction does not apply to employees who were made compulsory redundant. Where a former employee is re-employed at Chief Officer level, the appointment will be subject to the approval of full Council in accordance with the provisions of the Council's constitution.

The Council will not re-employ staff whose termination of employment is covered by a Settlement Agreement or COT3. The same restriction will apply in respect of the placement of such ex-employees via Employment Agencies or as self-employed consultants under a contract for services.

Delegated authority will be given to the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors (for posts in their respective services), Head of People, Policy and Transformation and the Head of Law and Standards to consider any pre or post termination requests to waive this policy provision on a case by case basis. A number of factors will be relevant in considering requests to waive this policy provision including, financial, working relationships and trust and confidence (this is not an exhaustive list). In the event that a request to waive is agreed, ex-employees will not be able to recommence employment with the Council (after an open advertisement and successful outcome from a recruitment and selection process) until a period of time has elapsed that is equal in length to the number of weeks' pay their redundancy or compensation payment equates to.

17.0 Confidentiality

The application of this Pay and Reward Policy will be undertaken in an open and transparent way but the salary details of individual members of staff shall remain confidential. Where the Council is required to publish salary information in accordance with the provisions of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005, this information is published on an anonymised basis due to the requirements of the current Data Protection Act.

18.0 Workforce Information

It is recognised that accurate workforce data is critical to the management of the Council's most valuable and costly resource, its employees, and to the implementation of this Pay and Reward Policy. People, Transformation and Policy will be responsible for analysing the data that is currently collected in order to inform any future proposed changes to this policy/related policy and in order to fully understand the financial context.

19.0 Partnership with Trades Unions

The Council will endeavour to maintain the joint working approach that it has developed with its recognised Trade Unions and will continue to work closely with them on pay related matters. There has been consultation with representatives of the recognised Trade Unions during the development of this Pay and Reward Policy. Collective bargaining processes will be followed as appropriate for any proposed changes to pay and/or allowances.

20.0 Publication

Following approval by the full Council, and in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act, this Pay and Reward Policy will be published on the Council's Website.

In addition, for posts where the full-time equivalent salary is at least £60,000, in accordance with the provisions of Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note setting out:

- the total amount of salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the postholder in the current and previous year
- any bonuses so paid or receivable by the postholder in the current and previous year
- any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax
- any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination
- any benefits received that do not fall within the above.

21.0 Policy Review

This Pay and Reward Policy outlines the current position in respect of pay and reward within the Council. It will be reviewed and reported to Council on an annual basis to ensure it meets the principles of fairness, equality, accountability and value for money for the authority and its residents.

This Pay and Reward Policy is updated and approved by Council on an annual basis. This statement will come into immediate effect once fully endorsed by Council at its meeting in March 2024.

Appendix A: NJC FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS SALARY RATES 1 APRIL 2023

Spinal Column Point	Annual Salary £	Monthly Salary £	Weekly Salary £	Hourly Rate (37) £		
1	0	0	0	0		
2	22,366	1,863.83	428.94	11.5929	(210-253)	
3	22,737	1,894.75	436.05	11.7852		Grade 2
4	23,114	1,926.17	443.28	11.9806		(254-297)
5	23,500	1,958.33	450.68	12.1806	Grade 3	
6	23,893	1,991.08	458.22	12.3843	(298-341)	
7	24,294	2,024.50	465.91	12.5922		
8	24,702	2,058.50	473.74	12.8037		Grade 4
9	25,119	2,093.25	481.73	13.0198		(342-397)
10	25,545	2,128.75	489.90	13.2406		
11	25,979	2,164.92	498.23	13.4656		
12	26,421	2,201.75	506.70	13.6947		
13	26,873	2,239.42	515.37	13.9290		
14	27,334	2,277.83	524.21	14.1679	Grade 5	
15	27,803	2,316.92	533.21	14.4110	(398-453)	
16	28,282	2,356.83	542.39	14.6593		
17	28,770	2,397.50	551.75	14.9122		
18	29,269	2,439.08	561.32	15.1709		
19	29,777	2,481.42	571.06	15.4342		
20	30,296	2,524.67	581.02	15.7032		Grade 6
21	30,825	2,568.75	591.16	15.9774		(454-509)
22	31,364	2,613.67	601.50	16.2567		
23	32,076	2,673.00	615.15	16.6258		
24	33,024	2,752.00	633.34	17.1172	Grade 7	
25	33,945	2,828.75	651.00	17.5945	(510-565)	
26	34,834	2,902.83	668.05	18.0553		
27	35,745	2,978.75	685.52	18.5275		
28	36,648	3,054.00	702.84	18.9956		Grade 8
29	37,336	3,111.33	716.03	19.3522		(566-621)
30	38,223	3,185.25	733.04	19.8119		

31	39,186	3,265.50	751.51	20.3111		
32	40,221	3,351.75	771.36	20.8476	Grade 9	
33	41,418	3,451.50	794.32	21.4680	(622-677)	
34	42,403	3,533.58	813.21	21.9785		
35	43,421	3,618.42	832.73	22.5062		
36	44,428	3,702.33	852.04	23.0281		Grade 10
37	45,441	3,786.75	871.47	23.5532		(678-743)
38	46,464	3,872.00	891.09	24.0835		
39	47,420	3,951.67	909.42	24.5790	Grade 11	
40	48,474	4,039.50	929.64	25.1253	(744-809)	
41	49,498	4,124.83	949.27	25.6561		
42	50,512	4,209.33	968.72	26.1816		Grade 12
43	51,515	4,292.92	987.96	26.7015		(810-875)
44	52,750	4,395.83	1,011.64	27.3417		
45	54,025	4,502.08	1,036.09	28.0025	Grade 13	
46	55,328	4,610.67	1,061.08	28.6779	(876-941)	
47	56,655	4,721.25	1,086.53	29.3657		
48	58,022	4,835.17	1,112.75	30.0743		Grade 14
49	59,418	4,951.50	1,139.52	30.7978		(942-1007)
50	60,858	5,071.50	1,167.14	31.5442		
51	62,331	5,194.25	1,195.39	32.3077	Grade 15	
52	63,837	5,319.75	1,224.27	33.0883	(1008+)	
53	65,378	5,448.17	1,253.82	33.8871		

Appendix B: CHIEF OFFICER SALARY RATES – 1 APRIL 2023

JOB TITLE	GRADE	SCALE	ANNUAL SALARY £
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	MD01	001	135,842
		002	142,639
		003	149,436
		004	156,235
STRATEGIC DIRECTORS	CD01	001	114,391
		002	118,553
		003	120,352
		004	124,429
HEADS OF SERVICE	HDS01	001	84,919
		002	86,995
		003	89,116
		004	91,289

Appendix C: SOULBURY SALARY RATES – 1 SEPTEMBER 2023
i) EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROFESSIONALS (EIPs)

SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 1.9.23	SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 1.9.23
1	40540	26	73173
2	41920	27	74403
3	43224	28	75650
4	44545	29	76899
5	45857	30	78146
6	47170	31	79382
7	48550	32	80637
8	49878	33	81894
9	51425	34	83180
10	52805	35	84465
11	54166	36	85784
12	55484	37	87083
13	56976	38	88396
14	58308	39	89691
15	59777	40	90985
16	61106	41	92285
17	62440	42	93585
18	63748	43	94883
19	65097	44	96189
20	65794	45	97490
21	67133	46	98794
22	68301	47	100102
23	69586	48	101399
24	70739	49	102700
25	71971	50	104004

NOTES:

Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points, based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit and motivate employees.

* normal minimum point for EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level

** normal minimum point for senior EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level

*** normal minimum point for leading EIP undertaking the full range of duties at this level

**** extension to range to accommodate structured professional assessments.

ii) EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS - SCALE A	
SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 1.9.23
1	42422
2	44474
3	46525
4	48575
5	50627
6	52678
7	54609
8	56540
9	58348
10	60160
11	61848

NOTE:

*The 11-point scale A provides for up to 3 additional SPA points to be added to the post holder entitlement on the appropriate 6-point range

ii) SENIOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

SENIOR AND PRINCIPAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS (B) SALARY RANGE			
SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 1.9.23	SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 1.9.23
1	52678	10	66425
2	54609	11	67706
3	56540	12	69010
4	58348	13	70337
5	60160	14	71621
6	61848	15	72966
7	62540	16	74297
8	63836	17	75637
9	65120	18	76976

NOTES:

Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points, based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit, retain and motivate employees.

* Normal minimum point for the principal educational psychologist undertaking the full range of duties at this level

** Extension to range to accommodate discretionary scale points and structured professional assessments

Appendix D: **TEACHERS' SALARY RATES – 1 SEPTEMBER 2023**i) **TEACHER PAY RANGES**

QUALIFIED TEACHERS –	WALES		
MAIN RANGE	£ p.a.	UPPER PAY RANGE	£ p.a.
M1		UPS1	41927
M2(min)	29278	UPS2	43481
M3	31630	UPS3	45085
M4	34067		
M5	36749		
M6 (max)	40443		

UNQUALIFIED TEACHERS –	WALES
1	19689
2	21979
3	24268
4	26557
5	28849
6	31139

ii) **ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCES / PAYMENTS**

TEACHING AND LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY (TLR) PAYMENTS	ANNUAL ALLOWANCE £		ANNUAL ALLOWANCE £	
TLR 3 BAND (fixed-term award only)	Minimum	619	Maximum	3,071
TLR 2 BAND	Minimum	3,115	Maximum	7,605
TLR 1 BAND	Minimum	8,986	Maximum	15,204
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) ALLOWANCES	ANNUAL ALLOWANCE £			
SEN RANGE	Minimum	2,461	Maximum	4,855

iii) PAY SPINE FOR THE LEADERSHIP GROUP

(This spine applies to Headteachers, Deputy Headteacher, and Assistant Headteachers)

LEADERSHIP PAY – 1/9/23			
	WALES		
MAIN RANGE	£ p.a.		
1	45725	24*	79713
2	46869	24	80510
3	498039	25	82510
4	49235	26	84552
5	50461	27*	85789
6	51729	27	56647
7	53120	28	88796
8	54346	29	90995
9	55702	30	93260
10	57133	31*	94616
11	58616	31	95564
12	59967	32	97939
13	61466	33	100371
14	62998	34	102853
15	64565	35*	104366
16	66283	35	105410
17	67804	36	108019
18*	68821	37	110704
18	69509	38	113444
19	71234	39*	115058
20	72999	39	116209
21*	74065	40	119108
21	74806	41	122084
22	76663	42	125142
23	78561	43	127000

*These points and point 43 are the maximum salaries for the eight headteacher group ranges

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Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 23 April 2024

Subject Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 2028

Purpose To present Newport City Council's draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 and seek Council's approval for formal adoption.

Author Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Ward All

Summary Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, local authorities in Wales must develop and publish a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) that sets out the objectives it wants to achieve over a four-year period. Newport City Council's first SEP was published in 2012 and our current plan runs until the end of financial year.

To meet statutory requirements, the Council must develop and publish a new SEP, which sets out its Equality Objectives to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty for the next four-year cycle, 2024 – 2028.

Proposal Full Council to agree the adoption of the attached Strategic Equality Plan

Action by Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Timetable Immediate

To meet statutory requirements, the draft Strategic Equality Plan is published on the Council's website and will be updated following Council approval by the end of April.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Management Team
- Executive Board
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation
- Strategic Director, Transformation and Corporate
- Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation
- The Council's Strategic Equalities Group
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Newport City Council Cabinet Members

Signed

Background

Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brought together and replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The Act includes a public sector equality duty (the general duty), replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality.

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Act
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Disability
- Marriage and civil partnership (in relation to employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief

Local authorities in Wales are also subject to the requirements set out in the above-mentioned Regulations, namely, to prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years, and the requirement to have a Strategic Equality Plan which sets out how these objectives will be met. Objectives must relate to all protected characteristics, and effective arrangements must be in place to monitor progress made against them.

Objectives should be developed through consideration of a listed body's work and activities, including employment, service delivery and policy development. This analysis should be informed by engagement with people that share protected characteristics, gathering and analysing information, and assessing equality impact. Engagement is a key opportunity to gather information about which areas of work may be of interest to people with particular protected characteristics.

Development of Equality Objectives

The development of our draft Equality Objectives started with examining the broad themes identified across the Council's existing strategic documents, including our [Corporate Plan](#) and the [Gwent Well-being Assessment](#). These documents identify prevalent issues and highlight some key areas of focus based on an understanding of local or national need and existing research.

As part of this process, we also considered key external documents, such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) State of the Nation 'Is Wales Fairer' reports (2018 & 2023), which provide a comprehensive overview of equality in Wales and support evidence-based decision making to address inequality. To ensure our draft objectives aligned with national priorities, we also mapped our draft

Equality Objectives against the Welsh Government's strategies and plans, which set out actions to deliver a more fair and equitable Wales, including key policy interventions such as the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) and [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#).

As with the protected characteristics under the Equality Act, we have also considered the challenges encountered by people with care experience following the unanimous agreement of the motion to adopt care experience as a protected characteristic by the Council.

Through this work, the Council drafted six Equality Objectives that are focused on the following areas:

- **Equality Objective 1 (Leadership, Governance & Involvement)** - Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- **Equality Objective 2 (Customer Service and Access)** - Newport City Council's services are accessible to everyone in Newport, providing services that are both inclusive and considerate of individual need.
- **Equality Objective 3 (Representative Workforce)** - Newport City Council has a workforce that represents the city and is a workplace with an inclusive culture which recruits, develops and retains staff.
- **Equality Objective 4 (Community Cohesion)** - Newport City Council promotes positive relationships between different communities, supporting integration and effectively identifying emerging community tensions.
- **Equality Objective 5 (Equity in Education)** - Newport City Council supports schools and settings to positively address any inequality in provision, attainment, and early career pathways, of known groups of vulnerable and learners with disabilities.
- **Equality Objective 6 (Independent Living)** - Newport City Council contributes to the city being a great place to live, to grow older and live independently, and has in place a range of services that accommodates people in different situations.

Public engagement and consultation were undertaken following the endorsement of our draft Equality Objectives as a basis for consultation by the Council's Strategic Equality Group. The main aim of this consultation was to capture the views and opinions of Newport residents, particularly those from seldom heard communities with protected characteristics, and other key stakeholders on our draft Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan, including their thoughts on what actions we could take to tackle inequality and promote inclusion.

The results from our different consultation exercises suggest that Newport residents felt we were focusing on the right equality objectives. The majority of people agreed with our draft objectives. However, they also highlighted the inequalities that exist within local communities and gave us a clear steer on how we can improve our services and advance equality for everyone.

A Consultation Report will be published alongside the Strategic Equality Plan to provide further detail on the methods and outcomes of engagement, engagement by protected characteristic, links to wider council priorities, and how local and national evidence has informed the development of the objectives.

Governance

The delivery of the SEP will be underpinned by a series of comprehensive operational delivery plans, and specific delivery groups will be established to ensure the operational delivery of Equality Objectives.

Respective objective leads will provide quarterly reports to the Council's Strategic Equality Group (SEG), which will monitor and support progress against Equality Objectives throughout the year. SEG is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation, who also has responsibility for Equalities, and membership includes representation from Newport Fairness Commission, Trade Unions, Elected Member Equality Champions, Staff Equality Network Chairs, service area leads and senior officers.

In addition, annual reports summarising the progress we have made as an authority against each Equality Objective will be compiled at the end of every financial year for consideration by our Scrutiny Committee then presented to Cabinet and Council before publication on the Council's website, in accordance with statutory deadlines.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The cost of implementing the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives is met out of existing budgets by each relevant service area.

Risks

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
SEP and Equality Objectives are not formally adopted or published	H	L	A draft SEP has been developed and taken through relevant governance processes for approval	Executive Board, Head of People, Policy and Transformation
SEP and Equality Objectives are not implemented or reviewed	H	L	Delivery of the SEP will be underpinned by a series of comprehensive operational delivery plans. Progress against Equality Objectives will be monitored and supported by the Strategic Equality Group.	Strategic Equality Group, Policy and Partnership Manager, Senior Equalities Officer
Equality commitments are not understood by members and staff, including senior leaders	M	L	Mandated Equalities training is regularly delivered to staff and members. This training will be updated to include new priorities and clarify Equality commitments of all members and staff	Head of People, Policy and Partnership, Head of Law and Standards, Policy and Partnership Manager, Senior Equalities Officer

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

[Corporate Plan 2022 - 27](#)

[People Plan 2023 - 28](#)

[Digital Strategy 2022 - 27](#)

The SEP also considers the priorities identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) [Is Wales Fairer? \(2023\)](#) report and the Welsh Government's strategies and plans, which set out actions to deliver a more fair and equitable Wales, including key policy interventions such as the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) and [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#).

Options Available and considered

1. Council to agree the adoption of attached Strategic Equality Plan
2. Council to not approve the attached plan and redraft.

Preferred Option and Why

1. Council to agree the adoption of attached Strategic Equality Plan to ensure publication on the Council's website in accordance with statutory deadlines.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposal to adopt the plan, as the cost of implementing the plan will be met from existing service areas budgets.

The Strategic Equality Plan and the general obligations and requirements under the Act are key issues in the planning and delivering of services and therefore a key consideration in the Council's financial planning and budgets. Established budget setting processes allow for this consideration.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council's legal duties are set out in the report. There are no further legal implications.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

The Council's Strategic Equality Plan sets out clear Equality Objectives and outcomes to support the Council in meeting its statutory duties under the Equality Act over the next four years. It builds on the positive work delivered in our previous SEPs and was developed following consultation with residents, including equality stakeholder groups. The Plan also contributes towards achieving the well-being objectives in the Council's new Corporate Plan and Wales well-being goals, particularly the vision for '**A More Equal Wales**, and '**A Wales of Cohesive Communities**'.

There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

Scrutiny Committees

The draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024 -2028 was presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OMSC) on 8 March 2024. The full details will be published in the minutes of the Committee meeting on the Council's democracy pages.

The Committee thanked officers for their work and made the following recommendations:

- The Committee recommended more promotion of this plan with the youth population – either as a shortened/more accessible report, or a graphic etc.
- The Committee recommended using data to reinforce successes or challenges where it is meaningful in annual reports.
- The Committee recommended that the final Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report for 2023/24 includes a summary of work done within the plan period.
- The Committee emphasised the importance of accessibility for residents with low digital skills, elderly residents or those who don't choose to engage with the Council digitally.

In line with OMSC's recommendations, the final version of the Strategic Equality Plan will be made available in Easy Read and other formats to improve accessibility.

Cabinet

The draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 was approved at the Council's Cabinet meeting on 10 April with cabinet member agreement to present at Council.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

A full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) was undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 2028 and published on the Council's website (available in Welsh [here](#) and English [here](#)).

This FEIA considers our legislative responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), including the Socio-economic Duty, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011).

Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

In terms of the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act and consideration of the sustainable development principle, 5 ways of working:

Long Term - The delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan, Equality Objectives, and associated actions aim to influence the way that the Council makes decisions that have a long-term impact on communities.

Preventative - The Equality Objectives and associated actions within the Strategic Equality Plan have been developed to address inequality within service provision, the workforce, and the wider community. This includes early intervention to prevent the identified problems from worsening and actions to promote equality of opportunity and outcome.

Integration – While the Strategic Equality Plan cuts across all of Wales well-being goals, this plan will particularly support progress to achieve the vision for A More Equal Wales and A Wales of cohesive communities. Similarly, the delivery of this plan and work within this area align with and contribute to achieving the well-being objectives in the Council's new Corporate Plan.

Collaboration - Collaboration is key to delivering against the Equality Objectives set. We recognise to achieve our priorities we must work collaboratively with a range of key internal and external stakeholders, including the Strategic Equality Group, Equality Objective leads, service delivery groups and community partners.

Involvement – The Council engaged with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders in the development of this plan. Engagement and consultation with key stakeholders, including Newport residents, equality stakeholder groups, community partners and other interested parties will remain consistent throughout the delivery of this plan.

Consultation

Public engagement and consultation were undertaken following the endorsement of our draft Equality Objectives as a basis for consultation by the Council's Strategic Equality Group. The main aim of this consultation was to capture the views and opinions of Newport residents, particularly those from seldom heard communities and other key stakeholders on our draft Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan, including their thoughts on what actions we could take to tackle inequality and promote inclusion.

The Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 28 Consultation Report (available [here](#)), which accompanies this strategy, provides further information on the consultation process that informed its development.

Background Papers

[NCC Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24](#)

[Corporate Plan 2022-27](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

[Socio-economic Duty Guidance](#)

[The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)

[Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee papers March 2024](#)

[Cabinet papers April 2024](#)

Dated: April 2024



NEWPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYDD

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL DRAFT STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024 - 2028

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd cymunedol a fformatau eraill ar gais.

This document is available in Welsh, and community languages or other formats on request.

FOREWORD

DRAFT

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ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

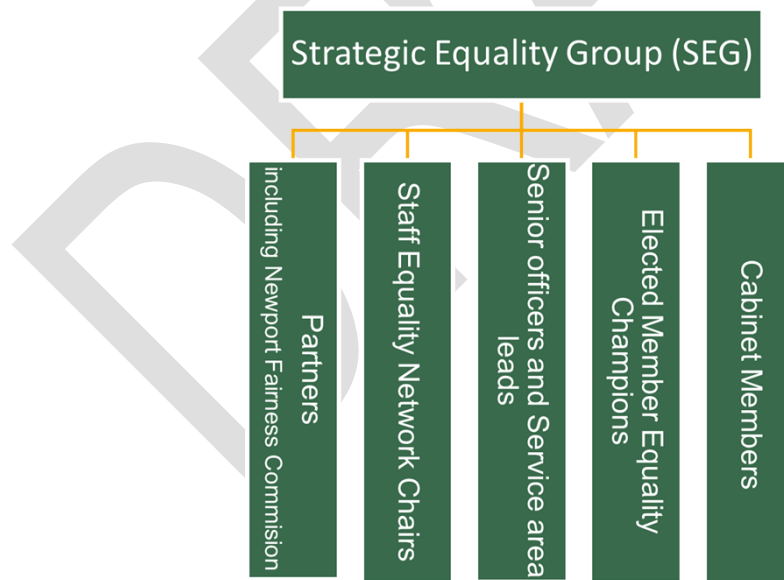
Under the Equality Act (2010), each local authority in Wales must publish a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) that sets out the objectives it wants to achieve over a four-year period. These priorities are called “Equality Objectives.”

Building on the work delivered in our previous SEPs, this plan outlines how Newport City Council will meet the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and our priorities to advance equality for protected groups, people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in every aspect of our work. The strategy runs for four years, beginning in April 2024 and finishing in March 2028.

In this strategy, we have tried to be explicit about how our equality objectives will make a real difference to how we deliver services and to the lives of people in Newport. Within each objective, we have identified clear outcomes we are working towards and actions that will contribute to us achieving those outcomes. You can also see which groups we believe will benefit most from our objectives and actions.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO MONITOR THE STRATEGY?

Delivery of the SEP will be underpinned by a series of comprehensive operational delivery plans and supported by our Strategic Equality Group. This group is chaired by the Cabinet Member lead for Equalities, and membership includes representation from Newport’s Fairness Commission, Trade Unions, Elected Member Equality Champions, Staff Equality Network Chairs, service area leads and senior officers. The Council’s Overview Scrutiny and Management Committee will have responsibility for the scrutiny and monitoring of the SEP’s progress, and update reports will be received by the committee at least annually.



In addition to this level of scrutiny from within the organisation, we will publish annual reports summarising the progress we have made as an authority against each Equality Objective. These will be compiled at the end of every financial year and are considered by our Scrutiny Committee then presented to Cabinet and Council before publication on the Council’s website, in accordance with statutory deadlines.

Annual reports from our previous Strategic Equality Plans are available on our [website](#).

OUR EQUALITIES DUTIES

The Equality Act 2010 brings together separate pieces of legislation into one single Act to improve protection for everyone. The Act includes a general duty (also known as the Public Sector Equality Duty or PSED) that aims to ensure public bodies consider how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their work, including decision making, policy development, and service delivery.

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY (PSED)

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, sets out a legal requirement for Newport City Council and other public organisations when making decisions and delivering services to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained later in this report).
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

WHO IS PROTECTED UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?

The Equality Act 2010 introduced nine protected characteristics, which are characteristics where evidence shows people may experience discrimination.

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Gender Reassignment
- ▶ Pregnancy and Maternity
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Religion or Belief
- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Sexual orientation
- ▶ Marriage and Civil Partnership

Everyone has one or more protected characteristic, and the Act also makes it against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristic(s). It also requires our Strategic Equality Plan to be explicit about how our plan relates to different protected characteristics. If our plan does not impact on a protected characteristic, the Act asks us to explain why.

CARE EXPERIENCE

At its meeting in January 2024, our Council unanimously agreed on a motion to adopt care experience as a protected characteristic in acknowledgement of recommendations by the Children and Young People's Education Committee established by the Senedd Welsh Parliament. As with the protected characteristics under the Equality Act, we have considered the challenges encountered by people with care experience, including Looked After Children, Care Leavers, and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in developing our Equality Objectives and tried to be explicit about how this plan will improve outcomes for this group.

We will continue to consider the impact on people with care experience along with our statutory duties in decision making, policy development and service delivery.

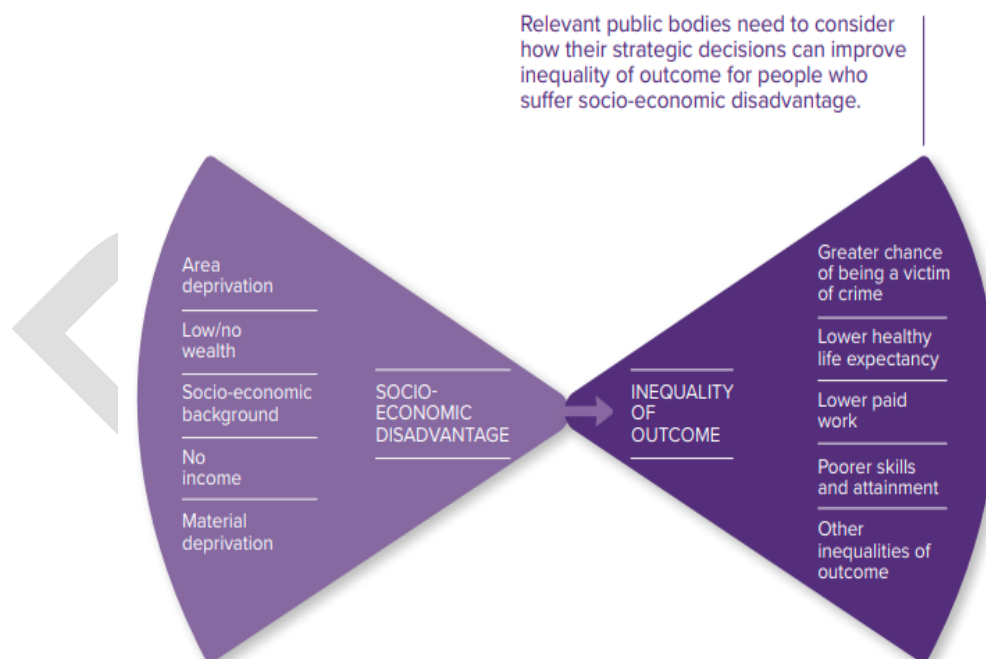
WELSH SPECIFIC DUTIES

To support the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Equality Act 2010 allows for the enactment of specific duties. In Wales, the PSED goes further and contains specific statutory duties also known as the [Wales Specific Equality Duty](#) which public bodies in Wales must comply with. Welsh regulations cover the following areas:

- Equality Objectives
- Engagement
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)
- Equality Information
- Employment Information
- Pay Difference
- Staff Training
- Strategic Equality Plan
- Procurement

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

The [Socio-economic Duty](#) came into effect in Wales on the 31st of March 2021. This duty requires public bodies, including Newport City Council, to consider the need to reduce inequalities experienced because of Socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions, such as, setting strategic objectives or developing public services.



In our previous Strategic Equality Plan, we embedded Welsh Government’s statutory guidance on the Socio-economic Duty in council processes, including strategic decision-making. This duty will remain an important part of the delivery of this plan.

OTHER RELATED DUTIES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

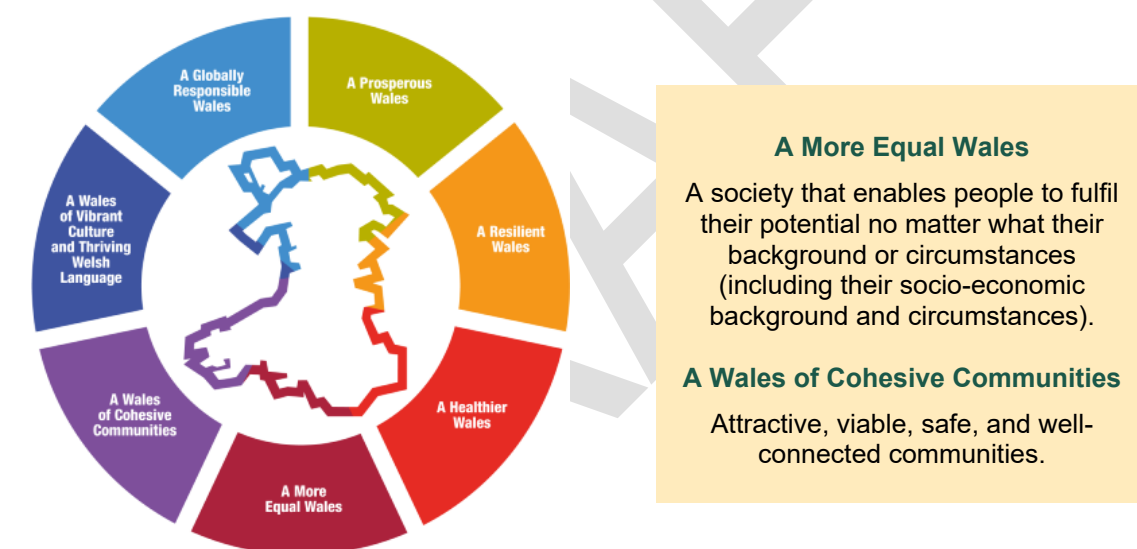
We have also tried to make sure that this strategy aligns with other related statutory duties and other key strategic documents, as well as considering Welsh Government priorities and national research.

THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act places a duty (also known as the Well-being Duty) on all public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of our decisions and to collaborate with our communities, people, and each other to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. While the Act's Well-being duty is embedded in Council processes and our Equality Objectives cut across all of Wales well-being goals, this plan will particularly support progress to achieve the vision for **A More Equal Wales** and **A Wales of cohesive communities**.

Wales Well-being Goals



Sustainable Development Principle



This Act also puts in place a sustainable development principle that helps organisations consider the impact they could have on people living in Wales in the future and ensures they are focused on tackling long-term challenges. Throughout the delivery of this plan, we will ensure our decisions promote or advance the five ways of working that underpin this principle.

CORPORATE PLAN 2022 - 2027

In November 2022, Newport City Council approved its new Corporate Plan 2022-27 to deliver 'an Ambitious, Fairer and Greener Newport for everyone'. In line with the overarching aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Newport City Council's Corporate Plan recognises the role of the Council in advancing equity internally and in local communities over the next five years. The delivery of this plan will support us to meet our statutory duties, support our Strategic Equality Plan and contribute to Wales's Well-being Goal of "A More Equal Wales" set in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

We have also aligned our SEP with the priorities and themes in other key Council strategic documents, such as our People Plan 2023-2028 and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy 2022 – 2027.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT DUTY

Newport City Council is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, which means that we seek to ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in accessing our services due to military life. The Covenant relates to our services generally, but new legislation, the Armed Forces Act 2021, places a duty on the Council to consider the circumstances of the Armed Forces Community in the areas of housing, education, and healthcare. To fulfil this duty, we have embedded consideration of the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant into our Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) process to ensure we consider the impact of our decisions on this community.

WELSH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PLANS

In the development of our Strategic Equality Plan, we have worked to align our Equality Objectives and associated actions with the Welsh Government's strategies and plans, which set out actions to deliver a more fair and equitable Wales, including the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) and [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#).

During the delivery of this plan, we will continue to review our Equality Objectives and actions to ensure alignment with key policy interventions, for example, the forthcoming Disability Rights Action Plan for Wales and HIV Action Plan for Wales

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (EHRC): IS WALES FAIRER REPORT

The EHRC's [Is Wales Fairer? \(2023\)](#) report provides a comprehensive overview of equality and human rights in Wales. It focuses on the nine characteristics established by the Equality Act 2010 and key priority areas, including human rights and socio-economic status. This State of the Nation report aims to support evidence-based decisions by public bodies and drive action and meaningful change to make life fairer for everyone.










This report's findings provide a complete picture of people's life chances in Wales. It also contains key recommendations to promote equality for everyone, which have informed the development of our SEP for 2024-2028, including our Equality Objectives and associated actions. We will continue to draw on this report's data and evidence to support our decision-making, policy, and service development processes.

ABOUT US

Newport is a coastal city with a rich industrial heritage and a long history of welcoming people from across the world to settle and contribute to the growth and success of the city. In the last 10 years, Newport's population has grown by 9.5% to 159,600, and it has remained home to one of Wales' most diverse and multicultural populations. The authority is also one of the largest employers in the local area with 60.2% % of our employees living within council boundaries.

Our Corporate Plan is framed around four main objectives, and aims to deliver an ambitious, fairer, greener Newport for everyone and this means everyone, irrespective of protected characteristics, care experience, socio-economic background, or any other factor.

KEY FACTS ABOUT NEWPORT

		
Newport's population saw the greatest increase in Wales, with a rise of 9.5% to 159,600 in 2021.	51% of the city's population is female 49% of the city's population is male	20.2% % of the population is below the age of 16 (slightly higher than the Welsh average)
		
62.9% of the population is between the ages of 16 and 64 (slightly higher than the Welsh average)	17.0% of the population is over the age of 65 (slightly lower than the Welsh average)	10.0% of the population self-identified as being disabled and limited a lot (slightly higher than the Welsh average)
		Sexual orientation
19.7% of the population comes from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (figure includes White minorities)	The top three religions in the Newport are: No religion (43.0%), Christianity (42.8%), and Islam (7.1%)	2.9% of the population identifies as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or other minority sexual orientations
Gender Reassignment	Care Experience	
Newport has the third largest proportion (0.6%) of the usual resident populations aged 16 and over identifying with a gender different to their sex registered at birth in Wales	348 Children and young people Looked After, 227 Care Leavers and 30 registered as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Feb 24) with a much wider number of care leavers across the population	54.1% of households in Newport are in material deprivation (same as the Welsh average)

OUR CONSULTATION

In developing this Plan, we have used a range of consultation methods to ensure we get the right balance of different views and a complete picture of equality in Newport. We have done this through online surveys aimed at the general public and more targeted focus groups with relevant stakeholders and community groups. We have also considered any relevant data related to Equality we have available to us based on our population, workforce, and the wider priorities of our organisation.

The results from our different consultation exercises suggest that people of Newport feel we were focusing on the right equality objectives, with majority of people agreed with our draft objectives. However, they have also highlighted the inequalities that exist within local communities and have given us a clear steer on how we can improve our services and advance equality for everyone.

Without strong leadership, clear & diverse governance, this work will have a very limited impact.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENT

We have developed a strong set of Equality Objectives that, if achieved, will improve both the way the council operates and the lives of those living and working in the city. It is reassuring that the plan considers the ever-changing Equality landscape and commits to incorporating future guidance, such as national policy under development by the Disability Rights Taskforce.

IN-NCC STAFF NETWORK CHAIRS

Accessing the Council and its services is difficult. Since the pandemic, most services moved online It's important these services are accessible to the public, especially those who might experience barriers.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENT

I feel like it's put too much down on individual schools and that enables certain schools to allow and ignore mistreatment and discrimination.

FOCUS GROUP RESPONDENT

We need to focus on migrant communities in the city, explicitly committing services that consider their specific needs and reducing the tensions often apparent between migrant and settled residents.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENT

We are pleased to see a commitment to Anti-racist values and increasing representation at all levels as well as developing, retaining, and supporting diverse staff. This will support Newport City Council in becoming an inclusive and representative organisation where staff from all backgrounds can achieve their potential.

DIVERSITY NETWORK CHAIR

To read more about how we developed our draft Equality Objectives and the consultation process that has informed the development of this strategy, please read our "Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028: Consultation Report," which accompanies this strategy.

OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

1. LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & INVOLVEMENT

Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement.

This Equality Objective focuses on the role that Newport City Council can play in promoting equalities, how we can put the equalities agenda at the heart of our decision-making processes, and how we ensure that we are delivering against our commitments and involving local people in the decisions that affect them.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE, DIGITAL INCLUSION AND ACCESS

Newport City Council's in-person and online services are accessible to everyone in Newport, providing services that are both inclusive and considerate of individual need.

This Equality Objective focuses on the degree to which the in-person and digital services delivered by the council are accessible to the public. It also focuses on how we can collaborate with local communities and partners to ensure equitable access to services for all residents.

3. REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

Newport City Council has a workforce that represents the city and is a workplace with an inclusive culture which recruits, develops, and retains staff.

This Equality Objective focuses on our staff and how we can be more representative of the communities we serve at every level throughout the organisation. It also focuses on how we can support staff in achieving their potential.

4. COMMUNITY COHESION

Newport City Council promotes positive relationships between different communities, supporting integration and effectively identifying emerging community tensions.

This Equality Objective focuses on building communities that have shared values, where diversity is welcomed and embraced, and where people feel connected to the place that they live.

5. EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Newport City Council promotes a whole school approach that is fully inclusive and looks to positively identify and address any inequality in provision, attainment, and early career pathways of vulnerable learners, including learners with disabilities

This Equality Objective focuses on how we work with schools to support them in addressing areas of inequality that may exist between different groups of pupils.

6. EQUITABLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Newport City Council contributes to the city being a great place to live and grow older, with a range of services that accommodate people in different situations.

This Equality Objective focuses on how the authority can offer a greater variety of support to people and how we can ensure our existing or new services are responsive to the changing and diverse needs of communities.

OUR PLAN

Equality Objective 1: Leadership, Governance & Involvement

“Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement.”

Outcome 1: Newport City Council shows clear and consistent leadership in promoting equality and diversity across the city.

We will achieve this by:

- Showing visible support on key dates and community events in the equalities calendar throughout the year.
- Showing visible commitment to Anti-Racism through promoting a zero tolerance to racial discrimination within our workforce, service delivery, and communities.
- Building on our work as part of the Proud Councils partnership to be a visible leader and actively champion LGBTQ+ inclusion in communities in Newport.
- Reaffirming commitment to the WLGA’s Diversity in Democracy programme and working with Elected Members to improve representation of in local democracy.
- Developing the role of our Member Champions and senior leaders.
- Developing a Cultural Strategy to celebrate and champion the City’s unique culture alongside its physical heritage.

Outcome 2: Newport City Council has a strong commitment to Equality at all levels and has a clear governance structure in place to monitor equality performance across the organisation

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring all senior leaders and managers set performance objectives to drive inclusion within the workplace and advance equity in communities.
- Reviewing the service area plans which deliver against our corporate plan, ensuring each area incorporates an equality performance indicator based on Welsh Government Action Plans
- Regularly reviewing, evaluating, and developing our Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) process and impact to ensure equality remains at the heart of our decision-making arrangements.
- Working with our lead Cabinet Member for Equalities, Strategic Equality Group and Corporate Management Team to review our governance arrangements and ensure they are fit for purpose

Outcome 3: Newport City Council will ensure engagement and involvement of people with protected characteristics and lived experience to inform the decision-making process

We will achieve this by:

- Monitoring Protected Characteristics of participants in consultation activity, and analysing results based on demographics.
- Using relevant evidence and the information we hold about communities across Newport to inform decision making, service design and policy making.
- Collaborating with community partners and equality stakeholder groups to further develop opportunities for seldom heard groups to engage with decision makers and improve participation in the decision-making process
- Engagement and consultation with people with care experience inform policy and service development.

Which protected characteristics will these outcomes most benefit?

We believe that improved leadership, governance, and involvement will benefit all protected characteristics, people with care experience, and make a positive contribution towards helping the authority consider socio-economic disadvantage.

Equality Objective 2: Customer Service, Digital Inclusion and Access

“Newport City Council’s in-person and digital services are accessible to everyone in Newport, providing services that are both inclusive and considerate of individual need.”

Outcome 1: We have a better understanding of the demographics of our service users, and reflect these in service design, removing barriers to access.

We achieve this by:

- Utilising data to identify any under or over representation in people that access our frontline services.
- Working with internal and external stakeholder groups for people that share protected characteristics to support the development of customer service provisions.
- Delivering Equalities, Welsh Language and Hate Crime training to all customer services staff on a regular basis.
- Reviewing accessibility of services for people that speak languages other than English or Welsh, including those that use British Sign Language (BSL)
- Developing an Interpreting and Translation Policy to support communication with non – English or Welsh speakers, people with a hearing or visual impairment or those with a learning disability.
- Reviewing the use, management, and accessibility of the Council's assets to ensure service delivery is efficient, inclusive, and meets residents' needs.

Outcome 2: Citizens with low digital literacy or those experiencing barriers to accessing services will have support and improved access to Digital Services.

We achieve this by:

- Redeveloping the Council's website to improve accessibility and ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1 AA).
- Work with the customer service review findings to develop standards and processes to ensure self-service facilities, including web applications are accessible to all users.
- Providing free public Wi-Fi in community settings, signposting to free data available or connectivity options and improving access to devices
- Working in collaboration with partners to deliver a free digital skills training programme and signpost people to training opportunities.
- Working in collaboration with partners to map digitally excluded communities and deliver on our six pledges to eliminate digital exclusion.

Outcome 3: People are aware of our complaints procedure when accessing services, barriers to access are effectively addressed and complaints relating to discrimination are managed in a way that ensures organisational learning.

We will achieve this by:

- Improving the collation of demographic data for effective monitoring
- Engaging with local communities to raise awareness of our complaints procedure, reduce barriers and promote equitable access.
- Developing public messaging and information about our complaints procedure in community languages
- Signposting people who raise allegations of discrimination against the council to appropriate services
- Introducing a process review in response to complaints relating to discrimination and the Welsh Language

Which protected characteristics will these outcomes most benefit?

We believe that an improved approach to customer service and access will benefit all protected characteristics, people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

Equality Objective 3: Representative Workforce

“Newport City Council has a workforce that represents the city and is a workplace with an inclusive culture which recruits, develops, and retains staff.”

Outcome 1: Staff with protected characteristics are proportionally represented at all levels throughout the organisation

We will achieve this by:

- Reviewing and improving the information collected on staff at all levels.
- Reviewing workforce data and exploring the implementation of positive action to strengthen our approach to the attraction, recruitment, and development of under-represented groups.
- Mapping pay gaps by protected characteristics and developing actions to address any disparities based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnic background
- Reviewing our recruitment processes to minimise unconscious bias and promote inclusion. i.e. ensuring language is inclusive and removing unnecessary markers.
- Renewing our commitment to the Disability Confident Scheme and working to achieve Disability Confident Leader status.
- Maintaining Gold employer under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme
- Further developing and mandating our Unconscious Bias training for all staff on recruitment panels
- Develop internal policies that reflect the needs and commitments to people with care experience

Outcome 2: Workplace culture is fully inclusive, promotes equality, and retains diverse staff

We will achieve this by:

- Working in collaboration with Staff Equality Networks to develop and promote active allyship within the workplace.
- Reviewing our Equalities training offer and working with partners to ensure learning opportunities cover Anti-racism, the Social Model of Disability and LGBTQ+ Inclusion.
- Developing a Dignity in the Workplace Policy that sets out a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination with clear interventions, repercussions, and clear pathways to support for staff.
- Improving Internal recording mechanisms for reports of discriminatory behaviour and providing regular updates to our Strategic Equality Group
- Regularly undertaking employee perception surveys and focus groups explore aspects of belonging and value and how this can be improved.
- Developing guidance on the implementation of key workplace policies and mandated learning opportunities targeted at managers to support inclusive leadership.
- Promoting the financial wellbeing support available to all staff to reduce the risk of in work poverty.
- Delivery of the People Plan 2023-28, including strategic themes covering Employee Experience, Engagement, Wellbeing, Transformation and Representation.

Outcome 3: Diverse staff within the organisation have a voice, are listened to, and developed

We will achieve this by:

- Reviewing access to training and development opportunities by protected characteristic.
- Strengthening Staff Equality Networks by providing development opportunities, resources, and internally promoting membership.
- Developing opportunities for staff from diverse or underrepresented backgrounds to engage with senior leaders.
- Reviewing and developing workplace policies in partnership with Staff Equality Networks. i.e. Wellness at Work, Transitioning in the Workplace and Dignity at Work Policies

Which protected characteristics will these outcomes most benefit?

This Equality Objective is likely to most benefit against the protected characteristics of: Race, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief, Gender Reassignment and Age. It is also likely to reduce inequalities for people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

Equality Objective 4: Community Cohesion

Newport City Council promotes positive relationships between different communities, supporting integration and effectively identifying emerging community tensions.

Outcome 1: Everyone living in Newport feels welcomed, and integration is supported by local communities

We will achieve this by:

- Co-developing a Migrant Integration Strategy to support Newport to become a City of Sanctuary for all resident migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees.
- Establishing a task force to implement the findings of our work as an Inclusive City, involving communities and key stakeholders.
- Developing a Welcome to Newport App and promoting the Welsh Government's Cultural Ambassadors scheme to help new arrivals integrate into local communities and learn about Wales, including the Welsh Language
- Working in partnership with locally funded services to support a wide range of communities to secure their rights, access support services, and overcome hardship.
- Working in collaboration with partners and communities to enhance and promote inclusive spaces and events for people in Newport.
- Continuing to support UK Resettlement Schemes and work with partners to support those displaced due to international conflict to resettle in Newport.
- Raise awareness of the needs of and strengthen the support available to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Migrant Children with Care Experience.

Outcome 2: Community tensions are monitored and mitigated effectively

We achieve this by:

- Building on our work with partners to develop multi-agency mechanism to effectively monitor and address community tensions at the earliest stage.
- Continuing the delivery of Prevent training to all schools and frontline staff in Newport, raising awareness of the risks of radicalisation and vulnerable groups.

Outcome 3: Through close partnership working with Gwent Police, Victim Support, and other key stakeholders, Hate Crimes based on protected characteristics will be effectively addressed, and victims will have improved access to support

We will achieve this by:

- Reaffirming commitment to Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter
- Delivering training in conjunction with partners to community groups that empowers them to challenge and act on hate speech where they encounter it.
- Collaborating with internal stakeholders and partners to raise awareness of the different types of hate crime, develop multi-agency mechanisms to tackle online hate and tackle underreporting in specific communities.
- Developing a Hate Crime Policy to strengthen the Council's commitment to tackling hate crime and incidents.

Which protected characteristics will these outcomes most benefit?

While many of our actions will have a benefit for all protected characteristics, the actions highlighted above will have a particular impact against the protected characteristics of: Race, Religion & Belief, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment. They will also likely reduce inequalities for people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

Equality Objective 5: Equity in Education

Newport City Council promotes a whole school approach that is fully inclusive and looks to positively identify and address any inequality in provision, attainment, and early career pathways of vulnerable learners, including learners with disabilities.

Outcome 1: Schools and education settings ensure quality provision secures improved progress for vulnerable learners, including learners with disabilities

We achieve this by:

- Supporting all schools and settings to improve the outcomes of pupils eligible for free school meals, through supporting high quality professional learning, effective allocation of resources and an appropriate curriculum offer to meet the needs of all learners.
- Working in partnership with schools to reduce rates of persistent absenteeism.
- Supporting schools to provide high quality universal provision for multi-lingual learners.
- Supporting young people into education, employment, and training.
- To further develop schools accessibility plans to ensure learners with disabilities can access their learning environments.

Outcome 2: We have effective measures to reduce the risk of and address prejudice-based bullying, harassment, or discrimination in Education

We achieve this by:

- Providing professional learning opportunities for all staff in schools and educational settings covering Anti-racism, the Social Model of Disability and LGBTQ+ inclusion and Hate Crime (to include improved engagement and awareness raising)
- Securing and delivering parental and community engagement sessions.
- Improving measures to report, record and monitor prejudice-based bullying, harassment, and discrimination in schools and education settings.
- Improving our response to identity-based bullying by embedding Welsh Government's key policy interventions.
- Ensuring updated use of terminology in policy and practice, framed in a celebratory model (moving away from a deficit model).
- Supporting schools to include anti racism in their curriculum offer, co-created with students.
- Developing appropriate provision for adults in school settings who have experienced prejudice-based discrimination in the workplace.

Outcome 3: Schools actively address the impact of poverty within education, thus reducing the cost of the school day

We achieve this by:

- Supporting senior leaders to recognise their role in mitigating the impact of poverty through the development of effective strategic planning.
- Engaging with all schools to support leaders to evaluate their anti-poverty strategy and its impact on vulnerable learners.
- Monitoring outcomes of Community Focused School Grants to measure the impact on supporting better educational outcomes for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds or who have other vulnerabilities.
- Continuing to build and evolve relationships with outside agencies.
- Helping disadvantaged families improve their capacity to support their child's learning, this might involve signposting to other services such as income maximisation and adult education.

Which protected characteristics will these outcomes most benefit?

This Equality Objective is likely to most benefit against the protected characteristics of: Race, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, Gender Reassignment and Age. It is also likely to reduce inequalities for people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

Equality Objective 6: Equitable Service Delivery

Newport City Council contributes to the city being a great place to live and grow older, with a range of services that accommodate people in different situations.

Outcome 1: Service delivery is inclusive, looks to address any disparities and is responsive to the challenges faced by communities

We achieve this by:

- Developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy which aims to improve inequalities of outcome for residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Working in collaboration with Disability Wales, disabled staff, and residents to embed the Social Model of Disability in service delivery and development.
- Working in collaboration with partners to implement the recommendations in the Building a Fairer Gwent Report to reduce inequality between our communities.
- Working in collaboration with internal stakeholders and partners across Gwent to become an Age-friendly city.
- Working in partnership with partners from the public services, charities, and other community organisations to support the armed forces community in the city.
- Embedding the principles of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter in service delivery to safeguard, promote the rights and life chances of children or young people with care experience.
- Applying our equality duties to collaborative public bodies and partnerships

Outcome 2: Housing services are equitable, responsive to the assessed accommodation needs of residents, take action to prevent homelessness and empower people to live independently

We achieve this by:

- Taking a data driven approach to reviewing the needs of people using our statutory and housing support schemes, including specialist provision for vulnerable people and potentially marginalised communities, i.e. Rough Sleepers, Refugees, Gypsy Roma Travellers, LGBTQ+
- Facilitating the provision of equalities training covering Anti-racism, Hate Crime, the Social Model of Disability, Migration, LGBTQ+ inclusion to all Housing staff on a regular basis.
- Ensuring that all commissioned services deliver high quality equalities training and that this is regularly reviewed through the commissioning process.
- Working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to improve and develop accommodation for people with a range of diverse needs.
- Supporting people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to access Welfare Benefit entitlements and signposting to support services.

Outcome 3: Through close partnership working with Newport Live barriers to accessing sports and leisure provision in the city will be reduced

We achieve this by:

- Working with Newport Live to improve the access, participation and representation of potentially marginalised or underrepresented groups in Sports, Leisure, Art and Culture.
- Helping Newport Live achieve the Disability Sport Wales insport Gold award.
- Promoting the availability of benefits available to carers in accessing Newport Live opportunities
- Supporting Education services to provide accessible School based Sport and Physical Activity Opportunities

Which protected characteristics will these outcomes most benefit?

This Equality Objective is likely to most benefit against the protected characteristics of: Race, Disability, Sex and Age. It is also likely to reduce inequalities for people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

KEY DOCUMENTS

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORTS

Available online: www.newport.gov.uk/our-council/plans-and-strategies/equalities

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL: CORPORATE PLAN 2017 – 2022

Available online: www.newport.gov.uk/our-council/plans-and-strategies/corporate-plan

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL: PEOPLE PLAN 2023 -2028

Available online:

<https://democracy.newport.gov.uk/documents/s28309/09i%20PEOPLE%20PLAN%20Final%20v1.1.pdf?LLL=0>

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL: PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Available online: www.newport.gov.uk/our-council/plans-and-strategies

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL: FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Available online: <https://www.newport.gov.uk/feia>

WELSH GOVERNMENT: ANTI-RACIST WALES ACTION PLAN

Available online: www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan

WELSH GOVERNMENT: LGBTQ+ ACTION PLAN FOR WALES

Available online: www.gov.wales/lgbtq-action-plan-wales

EHRC: IS WALES FAIRER REPORT (2023)

Available online: www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/equality-and-human-rights-monitor/equality-and-human-rights-monitor-2023-wales-fairer#:~:text=This%20report%20is%20the%20most,in%20the%20Equality%20Act%202010.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

This Strategic Equality Plan is designed to have a positive impact on the lives of everyone that lives in Newport. It presents an opportunity to build on achievements we have already made both as an employer and a service provider, as well as look to the future and identify new opportunities to reduce inequalities.

To deliver our vision for a more equal Newport, we will need the support of everyone in Newport, including our staff, residents and businesses or organisations based within the city. There are many ways in which you can support the delivery of this plan, get involved in the Council's decision-making process and contribute towards shaping the way which we deliver our services.

If you would like to know more about our work or share your views, you can do so in any of the following ways:

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL WEBSITE - www.newport.gov.uk

NEWPORT CONSULTATIONS - www.newport.gov.uk/haveyoursay

PHONE - (01633) 656 656 between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday

EMAIL - nccequality@newport.gov.uk

WRITE TO - Newport City Council

Civic Centre

Godfrey Road

Newport

NP20 4UR

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Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 23 April 2024

Subject **Amendment to Constitution - Scheme of Delegation for Assets**

Purpose To update the Officer Scheme of Delegation for decisions relating to Assets, to be adopted within the Constitution.

Author Head of People, Policy & Transformation

Ward N/A

Summary The report outlines a review of the officer Scheme of Delegation for Assets as set out in the Council's Constitution. This proposal is to update the schedule for delegated property transactions to ensure that the Council's governance for asset transactions supports effective decision making and better aligns with other delegated decisions contained within the constitution. These changes are within and subject to the financial controls and democratic process of the Council as set out in the Constitution.

Proposal Council is asked to approve and adopt the amendments to the paragraph 10.9 of Part 3.3 of the Officer Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution, as set out below.

Action by Head of People, Policy & Transformation
Monitoring Officer

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director – Corporate and Transformation
- Head of Asset Management and Valuation, Newport Norse
- Head of Law and Standards / Monitoring Officer
- Cabinet Member – Infrastructure and Assets
- Head of Housing and Communities
- Democratic Services Committee

Signed

Background

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers (Constitution part 3.3, paragraph 10.9), a number of powers with regard to minor property transactions are delegated to the Head of People, Policy and Transformation. The values of certain asset transactions have been in place for some time, are no longer aligned with current asset values, and are out of step with other delegated decisions contained within the constitution.

Changes to service demands are placing increasing demands on the Council's asset property portfolio. To ensure there is effective and efficient decision making regarding assets, there is a need to ensure that decisions are made and recorded at an appropriate level, through amendments to the current scheme of delegation for minor property transactions. Changing the Scheme of Delegation as recommended would enable property decisions to be streamlined, albeit with decisions regarding major property transactions continuing to be taken by members.

An analysis of a range of other local authorities in Wales has been undertaken and concludes we are currently out of step with other Councils where the focus is on major property transactions, setting financial limits ranging from £100,000 to £1,000,000 as examples. These ranges are more reflective of property values, and more closely aligned to other delegations such as those governed by the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSO).

Should the proposed amendments be adopted, officer decisions regarding property transactions would be subject to numerous controls, including the statutory duty to ensure best value in disposals of local authority land, the requirement to act within the scope of the Council's Capital Programme and prudential indicators, and budgets applicable to the service area in question. This includes the requirement to consult with ward or Cabinet members where the proposed transaction is likely to have an impact on the community. Importantly, it should be noted that nothing in the proposed delegations will serve to circumvent the financial controls set out in Part 4 of the Constitution, or elsewhere. Decisions regarding the setting of the Capital Programme, budgets and prudential indicators will remain outside the scope of officer delegation.

Decisions relating to assets are also subject to internal officer controls, financial and capital monitoring requirements, where appropriate project management oversight, and legal /property services advice as well as the wider constitution and legislative requirements

Proposal

The current scheme of delegation requires Cabinet and Ward Members to be consulted on a wide range of minor transactions, and formal reports for a variety of decisions. The values outlined in the scheme have diminished over time, applying to increasingly minor transactions.

Formal member reports and decisions are currently required for any disposals or acquisitions exceeding 100 square metres, and granting or acquiring interests exceeding £1,000 per annum as well as any lease over 7 years. Due to increased demands and changes relating to asset management, it is proposed that the scheme of delegation is amended. Ward members will continue to be consulted where there is a wider impact or direct interest on the community or residents within a ward.

Proposed changes to the scheme of delegation

Current officer delegation	Proposed delegation
i. To dispose of and acquire freehold interests or grant and acquire leasehold interests on parcels of land not exceeding 100 square metres in extent	To acquire, purchase and dispose of interests in land and property where the consideration for the transaction does not exceed £100,000. Where the transaction relates to the portfolio of any Cabinet Member(s), the decision shall be taken in consultation with that (those) Cabinet Member(s).

ii. To grant/acquire interests in property with an annual value not exceeding £1,000	To enter into, amend or surrender leases of land and property with an aggregate annual sum payable by the tenant (including rent, insurance rent, service charge/s and all other sums payable pursuant to the lease) not exceeding £100,000. To grant and obtain any consents sought or required in relation to any lease to which the Council is a party.
iii. To grant/acquire easements for services	To enter into, grant, amend or surrender licences, permissions, wayleaves, easements and other legal interests in land or property.
iv. To grant licenses to graze animals and/or mow grass for haymaking	Delete clause (included above).
v. To grant/acquire licenses to use property	Delete clause.
vi. To grant/acquire leases for a period of less than 7 years	Delete clause.
vii. To grant the release or discharge of covenants relating to Council land and property.	No change proposed.
The relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Member(s) shall be consulted before any decisions are taken in relation to minor property transactions that relate to their portfolios or wards	In addition to any other requirement above to consult with Cabinet Members, the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Member(s) shall be consulted where there is a direct or <u>wider impact</u> on the community or residents within a ward arising from any proposed transaction. The provisions of these delegations do not override any duty to ensure compliance with the Council's rules relating to capital acquisitions and transactions or other financial controls set out in Part 4 of this Constitution or elsewhere. All transactions must be within the Council's approved Capital Programme, the relevant budget/s and any applicable prudential indicators.

Decisions regarding dwellings provided to meet the council's statutory homelessness duties are dealt with through the Head of Housing and Communities delegated powers, following the relevant assessment.

All decisions, whether Cabinet Member or Head of Service are subject to appropriate reports, recording and relevant legal and financial advice and controls. Officer decisions are also subject to Strategic Asset Management Group review, financial and budgetary controls, Capital Assurance requirements, and strategic asset management principles.

Heads of Service to make arrangements for relevant record keeping and sign off within the management structure and property service arrangements based on the values established in contract standing orders and financial regulations. Measures are also currently being put into place to ensure the effective recording of officer decisions.

The Cabinet Member will continue to receive regular reports on progress relating to property matters through portfolio briefings.

Therefore, the **amended scheme of delegation** would be:

Decisions delegated:

- *To **acquire, purchase and dispose** of interests in land and property where the consideration for the transaction does not exceed £100,000. Where the transaction relates to the portfolio of any Cabinet Member(s), the decision shall be taken in consultation with that (those) Cabinet Member(s). [N.B. there is a proposed minor variation to the Democratic Services Committee approved scheme here to remove the word “freehold”, in order to cater for circumstances where a premium is payable to acquire a lease].*
- *To enter into, amend or surrender **leases** of land and property with an aggregate annual sum payable by the tenant (including rent, insurance rent, service charge/s and all other sums payable pursuant to the lease) not exceeding £100,000.*

To grant and obtain any consents sought or required in relation to any lease to which the Council is a party.
- *To enter into, grant, amend or surrender licences, permissions, wayleaves, easements and other **legal interests** in land or property.*
- *To grant the release or/ discharge of **covenants** relating to Council land and property*

In addition to any other requirement above to consult with Cabinet Members, the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Member(s) shall be consulted where there is a direct or wider impact on the community or residents within a ward arising from any proposed transaction.

All decisions must be within agreed Council policies, and within revenue budget allocation for the service areas affected or capital funding availability.

The provisions of these delegations do not override any duty to ensure compliance with the Council’s rules relating to capital acquisitions and transactions or other financial controls set out elsewhere. All transactions must be within the Council’s approved Capital Programme, the relevant budget/s and any applicable prudential indicators.

Following the relevant assessment, dwellings provided to meet the council's statutory homelessness duties are dealt with by the Head of Housing and Communities.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no financial impacts arising from the proposal which is in line with other matters relating to levels of delegation as set out in contract standing orders. In that respect, all acquisitions, either freehold or leasehold will require service area or corporate funding availability and be included within the Council’s approved capital programme following Cabinet / Council approval.

From 2024/25, all leasehold acquisitions are categorised as ‘capital expenditure’ and this has significant financial impact on the Councils capital strategy and a small number of prudential indicators which govern this. The Councils 2024/25 strategy includes this and will require on-going review.

Risks

It is important to identify and manage any project or scheme’s exposure to risk and have in place controls to deal with those risks.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of	Risk Probability	Risk Mitigation Action(s)	Risk Owner
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	Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
That decisions are not effectively scrutinised.	M	L	As set out in the report, proposal to scrutinise at an appropriate level, subject to existing governance arrangements.	Head of People Policy and Transformation.
That decisions are not taken in a timely manner to support Council priorities.	M	M	Currently an increasing number of decisions are taken at Cabinet Member level resulting in delays. This report proposes a more effective way of working. Strategic asset management principles and policies. Actions as outlined in this report, to clarify roles and processes.	Head of People, Policy, and Transformation. Head of Law and Standards.
That opportunities are not maximised, creating, or sustaining budget pressures, for example homelessness.	L	M	Actions outlined in this report to ensure that decisions regarding dwellings are taken in a timely manner following appropriate assessment.	Head of Housing and Communities.

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The effective management of property transactions underpins all of the Council's policies and priorities and the recommended changes in this report ensure that there is effective governance at the appropriate level of transaction.

Options Available and considered

- (i) Agree the recommended changes.
- (ii) Not agree the changes and keep the current working practices/policy and Constitution in place.
- (iii) Propose alternative amendments to the scheme of delegation.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1(i) – To agree the proposed changes to the Constitution, in line with the other parts of the officer scheme of delegation.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Whilst individual property decisions will continue to have financial consequence, this report is specifically about improving the responsiveness and timeliness of operational decision making.

There will still be a need to ensure that any acquisitions, on a case by case basis, are included on the Council's approved capital programme and therefore affordable through either service area revenue budgets and corporate capital funding and headroom availability and the necessary authority through Cabinet and Council have been secured. Similarly, any disposal over £10,000 continues to be regarded as a capital receipt, to be used/held corporately to support capital expenditure.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

In common with other local authorities, the Council has a scheme of delegation which allows certain decisions to be taken by cabinet members or officers. As set out in the report, the Council's current

Scheme of Delegation allows the Head of People, Policy and Transformation to make decisions regarding minor property transactions, however, this is not consistent with the norm across other authorities, many of which delegate decisions which are of a considerably higher value than is currently the case at this Council.

Allowing decisions with regard to property acquisition and disposal to be taken by a Head of Service within defined parameters and in accordance with Council policy will enable more efficient decision-making and enable members to focus on key, higher value transactions. It is noted, however, that the amended scheme of delegation includes a requirement for consultation with Cabinet members and ward members in certain circumstances which will ensure that members are made aware of transactions which may affect their portfolio or ward. The amended scheme also makes clear that the amended powers do not in any way circumvent the Council's financial controls set out in Part 4 of the Constitution and elsewhere.

As the report sets out, officer decisions to acquire, dispose of or otherwise deal with interests in land must be recorded and that record must set out the details of the property and the transaction, the name of the officer taking the decision and the delegated authority under which the decision was taken. It is proposed that a centralised register for such decisions will be set up.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

This report has been presented to Democratic Services Committee and is recommended to Council to approve the suggested changes and amendments to the Officer Scheme of Delegation for Assets.

The principles of open and transparent governance are consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 supporting Objective 4 (An inclusive, fair and sustainable council – Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core). The principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its five ways of working were supported when forming the proposal through working in collaboration and involving officers both across the Council and partners.

There are no direct HR implications arising from the proposed change.

Scrutiny Committees

None – recommendations previously considered at Democratic Services Committee.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

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

An FEIA is not required at this stage, however, this proposal is considerate of the 5 ways of working within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

- Long Term – Ensures that property decisions will be streamlined, with the full democratic process used more appropriately for major decisions over the long term, while ensuring short-term needs are not adversely impacted.
- Prevention – Ensures that the focus for Cabinet and ward members will be on decisions where there is a wider impact or direct interest on the communities they serve. This will ensure there is effective and efficient decision making when considering assets preventing potential delay issues.
- Integration – Supports the Councils Well-being Objectives, the seven Well-being Goals, and will re-align our focus in comparison with other local authorities in Wales.
- Collaboration & Involvement – In forming the proposal officers across the Council have worked in collaboration and involved other partners (e.g. Newport Norse) in its development.

Consultation

In their meeting of 18th March 2024, Democratic Services Committee considered the proposed amendments to the Constitution and recommended the option presented to Council for approval.

Background Papers

Constitution – scheme of delegation [Officer Scheme of Delegation \(p26\)](#)

Constitution – responsibility for functions – [terms of reference](#)

Schemes of delegations for other Councils

Democratic Services Committee meeting – March 2024

Dated: 3rd April 2024

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