

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 15 May 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Mudd (Chair), D Davies, D Batrouni, J Clarke, Y Forsey, D Harvey, J Hughes, L Lacey and S Marshall

1 Apologies for Absence

No apologies received.

2 Declarations of Interest

The Leader declared an interest in Item 6.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes from 10 April 2024 were confirmed as a true record.

4 Strategic Asset Management Plan

The first report presented by the Leader to Cabinet was on the Strategic Asset Management Plan. Following the development of the new Corporate Plan 2022-2027 and other strategies, the Strategic Asset Management Plan was also reviewed. The revised Plan would help to ensure the principles of asset management were reflected in business decisions across the organisation.

The Plan was an enabler to support the Council in achieving Corporate Plan objectives through the effective management of its land and property assets. This included ensuring that buildings were sustainable and met the needs of communities.

The principles outlined ensured that property was suitably managed and maintained within budget constraints and in line with the Council's climate change objectives.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Lacey referred to the previous plan, produced in 2018, which was in need of updating considering the events over the past six years and thanked officers, partners, elected members, and scrutiny committee for their input. Councillor Lacey outlined the maintenance backlog to Cabinet colleagues, as well as highlighting the complex estate managed by Newport City Council. Councillor Lacey recognised the teams that managed the assets portfolio to ensure the best use of assets for Newport residents.
- Councillor Forsey thanked the climate change team for all their work. The decarbonisation of Newport City Council buildings was a long-term project, which would

take years to achieve. Work was progressing at a good rate and Councillor Forsey hoped this would continue.

- Councillor D Davies as Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years supported the aspiration of meeting carbon neutrality by 2030. It was clear that sustainably optimised estates were fit for purpose and therefore supported the plan.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024 to 2028 and supporting policies.

5 Safer Newport Strategic Needs Assessment and Plan

The next item presented by the Leader was the Safer Newport Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment and plan for 2024 to 2029.

As a local authority, Newport City Council had a responsibility under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to formulate and implement a plan to reduce crime and disorder in the area through our local Community Safety Partnership, Safer Newport.

This important partnership included Gwent Police and other relevant partners and supported a multi-agency approach to complex problems.

Part of the partnership responsibility included undertaking a Strategic Needs Assessment for Community Safety. The primary goal of this assessment was to pinpoint the underlying causes, patterns, and significant community safety issues, such as Anti-Social Behaviour, Serious Violence, Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence.

The Strategic Needs Assessment presented with the report provided an evaluation of the current picture of community safety in Newport, based on quantitative data from various agencies and qualitative insights from citizens and partners.

This was previously considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships, and their comments were included within the report.

Cabinet noted the plan identified three priority areas for Newport, the first two being serious violence and organised crime and antisocial behaviour. The third priority was to provide support within the community for those who may be more vulnerable to community safety issues. This included children and young people who were, or potentially at risk of being exploited, and those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse, or sexual violence.

The implementation of this plan and the vision of 'Having a positive impact on the lives of our communities' could only be achieved by working in partnership. The Leader therefore took the opportunity to thank Safer Newport membership organisations for the work they did across Newport.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Harvey voiced her concern about knife crime and the coercion of children committing acts of crime. Crime and domestic violence was on the increase, therefore Councillor Harvey welcomed the report.
- Councillor D Davies considered that it was a detailed report and noted the higher levels of crime in Gwent but was reassured that community safety was supported as a key priority. Effective preventative services were also in place.

- Councillor Forsey referred to the cost-of-living crisis and the impact it had in relation to violence.
- Councillor Marshall highlighted partnership working and noted the collaborate work between the justice system and the Youth Justice team.
- The Leader echoed the comments of Councillor Marshall regarding partnership working and took the opportunity to thank Councillor Clarke for his support.

Decision:

Cabinet recommended to Full Council that the attached Safer Newport Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment and Plan be adopted by the Council.

6 **Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy**

The Leader declared an interest at the start of the meeting.

The Leader presented the Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy to Cabinet. The Serious Violence Duty became law across England and Wales at the end of January 2023 and placed a mandatory requirement on local authorities to work with other 'specified authorities' to develop a plan and strategy to reduce and prevent serious violence.

Cabinet noted the development of the Strategic Needs Assessment and strategy was undertaken in collaboration with partners across Gwent, however, the duty applied to Newport City Council.

The Needs Assessment and Strategy provided an evaluation of the current picture of serious violence across the region, with sections specific to Newport.

The four strategic priorities identified to meet the vision 'to create a Gwent Without Violence' were:

- Better use of data to inform action
- Prioritise addressing the risk factors for violence with evidence-based interventions
- Join the dots to better understand and maximise impact
- Adopt a place-based approach that utilises local experience, listens to community voices and is strengthened through regional governance

Within Newport, the findings of the assessment and the four priorities were embedded within the Safer Newport Community Safety Plan, which was also mentioned under the previous item on the agenda.

Both documents were considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnership and their comments were included within the report.

This was the first Gwent-wide strategic needs assessment and strategy, and the Leader thanked all partners involved for their work on this.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Davies acknowledged that an effective form of strategy would be developed as outlined in the report. Councillor Davies took the opportunity to wish Councillor Mudd as the newly elected Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) all the best supporting this strategy going forward and hoped that in her new role as PCC would provide an update for Newport City Council on a regular basis.

- Councillor Hughes highlighted the importance of listening to people experiencing violence within the community.

Decision:

Cabinet recommended to Full Council that the attached Gwent Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy be adopted by the Council.

7 NCC External Pressures - Cost of Living

The final report presented by the Leader was the monthly update on the challenges faced by residents and the Council, including the cost-of-living crisis and pressures on housing and homelessness services across Newport.

Cabinet was aware that collaboration and partnership working was key to supporting citizens. With this in mind, the report provided information on how this way of working was enabling greater access for residents to support, advice, and guidance.

The report also provided examples of activities and support offered during this period, including Easter family activities, distribution of essential food, shopping vouchers, and household goods.

Cabinet noted the uptake of free school meals which was above 70% in all sectors and above 80% in the special sector.

Pressures on housing and homelessness services in the city continued to be a concern, and the report provided an update on the Council's strategy to tackle these challenges including through working with the Royal Foundation Homewards Programme.

The Leader was pleased to announce that Newport was chosen to be one of only six councils across the UK working with the programme.

Cabinet was asked to promote aspects of this work including encouraging private landlords with vacant properties to contact the council to discuss how they could support officers in the housing and communities service through the Leasing Scheme Wales.

The Leader also encourages anybody in need to attend the 'Think Wise – Live Wise' drop in events which provided cost of living related information and guidance on topics such as budgeting, managing utility bills and rent advice.

The Leader continued to advocate for partnership working as being vital in supporting residents and businesses and thanked everyone involved.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Harvey thanked council staff for their hard work and reminded those in need of support of the signposting provided by Newport City Council for financial support.
- Councillor D Davies mentioned the Welsh Government focus groups and grant funding allocated to establish relations with children and family within schools and the wide range of support as a result of the grant funding.
- Councillor Marshall highlighted the recent event at St Woolos Cathedral for National Children's Day and the events taking place within Newport during the forthcoming half term.

Decision:

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

8 **Work Programme**

This was the regular monthly report on the work programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the Work Programme.

Finally, Cabinet thanked the Leader for her support over the last five years as Leader of the Council and wished her all the very best in her future role as Police Crime Commissioner.