

Agenda



Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 11 December 2024

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 1

To: Councillors D Batrouni (Chair), R Howells, S Adan, P Drewett, E Stowell-Corten, D Davies, J Clarke, Y Forsey and L Lacey

Item		Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
3	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> (Pages 3 - 8)	
4	<u>Treasury Management Half Yearly Monitoring Report</u> (Pages 9 - 26)	All Wards
5	<u>Long Term Provision of Internal Audit Services</u> (Pages 27 - 38)	All Wards
6	<u>The Middle Tier Review (School Improvement)</u> (Pages 39 - 50)	All Wards
7	<u>Corporate Risk Register Update (Q2)</u> (Pages 51 - 94)	All Wards
8	<u>Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2024</u> (Pages 95 - 134)	All Wards
9	<u>Work Programme</u> (Pages 135 - 142)	
10	<u>Part 2 Exempt or Confidential Items</u> Not for publication as consideration of the report involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.	
11	<u>Link to view the Live Event</u>	

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Date of Issue: 4 December 2024

This meeting will be available to view shortly after completion. All meeting recordings can be found [here](#).

To view webcast click on link:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MjYwNWM4NTQtNmEzNS00YjM5LTgxMTQtMG E5Mjg3YzQxMzNi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7B%22Tid%22%3A%222c4d0079-c52c-4bb3-b3ca-d8eaf1b6b7d5%22%2C%22Oid%22%3A%225929103b-2b30-477b-bd31-5b8869976ce7%22%2C%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3Atrue%2C%22role%22%3A%22a%22%7D&btype=a&role=a



Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 13 November 2024

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors D Batrouni (Chair), R Howells, S Adan, P Drewett, E Stowell-Corten, D Davies, J Clarke, Y Forsey and L Lacey

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Adan declared an interest under Item 5, as governor at St Andrews Primary School.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes from 16 October were accepted as a true record.

4 September Revenue Budget Monitor

The Leader explained the current forecast position on the Council's revenue budget and the risks and opportunities that presented themselves within the September update. Against a net budget of £400m, the forecast reflected a relatively balanced position with a £786,000 underspend, including the contingency budget and the in-year underspend against capital financing budgets.

A small underspend was projected however, service areas were collectively forecasted to overspend by £6.2m, excluding schools.

The key service area overspending was within Housing and Communities, due to the demand for temporary accommodation, and within Education, due to increased costs of Additional Learning Needs (ALN), special school transport, and expenditure on local ALN provision. These key areas were outlined in the report.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Davies referred to the forensic focus that officers had on budget and finance within Newport schools with only a small number of schools anticipating a deficit. Newport schools were in a better position than most in Wales.
- Councillor Drewett noted the school balances position and welcomed the introduction of additional funding for secondary schools.

- Councillor Forsey referred to the decarbonisation programme, highlighting that it was important not to be left behind.
- Councillor Lacey explained that the children's services overspend was due to circumstances beyond the Council's control and that social services were in a more comfortable position now than six months ago.. The WCCIS project was progressing well, and it was hoped that Welsh Government would also provide additional finance.

Decision:

Cabinet -

- Noted the forecast position, outlined in the report (Sections 1 and 2).
- Noted the overall shortfall in the delivery of savings accepted as part of the 2024/25 revenue budget.
- Noted the schools' forecast position, and the position on the individual and total school reserves (Section 3), acknowledging the risk that further individual deficit positions could emerge by the end of the financial year.
- Noted the forecasted movement in reserves.
- Approved the recommended reserve transfers as set out in 4.3.
- Noted the risks identified throughout the report, such as continued demand issues being faced by services in housing and social care.

5 Capital Programme Monitoring and Additions - September 2024

The Leader introduced the Capital Programme monitoring and additions report. The report provided an update on the level of available capital headroom and detailed the additions to the programme identified and sought approval for these additions.

Cabinet was asked to approve the slippage identified. Any further slippage identified throughout the year would only be subject to approval as part of the final outturn report, once the final position was known.

The Headroom stood at £12.715m, following the additions detailed in the report.

The Council complied with Prudential Indicators set for 2024/25, except for the indicator designed to show the proportion of financing costs to the net revenue stream.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Davies referred to the completion of work to St Andrew's Primary School due in September 2025 and thanked Headteacher, Jo Giles, for managing both sites as well as thanking the Governing Body.
- The Leader also thanked the Finance team for their hard work in handling the finance reports presented to Cabinet.

Decision:

Cabinet -

1. Approved the additions to the Capital Programme requested in the report (Appendix A).
2. Noted the predicted capital expenditure outturn position for 2024/25.
3. Noted the amendments and indicative slippage for the capital programme

6 2025/26 Budget Proposal

The Leader provided Cabinet with an update on the Council's 2025/26 budget process and presented the first tranche of savings proposals.

It was expected that the Council would need to find savings to balance its budget for 2025/26. The first tranche of savings was included in the report, with further proposals to follow in January.

A small number of the proposed savings required public consultation and were listed in Appendix 1a and Appendix 2. The majority of the proposals did not require public consultation, as listed in Appendix 1b.

Implementation costs relating to those proposals that did not require public consultation totalled £776,000, and Cabinet were asked to approve the use of the Transformation Reserve for this. The available balance in the reserve was currently £3.292m.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Davies urged residents to contribute to the public consultation process before the final budget was agreed in February 2025, adding that Cabinet would consider their comments.
- Councillor Lacey thanked officers especially in social services who showed that their services could be used throughout other authorities within Gwent.
- Councillor Drewett also thanked officers for their creative ways of generating income in areas such as CCTV and pest control as well as the way funding was transferred to grant funding.
- Councillor Adan echoed Councillor Drewett's comments regarding officer's innovation in delivering services to the public and also thanked officers from the housing, planning, and transformation team.
- Councillor Clarke added that these were tough times but hoped that Newport City Council would work together.

Decision:

Cabinet -

- Agreed the following draft proposals for public consultation:
 - Budget savings proposals in Appendix 1a (summary table) and Appendix 2 (detailed proposals).
- Approved:
 - Implementation of the delegated decisions in Appendix 1b.
 - The use of the Transformation Fund to fund the implementation costs of the proposals listed in Appendix 1b totalling £776,000.

7 Summary Of Estyn Inspection Outcomes - January 2022 To July 2024

The Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years presented to Cabinet the report on Newport schools' Estyn inspection outcomes, between January 2022 and July 2024. Twenty-five judgements were available comprising of twenty-two primaries, two secondaries and one special school.

The Cabinet Member highlighted two schools: Jubilee Park Primary and Langstone Primary, that had received no specific recommendations for improvement relating to their inspections. It was believed that Newport was one of the only Local Authorities in Wales to have two schools in this position.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Lacey reflected on the Estyn inspection at Jubilee Primary School. It was a new school and was the first to receive 'no recommendations'. There were eleven out of 25 schools in Newport that had best practice, which showed that Newport was leading the way.
- Councillor Clarke recalled as a school governor how much work had teachers and officers had put into getting schools out of special measures such as Malpas Park Primary School and Newport High School., by
- Councillor Drewett noted the excellent report including case studies which reflected Newport's dedication to schools and had been disseminated to other schools in Wales. Councillor Drewett congratulated all the hardworking pupils, teachers, school governors, the Head of Education, Sarah Morgan, and Councillor D Davies.
- The Leader echoed the comments of his Cabinet colleagues.

Decision:

Cabinet accepted the report for information.

8 Gwent Regional Partnership Board Area Plan/Gwent Regional Partnership Board Annual Report

The Cabinet Member for Social Services highlighted the RPB Annual Report for 2023/2024 which was attached for information (Appendix A) and provided a strategic overview of the work of the Regional Partnership Board in delivering against their agreed priorities.

Whilst it was a regional report, most of the work undertaken was cross cutting and relevant to Newport. Key developments were also set out within the report. The use of grant funding was included for information in (Appendix B). The Annual Report was also submitted to Welsh Government.

Decision:

Cabinet reviewed progress made against the objectives and provided feedback/comments.

9 Air Quality Action Plan Adoption

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity advised Cabinet colleagues on the updated Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the five-year period 2024 to 2029 which set out how to achieve sustainable compliance.

Newport declared 11 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) for breaches in the annual air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide and had a statutory duty under the Environment Act 1995 and guidance to produce an AQAP where it declared AQMAs.

Once sustained compliance was being achieved, the Council would be able to systematically revoke its AQMAs and produce a city-wide Air Quality Strategy setting out how sustained compliance would be maintained to strive for the best achievable air quality for Newport.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor R Howells highlighted that poor air quality had a huge impact on quality of life and added that Newport City Council was leading the way with the decarbonising of its fleet, with 31% of vehicles having zero emissions.
- Councillor D Davies welcomed the opportunities to have frank discussions on how air quality can be improved within Beechwood ward and thanked Senior Scientific Officer, Steve Manning for going over and above in his work.
- Councillor Lacey also thanked Councillor Forsey for her dedication and commitment towards air quality in Newport. Many of her Cabinet colleagues concurred.

Decision:

Cabinet considered and noted the contents of the report and approved the Newport City Council 2024-2029 Air Quality Action Plan and agreed for the plan to be taken to Council for a decision on its adoption.

10 One Newport Summary of Business

The link to the One Newport Summary Document was included in the Agenda papers for information.

11 Work Programme

This was the regular monthly report on the work programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the Work Programme.

12 View the meeting by clicking on the link below:

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Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject **Half Yearly Report on Treasury Management for the period 2024/25**

Purpose This report is to inform Cabinet of treasury activities undertaken within the first half of the financial year 2024-25 and updates Cabinet on the position in relation to the Treasury Management prudential indicators as at September 2024. The Cabinet is asked to make any comments or observations, as needed, which will be included in this report when subsequently sent to Council.

Author Assistant Head of Finance / Chief Accountant

Ward All

Summary In line with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy, the Council continues to be both a short-term investor of cash and borrower to manage day-to-day cash flows. Within the first half of this financial year, the authority has taken three temporary loans totalling £15m and one long term loan from the PWLB of £10m. This was done at a time when rates reduced in the very short term so the Authority took advantage of slightly favourable rates that were available, as there is a need to borrow within the 2024-25 financial year. This is in line with the agreed 2024-25 Capital and Treasury Strategy

Up to the end of September 2024, the Council's net borrowing is £115.4m, a decrease from £123.2m on 31 March 2024 levels.

This report has been considered by Governance & Audit Committee who provided no reservations or adverse feedback.

Proposal To note the report on treasury management activities during the first half year period of 2024-25 and provide any feedback as required for the subsequent report to Council.

Action by Head of Finance / Assistant Head of Finance

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Treasury Advisors
- Head of Finance
- Governance & Audit Committee

Signed

Background

1. Treasury risk management within Newport City Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code). The revised edition had a number of key changes which the Authority adopted in the 2023/24 financial year. The key changes are;
 - It particularly highlights the requirement that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return.
 - The forward-looking prudential indicators must be monitored and reported to members at least quarterly (currently half-yearly) as part of the normal budget monitoring reports.
 - The Authority will also have to explicitly document a formal and comprehensive knowledge and skills schedule to ensure the effective acquisition and retention of treasury management skills for those responsible for the management, delivery, governance, decision-making and compliance with legislative requirements.

2. CIPFA defines Treasury Management as

The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

3. The 2024-25 Treasury Management Strategy was approved by the Council as part of the Capital Strategy in February 2024 and can be viewed at the following location. [Part 1 Report Template](#)
4. This report presents the following information:
 - details of capital financing, borrowing, any debt rescheduling and investment transactions
 - reports on the risk implications of treasury decisions and transactions
 - details the monitoring position on treasury management transactions
 - compliance with treasury limits set and Prudential Code

BORROWING STRATEGY / ACTIVITY

Short and Long Term Borrowing

5. Whilst the Council has significant long-term borrowing requirements, the Council's current strategy of funding capital expenditure is through the concept of 'internal borrowing', where the Council seeks to use its existing cash balances to afford its capital expenditure prior to taking out external borrowing i.e. deferring taking out new long term borrowing and funding capital expenditure from the Council's own cash resources for as long as is possible, which it has because of its 'cash-backed' reserves and, to a lesser extent, day to day positive cash-flows. However, this capacity is being reduced so, in the first half of the financial year, the Council undertook some early borrowing in the form of three temporary loans totalling £15m and one long term loan totalling £10m. This was done at a time that the interest rates 'dipped' for a very short window of time and the Council, knowing that it has a clear need to borrow by the end of 2024-25, took advantage of the slightly favourable rates available, in line with advice from our treasury advisors.
6. By using an internal borrowing strategy, the Council can also minimise cash holding at a time when counterparty risk remains relatively high, especially within the current economic climate. However, the capacity to internally borrow is planned to reduce over the short to medium term as the level of reserves are being utilised as intended. In addition, some existing sizeable loans are due to mature within the next year. These two factors will mean that some new borrowing will be required simply to

replace existing borrowing, before considering any overall increase in the capital financing requirement as a result of the Council's capital programme.

7. After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce rates, albeit slowly. With headline inflation lower, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. As forecast by Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate again to 4.75% in November. Arlingclose now forecast that the MPC will continue to reduce Bank Rate, but more slowly and by less than what was originally believed. It is expected that there will be another rate cut in February 2025, followed by a cut alongside every Monetary Policy Report publication, to a low of 3.75%.
8. The following table compares the borrowing levels at the end of September with the equivalent from March 2024 and the position from the mid year report to the end of the year for the financial years 2023-24 and 2022-23. As noted above, the Council have taken out £25m of new loans, both temporary and long term. However, the Council's overall borrowing only increased by £20.1m during the first half of 2024-25. This was due to the redemption of two PWLB loans at the beginning of the financial year, plus there are a number of loans which are Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) loans, which pays back principal over the life of the loan, so the borrowing levels decline naturally over the life of the loan as an alternative to maturity based loans where the amount borrowed is only repaid when the loan period expires.

Comparison	Sept 2024-25	March 2023-24	Sept 2023-24	March 2022-23	Sept 2022-23
Public Works Loan Board	111,276,386	104,531,704	90,552,301	93,089,897	95,793,799
Interest Free Borrowing	10,950,057	11,263,988	9,947,012	9,905,757	9,814,568
LOBOs	15,000,000	15,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000
Ex LOBO	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Temporary borrowing	15,000,000				
Accrued Interest		1,338,047		606,212	
	157,226,443	137,133,739	135,499,313	138,601,866	140,608,367

9. As well as traditional external borrowing via the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), the Council has LOBO (Lender Option / Borrower Option) borrowing. One of the features of a LOBO is that the lender can volunteer a change in rate at certain intervals, and this is more probable in an environment of rising interest rates, as recently experienced. Within 2023/24 three of the six LOBOs that the Authority held gave notice that they were intending to increase the interest rate, therefore the Council decided to repay the loan at no additional cost as accepting the revised terms would mean the Authority would still have refinancing risk for those loans in later years. Therefore, the authority took out £15m of new long term borrowing in PWLB loans to repay the LOBOs loans, which has had no impact on the Council's overall borrowing at the time.

The other three LOBOs also have call dates within the next 12 months. Again, if the option is exercised and an increased rate proposed, a decision on how to proceed considering other financing options would be made in conjunction with our treasury advisors.

INVESTMENTS ACTIVITY / POSITION

10. The Council's strategies in this area of Treasury Management are:

- to be a short term and relatively low value investor, consistent with the pursuit of an ‘internal borrowing strategy’ and
 - investment priorities should follow the priorities of security, liquidity and yield, in that order.
11. The following table compares the investment levels at the end of September with the equivalent from March 2024 and the position from the mid year report to the end of the year for the financial years 2023-24 and 2022-23. This indicates a net increase in investment activity of £27.9m since March 2024. This is because the Council undertook borrowing in advance of need, and the Authority have been able to reinvest this on a short term basis, although it is anticipated that investment balances will reduce as the year progresses.

Comparison	Sept 2024-25	March 2023-24	Sept 2023-24	March 2022-23	Sept 2022-23
Investment	- 41,800,000	- 13,675,000	- 54,680,000	- 47,231,574	- 500,000
Accrued Interest		- 269,735			
	- 41,800,000	- 13,944,735	- 54,680,000	- 47,231,574	- 500,000

12. The January 2018 saw the implementation in the UK of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), where treasury consulting firms were obliged to treat all local authorities as retail clients unless they opted up to professional client status and met certain criteria. Those criteria included holding a minimum of £10m investment balance and employing knowledgeable and experienced staff to carry out investment transactions. In February 2023, the Council invested in three covered bonds to satisfy this requirement; Santander (£3.5m), Lloyds (£4m) and Cie de Financement Foncier (£2.5m). These are longer term investments which helps diversify our investment portfolio and provide a high level of investment security.

NON-TREASURY INVESTMENTS

13. The definition of investments in CIPFA’s revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the Investment Guidance issued by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s (MHCLG) and Welsh Government, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return.
14. The Authority held such investments in:
- directly owned property such as office and commercial units of £10.6m
 - loans to developers £10.3m
 - shareholding in subsidiaries £0.3m (Newport Transport)
15. Directly held property is subject to annual valuation review which can change the value of the holding.
16. The developer loans activity reflects those regenerative partnership projects that are included within the capital programme to assist developers with cash flow loans on particular projects and which are required to be repaid plus interest.

OTHER TREASURY CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2024-25

Economic background and Counter Party Update

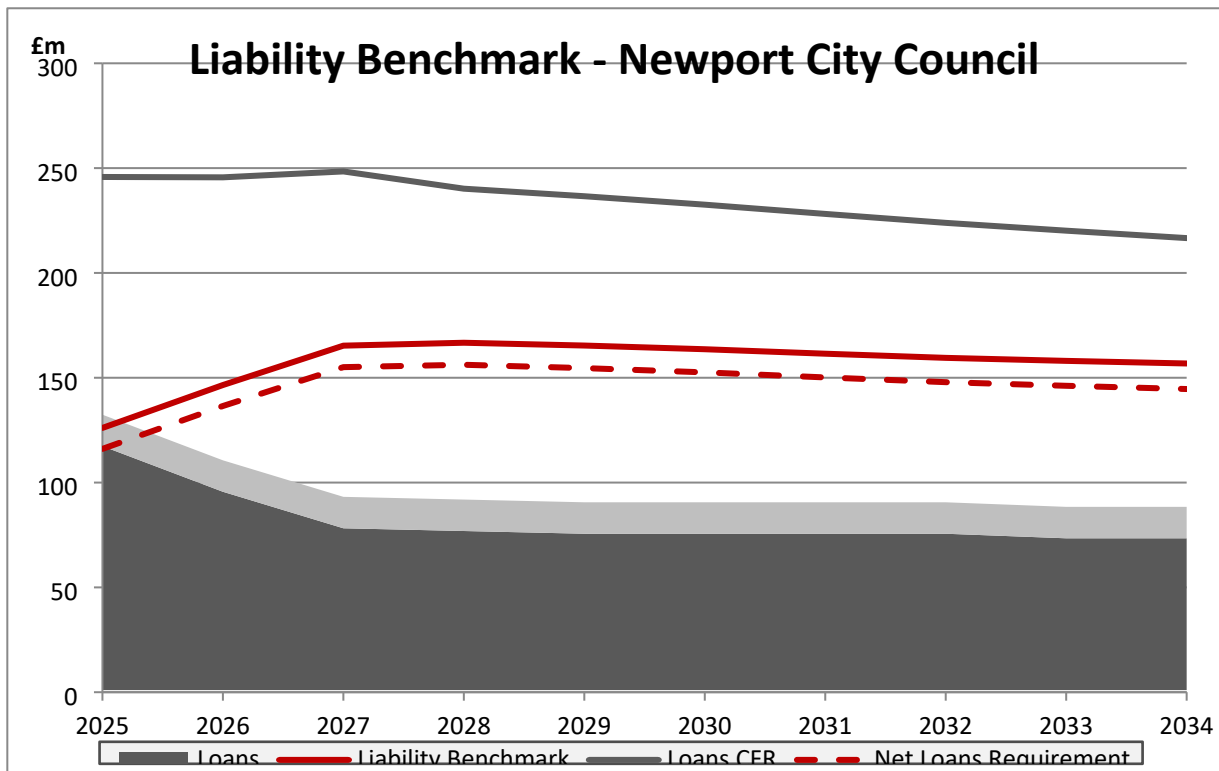
17. Appendix A outlines the underlying economic environment as provided by the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose. This is very useful context in informing annual strategy and assisting in effective treasury decisions.
18. Having completed a review of its credit advice on suspended UK Local Authorities, Arlingclose continues to advise against lending to Birmingham City Council, London Borough of Croydon, Nottingham City Council, Slough Borough Council, Thurrock Council, Warrington Borough Council and Woking Borough Council.

Compliance with Prudential Indicators approved by Council

19. The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using various indicators which can be found in Appendix B. The Authority has complied with the Prudential Indicators for the first half of 2024/25, set in February 2024, except for one – the 'percentage of the Councils capital financing budget of its net budget'. This has arisen due to a technical/accounting aspect associated with this indicator and has no financial cost or impact. The capital financing budget is inclusive of annual lease costs which are currently changing in terms of their accounting treatment so that they are classed as capital financing costs and not any other revenue budget type. This is a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent an additional cost to the Council. The breach therefore does not represent a significant financial impact and will be reported to the full Council as part of this monitoring report.

Liability Benchmark Indicator

20. CIPFA recommends that the optimum position for external borrowing should be at the level of the Liability Benchmark (i.e. all balance sheet resources should be used to maximise internal borrowing). If the outputs show future periods where external loans are less than the Liability Benchmark, then this indicates a borrowing requirement thus identifying where the authority is exposed to interest rate, liquidity and refinancing risks. Conversely, where external loans exceed the Liability Benchmark then this will highlight an over borrowed position which will result in excess cash in the organisation requiring investment thus exposing the authority to credit and reinvestment risks and a potential cost of carry. The treasury strategy should explain how the treasury risks identified by the Liability Benchmark are to be managed over the coming years.
21. The Liability Benchmark is effectively the Net Borrowing Requirement of a local authority plus a liquidity allowance. In its simplest form, it is calculated by deducting the amount of investable resources available on the balance sheet (reserves, cash flow balances) from the amount of outstanding external debt and then adding the minimum level of investments required to manage day-to-day cash flow. It is often denoted in pictorial form using the following graph:



22. In the chart above, the blue line reflects the accumulated value of historic, and future, unfunded capital expenditure – i.e. expenditure initially funded by borrowing and then funded via the revenue budget, over time, in the form of MRP (Minimum Revenue Provision). In effect, this line represents the gross amount of borrowing required.

The solid red line is the calculated actual/real level of borrowing required, taking into account the Council's internal borrowing capacity (i.e. the value of balance sheet resources at any point in time). The gap between the blue and red lines represents the internal borrowing capacity.

The grey shaded areas represent the actual borrowing undertaken by the Council as of 30th September 2024 and shows how these loans reduce as they are scheduled for repayment.

The white gap between the solid red line and the grey shaded areas represents the estimated amount of new borrowing required over the next ten years. A large proportion of this new borrowing would be to replenish existing maturing borrowing, with the remainder being required as a result of the Council's capital expenditure plans.

Outlook for short to medium term

23. As outlined in the Liability Benchmark graph, and elsewhere in the report, the Council has a longer term underlying need to borrow. This is driven by the increasing expenditure on the Capital Programme, with a significant peak expected towards the second half of 2024-25, as well as the need to refinance existing borrowing, which the Council has already done through undertaking some early borrowing to take advantage of some favourable rates. This position will be reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with the treasury advisors, especially in light of the volatile economic context and the regularly changing borrowing rates.

24. Aside from LOBOs, which could potentially see interest rate rises, all of the external borrowing is on a fixed rate basis.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Investment counterparty not repaying investments	High, but depending on investment value.	Low	The Council only invests with institutions with very high credit scores. It employs advisors to monitor money market movements and changes to credit scores and acts immediately should things change adversely. The lower levels of funds available for investment will also alleviate the risk. Colleagues also monitor financial circulars and Treasury consultants advice to be able to respond in a timely fashion, and withdrew its investment from one local authority recently.	Members, Head of Finance, Treasury staff, based on advice from treasury advisors
Interest Rates moving adversely against expectations	Medium	Medium	Interest rates are currently volatile, however the Council's external borrowing is based on fixed interest rates, although there is a degree of risk in relation to LOBOs. The Council will continue to monitor interest rates in anticipation of a medium term need to borrow and will work with its treasury advisors to identify the optimum time to undertake any new borrowing.	Head of Finance, Treasury staff, treasury advisors

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

It is the Council's policy to ensure that the security of the capital sums invested is fully recognised and has absolute priority. The Council follows the advice of the Welsh Government that any investment decisions take account of security, liquidity and yield in that order.

Options Available and considered

The Prudential Code and statute requires that, during and at the end of each financial year, reports on these matters are presented to Council for approval.

Preferred Option and Why

The approach required by statute is quite prescriptive, such that there aren't many choices/options. This report is a regular half yearly event. The Governance & Audit Committee acts as the main scrutiny mechanism before a similar report is received by Cabinet/Council. Cabinet are asked to note the

contents of the report in relation to Treasury activities and indicators and provides endorsement or feedback pertinent to add to the subsequent Council report.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Decisions made on treasury matters will be made with a view to complying with the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators, taking advice, where needed, from our treasury advisors.

The report reflects the expected change, from a treasury management perspective, in that the Council have undertaken significant borrowing, both short term and long term to cover the refinancing requirement which was going to crystallise at the end of 2024-25. As the Council undertook borrowing in advance of need to take advantage of favourable rates, the Council have also been able to reinvest this, in the short term. The need to borrow was expected to happen, in line with the intended use of reserves and consequent reduction in internal borrowing capacity, coupled with the continuation of the capital programme delivery. As highlighted in previous reports, and confirmed by the Liability Benchmark indicator, there remains an underlying, short to medium-term, need to borrow, which is currently anticipated to crystallise during 2024/25.

The indications are that interest rate volatility has now calmed, with our treasury advisors forecasting that the next cut will be in February 2024. Rates will continue to be closely monitored on a regular basis, to identify any change in circumstances.

It may be necessary to undertake some short-term borrowing to assist with managing day to day cashflow requirements and, if that is required, I have the necessary delegated authority to undertake this. The same also applies should any further existing LOBOs be repaid and require refinancing. Should that eventuality arise, the Council would liaise with its treasury advisors and carefully consider the best option for refinancing those loans, unless they could be afforded from within existing investment balances.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

It is a function of the Cabinet to consider the Annual Report on Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators and make recommendations to Council. The report has been prepared in line with the Council's 2024-25 Treasury Management Strategy. There are no legal implications.

Comments of Head of People, Policy & Transformation

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to balance short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs as demonstrated in the Council's approach to treasury management.

There are no direct HR implications associated with the report.

Local issues

N/A

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**

For this report, a full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. This is because this report is not seeking any strategic decisions or policy changes, with its purpose being to update on the treasury management activities for the year retrospectively. However, fairness and

equality are considered as part of service delivery and will feature in annual finance reports, such as the Treasury and Capital Strategy.

In terms of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, and the five ways of working contained within it, this report highlights examples of these being supported. This report is a backwards looking report of the treasury management activities of the Council. It shows that we followed the treasury management strategy and the compliance with prudential code and treasury management indicators. This links into the long-term objectives of the authorities and ensures that the Councils' activities are carried out in an affordable, prudent and sustainable manner.

In the case of the Welsh Language, the service will continue to ensure that, wherever possible, services or information is available in the medium of Welsh.

The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 06 April 2011. The Act identifies a number of 'protected characteristics', namely age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership. The new single duty aims to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the regular business of public authorities. Compliance with the duty is a legal obligation and is intended to result in better-informed decision-making and policy development and services that are more effective for users. Nothing in this report is considered to have a direct equality impact.

Consultation

N/A

Background Papers

Report to Council February 2024: Capital Strategy and Treasury Strategy.

Dated: 4 December 2024

APPENDIX A

Introduction

The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2024/25 was approved at a meeting on 29th February 2024. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

External Context

Economic background: UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally to June to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices. Core and services price inflation remained higher at 3.6% and 5.6% respectively in August.

The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.

Labour market data was slightly better from a policymaker perspective, showing an easing in the tightness of the job market, with inactivity rates and vacancies declining. However, a degree of uncertainty remains given ongoing issues around the data collected for the labour force survey by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for the three months to July showed the unemployment rate fell to 4.1% (3mth/year) from 4.4% in the previous three-month period while the employment rate rose to 74.8% from 74.3%.

Over the same period average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 5.1%, down from 5.4% in the earlier period, and total earnings (including bonuses) was 4.0% (this figure was impacted by one-off payments made to NHS staff and civil servants in June and July 2023). Adjusting for inflation, real regular pay rose by 2.2% in May to July and total pay by 1.1%.

With headline inflation lower, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%, with the lone dissenter preferring Bank Rate to be cut again to 4.75%. The meeting minutes and vote suggested a reasonably hawkish tilt to rates, with sticky inflation remaining a concern among policymakers.

The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years' energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025 and remaining there until early 2027.

As forecast by Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate to 4.75% in November. Arlingclose now forecast that the MPC will continue to reduce Bank Rate, but more slowly and by less than what was originally believed. It is expected that there will be another rate cut in February 2025, followed by a cut alongside every Monetary Policy Report publication, to a low of 3.75%.

The US Federal Reserve (the Fed) also cut interest rates during the period, reducing the Federal Funds Rate by 0.50% to a range of 4.75%-5.00% at its policy meeting in September. The forecasts released at the same time by the central bank suggested a further 1.00% of easing is expected by the end of the calendar year, followed by the same amount in 2025 and then a final 0.50% of cuts during 2026.

Having first reduced interest rates in June, the European Central Bank (ECB) held steady in July before cutting again in September, reducing its main refinancing rate to 3.65% and its deposit rate to 3.50%. Unlike the Fed, the ECB has not outlined a likely future path of rates, but inflation projections remain in line with the central bank's previous forecasts where it will remain above its 2% target until 2026 on an annual basis.

Financial markets: Sentiment in financial markets continued to mostly improve over the period, but the ongoing trend of bond yield volatility remained. The general upward trend in yields in the early part of the period was reversed in the later part, and yields ended the half-year not too far from where they started. However, the volatility in response to economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant it was a bumpy ride for bond investors during that time.

Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00% but hit a high of 4.41% in May and a low of 3.76% in mid-September. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 4.51% but hit a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 5.12% over the period to 30th September.

Credit review: Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list at 100 days.

Having had its outlook increased by Fitch and ratings by S&P earlier in the period, Moody's upgraded Transport for London's rating to A2 from A3 in July.

Moody's also placed National Bank of Canada on Rating Watch for a possible upgrade, revising the outlook on Standard Chartered to Positive, the outlook to Negative on Toronto Dominion Bank, and downgrading the rating on Close Brothers to A1 from Aa3.

S&P upgraded the rating on National Bank of Canada to A+ from A, and together with Fitch, the two rating agencies assigned Lancashire County Council with a rating of AA- and A+ respectively.

Credit default swap prices were generally lower at the end of the period compared to the beginning for the vast majority of the names on UK and non-UK lists. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.

Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

APPENDIX B

Local Context

On 30th September 2024, the Authority had net borrowing of £115.4m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.03.24 Actual £m	31.03.25 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	282.0	330.3
Less: *Other debt liabilities	36.1	84.7
Borrowing CFR	246.0	245.6
Less: Usable reserves	-125	-104
Less: Working capital	2.7	-4
Net borrowing	123.7	137.9

* finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

The treasury management position on 30th September 2024 and the change over the six months is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.03.24 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.9.24 Balance £m	30.9.24 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	125.9	5.4	131.3	16.3
Long term interest free borrowing	11.3	(0.3)	11.0	0.4
Short-term borrowing	0.0	15.0	15.0	0.1
Total borrowing	137.1	20.1	157.2	16.8
Long-term investments	(10.0)	-	(10.0)	3.1
Short-term investments	(3.9)	(27.9)	(31.8)	0.1
Cash and cash equivalents	-	-	-	-
Total investments	(13.9)	(27.9)	(41.8)	3.1
Net borrowing	123.2	(7.8)	115.4	19.9

Three temporary loans totalling £15m and one long term loan totalling £10m was taken out in the first half of the financial year. The temporary borrowing was from other local authorities and a fire authority, and the long term loan was taken from the PWLB. However, the Council also have a number of other loans with PWLB and Salix which are EIPs which is why total borrowing has only increased by £20.1m. The Council have also redeemed two small PWLB loans at the beginning of the financial year.

Short term investments have increased during the period, and this was due to undertaking the £25m of borrowing in advance of need which the authority have been able to reinvest in the short term.

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without

compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. At the present time short term interest rates are higher than long term interest rates.

After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile over the 6-month period and have reduced slightly between April and September 2024. Much of the downward pressure from lower inflation figures was counteracted by upward pressure from positive economic data. Data from the US continues to impact global bond markets including UK gilt yields.

The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the half year and 4.79% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.18%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 5.57% during the half year, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.40%.

Whilst the cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities spiked to around 7% in late March 2024, primarily due a dearth of LA-LA lending/borrowing activity during the month, as expected shorter-term rates reverted to a more normal range and were generally around 5.00% - 5.25%.

CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Authority has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

Loans Portfolio: At 30th September the Authority held £157.2m of loans, (an increase of £20.1m to 31st March 2024, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 30th September are summarised in Table 3A below.

Table 3A: Borrowing Position

	31.3.24	Net Movement	30.9.24	30.9.24	30.9.24
	Balance		Balance	Weighted Average	Weighted Average
	£m	£m	£m	Rate	Maturity
				%	(years)
Public Works Loan Board	104.5	6.7	111.3	3.9	11.4
Banks (LOBO)	15.0	-	15.0	15.0	3.2
Banks (fixed-term)	5.0	-	5.0	3.8	1.7
Local authorities (long-term)	-	-	-	-	-
Local authorities (short-term)	-	15.0	15.0	2.0	0.1
Other inc. WG loans	11.3	(0.3)	11.0		0.4
Accrued interest	1.3	(1.3)	-		
Total borrowing	137.1	20.1	157.2	3.6	21.3

The Authority's borrowing decisions are not predicated on any one outcome for interest rates.

LOBO loans: On 30th September, the Authority held £15m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate and terms or to repay the loan at no additional cost.

As market interest rates rose, there was increased probability of call options on the LOBOs being exercised by lenders. £30m of LOBO loans had annual/semi-annual call option dates during the six-month period to September 2023, no LOBO loans were called.

The Authority has £15m LOBO loans with call dates within the next 12 months, some of which will occur during the remainder of the financial year. The Authority has liaised with treasury management advisors Arlingclose over the likelihood of the options being exercised. If the option is exercised and an increased rate proposed, [the Authority plans to repay the loan at no additional cost as accepting the revised terms would mean the Authority would still

have refinancing risk in later years.]. If required, the Authority will repay the LOBO loans with available cash or by borrowing from other local authorities or the PWLB.

Other Debt Activity

Although not classed as borrowing, the Authority previously raised capital finance to afford Glan Usk School and the Southern Distributor Road. The Accounts for 2023-24 show an outstanding liability of £36m to pay to the operator.

Treasury Investment Activity

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code now defines treasury management investments as those investments which arise from the Authority's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the half year, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £11.6 and £68.1 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.03.24		30.09.24	30.09.24	30.09.24
	Balance	Movement	Balance	Income Return	Weighted average maturity
	£m	£m	£m	%	Years
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	-	-	-		
Government (incl. local authorities)	(3.7)	(28.1)	(31.8)	5.2	0.7
Money Market Funds	-	-	-		On Call
Covered Bonds	(10.0)	-	(10.0)	5.0	0.0
Accrued Interest	(0.3)	0.3	-		
Total investments	(13.9)	(27.9)	(41.8)	5.0	0.8

As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.

Bank Rate reduced from 5.25% to 5.00% in August 2024 with short term interest rates largely being around these levels.

Bank Rate increased by 1%, from 4.25% at the beginning of April to 5.25% by the end of September. Short-dated cash rates rose commensurately, with 3-month rates rising to around 5.25% and 12-month rates to nearly 6%. The rates on DMADF deposits also rose, ranging between 4.8% and 5.4% by the end of June and Money Market Rates between 4.1 and 5.2%.

The £10m that is available for longer-term investment is invested in covered bonds, which has been maintained since the last report and no change is expected in the medium term.

The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose's quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 5 below.

Statutory override: In April 2023 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government published the full outcome of the consultation on the extension of the statutory override on accounting for gains and losses on pooled investment funds. The override has been extended for 2 years until 31st March 2025 but no other changes have been made; whether the override will be extended beyond the new date is unknown but commentary to the consultation outcome suggests not.

Non-Treasury Investments

The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).

Investment Guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Welsh Government also includes within the definition of investments all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

The Authority also held investments in

- directly owned property such as office and commercial units of £10.6m
- loans to developers £10.3m
- shareholding in subsidiaries £0.3m

These investments generated £1.02m in 2023/24 of investment income for the Authority after taking account of direct costs.

Compliance

The Head of Finance reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Investment Limits

Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit	30.09.24 Actual	Complied? Yes / No
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a		Yes
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£10m	Unlimited	31.8	Yes
Secured investments *	25 years	£10m	Unlimited		Yes
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	Unlimited	10.0	Yes
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	£10m		Yes
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£5m	£25m		Yes
Money market funds *	n/a	£10m	Unlimited		Yes
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£10m	£25m		Yes
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£10m	£25m		Yes
Other investments *	5 years	£5m	£5m		Yes

Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 8 below.

Table 8: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	2024/25 Maximum	30.09.24 Actual	2024/25 Operational Boundary	2024/25 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes / No
Borrowing	157.2	157.2	165	259	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	84.2	84.7	92	92	Yes
Total debt	241.4	241.9	257	351	

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

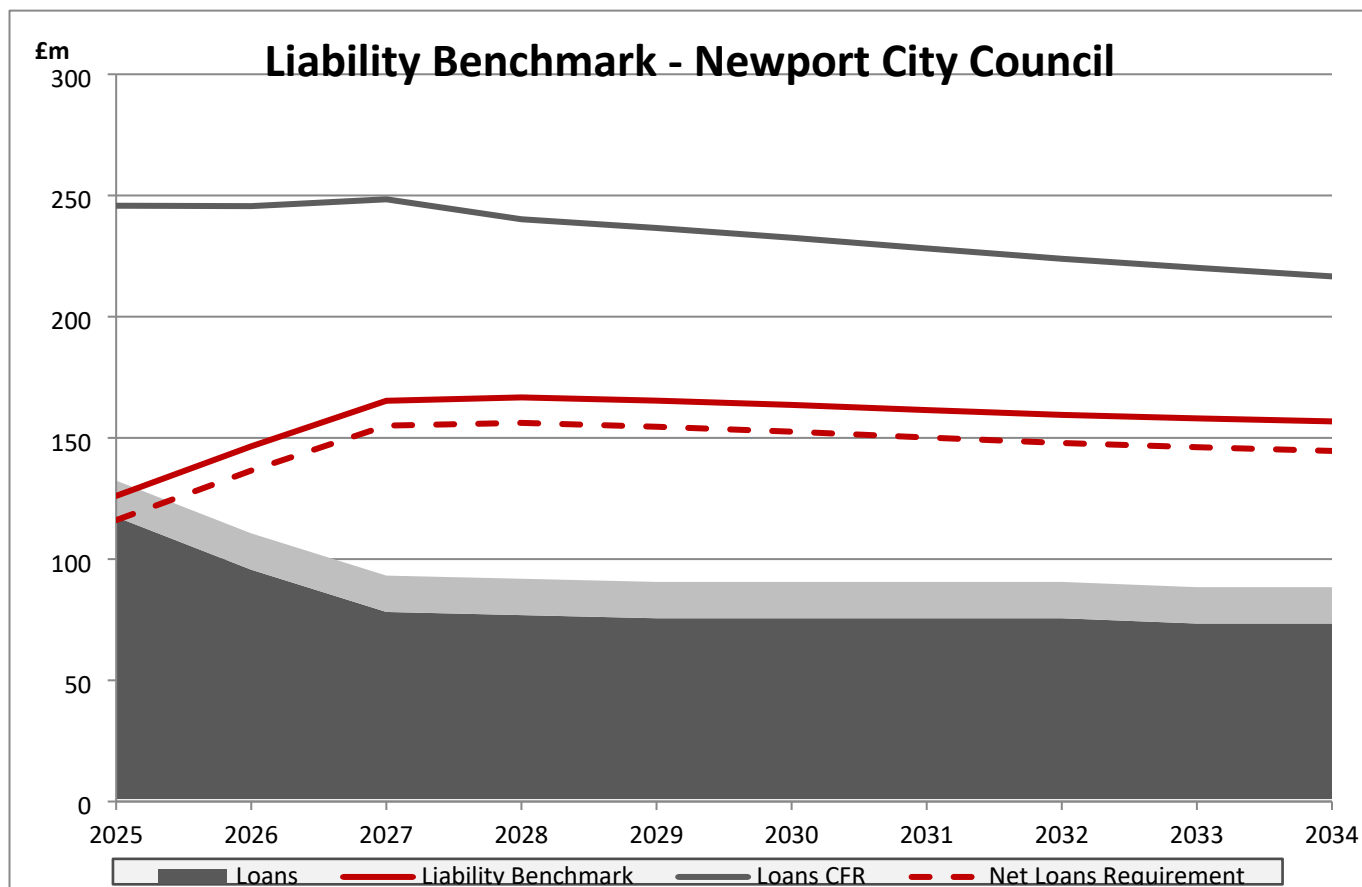
As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

1. Liability Benchmark:

This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £10m required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

	31.3.24 Actual	31.3.25 Forecast	31.3.26 Forecast	31.3.27 Forecast
Loans CFR	246.0	245.6	248.4	244.4
Less: Balance sheet resources	-123.6	-109.1	-102.4	-98.7
Net loans requirement	122.4	136.5	146.1	145.7
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10	10	10	10
Liability benchmark	132.4	146.5	156.1	155.7
Existing borrowing	-137.2	-159.3	-135.4	-130.9

Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes no new capital expenditure funded by borrowing until 2027/28 (other than that already approved as part of the Capital Programme or contained within the existing capital headroom), minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 25 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing.



Whilst borrowing may be above the liability benchmark, strategies involving borrowing which is significantly above the liability benchmark carry higher risk.

2. **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	30.09.24 Actual	Upper limit	Lower limit	Complied
Under 12 months	35%	60%	0%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	5%	40%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	10%	40%	0%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	19%	40%	0%	Yes
10 years and within 20 years	12%	40%	0%	Yes
20 years and within 30 years	3%	30%	0%	Yes
30 years and within 40 years	12%	30%	0%	Yes
40 years and within 50 years	0%	20%	0%	Yes
50 years and above	3%	20%	0%	Yes

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

3. **Long-term Treasury Management Investments:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£10m	£10m	£10m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£10m	£10m	£10m
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

Interest Rate Exposures: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. Bank Rate was maintained at 5% at 30th September.

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit	30.09.24 Actual	Complied
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	£250,000	227,241	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	£150,000	-137,241	Yes

For context, the changes in interest rates during the half year were:

	31/3/24	30/9/24
Bank Rate	5.25%	5.00%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.36%	4.95%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.68%	4.55%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.74%	4.79%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.18%	5.27%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.01%	5.13%

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at new market rates.

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Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject Long-term provision of Internal Audit services

Purpose This report sets out the Head of Finance recommendation to the Cabinet for the long-term provision of the Council's internal audit service

Author Head of Finance

Ward N/A

Summary Following a challenging 18-month period for the Council's internal audit service where the role has been undertaken on a temporary basis by an external partner, the Head of Finance has concluded work in identifying long term options in moving forward. The recommendation is to enter a long-term public-sector partnership arrangement and to utilise the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), who currently provide the Council's interim solution.

Proposal That Cabinet authorises the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Council Leader as Cabinet Member for Finance, to establish the Council as a full partner with the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) for the long term provision of internal audit services.

Action by -Head of Finance – establish the Council as a full partner with the SWAP under acceptable terms.
-To enter formal consultation with affected staff.

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Statutory Officers
- Executive Board
- CM for Finance / Leader
- Governance & Audit Committee

Signed

Background

The Council's challenge – provision of internal audit services

The last 18 months have been challenging for the internal audit function. The team has been reduced over several years and in April 2023 had an establishment of 6.5 staff and led by a part time Chief Internal Auditor, shared with a neighbouring Council. The team has always operated with vacancies given challenges in recruitment but over a 6-month period at the beginning of the 2023/24 financial year, it also lost a further 5 (4.5 staff) members of the team, mainly for promotional opportunities in other Councils and WG. These roles included the most senior levels within the team, including the Chief Internal Auditor.

As a short term solution, an external organisation (South-West Audit Partnerships – 'SWAP') were asked to deliver resources to fulfil the 2023/24 audit plan and a chief internal auditor role. SWAP was well known to the Council as they had delivered parts of the council's internal audit plan to cover vacancies in the team in previous years. This short term solution worked very well and their efficiency in fulfilling most of the plan, starting later in the year as they did, was impressive. The Chief Internal Auditor also developed and agreed the current year, 2024/25 audit plan and that was approved by the Governance & Audit committee last March, the earliest the plan has been prepared, finalised and approved.

Over the last 18 months, two junior auditor roles have been recruited but two attempts to recruit into the middle and senior roles have not been successful, often with no applicants. The team has always struggled to recruit staff given the small team and limited opportunities this affords, in terms of experience and opportunities. There have been no specialists' roles within the team for several years and this cannot be developed in the current structure given its size. In the meantime, our neighbouring Council with whom we shared the Chief Internal Role have recruited into that role full time and no longer wish to share that role.

The future provision of the internal audit function

Given the small size of the team with the problems and limitations this creates around opportunities and career progression, the inability to develop broader experiences and technical specialisms within the service; the resulting lack of resilience within the service and the on-going difficulties in recruiting; it was decided that the Council's interests were better served by securing external arrangement for its internal audit provision. It was also influenced by our experience in using a larger internal audit organisation where they were able to quickly 'get up to speed' on our challenges and bring in experienced resources as needed, including specialists in fraud related work and a new and fresh approach which has worked well.

In terms of securing an external service, there are two broad options available to the Council

1. Tender a service to the private sector
2. Enter into a public sector partnership arrangement

In terms of the first option in pursuing a service with the private sector, likely through a tendering process; whilst it would potentially provide solutions to the drivers for change outlined above, it was not pursued because:

- It is not a route which the Council has historically pursued in other areas e.g. education achievement service, NORSE, Leisure Trust. In all cases, the Council has sought to retain a significant interest through shareholding/partnering arrangements with a focus on strong public sector ethos.
- Profit motive is potentially problematic as is managing a more contractual based relationship
- Time consuming process to develop a tender with limited experience in this area
- Potentially more issues to consider for staff transferring e.g. pensions etc

In terms of the second option in pursuing membership into a partnership arrangement; it too would provide solutions to the drivers for change outlined above, plus the following benefits:

- Council retains interest via full partner status
- Strong public sector ethos and ideally, Local Government focus
- No profit motive leads to re-investment in service improvements and focus on quality and needs of audits/partners
- Likely to be less or little to no staff transfer issues

Significantly, there are two ready-made options available to the Council, being the SWAP partnership and a developing partnership in South Wales. The availability of these partnership options was also a contributor in the decision to pursue a public sector partnership provision.

Appendix One has a summary of the organisations.

Approach

The HoF has been reviewing the services that are available from both partnerships and has had discussions as needed to understand which option would likely best serve the Council's interests. Whilst not a formal 'tender style approach', the information gathered and discussed with both partnerships has still followed a consistent, robust and formal approach with areas of interest explored and information gathered being:

- Core service and providing annual assessment (planning, audit input, reporting, management)
- Added value and specialisms
- Innovation / different approaches
- Impact on staff members
- Governance arrangements

In addition, a standardised return on audit staff and days input was requested. The current budget was used to inform this and there is no reduction in the budget for 2025/26 as we implement this change. Only SWAP returned this data request.

The Council's requirements

The core requirement in pursuing this solution was to have a service which:

- Is efficient (maximising audit days available) and effective (robust in scope and completion of reviews and their timely reporting)
- Allows for an overall assurance opinion to be given annually.
- Is compliant as a minimum with relevant professional standards for the services delivered, currently the International Professional Practices Framework of the Institute of Internal Auditors, as detailed in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which are assessed externally every 5 years.
- Which is visible and where the service understands the Council and its services well. That is, the Council would seek 'fixed individuals' for the Chief Internal Auditor and Audit Manager (or similar/equivalent) roles as a minimum and ideally, principal auditor (or similar/equivalent) roles too and they should, as appropriate, be active members of the Council's wider staff arrangements and forums e.g. managers network, management team members, all Wales chief internal auditor's forum etc.
- Which incorporates capacity and skills/knowledge for (i) fraud related work including investigations where needed, NFI co-ordination/reporting/some checks, periodic fraud risk assessments and (ii) data driven analysis and investigations (ii) IT related audits.
- Which is flexible to meet changing needs or issues as they arise

Review conclusions

The areas explored are summarised here

Service - input

Based on the budget available, both partnerships were asked to complete an analysis of audit days available for the Council based on the existing budget available. Only SWAP returned the more detailed analysis with the South Wales partnership providing less information but with some indications of resources.

The information returned was therefore not consistent from both and not comparable but sufficient to confirm that the audit days/input at least equals the current days of audit effort in the in-house team structure (c1,000) but with more information and therefore certainty from SWAP.

Whilst not an objective analysis, the senior management view of the SWAP partnership, following their experience over the last 18 months, is that they are efficient in maximising the days available into individual audits and completion of the plan. As already noted, whilst they started their interim role late in 2023/24; they still completed a large percentage of the audit plan. Clearly, this can't be compared to the South Wales partnership as the Council has not used their services, but the SWAP partnership is a known entity with the Council's experience of their work and approach being positive.

Service – resilience

Both partnerships offer improvements over the current arrangements given their larger size and wider opportunities for development. The South Wales partnership has 16 staff and is led by the Chief Internal Auditor, supported by an Audit Manager. The Chief Internal Auditor fulfils that role in all of its three partner clients. The SWAP partnership has 80 staff and is led by an Executive Board including – Chief Executive, Operations Director, Continuous Improvement Director and supported by a Chief Technical Adviser; with senior managers then fulfilling Chief Internal Auditor roles at partner clients. The SWAP Partnership is considerably larger, and this provides a greater level of sustainability and resilience.

In addition, the SWAP partnership has one team of nine staff who are not linked to any single partner client and who fulfil external income generation roles, usually to other audit teams with vacancies. In this context here though, they provide added resilience to their partner clients by being also deployed to fill resourcing gaps across all their partners to ensure continuity of delivery, where needed.

Service - specialist services

Given the maturity of the SWAP partnership, it has a well-developed 'added value' offer from specialists, including IT audit, a separate strategic / operational fraud team and a data analysis team who work across all partners as needed.

The South Wales partnership have an IT auditor specialist only. Audits / partners have retained their own fraud officers though these are transactional roles in areas like Housing Benefits etc but the partnership co-ordinate and work closely with them. There is no strategic fraud focus and capacity currently, nor data analysis capacity.

The Council has a need to develop its approach to identify and manage its fraud risk profile and this was the subject of an Audit Wales review in 2023. The Council has already taken steps to begin this work, utilising the SWAP partnership expertise and experience in this area.

Service - reporting

The SWAP Partnership has a highly developed approach to managing and sharing its audit plan, the delivery of those and reporting on conclusions and subsequent implementation of any recommendations.

It utilises specific audit management and reporting software which audit/partners can access in real-time – partner client’s access to the system is available to share documents, provide feedback, access reports and update agreed actions. Audit dashboards in real-time are being rolled out to Governance & Audit committees in their partner audit clients.

The South Wales partnership use audit management and reporting software but is a tool for the internal audit management only. It does not have real-time access by audits/partners and G&A’s committees.

Both partnerships would attend Governance & Audit committees, Executive, Corporate and Directorate Management Team meetings as needed to report on their work.

Service – innovation and development capacity

The SWAP Partnership has more capacity, scope and prospect for leveraging developments, improvements and innovation to the Council in its services. It has a bigger resource base / capacity to do this with an experienced and developed management team who are leaders in this field, which include:

- (i) A Chief Technical Advisor role. Formally Chief Professional Practice Advisor at the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors UK and Ireland.
- (ii) A Chief Executive role. SWAP’s former Chief Executive was on the board that developed the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The current Chief Executive is a former member of the Global Institute of Internal Auditors Guidance Committee and currently Chair of the Chief Auditors Network (a local authority run networking group).
- (iii) A Continuous Improvement Director role
- (iv) An Operations Director role. A former deputy president of the Institute of Internal Auditors UK and occasional speaker at the South-West and Wales Institute of Internal Auditors

Some recent development and innovation in services delivered and offered include:

- “Developing and rolling out a one-page audit report, across Partners. This looks to summarise all the audit findings on a single page, to provide greater focus and deliver key messages more effectively”.
- “Emerging Technology – use of more advanced, emerging technologies. We can share our experiences with the early adoption of Automation, Natural Language Processing (NLP) and continuous assurance provision. Our Generative AI Assistant (GAIA) has been shortlisted for Audit & Risk award this year.”
- Working with our Partners we have developed and implemented “Combined Assurance and Healthy Organisation Reviews checks as a highly effective way to identify critical areas where assurance or procedures could be improved in their businesses, as well as recognising areas where potential efficiency savings could be made”.
- SWAP undertakes numerous external peer assessment of external quality assessments against the PSIAS for other partnerships, and clients (including Welsh Government and Welsh Parliament). Performance of these assessments are used to challenges their own assumptions and interpretations and helps to improve themselves and their services.

The above senior management roles are not involved in individual audits; who have their own senior managers who fulfil the Chief Internal Auditor roles in partner clients.

The South Wales partnership in contrast has one Chief Internal Auditor who fulfils this role in each of their existing three clients as well as leading the partnership organisation, alongside and under the Vale of Glamorgan’s s151 officer. It therefore has a more traditional ‘offer’ in relative terms.

The differences in this area are significant and are largely due to the maturity of the SWAP Partnership and the fact it is the largest public sector audit partnership in the UK.

Staffing matters

Both partnerships operated similar senior staff arrangement with a fixed chief internal auditor and an audit manager (both 0.5 staff equivalent) and a pool of audit staff who could potentially work across a number of other audits/partners.

SWAP confirmed they would have a team primarily focussed on Newport City Council, but they could be asked to work on other audits as needed. They would be able to utilise an existing Chief Internal Auditor who was based relatively locally. The South Wales partnership operated a pool only beyond the senior management roles. In essence, both options are similar in their approach.

Both partners offer (i) membership / continuing membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (ii) recognition of 'service to date' in any terms and conditions (iii) use of the NJC pay scales, the same as Newport City Council

Individuals transferring can stay on Newport City Council terms or transfer to the Vale of Glamorgan/ SWAP terms & conditions.

Both Partnerships are committed to training. SWAP provided a lot of detail on their activities, which includes not only individual training offers but also wider organisational conferences and development days.

Governance

Audits

Both options have similar governance around the quality assurance of their audit plans and individual audits, utilising their senior officers to manage most aspects of these and reviewing work. They also ask those audited to feedback on their work and this is reported. They also are externally assessed against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Both partnerships report on their work and are accountable for performance to their partner organisations (Executive Board) and their Governance and Audit Committees who oversee the delivery of the audit service.

Organisation

Appendix A explains the background to each partnership and where/how partners sit on their governance arrangement. Their different sizes require a different approach but both allow the Council to participate fully and influence the partnerships.

Governance & Audit Committee

The details here were reported to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee at their meeting on 28th November

In their meeting, the Committee were generally supportive of the proposed arrangement around joining a wider partnership arrangement in that it met the needs of the Council and made the following specific comments and questions:

- i. Was there not a legal requirement to tender the work?

HoF response: Because Newport City Council are joining South-West Partnership as a partner, then there is no need to tender this, as this type of arrangement is outside the scope of the Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015.

Regulation 12. of PCR 2015 allows contracting authorities to trade with 'teckal' companies that they are controlling entities over, and the new Procurement Act 2023 which should come into force in late February 2025 also has similar exemptions known as 'vertical' and 'horizontal' arrangements

- ii. To seek clarity on the lawfulness of TUPE transferring staff staying on existing Terms & Conditions, to ensure staff affected are engaged and given advice on transferring and that Unions are engaged

HoF response: The South-West Partnership have confirmed that they have several employees who have opted to stay on their existing Terms & Conditions when they transferred. This will be explored further as part of the transfer and HR/Legal colleagues will be involved and supporting the process.

Team members have already been kept up to speed informally and a more formal approach, in line with the Council's policies and procedures in relation to this will be taken now as we move to regularising the Council as a Partner. HR colleagues are supporting the project, and Unions will be involved in line with the Council's policies and procedures.

- iii. To ensure that the Council receives a good service and at least the same level of service for the budget/cost

HoF response: HoF has confirmed that the number of days input to the service will be at least at the current level which the budget can resource. There will be quality monitoring processes put in place and many of them operate already e.g. evaluation questionnaire sent to all audits completed, a range of PI's monitored and reported to HoF, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee.

- iv. The Partnership agreement will need to meet the needs of the Council including any future decision to exit the partnership

HoF response: As with all partnerships and contracts, the Council will review and ensure that the terms are acceptable and HR/Legal colleagues will be supporting this project, including this aspect as needed.

Summary/Conclusion

The review of the 'offer' from each partnership reflected strongly their different stages of maturity as internal audit organisations and this was a key distinction which gave rise to notable differences the two partnerships.

The SWAP option is very mature, having been established 20 years ago with c25 clients, 80 staff and have grown to be the largest local government specialist internal audit provider in England/Wales. In contrast, the South Wales partnership is young and keen to grow. There is relatively low capacity and resilience. They have three clients only, having lost one client about 12-18 months ago.

- Many of the issues explored in both options meet the core requirements for the service.
- The maturity of the SWAP partnership provides more added value services from specialists, and they have developed better reporting and can potentially leverage more innovation in audit approaches to the Council.
- The South Wales partnership could not provide the depth and breadth of specialist work, some of which, fraud work in particular, the Council have a requirement for.
- The SWAP option would be relatively seamless given they are providing the service currently. They have a locally based manager.
- The track record of the SWAP Partnership is impressive with steady growth in partners and 100% retention. The Council's own experience to date has been positive.

From a service perspective, the SWAP partnership very clearly provides the better option to the Council currently though the Cabinet needs to balance that against the potential to support a developing partnership in the region locally.

Cabinet are recommended to authorise the HoF to establish the Council as a full partner with the SWAP Partnership who will provide internal audit services.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no financial impacts. There is no change in the internal audit budget resulting from this.

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?
Unable to agree partnership terms	M	L	Key terms discussed and is well known to the Council at this point Other public sector organisations operate within the terms	HoF
Staff transfer terms are unacceptable			As above Internal staff kept updated on developments Formal staff consultation to begin after the decision, as appropriate	HoF supported by HR business Partner

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The internal audit function contributes to the good use and management of resources, and this is a key requirement for the Council as resources become more challenging.

Options Available and considered

The report sets out the drivers for change in the provision of internal audit services and moving to a partnership model which is more sustainable. A decision could be taken to retain an in-house team.

In terms of a partnership, there were two known organisations considered and these have been reviewed on a consistent basis. There are large differences between both, stemming from their different size and period of existence. From a service perspective, the SWASP partnership is clearly the stronger option, but this could be considered next to the potential to support the longer-term development of a South Wales partnership.

Preferred Option and Why

Experience has consistently shown that sustaining an in-house team would be difficult, if not impossible to achieve given its inherent challenges, in particular, recruiting staff and developing audit specialisms. Service sustainability would be a high risk. Moving to a larger partnership model is the preferred option.

In terms of the partnership itself, the SWAP option is clearly well developed and mature and would provide, from the very beginning, a stronger service with more specialisms to call upon and a more developed approach. This is not a strategic partnership or service and alongside the ease of transition that retaining SWAP would entail; it is the preferred choice and recommendation.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial impacts related to this decision. There is no change proposed to the internal audit budget going into 2025/26 and the audit resources/input resulting from this change will be at least the same / similar as the in-house team, if fully staffed.

The options identified in going forward allow for a more resilient service.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

It is for the Cabinet to decide on the provision arrangements for this service, with the recommendation being an external public sector partnership. In this report, the Head of Finance sets out the various options for the provision of the internal audit function going forward. All of the options put forward are lawful and appropriate and it is therefore ultimately a matter for the Cabinet to decide which would be preferable. In considering this, the Cabinet will note the comments of the Governance and Audit Committee which are, as set out above, generally favourable towards what is being proposed.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

This report asks the Cabinet to decide on the long-term provision of the Council's internal audit service, with the Council establishing itself as a full partner with the SWAP Partnership who will provide internal audit services.

The proposal is in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 vision of 'an ambitious, fairer, greener Newport for everyone', and supports its four Well-being Objectives, including 'An inclusive, fair and sustainable council'. The principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its five ways of working are supported, with this proposal looking to ensure that the internal audit function is sustainable both in the short and long-term preventing the issues faced by the council over recent years with resource and capacity. This can be achieved through collaboration with the SWAP Partnership and via the consultation of existing staff.

A Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment was not required for this report. There are potential staffing implications for three staff members who may be subject to transfer to the SWAP Partnership, and these will be subject to staff consultation in accordance with Council policies

Scrutiny Committees

N/A

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

• Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

- Long term – The proposal looks to ensure the internal audit function is sustainable both in the short and long-term through the establishment of the Council as a full partner with the SWAP partnership.
- Prevention – The Council's internal audit function has been challenging over the last 18 months, with reduced resource and capacity. Establishing a more resilient service will prevent these issues from occurring ensuring the council can deliver on this important function.
- Integration – This proposal supports the National Well-being Goals (e.g. A Globally Responsible Wales) and is in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 vision of 'an ambitious, fairer, greener Newport for everyone', and its four Well-being Objectives, including 'An inclusive, fair and sustainable council'.

- Collaboration – The proposal has been developed in collaboration with the Council’s Executive Team; the Council’s Governance & Audit Committee; and the SWAP/South Wales Partnerships.

Involvement – Staff potentially impacted by this proposal have been informally consulted and kept up to date with developments, while formal staff consultation arrangements and policies will be followed during implementation

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

Given the nature of the proposal here, no FEIA was required and there are no changes proposed which impact on these duties. The paper deals with the permanent options to deliver existing services

Consultation

The recommendation here has been consulted on with the Council’s Executive Team who have considered it alongside the opportunity to assist in developing, over the longer term, a South Wales partnership. Similarly, the Council’s Governance & Audit Committee have been consulted and their comments are included in this report.

Current staff employed by the Council (three) have been informally consulted and kept up to date with developments and the Council’s formal staff consultation arrangements and policies will be followed during implementation.

Background Papers

N/A

Dated:

APPENDIX A

Partnerships Background

South-West Audit Partnership – ‘SWAP’

- Came out of a collaboration of district councils in Somerset. Now has 24 partners / audits, predominantly local government and all public sector. They have retained all audits/partners over their 20yr existence and have c80 staff. They are the largest local Government internal partnership in England and Wales.
- Has 1 partner in Wales (Powys) with balance predominantly in South-West and the Welsh borders
- Is a private company limited by guarantee, without share capital and is a Teckal compliant organisation which is Local Authority controlled through Partners representation on its governance structure. Not for Profit organisation.
- Small team within SWAP provides interim solutions to resourcing challenges at various South Wales Councils including the Regional Internal Audit Service itself. Vast majority of staff focussed on working on partners audits. External income generated, in context of not-for-profit organisation, is used for wider benefit of the partnership
- Owner's Board represented by Councillors nomination by Partners – meet 6 monthly and make decisions on governance structure, budgets and assets.
- Board of Directors made up of officers nominated by each member of the Board (usually HoF/ similar) – focus on implementing strategy and monitors performance
- Management Team runs company on a day-to-day basis
- No minimum period of membership but 12 months' notice required for leaving

Regional Internal Audit Service

- Came into existence in 2019 based on four South Wales Councils and now reduced to three following one Council departure. They have 16 staff, led by a Chief Internal auditor role.
- A developing partnership and keen to grow
- Hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan with 16 staff, led by a Chief Internal Auditor Role and supported by one Deputy/Audit Manager
- Partnership Board consist of the s151 officers of each audit/partner
- Head and Deputy head of RIAS manage operational matters and allocation of work



Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject **The Future of Newport School Improvement Services**

Purpose For Cabinet to agree a suitable option for the delivery of School Improvement Services in Newport.

Author Chief Education Officer

Ward All Wards

Summary In January 2024 Welsh Government commenced the ‘Middle Tier Review’ which asked all local authorities to consider next steps in planning school improvement, aligned to new national guidance. This report looks at the options available for the delivery of school improvement services in Newport with accompanying appraisals.

Proposal

1. To continue to commission school improvement services from the Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) for the foreseeable future; and
2. To mandate the Chief Education Officer to work with partners to explore the potential for changes to the governance of EAS and to implement changes to the delivery of services by EAS which reflect stakeholder feedback and national school improvement guidance.

Action by Chief Education Officer

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- The Chief Executive of Newport City Council
- The Strategic Director for Policy & Transformation
- The Newport Headteacher School Improvement Group
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years

Signed

Background

In 2012 The Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) was established in response to the Education Minister, Leighton Andrews twenty-point education reform plan. At this time the expectation was set, that all local authorities would participate in joint school improvement consortia arrangements.

The EAS continues to provide all school improvement functions across Newport, Torfaen, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire councils. Governance arrangements are secured through a Company Board and the Joint Executive Group which contains membership from local elected member, Cabinet Members for Education and a nominated lead Chief Executive from across the region.

In January 2024 Dr Dylan Jones and ISOS was commissioned by the previous Minister for Education and Welsh Language (Jeremy Miles) to conduct a Middle Tier Review with stakeholders across Wales. This paper will look at the Middle Tier Review (MTR) with a spotlight on options and a recommendation for School Improvement Services in Newport.

The Middle Tier Review has removed the former 'expectation' that local authorities work in partnership with Regional Consortia School Improvement Partners, in traditional geographical footprints. Partnership working is however still required and single local authority school improvement services have been significantly discouraged by Welsh Government

The recommendations and expectations from the Middle Tier Review must work hand in hand with the new national guidance on School Improvement which is currently in its final draft.

Each local authority must submit an application to Welsh Government on their revised school improvement partnership arrangement. The application must reflect the draft School Improvement guidance. Applications will be accepted or refused based on these criteria.

How does the Current EAS Model take in to account the Revised Welsh Government School Improvement Guidance 2024?

In June 2024, the draft guidance 'A collaborative model between schools, LAs and Welsh Government' was shared outlining aims and objectives.

The aim of the policy is to support the system in collectively raising educational standards in Wales as we mature into a self-improving system. The guidance sets out Welsh Government policy expectations for a new, school-to-school collaborative approach to self-evaluation and improvement: it should be rooted within an open culture, with collective responsibility between LAs, schools and groups of schools. The Schools in Wales as learning organisations model sets out the key characteristics to deliver this culture. The aims of the guidance are noted below, alongside corresponding current local delivery mechanisms and considerations for next steps.

It should be noted that the current delivery of School Improvement by the EAS is highly reflective of the new national School Improvement guidance (2024).

The aims of the guidance	Current local practice	Further considerations
1 Improve the quality of leadership and teaching and learning by embedding and enabling deep and purposeful collaborative improvement and collective responsibility as the foundations of the school improvement model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-constructed school improvement model• Clear universal work programme for SIPs focussed on SDP priorities, teaching and learning and self-evaluation.• Professional Discussions.• Termly supported self-evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-constructed local Teaching and Learning Strategy (to include appendices for literacy and numeracy).• A co-constructed local self-evaluation and improvement strategy for schools.• Provide local opportunities for leaders to work within and across other settings.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team around the school meetings. • HTs undertaking the role of SIPs. • Partner schools e.g. s2s intensive support. • Cluster governor professional learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop local approaches to shared leadership arrangements through collaborations, including all through school models.
2	Develop an open, supportive culture which enables self-evaluation to become a mechanism for improving schools and the wider school system, rather than as a compliance exercise within an accountability system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular termly supported self-evaluation activity with all schools. • Extended supported self-evaluation in schools that require a more in-depth activity leading to precise follow up support for teaching and learning. • Piloting a cluster peer review approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider removing the LA thematic element from the termly SSE so that schools can focus on self-evaluation linked to their own priorities. • Use a local sampling approach to evaluate provision and pupil progress in identified areas to write a precise local evaluation. • Revise the universal offer for SIPs to ensure that SSE activity is broader and more balanced and always includes enough first-hand evidence to make a robust evaluation of pupil progress.
3	Enable LAs to create a local collaborative improvement infrastructure which allows all schools and LAs to: <p>a. improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement within schools, where high-quality collaborative working, active professional learning and enquiry, and effective peer support and challenge are central.</p> <p>b. continue to develop a shared understanding of progression and expectations for learning.</p> <p>c. develop a more authentic, collective understanding of local priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partner School model enables collaborative working, active professional learning and enquiry, and effective peer support and challenge. • Teaching and Learning Framework. • New guidance: Self Evaluation and Improvement Planning. • Local expectations of effective cluster working. • Local professional learning offer linked to priorities. • School Support Overview and local SSE themes enables collective understanding of local priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-constructed local agreement that outlines the expectations of effective cluster working*. • Consider different models of peer review*. • Consider how SIPs and broader team can become more involved in supporting LA functions e.g. ALN, attendance / exclusions*. • The development of Local Collaboratives e.g. HT cluster leads coming together to develop a more authentic, collective understanding of local priorities*. • Simplifying the universal PL offer so that is focusses on a 'back to basics' approach and supports schools to address national priorities*. • To co-construct local examples of assessment and progression tracking systems. • To share local examples of effective long, medium- and short-term planning in schools. • Develop local portfolios to exemplify a shared understanding of progression and expectations for learning.
4	Enable school leaders and LAs to focus time and energy on building, and releasing, school-based capacity to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of funded systems leaders through the SIP and Partner School model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore purposeful models for Secondary-to-Secondary collaborations*.

	support local system improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of vertical school to school support at individual and school level. Cluster (horizontal) collaboration to continue to develop a shared understanding of progression and expectations for learning. 	
5	Enable LAs to work in partnership with each other and Welsh Government to ensure evidence based good practice is shared systematically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Schools model at local and wider contexts. Supporting Our Schools Website – sharing effective practice. Local case studies / videos and impact captures. Good practice events and Partner Schools delivery PL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop local improvement intelligence through the creation of an 'LA on a Page' to ensure local intelligence is precise and systematically shared locally and nationally.
6	Provide a supportive national infrastructure to ensure local improvement intelligence informs national priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local areas of strength and improvement priorities are identified. The SSO is an agile repository which enables local improvement intelligence to inform national priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction of local pathways for school leaders to develop their system leadership skills*.

The following information's considers current performance of Newport schools linked to Estyn Judgements and any subsequent case for change.

Performance of Newport Schools and settings

The performance of nearly all schools and settings across the city are good or better. Where previously schools have been in an Estyn category or causing concern and subject to Local Authority intervention, performance has improved. Twenty-five schools have been inspected by Estyn since May 2022. 44% of schools inspected were asked to write best practice case studies which is more than double all Wales average.

Newport Education Service know their school well. Where support is required, early support is brokered at pace to prevent schools from causing concern.

Stakeholder Feedback

In Spring 2024, a new stakeholder group of Headteacher was established to focus on school improvement. The Headteacher 'School Improvement Group, (SIG)' is made up of 16 Headteacher (10 primary, 5 secondary and a special school Headteacher) which is representative of 29% of Headteacher workforce, from across the city.

This group has considered the strengths and opportunities for change in respect of school improvement services. Their feedback is noted below:

Headteachers overall value:

- Quality assurance activities, which support and challenge school leaders to deliver the statutory elements of a school's work, for example school development planning.
- The current professional learning offer, which includes support from partners schools, regional consortia advisor support, (primaries only) and the wider professional learning offer provided by the EAS, with the option for schools to buy-in external consultants.
- The Partner School funding model which retains additional funding at school level and within the local authority.

- LA representation as a part of Headteacher performance management arrangements.

Headteachers overall do not value:

- Supported Self Evaluation (SSE), activities which do not focus on the school’s improvement priorities.
- School Improvement Partners (SIP) attending governing body meetings to share the ‘School’s Support Overview document’.
- School Improvement Partners who use their role as an opportunity to disproportionately income generate, with multiple schools.
- A proportion of meetings instigated by the EAS, which have limited value to school leaders.

Secondary Headteachers do not value:

- Current NQT Induction
- The professional learning offer; subject specific support.

Headteachers identified key aspects of school improvement work which requires further refinement:

- The quality assurance of School Improvement Partners.
- The role of School Improvement Partners.
- Support for schools which need to be more school directed and led.
- The focus of support i.e. this should be focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The desegregation of support and audit- style activities.
- The over emphasis and focus on current cluster working (as defined by a secondary school and its feeder primary schools).
- Administrative processes e.g. grant planning tool and share point.

Options Available and considered with Risks:

The following information describes three potential models to deliver Newport School Improvement functions with strengths and threats. The descriptors and board view of each model have been created to determine a preferred option to conclude this paper.

Option 1: Remaining in a static position with the Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service providing a service to Newport and other local authorities across the region. Features of this include:

- Governance Issues remaining static (Company Board)
- Common regional protocols and processes across all local authorities
- SIPs for Newport Schools from surrounding local authorities or core sips
- Principal SIP form central EAS
- Governors Support Service provided
- Regional Professional Learning offer to continue Schools to School Support to continue
- Cluster focus to remain in place
- Regional Headteacher Strategy Group to be led by EAS

<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secures ongoing delegation of funding to schools • The current model provides many features in common with revised national school improvement guidance. • There have been many successes for Newport schools linked to this model, particularly where SIPs have been strong. • The local authority has its own School Improvement Lead and Intelligent Client 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider stakeholder feedback shows a desire to review Company Board and consider alternative governance models. • Not all local authorities currently in the model may remain – this may weaken the current EAS staffing structure and resources available for all partners. • Further MTR recommendations link to bespoke systems and processes to support local issue and ongoing dialogue and collaboration with local authorities.
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<p>(DCEO) to maintain a good working relationship and positive outcomes for the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAS has always ensured that their practice is reflective of national priorities and educational research and has adapted over time in line with regional requests. There is a good track record of positive change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newport Headteacher School Improvement group feedback shows a strong preference for adaptation and change to the current regional model to better suit Newport's Schools, especially in the secondary sector.

Option 2: Continue to commission services of the Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service, making further changes which represent stakeholder feedback and national school improvement guidance. Features of this include:

- A review of the Company Board model is considered alongside alternative governance models.
- The Partnership continues to employ current EAS staffing (as much as possible – note if one of the current local authorities exits this will have resource and staffing impact).
- Overtime further changes are made to ensure school improvement services reflect changing times, educational research, national school improvement guidance, local need, the further empowerment of local school leaders.
- Schools delegated funding continues to be secured to allow Headteachers to act as School Improvement Partners and schools to act as ‘Leads’ for school improvement themes (Partner Schools).
- Overtime, further opportunities are found to employ school improvement staff through Newport City Council, demonstrating co-ownership.
- Newport maximises its own SIPs and schools to schoolwork within the city with more Newport schools supporting other Newport schools (where standards are high, and quality is strong).
- Newport local authority officers and advisory staff (linked to Attendance, GEMS, ALN, Inclusion and Early Years) work seamlessly with school improvement partners to maximise support for schools with SIPS.
- Newport becomes front and central to the branding of school improvement work within the city.
- The Newport Headteacher School Improvement Group remains in place and works collaboratively with the LA on changes to school improvement systems and processes over time.
- More Newport schools become Partner Schools, providing support linked to their specific areas of strength.
- Secondary horizontal working groups become a significant feature of the new partnership with greater opportunities to source and offer support from local secondary schools within the city.
- Cluster working is realigned to ‘contextual working groups’ rather than traditional feeder schools link.
- Quality assurance processes are developed with school leaders (at all levels) to maximise their opportunities to become Partner Schools.
- A mixed economy of core / casual SIPS is in place with greater opportunities for local authorities to directly employ school improvement staff when vacancies and funding allows.
- A Secondary specific DHT network is established to secure school improvement practices and support leadership development and succession planning.

Opportunities

- A revised governance approach may reduce some bureaucracy for the EAS and local authorities.
- Working to change and improve over time has less risk of destabilising school improvement and will help to retain high quality staff currently working within the system.
- Schools delegated funding can remain secure.
- Newport can maximise their income generation for Partner School work.
- Secondary schools have a greater opportunity to work collaboratively and reduce duplication and better quality assure provision for subject specific support.
- Working in a local context can be highly beneficial to understanding Newport communities, learners and their similarities.
- Developmental opportunities for school and LA staff are maximised and succession planning within the city is strengthened.
- Newport leaders will feel an improved sense of collaboration and empowerment and ownership around school improvement activities.
- Better alignment between the school improvement service and advisory staff linked to attendance, GEMS, ALN, Inclusion and Early Years, to provide seamless support to school.

Threats

- The review of the Company Board is uncharted territory which will require a SWOT analysis.
- Potential loss of staff expertise, through EAS staff seeking work elsewhere, at a time of uncertainty.
- Changes in partnership over time may result in destabilisation of a partnership staffing structure over time.

Option 3: Newport reverts to a local authority led School Improvement Service and offers to collaborate with other local authority partners on a buy back basis. Some services could be purchased from other local authorities e.g. a shared Governor Support Service. The features of this include:

- All school improvement is designed by Newport and is provided by a Newport core staffing structure. This includes a Head of School Improvement, a Principal School Improvement Partner, a mixed economy of core SIPs and Headteacher SIPs, Professional Learning Lead, Learning, Teaching & Curriculum Lead, Core subject specialists, Lead for Governor Support, additional support for equity, education and wellbeing, learning intelligence and administration. This model would require additional funding of £800k.
- Governance arrangements link to current local authority systems e.g. Cabinet Member, Scrutiny and Cabinet Reporting.
- A Newport Headteachers School Improvement Group remains in place.
- Core staff have multi-dimensional roles to facilitate the LEAG School Improvement Grant T&C's

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff from the EAS may be able to TUPE across to Newport, although specific staff cannot be requested. • Improved alignment between the school improvement staff and advisory staff linked to attendance, GEMS, ALN, Inclusion and Early Years, to provide seamless support to school. • Newport will have autonomy over staffing, functions and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial penalties linked to disassembling a regional partnership. • The cost of model 3 is beyond the current funding available – this would reduce schools delegated funding or wider council funding. • Council staffing has also reduced over time. Commencing with limited staffing presents a risk for future capacity. • Staff absence could not be covered which may reduce support for schools at times. • Other LA's buying in a service can choose to pull out at any time which can destabilise budgets and resources. • Prior advertising of school improvement staff demonstrates that there is sparsity of professionals. Headteachers are reluctant to leave their posts. Local authority posts have less favourable pay, terms and conditions. Secondment arrangements are unaffordable. • Welsh Government have instructed LA's not to work in total isolation. Buying in one element of a shared service does not maximise opportunities for seamlessness. For example – if Newport were to buy in Governors Service from another local authority, there can be a disconnect between leadership and the quality of Governing Bodies. • Providing services for other local authorities can reduce a local authorities ability to focus on its own local needs. Report writing and quality assurance for other local authorities is time consuming and overly burdensome. • Providing a service for another local authority can deplete resources quickly for example a LA moving into Special Measures would need a significant amount of resource which maybe too challenging to find. • Newport may be responsible for managing and quality assuring HT SIPs outside of their own LA. • Recruitment and retention of high-quality School Improvement Partners is challenging in sufficient numbers; even through recruiting current Headteachers and Core SIPs.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The Local Authority receives a series of grants, where terms and conditions state that such funding must be spent in line with School Improvement functions.

£1,953, 523 School Improvement Grant income is utilised to support a School Improvement Service for Newport with an additional the local authority annual core contribution of £626, 633.

This provides a total of £2, 580, 156 for the EAS to facilitate a school improvement function. However, currently schools receive a further direct contribution of £1,444, 792 for School-to-School work (e.g. Partner Schools) and for Headteachers to deliver a School Improvement Partner role

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?
Council Funding or Welsh Government Grants reduce overtime	M	M	School Improvement models fluctuate overtime. Budgets for school improvement are closely monitored. Where necessary, efficiency can be made and delivery programmes can be redeveloped, prioritising key themes pertinent to the local authority context.	Chief Education Officer

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Newport Corporate Plan 2022-2027
The Newport Education Service Plan 2024-2025

Options Available and considered

Option 1: Remaining in a static position with the Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service providing a service to Newport and other local authorities across the region.

Option 2: Continue to commission services of the Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service, making further changes which represent stakeholder feedback and national school improvement guidance

Option 3: Newport reverts to a local authority led School Improvement Service and offers to collaborate with other local authority partners on a buy back basis. Some services could be purchased from other local authorities e.g. a shared Governor Support Service.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 2: 'Continue to commission services of the Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service, making further changes which represent stakeholder feedback and national school improvement guidance'.

On the basis that.

- Newport schools are in a stable position and have improved outcomes over time.
- There is scope to meet Headteacher stakeholder views.
- Welsh Government do not want local authorities to work in isolation
- A Newport standalone Advisory Service is more expensive and risks the reduction in schools' income generating through SIP and School to School work.
- That the current EAS model meets new School Improvement Standards and provides economies of scale.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

This report provides cabinet members with a comprehensive report for options for ongoing support and improvement for Newport schools. There would be financial impacts with moving away from the current model with costs likely to rise and risks around financial sustainability of a model centred on individual LA's model. The recommended option therefore is based in improving the current model and making it more efficient/effective for Newport.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The relevant legislative background is set out in the report. The Council is required to adopt a mechanism by which school improvement services will be delivered over the next few years. The report sets out three options and lists the benefits and drawbacks of each. The analysis above indicates that the preferred solution would be to continue to commission services from the EAS but with further changes to reflect stakeholder feedback and national guidance. As the report notes, this would include a review of the EAS board and changes to the organisation's governance. However, it should be added that these are matters which are not entirely within the control of this Council and would need to be resolved in collaboration with other participant authorities and EAS itself. This means that it would not be possible to guarantee a given outcome. Nevertheless, it is apparent from the options appraisal above that the proposed solution is more desirable than the alternatives and it would therefore be appropriate for the Cabinet to adopt the recommendations of the Chief Education Officer.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

This report provides cabinet members with a comprehensive report for options for ongoing support and improvement for Newport schools. The report and options given are in line with relevant legislation and guidance. This is inclusive of Newport's Corporate plan and also Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2014.

An FEIA has been completed. At this stage of consideration there are no HR implications.

Scrutiny Committees

This report has not been through Scrutiny Committee. However, Scrutiny Partnerships have assessed an EAS Value for Money report on an annual basis. All comments from the committee have supported the local authority in their commissioning arrangements to date.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

A FEIA on the options is embedded here:



FEIA.docx

The reports content contributes to the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act and the Wellbeing Goals. The report supports:

- A Prosperous Wales: An effective School Improvement Service supports a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing fair work.
- A More Equal Wales. This report demonstrates that Newport schools will continue to secure appropriate School Improvement support regardless of socio-economic circumstances or context.
- Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. All School Improvement models must include the development of the Welsh language and Welsh culture within schools and settings.

This report also supports the 5 ways of workings through:

1. Integration and Collaboration: The report demonstrates how national and local priorities of Welsh Government, School Improvement Services, the local authority and schools work together to meet the wellbeing objectives.
2. Long Term: Good quality School Improvement Services in schools safeguard the long-term needs of schools and its learners.
3. Prevention: This report shows how early intervention and preventative with good quality School Improvement Services support schools and learner outcomes

2010 Equality Act

This report does not contain any specific reference to the 2010 Equalities Act.

Socio-economic Duty

All options for a School Improvement Service must support learners disadvantaged by poverty and any other earners considered to be vulnerable.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

This report supports the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure. Schools Improvement Services will support schools in English Medium and Welsh Medium settings. All schools (and the local authority) share the common priority of supporting one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and the Welsh Language Measure. Support and professional learning will be provided by the School Improvement Services to enable schools to thrive and meet their recommendations linked to Welsh Language

Consultation

The report was completed in consultation with the Chief Executive, Strategic Director and Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years.

Background Papers

N/A

Dated: 4 December 2024

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Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject Quarter 2 2024/25 Corporate Risk Register Update

Purpose To present the Council's Corporate Risk Register for the end of Quarter 2 (1st July 2024 to 30th September 2024).

Author Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Ward All

Summary The Council's Corporate Risk Register monitors those risks that may prevent the Council from achieving its strategic priorities or delivering services to its communities and service users in Newport.

At the end of Quarter 2, there were 15 risks recorded in the Corporate Risk Register that are considered to have a significant impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and legal obligations.

There were 8 Severe risks (risk scores 15 to 25); 7 Major risks (risk scores 7 to 14); that are outlined in the report. In comparison to the Quarter 1 Corporate Risk Register, there was no change to the risk scores for the 15 risks.

As set out in the Council's Risk Management Policy, Cabinet reviews the Corporate Risk Register on a quarterly basis ensuring procedures are in place to monitor the management of significant risks.

Proposal Cabinet is asked to consider the contents of the Quarter 2 update of the Corporate Risk Register.

Action by Executive Board and Heads of Service

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Executive Board
- Corporate Management Team

Signed

Background

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires Newport City Council to set Well-being Objectives in its Corporate Plan. As a public body, the council is also responsible for delivering services (statutory and non-statutory) to residents, businesses, and visitors across Newport. We will inherently encounter opportunities and risks that may prevent, disrupt, impact or enhance the delivery of services and achieve the objectives in the Corporate Plan. How the council responds and manages these opportunities and risks is important to ensure resources are being used efficiently and effectively to maximise value for money and to minimise and/or prevent the risk impacting services, communities, and citizens in Newport.

The [Risk Management Policy](#) outlines how the council manages risk and sets the risk appetite towards the opportunities and risks in the course of its duties. Officers regularly manage risk in the course of their duties whether this is health and safety risks, civil contingencies, safeguarding risks to children, young people, adults and carers or risks to assets, buildings, and council employees. The relevant service area(s) and professional disciplines will be assessing and managing these risks as required and reporting these through their own reporting mechanisms.

This report reflects the most significant risks recorded in the Corporate Risk Register at the end of Quarter 2, reflecting the risk scores assessed in the last period noting any movement with risks, and the action(s) which service areas are taking to manage the risks reported.

Newport City Council – Quarter 2 2024/25 Service Area Risk Summary (Appendix 2)

At the end of Quarter 2, there were 44 risks recorded (including corporate risks) across the 11 service areas. The table below provides a summary of the changes reported during the period.

Total Risks at Q2 (24/25)	Risk Scores Increased since Q1 (24/25)	Risk Scores Decreased since Q1 (24/25)	No Change since Q1 (24/25)	New Risks in Q2	Closed Risks in Q2	Escalated Risks ⁺¹	De-escalated Risks ⁺²
44	1	1	42	0	0	0	0

Quarter 2 Corporate Risk Register Update (Appendix 1 and 3)

At the end of Quarter 2, the Corporate Risk Register included 15 risks that are considered to pose the most risk to the delivery of services and achievement of its strategic priorities. The 15 corporate risks consisted of:

- 8 Severe risks (15 to 25)
- 7 Major Risks (7 to 14)

In comparison to the Quarter 1 (24/25) Corporate Risk Register, there was no change to the risk scores for the 15 risks.

Appendix 1 - Quarter 2 Corporate Risk Heat Map and Risk Profile

Appendix 2 – Quarter 2 Newport City Council’s Service Area Risk Summary.

Appendix 3 – Newport City Council’s Quarter 1 Corporate Risk Register (Attached separately).

Glossary – Risk Management terminology and Risk Score Assessment

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?
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The Council does not achieve its objectives as corporate level risks are not adequately managed and monitored.	M	L	Risk Management Strategy has been adopted and mechanisms are in place to identify, manage and escalate emerging and new risks / mitigation strategies. Audit Committee oversight of risk management process.	Directors, Heads of Service and Performance Team
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* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Corporate Plan 2022-27

Service Plans 2024/25

Options Available and considered.

1. To consider the contents of the Corporate Risk Register and to continue monitoring progress of actions taken to address the risks identified in the report.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of the risk register

Preferred Option and Why

To consider the contents of the Corporate Risk Register and monitor the progress of actions taken to address the risks identified in the report. This will give the Cabinet sufficient assurance and oversight of the main overarching risks that the council faces in delivering the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report itself. The corporate risk register forms an important part of the governance and budget setting arrangements for the Council and the risk register is used to guide the internal audit plan.

There are a number of risks with either a direct or indirect financial impact. For example, the risk around increasing demand for homelessness provision has a significant direct budget impact.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the report. As part of the Council's Risk Management Strategy, the corporate risk register identifies those high-level risks that could impact upon the Council's ability to deliver its corporate plan objectives and essential public services. Governance and Audit Committee are responsible for reviewing and assessing the Council's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements. However, the identification of corporate risks within the risk register and monitoring the effectiveness of the mitigation measures are matters for Cabinet. There are some changes to the scoring of some of the risks in the register as set out above.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Effective monitoring and reporting of the Council's Corporate Risk Register is essential in minimising and preventing the likelihood and impact of risks against our objectives. The Council's risk management is a key area in the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. Following the completion of 2023/24 service plans, service areas have taken the opportunity to review and update their service plans 2024/25. This includes the review of their risks to ensure that their objectives and actions support necessary mitigation activity, identification of any new / emerging risks and also to assess their existing risks.

Local issues

Not applicable

Governance and Audit Committee (G&AC)

The quarter 2 risk report was presented to the Council's Governance & Audit Committee (28th November). There were no comments or recommendations raised for Cabinet to consider.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

For this report, a full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. This is because this report is not seeking any strategic decisions or policy changes, with its purpose being to update Cabinet on the current risk register.

Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

Under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and its 5 ways of working principles this report supports:

Long Term – Having effective risk management arrangements will ensure that the opportunities and risks that will emerge consider the long-term impact on service users and communities.

Preventative – Identifying opportunities and risks will ensure the Council is able to implement necessary mitigations to prevent or minimise their impact on Council services and service users.

Collaborative – The management of risk is undertaken throughout the Council and officers collaborate within service areas, Corporate Management Team and the Council's Cabinet to ensure decisions are made in a timely manner and are evidence based.

Involvement – The Council's Risk Management process involves officers across the Council's service areas and Cabinet Members.

Integration – Risk Management is being integrated throughout the Council and supports the integrated Planning, Performance and Risk Management Framework. The Framework ensures that planning activities consider the opportunities and risks to their implementation and overall supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and legislative duties.

Consultation

As above, the Risk Register is also considered by Audit Committee.

Background Papers

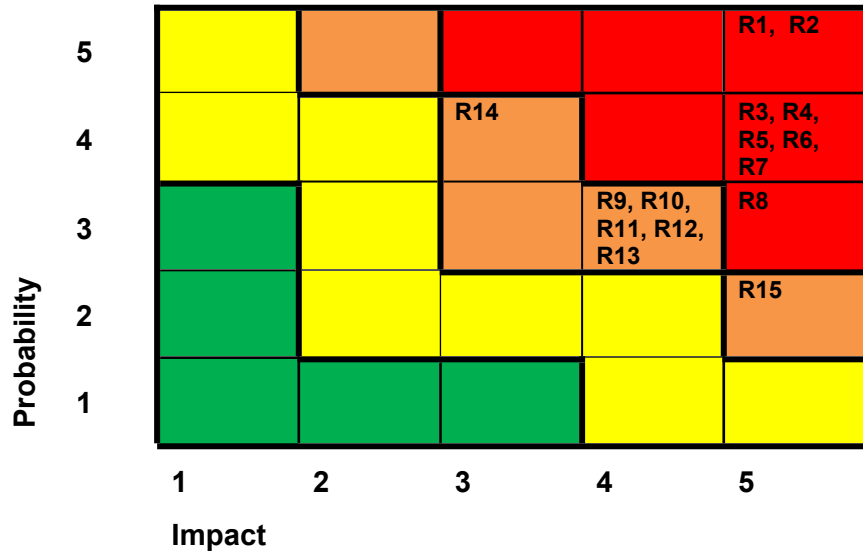
[Quarter 1 Corporate Risk update to Cabinet](#)

[Governance and Audit Committee meeting May 2024](#)

[Risk Management Policy](#)

Dated: 4th December 2024

Appendix 1 – Quarter 2 2024/25 Risk Heat Map



Corporate Risk Heat Map Key (Quarter 2 2024/25)	
R1 - Pressure on Housing and Homelessness Service	R9 - Stability of Adult Social Services Providers
R2 - Pressure on the delivery of Children Services	R10 - Schools Finance / Cost Pressures
R3 - WCCIS Replacement	R11 - Information and Cyber Security
R4 - Pressure on Adult & Community Services	R12 - Demand for ALN and SEN support
R5 - Balancing the Council's Medium-Term budget	R13 - Educational Out of County Placements
R6 - Highways Network / Infrastructure	R14 - Welsh Government's Net Carbon Zero Target by 2030
R7 - Newport Council's Property Estate	R15 - City Centre Security and Safety
R8 - Eliminate Profit from Social Care	

Risk Score Profile between Quarter 3 2023/24 and Quarter 2 2024/25

Risk Reference	Risk	Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Risk Score Q3 2023/24	Risk Score Q4 2023/24	Risk Score Q1 2024/25	(Current) Risk Score Q2 2024/25	Target Risk Score
R1	Pressure on Housing and Homelessness Service	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	Environment & Sustainability / Housing & Communities	20	20	25	25	12
R2	Pressure on the delivery of Children Services	Cabinet Member for Social Services	Social Services / Children Services	25	25	25	25	12
R3	WCCIS Replacement (New)	Cabinet Member for Social Services	Social Service Directorate	-	20	20	20	4
R4	Pressure on Adult & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Social Services	Social Services / Adult Services	20	20	20	20	12
R5	Balancing the Council's Medium-Term budget	Leader of Newport City Council / Cabinet	Transformation & Corporate / Finance	20	20	20	20	10
R6	Highways Network / Infrastructure	Cabinet Member for Assets & Infrastructure	Environment & Sustainability / Infrastructure	20	20	20	20	15
R7	Newport Council's Property Estate	Cabinet Member for Assets & Infrastructure	Transformation & Corporate / People, Policy & Transformation	20	20	20	20	12
R8	Eliminate Profit from Social Care	Cabinet Member for Social Services	Social Services / Children Services	15	15	15	15	4
R9	Stability of Adult Social Services Providers	Cabinet Member for Social Services	Social Services / Adult Services	16	16	12	12	12
R10	Schools Finance / Cost Pressures	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years	Transformation & Corporate / Education Services	12	12	12	12	12
R11	Information and Cyber Security	Leader of Newport City Council	Transformation & Corporate / People, Policy & Transformation	12	12	12	12	8
R12	Demand for ALN and SEN support	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years	Transformation & Corporate / Education Services	12	12	12	12	6

Risk Reference	Risk	Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Risk Score Q3 2023/24	Risk Score Q4 2023/24	Risk Score Q1 2024/25	(Current) Risk Score Q2 2024/25	Target Risk Score
R13	Educational Out of County Placements	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years	Transformation & Corporate / Education Services	12	12	12	12	4
R14	Welsh Government's Net Carbon Zero Target by 2030	Cabinet Member for Climate Change	Environment & Sustainability / Environment & Public Protection	12	12	12	12	2
R15	City Centre Security and Safety	Cabinet Member for Assets & Infrastructure	Environment & Sustainability / Infrastructure	10	10	10	10	9

Appendix 2 – Quarter 2 24/25 NCC Service Area Risk Summary

Directorate	Service Area	Total Q2 Risks	Risk Scores Increased since Q1	Risk Scores Decreased since Q1	No Change since Q1	New Risks in Q2	Closed Risks in Q2	Escalated Risks ^{*1}	De-escalated Risks ^{*2}
Environment & Sustainability	Environment & Public Protection	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
	Housing & Communities	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
	Infrastructure	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
	Regeneration & Economic Development	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Social Services	Adult Services	5	1	0	4	0	0	0	0
	Children Services	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
	Prevention & Inclusion	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Transformation & Corporate	Education	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
	Finance	6	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
	Law & Standards	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	People, Policy & Transformation	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Total		44	1	1	42	0	0	0	0

*1 – Escalated Risks – Risks that have been escalated from Service area risk registers to Corporate Risk Register

*2 – De-escalated Risks – Risks that have been de-escalated from Corporate Risk Register to service area risk register

Glossary

This document provides an explanation of terminology used in this report and supporting documents.

Risk Appetite – the amount of risk that Newport City Council is willing to seek or accept in the pursuit of the Council's long-term objectives.

Inherent Risk Score – The level of risk in the absence of any existing controls and management action taken to alter the risk's impact or probability of occurring.

Residual Risk Score – The level of risk where risk responses i.e. existing controls or risk mitigation actions have been taken to manage the risk's impact and probability.

Target Risk Score – The level of risk (risk score) that Newport City Council is willing to accept / tolerate in managing the risk. This is set in line with the Council's overall risk appetite.

Risk Mitigation Action – Actions identified by the Risk Owner to respond to the risk and reduce the impact and probability of the risk of occurring.

How the Council Assesses Risk

An assessment of the likelihood and impact of risk is important to measure, compare and monitor risks to ensure efficient use of resources and effective decision making. This assessment is carried out using the risk matrix as described below.

Risk Assessment Matrix

A Corporate Risk Register will contain the high-level risks for the whole authority. In order to differentiate between these high level risks a 5x5 risk assessment matrix will be applied. The matrix is shown below, and further detail is included in appendix 3.

Risks are scored using the scoring system for probability and impact and assigned a rating based on the tolerances set out in the matrix below

Risk Score	Risk Impact Areas (See Risk Appetite Statement)									
	Strategy / Policy	Governance / Legal / Regulatory	Business Continuity / Operational	Reputational	Finance inc Commercial / assets	Technology & Information Security	People / Health & Safety	Safeguarding	Climate Change & Environmental Impacts	Programme & Project Delivery
5 Severe	Page 60	<p>Failure of a key strategic objective e.g. Corporate Plan, Climate Change Plan or compliance with Council Policy etc Council Constitution.</p> <p>Legislative / Regulatory breach resulting in multiple litigation / legal action taken against the Council.</p> <p>(Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts).</p> <p>Immediate action(s) required to mitigate / prevent risk impact.</p>	<p>Severe and serious organisational / service failure that has direct impact on stakeholder's including vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Service disruption over 5+ days.</p>	<p>Severe and persistent</p> <p>National media coverage.</p> <p>Adverse Central Government response, involving (threat of) removal of delegated powers.</p> <p>Officer(s) and / or Members forced to resign.</p> <p>Systematic failure to deliver services.</p> <p>(Linked to other Risk Impact areas).</p>	<p>Ineffective governance, and internal control arrangements resulting in severe financial loss, misappropriation and/or fraud.</p> <p>Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance. Capital > £1M</p> <p>Revenue >£1M</p>	<p>Severe data breach and/or loss of major system(s) preventing organisational delivery.</p> <p>Immediate action(s) required to mitigate / prevent risk impact.</p> <p>(See also BC / operational risk)</p>	<p>Multiple severe and irreversible injuries or deaths of staff, students or members of the public.</p> <p>Immediate action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact.</p>	<p>Severe, multiple / systematic failure of safeguarding arrangements resulting in injuries and/or deaths.</p> <p>Immediate action(s) required to prevent and/or mitigate risk impact.</p>	<p>Severe impact on CO2 emissions impacting on the Council's net zero carbon targets.</p> <p>Severe impact on Newport environment / biodiversity.</p> <p>Immediate action(s) required.</p>	<p>Project status is over 12 months from anticipated implementation date.</p> <p>Project(s) do not deliver the major benefits / savings identified in business case.</p> <p>(Linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts)</p>
4 Major	Page 60	<p>Major impact and/or constraint on achieving key strategic objectives e.g. Corporate Plan, Climate Change Plan or compliance with Council Policy etc Council Constitution.</p> <p>Serious legislative breach resulting in intervention, sanctions and legal action.</p> <p>(Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)</p>	<p>Loss of an important service(s) for a short period that could impact on stakeholders.</p> <p>Service disruption between 3-5 days.</p>	<p>Adverse publicity in professional / municipal press, affecting perception / standing in professional / local government community</p> <p>Adverse local and social media publicity of a significant and persistent nature.</p> <p>(Linked to other Risk Impact areas).</p>	<p>Ineffective governance, and internal control arrangements resulting in major financial loss, misappropriation and/or fraud.</p> <p>Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance.</p> <p>Capital > £0.5M - £1.0M</p> <p>Revenue >£0.5M-£1M</p>	<p>Major data breach and/or loss of major system(s) preventing organisational / service delivery.</p> <p>Action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact.</p>	<p>Major irreversible injury or death of staff, students or members of the public.</p> <p>Action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact</p>	<p>Major safeguarding incidents resulting in significant injury / harm to individual(s).</p> <p>Action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact.</p>	<p>Major impact on CO2 emissions impacting the Council's net zero carbon targets</p> <p>Major impact on Newport environment / biodiversity of an area in the community.</p> <p>Action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact.</p>	<p>Project status is 6 to 12 months over from anticipated implementation date.</p> <p>Project(s) do not deliver major benefits / savings identified in business case.</p> <p>(Linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts)</p>
3 Moderate		<p>Noticeable constraint on achievement of a key strategic objective / Service Plan objective e.g. Corporate Plan, Climate Change Plan or compliance with Council Policy</p> <p>Significant legislative breach resulting in investigation.</p> <p>(Linked to Financial / Reputational Impacts)</p>	<p>Loss and/or intermittent disruption of a service between 2-3 days.</p>	<p>Adverse local publicity / local public opinion including social media.</p> <p>Statutory prosecution of a non-serious nature.</p>	<p>Ineffective governance, and internal control arrangements resulting in moderate financial loss, misappropriation and/or fraud.</p>	<p>Moderate Data breach and/or intermittent of service / specific system.</p> <p>Action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact.</p>	<p>Injury to staff, students or members of the public. Not life threatening.</p> <p>Action(s) required to mitigate / prevent impact</p>	<p>Safeguarding arrangements require improvement to prevent / mitigate individual harm /injury.</p>	<p>Moderate impact on the Council's CO2 emissions. Further action(s) required to mitigate / reduce impact.</p> <p>Moderate impact on Local community</p>	<p>Project status is 1 to 6 months over from anticipated implementation date.</p> <p>There is significant reduction on delivery of benefits / savings identified in business case.</p>

Risk Score	Risk Impact Areas (See Risk Appetite Statement)									
	Strategy / Policy	Governance / Legal / Regulatory	Business Continuity / Operational	Reputational	Finance inc Commercial / assets	Technology & Information Security	People / Health & Safety	Safeguarding	Climate Change & Environmental Impacts	Programme & Project Delivery
	etc Council Constitution.			(Linked to other Risk Impact areas).	Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance. Capital = £0.25M - £0.5M Revenue = £0.25M to £0.5M				environment and biodiversity. Action(s) required to manage risk.	(Linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts)
2 Low	Constraint on achievement of Service Plan objective that does not impact on Corporate Strategy	Moderate impact leading to warning and recommendations.	Brief disruption of service that has a minor impact on the delivery of a service. Service disruption 1 day.	Contained within Directorate Complaint from individual / small group, of arguable merit. (Linked to other Risk Impact areas).	Ineffective governance, and internal control arrangements resulting in low financial loss, misappropriation and/or fraud. Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance. Capital = £0.1M - £0.25M Revenue = £0.1M – £0.25M	Technology improvements required to meet necessary standards / low level data breach Minor improvements and lessons learned.	Some minor reversible injuries. Minor improvements and lessons learned action required.	Minor safeguarding improvements required to prevent / mitigate harm or injury to individual(s)	Minor impact on the Council's CO2 emissions. Actions required to improve emission impact. Minor impact on Local community environment and biodiversity. Action(s) required to manage risk.	Project status is 1 to 4 weeks over from anticipated implementation date. There is minor reduction on delivery of benefits / savings identified in business case. (Linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts)
1 Very Low	Constraint on achievement of Service / Team Plan objective	No reprimand, sanction or legal action.	Minor disruption of a non-critical service.	Isolated complaint(s) that are managed through the corporate complaints process and service area. (Linked to other Risk Impact areas).	Ineffective governance, and internal control arrangements resulting in very low financial loss, misappropriation and/or fraud. Unplanned and/or additional expenditure disturbance. Capital < £100k Revenue <£100k	Non-critical technology disruption / improvements required. Arrangements are effective in managing and learning lessons.	Some superficial injuries. Arrangements are effective in managing risk.	Isolated safeguarding incidents requiring action through business as usual activity.	Minimal or low impact on CO2 emissions. Minimal or very low impact on environment and/or biodiversity. No further action required.	Project status is 1 week over from anticipated implementation date. There is insignificant / no impact on delivery of benefits / savings identified in business case. (Linked to Financial / Strategic / Reputational Impacts)

Risk Probability Scoring

Probability Score (1-5)	%	Criteria
5	Almost Certain (75%+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence indicating that the risk has already occurred or there is almost certainty of the risk taking place. The current governance, internal control / processes are not effective enough to manage the risk and requires further risk mitigation action(s) to manage and/or reduce the risk.
4	Likely (51-75%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is indicating that the risk is likely to occur considering the current governance, internal control and other arrangements in place. Further risk mitigation action(s) are required to improve current arrangements and to reduce the probability of the risk occurring.
3	Possible (26-50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is indicating that it is possible risk will occur based upon the existing governance, internal control and other arrangements in place. Further risk mitigation action(s) are required to improve current arrangements and to reduce the probability of the risk occurring.
2	Unlikely (6-25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is indicating that it is unlikely the risk will occur based upon the existing governance, internal control and other arrangements in place. Minor improvements are required to improve current arrangements.
1	Rare (0-5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is indicating the risk will rarely occur based upon current governance, internal control and other arrangements in place. Ongoing monitoring and assurance of arrangements managed through routine operations.

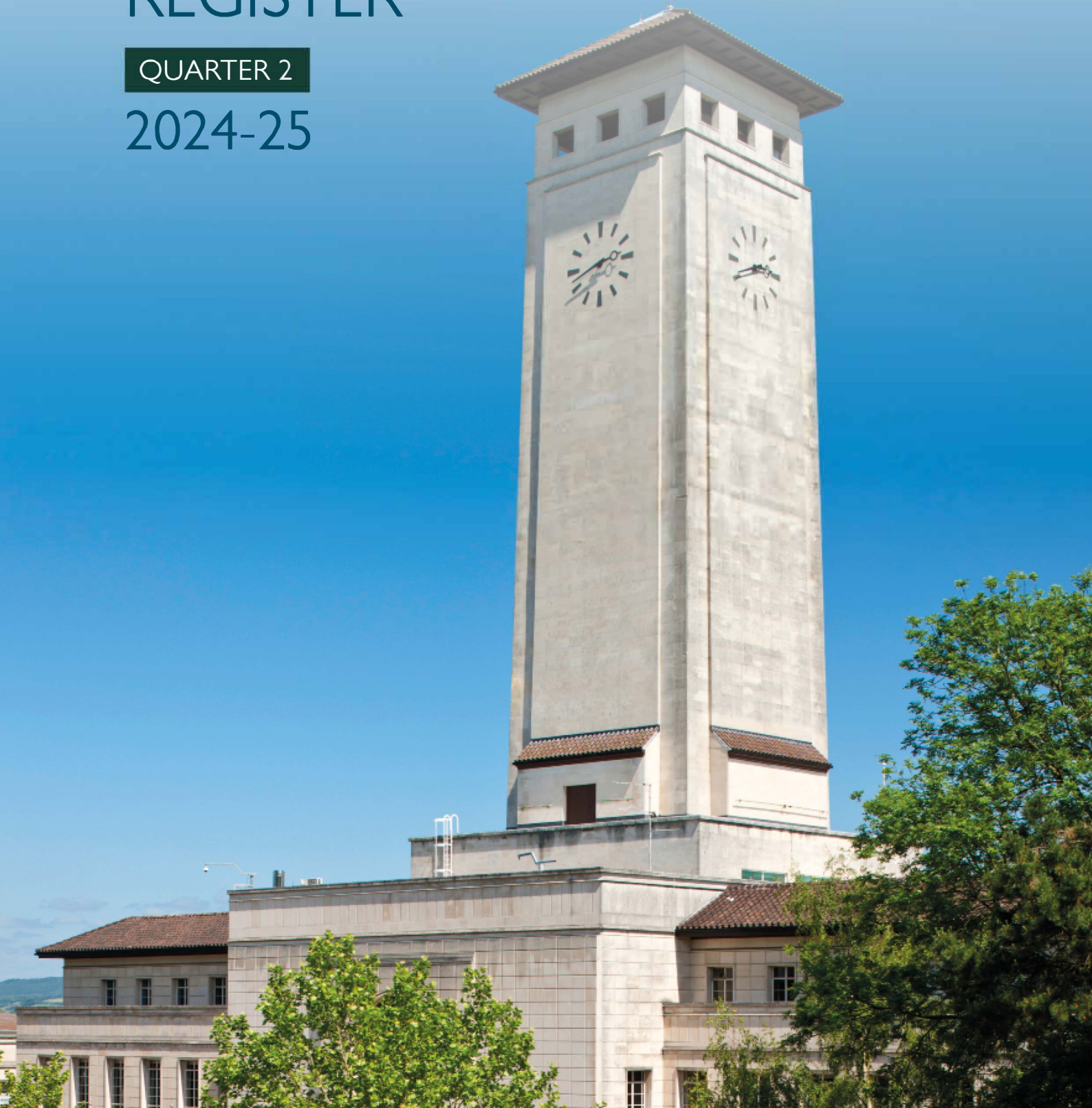


NEWPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYDD

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

QUARTER 2




2024-25







Corporate Risk Report Definitions

Direction of Risk

The change of risk score between previous quarter and the current quarter being reported.

Direction of Risk	Definition
	The risk score has decreased / improved since the last quarter update.
	The risk score has increased / worsen since the last quarter update.
	The risk score has remained the same since the last quarter update.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

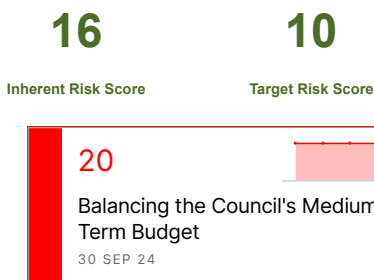
RAG Assessment	Definition
	Action has been completed.
	Action is on track to be completed by the Agreed target date.
	Action is mainly on track with some minor issues preventing the action being completed by the agreed target date. Management interventions required to improve performance and close monitoring by the Head of Service / Service Management Team.
	Action is not on track with major issues preventing the action being completed by the agreed target date. Immediate management interventions and escalation to Directorate Management Board required to improve performance.

Abbreviations

ADSS – Association of Directors Social Services
 ALN – Additional Learning Needs
 BP – Business Partner
 CCP – Climate Change Plan
 DHCW – Digital Health Care Wales
 DOR – Direction of Risk.
 IA – Internal Audit
 LAEP – Local Area Energy Plan
 LRBs – Learning Resource Bases
 MTFP – Medium Term Financial Plan
 NCC – Newport City Council
 OOC – Out of County
 PPT – People Policy & Transformation
 RAG – Red / Amber / Green
 RSL – Registered Social Landlord
 SEN – Special Education Needs
 SRS – Shared Resource Service (Newport Council's IT Partner)
 WCCIS – Welsh Community Care Information System
 WLGA – Welsh Local Government Association
 YJS – Youth Justice Service

Balancing the Council's Medium Term Budget

Risk Overview	To meet the Council's requirement of reducing the gap between Council spend and Budget allocation over the next 3-5 years
Parent Service(s)	Finance
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Leader of the Council



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance reported to key strategic boards on monthly basis e.g. Executive Board, Directorate Management Boards, Corporate Management Team, Service Area Management teams. Finance updates reported to Cabinet on revenue and capital position. Corporate Governance and Council Constitution sets roles and responsibilities of financial management.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly finance (revenue and capital) forecasting of budgets to identify budget pressures and savings. Finance Business Partners supporting budget holders / senior managers. Budget setting process with senior officers / budget holders. Includes consultation with public and other key stakeholders.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory / Audit Wales review of Council finances. Internal Audit reviews of finance and financial controls. Local authority network and reporting to Society of Welsh Treasurers and Welsh Government.

Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Balancing the Council's Medium Term Budget	→	The Council's forecasted three year budget gap is very significant and there are continuing demands being placed on Council services. The Council's budget is funded 75% by WG and therefore what happens to this has a significant impact. At this point, the outlook remains challenging.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Finance Business Partner Review of service area monitoring positions (2024/25)	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	
 Senior leadership, Cabinet, Scrutiny and public engagement into MTFP development.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	
 Service area finance challenge reviews	01 Jun 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	

City Centre Security & Safety

Risk Overview	Minimise the risks and disruption to people and businesses due major incidents or deliberate acts that pose hazards to people and business and can result in structural damage; damage/disruption to infrastructure and utilities; impacts on business continuity, reputation, and the economy, in both the city centre and affected surrounding areas.
Parent Service(s)	Infrastructure
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Assets and Infrastructure



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Protect Duty Act is currently going through Parliament, which will create a statutory duty for Counter Terrorism preparedness to be undertaken across all city centres across the UK. Newport City Council along with the Wales Extremism Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU), Heddlu Gwent Police and other emergency services have formed the Newport City Council Protectiveness Security and Preparedness Groups (PSPGs), chaired, and led by NCC. A key role of PSPGs will be the multi-agency assessment of current risk and vulnerabilities, and provision of effective mitigation in a proportionate manner. PSPGs will also ensure responsibilities under the new Protect Duty are discharged.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in the NCC Infrastructure Service Area Plan is the objective to ensure Newport City Council is meeting its requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act, by developing and having in place effective governance and control arrangements to identify, prepare and respond to events in Newport. Supporting this objective, the Council has a well-established and integrated Corporate Emergency Management Plan, which outlines arrangements which are intended to assist the co-ordination of the Authority's response to any actual, or threatened incident, or emergency, while maintaining normal services as far as possible. The plan provides a flexible framework of procedures to enable a quick, effective, and appropriate response to mitigate the effects of an incident or emergency that may have an impact on the Council's response. The Council's Emergency Management Structure provides a framework of integrated emergency management to ensure co-ordination within the Council and with external agencies. The structure enables the Council to respond at an operational, tactical, and strategic level. At a strategic level in any incident a Gold Duty Officer (Chief Executive, Strategic Director, Head of Service) will be available to decide on what actions to take. Via the Civil Contingencies Duty Officer systems, the Council also provides 365 24/7 incident response. Consideration to be given to incorporating structured and strategic conversations about security and counter terrorism into pre application stage of major developments.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the duties of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, that Council also works in partnership with key responding agencies, including the emergency services, to ensure a timely and effective multi agency response to incidents. Multi Agency Plans and Procedures are developed via the Gwent Local Resilience Forum. Due to significant recent major incidents across the UK (Manchester Arena Bombing) the Council with its partners review any recommendations resulting from inquiries to ensure that where necessary appropriate learning is integrated into existing plans and procedures.

Direction of Risk

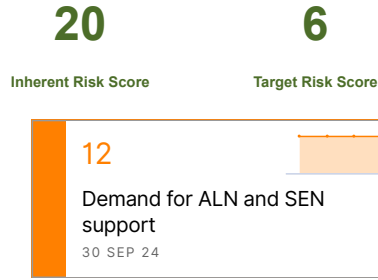
	DoR	Comment
City Centre Security & Safety	➔	<p>During Q2, work has recommenced in working with colleagues in Counter Terrorism Policing Wales to assess city centre security measures by not only geographical zones but also business/sector type zones. The intention that this new initiative will support enhanced liaison and buy-in from business across the city centre area.</p> <p>With the support of partners, work continues to promote and encourage nationally approved security training to ensure service providers across the City Centre and wider event organisers are better prepared to respond quickly to significant incidents. Following meetings held with colleagues in Counter Terrorism Policing Wales, additional opportunities are being investigated to provide further one to one security related training with city centre businesses. This will be investigated through the Newport BID team to promote with business and plan to deliver the training.</p> <p>Due to current climate, the Council continues to work with its key partners to ensure any intelligence with regards to any potential issues that may impact the safety of the city centre, is provided and if required response measures are put in place.</p>

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Collaborate & support the Police and partners with city centre risk assessments	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	
 Meet requirements to protect business, public and visitors through security improvement	28 Feb 2020	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	

Demand for ALN and SEN support

Risk Overview	Funding to cover Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Special Education Needs (SEN) provision across the city is insufficient and does not meet the demand of increasing need.
Parent Service(s)	Education Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Forum review and agree funding formulas and funding arrangements for school Schools Forum Finance sub-group. ALN Panel scrutinise pupil information to identify if a specialist placement is needed as part of their statutory duty.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALN Implementation finance subgroup review and discuss a number of funding formula models and agree on the most appropriate to be presented firstly to the Schools forum Finance Sub-Group and if in agreement will be presented at Schools Forum for ratification. ALN Panel scrutinise pupil information to identify if a specialist placement is needed as part of their statutory duty. Specific OOC ALN Officer responsible for monitoring OOC provision and where possible look for local alternative provision.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport LA has commissioned 14 places at Catch 22 a primary age Social, Emotional, Behaviour Difficulties Independent Education Provider to reduce the risk of pupils requiring OOC placements.

Direction of Risk

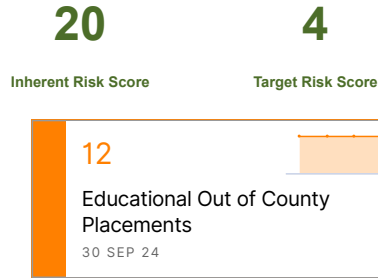
	DoR	Comment
Demand for ALN and SEN support	➔	The risk score has remained static as we continue to maintain the risk within the service area. However, there are increasing financial pressures on schools due to the expectations of ALN reform and the increase of complex pupils. Headteachers have reported that they are struggling to fund the additional learning provision for some of their pupils. We are seeing an increase in referrals for specialist provision. The primary Learning Resource Bases are at capacity, and a waiting list is in place, Ysgol Bryn Derw (YBD) is oversubscribed, however a consultation has just been launched to expand YBD to 136 places. Our other specialist provisions are either full or have very few spaces left. Phase transfer of ALN children transferring from Nurseries into reception classes has highlighted the increasing number of children with complex ALN requiring specialist placements at a very early stage.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Develop and implement a Post 16 Strategy for the transition of pupils into further education	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Develop robust processes to review and quality assure LA additional learning provision.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Develop robust processes to review and quality assure LA non-maintained settings.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Ensure the ALN duties and Educational Tribunal Act 2018 and ALN Code 2021 are embedded at LA and...	01 Apr 2024	31 Aug 2025	31 Aug 2025	★

Educational Out of County Placements

Risk Overview	Limited access to Newport City Council (NCC) provision for pupils who require complex and specialist placements which results on a reliance on Out of County (OOC) placements both day and residential.
Parent Service(s)	Education Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALN Panel scrutinise pupil information to identify if a specialist placement is needed as part of their statutory duty. Procurement and Head of Service approval needed for OOC placements.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALN Panel scrutinise pupil information to identify if a specialist placement is needed as part of their statutory duty. Monthly budget monitoring and review of cost of planned OOC placements Procurement and Head of Service approval needed for OOC placements. Specific OOC ALN Officer responsible for monitoring OOC provision and where possible look for local alternative provision.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport LA has commissioned 14 places at Catch 22 a primary age Social, Emotional, Behaviour Difficulties Independent Education Provider to reduce the risk of pupils requiring OOC placements.

Direction of Risk

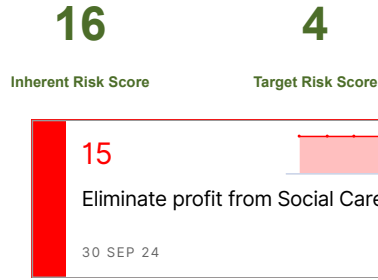
	DoR	Comment
Educational Out of County Placements	➔	The OOC risk remains static this quarter. Although there has been a rise in the need for specialist placements these additional costs are being managed within the service area. Education and Finance are closely monitoring the in-year budget pressure to mitigate the risk for the remainder of the financial year.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Develop and implement a Post 16 Strategy for the transition of pupils into further education	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Develop robust processes to review and quality assure LA additional learning provision.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Develop robust processes to review and quality assure LA non-maintained settings.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Explore opportunities to extend specialist provision including Welsh medium within the city.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★

Eliminate profit from Social Care

Risk Overview	Increased pressure on Local Authorities to ensure children are placed in accommodation which does not make profit from children by 2027 as part of Welsh Government Legislation. Although Welsh LA's support this in principle it may lead to LA's being forced into developing unregistered emergency placements for children. This is costly and could lead to prosecution of the Head of Children's Services.
Parent Service(s)	Children Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services





Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Services is working both nationally and regionally to create opportunities to reduce the risks. The Council's Corporate Plan and Service Plan has identified this as a strategic priority to deliver over the next 5 years. Regional collaborative working to identify options and opportunities to create in-house services. Bids have been submitted to WG to develop care homes for children and to assist with developing edge of care provisions in order to reduce the numbers of children entering the care system.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport Council has several settings such as Windmill Farm, and Rosedale Cottage which provide in-house provision which is also available to other local authorities. Bids have been submitted to Welsh Government to develop further provision in Newport. Newport fostering team has a recruitment campaign which is aligned with Foster Wales
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport is working with Action for Children to develop a local residential provision for our disabled children and developing further residential provision for our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children. NCC has submitted a bid to Welsh Government for revenue funding up to £15m to support the delivery of this new requirement over the next 3 years. The funding will be used to develop projects to build in-house placement sufficiency. However, after the three year period it is uncertain whether NCC will receive additional funding. It is anticipated for NCC to be notified by the quarter 3.

Direction of Risk

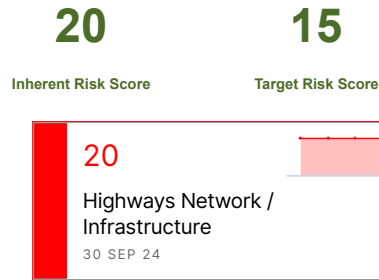
	DoR	Comment
Eliminate profit from Social Care	→	This area continues to remain uncertain given the lack of clarity from WG around exemption and financial contribution to the policy change. CS continues to work at a national and regional level to build placement sufficiency. There is ongoing work with Norse and the Council's officer asset group to identify suitable properties to bring our children out from for profit placements. Foster Wales continues to support Foster Newport in recruitment campaigns to increase the number of carers in Newport.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Develop 6 additional children's homes, in line with the Residential strategic plan.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	●
 Develop a parent and child fostering service.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Focus on developing specialist fostering placements with psychological support.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	●
 Increase the proportion of foster care provision within Newport.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	●
 Residential Children's Homes Programme Project	01 Apr 2021	31 Mar 2028	31 Mar 2028	●

Highways Network / Infrastructure

Risk Overview	Failure to recognise current levels of under investment in the whole life of the city's highway network assets in the medium to long term will continue to compound existing maintenance backlog figures.
Parent Service(s)	Infrastructure
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Assets and Infrastructure



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<p>Highway Asset Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quinquennial Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) is produced by City Services, which was last refreshed in 2019. It seeks to document the activities, processes, and information to support strategic investment decisions and long-term maintenance planning. It provides information on the assets we have responsibility for, monitors how they are performing, documents their depreciation and confirms levels of funding required to mitigate the demands placed upon them. <p>Highway Annual Status and Options Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The highway Annual Status and Options report is a product of the HAMP that records the condition of the assets and seeks to identify and prioritise the funding need. The report sets out the status of our assets in terms of extent, value and condition and presents the projected outcome of identified investment options. <p>Highway Maintenance Manual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Highway Maintenance Manual documents how the council manages the city's highway maintenance. It sets out how, as highway authority, it discharges its duties and the management of user risk.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the asset condition, maintenance requirement and its associated risk to the highway user is understood, the service area undertakes the following internal controls and processes: <p>Reactive Safety Inspections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are inspections undertaken in response to stakeholder notification of potential maintenance defects <p>Routine Inspections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a regime of planned safety inspections designed to identify defects that have the potential to cause harm to users and defects that require repair in order to prevent escalation of deterioration and increased (avoidable) maintenance needs. <p>Condition Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are both visual and specialist road condition "machine based" surveys, that record the condition of components of the asset to enable a programme of renewal/replacement to be prepared
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Highway Asset Management Plan projects an anticipated annual capital investment of £500k and an anticipated £1.86m revenue investment through to the end of the current plan in 2023/24.

Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Highways Network / Infrastructure	➔	<p>Nationally, the condition of the country's highway infrastructure asset continues to be a cause of concern as a result of historic under investment.</p> <p>Within Newport, the annual highway network investment has continued to decrease over time whilst the number of roads maintainable at public expense and asset usage has continued to rise.</p> <p>Increased investment this year in surface treatments, resurfacing and bridge inspection has been welcomed, however levels of funding are still failing to maintain "steady state" as a minimum asset condition. Therefore, asset condition continues to deteriorate year on year.</p> <p>In addition to the impact of increased vehicles and usage of assets, increases in permitted axle weights, wetter winters and hotter summers are all resulting in accelerated deterioration and unpredictable asset failure</p>

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Carriageway Preservation Treatments - Project Status	01 Apr 2024	31 Oct 2024	31 Oct 2024	★
 Carriageway Resurfacing Works - Project Status	01 Apr 2024	31 Oct 2024	31 Oct 2024	★
 Develop and implement a new Highways Asset Management Plan.	01 Apr 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	●
 Old Bassaleg Bridge Status / Future Options - Project Status	01 Sep 2023	30 Jun 2027	30 Jun 2027	★
 SE Wales Transport Commission Project	01 Apr 2022	31 Dec 2027	31 Dec 2027	★

Information and Cyber Security

Risk Overview	Management and security of the Council's ICT systems to protect personal and sensitive data from theft and loss whilst also maintaining business continuity and system integrity.
Parent Service(s)	People, Policy & Transformation
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Leader of the Council



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing governance is documented in the council's information risk management policy. This includes internal groups such as the Information Governance Group chaired by the Director – Transformation and Corporate and the Data Protection Group. It also includes roles of Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), Data Protection Officer (DPO), the Information Management team and a designated Cabinet Member with this strategic responsibility. The Annual Information Risk Report is formally reviewed by Overview Scrutiny Management Committee and Cabinet Member – Organisational Transformation. Existing Organisation / Service Area management structure to report and escalate issues to senior officers. Also could be a Programme / Project Board, Task & Finish Group or other governance group which are aware and have oversight of the risk.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Annual IT Health Check is carried out in line with requirements of the Public Services Network (PSN). Regular hardware and software updates are carried out by the IT Service. Technical controls are in place including the use of endpoint protection, firewalls, encryption, backups, security certificates, mobile device management etc. Physical security measures are in place to prevent inappropriate access. Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA's) are carried out and an Information Risk Register is managed. The council's IT Service, the Shared Resource Service (SRS), has a security function complementing council staff as well as security embedded in various roles. The council has processes for out of hours incidents including the SRS.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Wales conducts independent reviews including on cyber security. The council is a member of the Warning and Reporting Point (WARP). Shared Resource Service is responsible for the Council's management of systems and processes.

Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Information and Cyber Security	➔	The overall risk score is unchanged. As reported in the Annual Information Risk Report to Scrutiny in the last quarter, a range of measures are in place and good progress has been made on the action plan in relation to the Audit Wales review of Cyber Security. Previous improvements and technical controls include Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) implementation and migration of the Council's data centre with improved back up facilities to the cloud. Existing governance is documented in the Council's information risk management policy including the officer Information Governance Group, Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) role and the Annual Information Risk Report. Technical controls are in place alongside physical security measures. Annual IT Health Check is completed in line with the requirements of the Public Services Network (PSN) and compliance was updated, vulnerabilities addressed and accreditation achieved June 2024. The council's IT Service, a partnership with the Shared Resource Service (SRS), supports through their security function and joint processes for out of hours incidents.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Develop and deliver the actions from the annual Information Risk Report 23/24.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Improve Cyber resilience and information security governance	01 Apr 2023	31 Mar 2027	31 Mar 2027	★
 Information & cyber awareness raising and training	01 Apr 2023	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Progress implementation of Audit Wales Recommendations	01 Aug 2023	31 Aug 2024	31 Aug 2024	✓

Newport Council Property Estate

Risk Overview	NCC has a property estate covering over 140 operational buildings such as the Civic Centre, Telford Depot, schools etc. The Council has to ensure the estate is maintained to required standards to enable access, safety, security and in the long term sustainable for staff and residents to use.
Parent Service(s)	People, Policy & Transformation
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Assets and Infrastructure



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Strategic Asset Management Group (officer asset group) is responsible for the monitoring, delivery and reporting of the Council's Assets. This is represented by senior officers from the Council and representatives from the Council's Property Services partner, Newport Norse. Capital Asset Group also monitors the Council's capital programme and reports to Executive Board. The Schools' / Social Services estate is also overseen by the officer led group which also includes representatives from the Council's Property Services partner, Newport Norse and Council representatives.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport Council has a contract arrangement with Newport Norse who oversee the management and maintenance of the Council's estate. Service Areas are responsible for the building assets which they use across the Council's estate. Newport Norse are responsible for undertaking regular building condition assessments to ensure that they meet necessary legislative and building regulations. The assessments completed by Newport Norse are risk assessed and reported through the Council's governance groups. Maintenance work completed on the Council's estate is prioritised based upon risk including any reactionary / immediate work that has to be completed. School's estate is devolved to schools and managed through their arrangement with Newport Norse and the Corporate Landlord Policy establishes responsibilities also.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's asset maintenance budget is insufficient to meet ongoing annual maintenance requirements across the property portfolio, and this is part of the asset rationalisation review. The Council has a joint venture with Newport Norse to oversee and manage the estate portfolio (including schools).

Direction of Risk

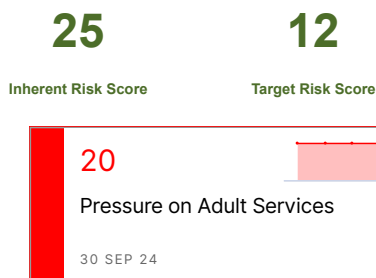
	DoR	Comment
Newport Council Property Estate	➔	<p>There is no change in the overall risk score this quarter and the risk remains high due to the overall maintenance and repair backlog across the estate. Despite this, progress has been made in the last quarter</p> <p>With the development of the Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan and supporting policies, which were approved by Cabinet in this period and are now published.</p> <p>The Asset Rationalisation Programme is also progressing with several key assets to be reviewed on 2024/25.</p>

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Adherence to the Corporate Landlord Policy and ensuring that all Premises Managers are accountable.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Asset Rationalisation Project	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2027	31 Mar 2027	●
 Develop and manage effective contract management arrangements with Newport Norse.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	★
 Development and delivery of strategic asset management	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2027	31 Mar 2027	★
 Review building requirements for staff accommodation.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★

Pressure on Adult Services

Risk Overview	There is increasing pressure on Adult Services to deliver services to adults with complex and long lasting needs. With an increase in demand / volume of referrals and care packages the Council has seen an increase in costs whilst in the context of tightening budgets. There are also additional statutory requirements to safeguard adults in our care and prevent risk of harm, injury or a loss of life.
Parent Service(s)	Adult Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport Council has a new structure with a Director of Social Services and three service areas to deliver Social Services. There are regular Directorate and Service Area meetings held to monitor and report the delivery of Adult Services. At a regional level the Council is part of the Regional Partnership Board which oversees the delivery of social services across Gwent. A Population Needs Assessment has been undertaken for Gwent in relation to the forecasting of demand and provision of services across Newport and Gwent.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC Adult Services has various mechanisms to monitor and report on the delivery of its services through financial and non-financial performance measures. Regular reports and updates are provided through Directorate, Service and Team management levels in the organisation.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delivery of Adult Services is subject to External Regulatory review through Care Inspectorate Wales. Internal Audit provide assurance in relation to the delivery of Adult Services.

Direction of Risk

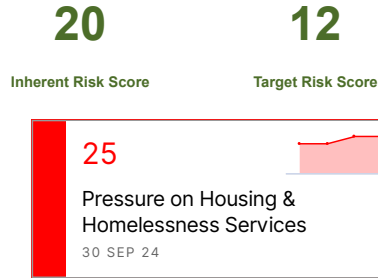
	DoR	Comment
Pressure on Adult Services	➔	The pressure on Adult Services continues to be significant. We continue to actively consider how resources can be deployed to meet demand and ensure that people's statutory care and support needs are met

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Centrica Lodge – Review of the service to meet changing needs.	02 Apr 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration and Team Building - Collaborative workforce across all teams.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop the role of Social Work Assistants	01 Oct 2024	31 Dec 2025	31 Dec 2025	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of Direct Payment service for people to access and commission their own care & support..	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of intermediate care offer.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation of the Independent Living Strategy.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2027	31 Mar 2027	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promotion of the use of assistive technology to support people to remain living independently.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review and restructure of Occupational Therapy.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review of Home First	01 Apr 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review of the Managed Care service	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Succession Planning - Workforce has capacity to deliver responsive social care.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	●

Pressure on Housing & Homelessness Services

Risk Overview	Increased pressures being faced by the Council's housing service as result of new legislative requirements, lack of affordable permanent accommodation, cost of living crisis and uncertainty over future financial grants from Welsh Government
Parent Service(s)	Housing & Communities
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Transformation Board has been established to deliver changes required to the housing service. Housing and Homelessness including Housing Transformation Board is monitored and reported to the Environment & Sustainability Directorate Management Team and Service Management Team. Regular updates are provided to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation & Housing on performance and risk. Furthermore there are existing team arrangements to monitor and report the delivery of the service. The Housing and Homelessness teams are also involved with the Strategic Housing Forum and its associated subgroups with Registered Social Landlords and Rough Sleeper Strategic Group.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly meetings are held with the finance BP to discuss budgets and forecasting. The Housing and Homelessness teams also submit monthly finance forecasts and produce quarterly performance measures to monitor performance. There are also other operational performance measures monitored and reported through the teams. The team also submit monthly Wales Housing statistics to Welsh Government.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Government grants were received during 2022-23 which reduce the overall spend on the housing advice and temporary accommodation service. WG has advised that additional grant funding will be forthcoming in future years but has given no indicative figures. The Housing and Homelessness teams are also involved with the Strategic Housing Forum and its associated sub groups with Registered Social Landlords and Rough Sleeper Strategic Group. NCC provides regular monitoring performance reports on its housing and homelessness position.

Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Pressure on Housing & Homelessness Services	➔	Welsh Government's changes to Homelessness legislation in December 2022 continues to have an impact on the number of households whom the authority has a statutory duty to accommodate in temporary accommodation. Supply is not keeping pace with demand and the cost of living crisis has started to increase this demand further. A number of initiatives are being progressed to increase the supply of temporary and permanent housing and reduce the use of bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation. The Housing teams have been restructured from 01/04/24, with existing Officers undertaking a training programme with a focus on increased prevention of homelessness and the provision on more person-centered services. Additional staff have been recruited and will also be undertaking training during quarter 3, 2024/25.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Ensure Social Housing Grant, Transitional Accommodation Cap Program and any other capital grants...	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Housing Transformation Project	01 Apr 2023	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Review opportunities to take an active role in property investment or utilisation of council owned...	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 The Common Housing Allocations Policy is amended to ensure that those in the most acute housing...	01 Apr 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	●

Pressure on the Delivery of Children Services

Risk Overview	Children Services are facing pressures to manage increase in volume of referrals and cases of children with complex needs. This is in a context of inflationary cost rises and budgets not being able to meet these cost increases; alongside recruitment and retention issues across the Social Care sector and in Newport.
Parent Service(s)	Children Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Services delivered in accordance with Social Services and Well-being Act, Well-being of Future Generations and Children's Act. There are governance arrangements in place at local, regional and national levels. Directorate and Service Management Teams meet monthly to provide service and performance updates on the delivery of the service. This includes performance, finance and HR information to inform decision making. Additionally, the Council's Executive Board and Corporate Management Team has oversight in the delivery of services. At a regional (Gwent) level, Heads of Service and Director of Social Services represent Newport Council at the Regional Partnership Board. Service pressures are reported here and collaborative working between agencies and other local authorities. The Safeguarding Board and Children's Family Strategic Partnership Board collaboratively work at regional levels to monitor and manage demand issues.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Children Services teams deliver services in compliance with the Social Services and Well-being Act and Children's Act. Internal Controls and processes are established to meet these requirements under the different Acts. WCCIS system monitors and records caseloads and case management across social services. Regular (Monthly) check ins and case management meetings are held between the Council's staff and managers to monitor and manage caseloads. Collaborative and co-production working takes place between Children Services and other agencies to manage caseloads. This includes Foster Wales. Human Resources – HR Business Partners support Managers with the recruitment and retention of staff including working the Council's Communications team to promote social care roles. Finance – monthly forecasting and monitoring of finances across Children services. Mechanisms in place to escalate budget pressures and Finance Business Partners forecasting demand pressures / resources. Commissioning and procurement to find best value for residential placements. Performance Management – Monthly reporting to Welsh Government and regular performance monitoring of services in Newport.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Inspectorate Wales (External Regulator) and Internal Audit provide assurance of governance, internal control and risk management. Third sector partnership working with Barnardos – prevention and statutory functions supporting families, MyST, residential homes provision, and Foster families.

Direction of Risk

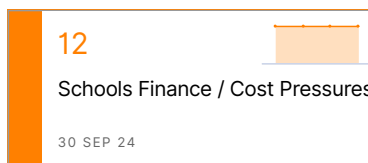
	DoR	Comment
Pressure on the Delivery of Children Services	➔	The pressure on CS continues to remain high due to the year on year increase in referrals and the economic and social challenges that families are facing. The not for profit agenda and increase in fees from private providers is placing a strain on CS budgets. Staff are working hard to manage high caseloads, whilst also facing unrealistic expectations from other agencies and the judiciary on what statutory services can deliver in such financially challenging times.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition of new YJS intervention hub.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	●
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to increase the support provided to Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers within Newport.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	★
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to utilise MyST in our teams for reunification, step down from residential & stabilisation	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	★
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop our independent living skills offer for children with disabilities.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	★
<input type="checkbox"/> Extend the Safeguarding hub offer in order to meet continued demand.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of WG action plan to reduce the number of children who are looked after.	01 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	★
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the use of technology	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	●
<input type="checkbox"/> Succession planning for staff in key roles.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2026	31 Mar 2026	●

Schools Finance / Cost Pressures

Risk Overview	Cost pressures of schools are not met resulting in increased deficit budgets
Parent Service(s)	Education Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education & Early Years



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures within Education and Finance support the escalation of identified issues to senior officers, Heads of Services and Executive Board. In addition, the Schools Forum is a statutory committee which acts as a consultative body in relation to any changes to the schools funding formula, and task and finish sub-groups are created to consider specific elements where necessary. Schools Governors are also responsible for monitoring and reporting school finance positions.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Finance Business Partners provide a key role through their relationships with schools, and support early identification of emerging issues. Any issues are escalated to the Lead and Senior Finance Business Partners and the Assistant Head of Education to consider intervention and discussions around appropriate mitigating actions.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each school has a Service Level Agreement with the Council to support them in financial planning and monitoring, although schools have a choice in the level of service they wish to procure under these arrangements.

Direction of Risk

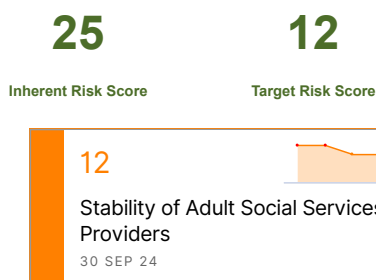
	DoR	Comment
Schools Finance / Cost Pressures	➔	There is no change to this risk score given that many schools are operating with large in-year deficits. Work is ongoing with a small number of schools that are considered to be at risk of moving into closing deficit positions as the year progresses and / or are likely to be unable to set a balanced budget for 2025/26. This situation continues to be monitored closely but the overall position remains delicate.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Further opportunities to involve stakeholders in improvement planning processes.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Review and refine systems and processes to support schools in effective financial management.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★

Stability of Adult Social Services Providers

Risk Overview	The Council requires support from external providers to deliver care packages for adults (residential / non residential). The current marketplace for external providers is volatile due to the increasing costs to provide care, maintain homes, staffing meeting legislative and regulatory requirements.
Parent Service(s)	Adult Services
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newport City Council is consistently reviewing and monitoring the provision of residential and non-residential care providers in the city and across the region. Regular Directorate and Service area meetings are held including representatives from Finance to assess and forecast the Council's financial position. Extensive work being undertaken regionally and nationally to support providers and to explore alternative models of provision. This includes Welsh Government officials and is linked to extensive focus and work with health colleagues to explore care in hospital settings and the need to provide community based care.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council undertakes regular monitoring and assessment of placements and care packages across Adult Services. The Commissioning team are in weekly if not daily contact with providers in order to support packages of care. Similarly staff from the teams are in very regular contact with residential providers including links with Care Inspectorate Wales. The Council's financial monitoring and reporting of care provision is also undertaken monthly. Contract management arrangements are in place to manage provision and ensure providers meet necessary requirements, standards and provide value for money.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus on this area of work is extensive including external monitoring.

Direction of Risk

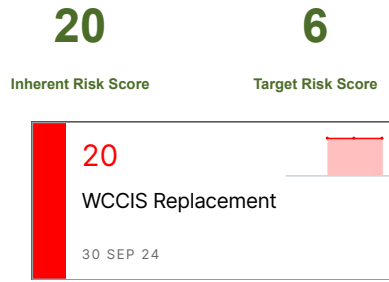
	DoR	Comment
Stability of Adult Social Services Providers	➔	The supply of domiciliary care providers is currently very good. We will continue to monitor through the winter months.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Centrica Lodge – Review of the service to meet changing needs.	02 Apr 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	★
 Increase and improve Respite options for older adults.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Review of Home First	01 Apr 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	★
 Review of the Managed Care service	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★

WCCIS Replacement

Risk Overview	The Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) is a national system used by Social Services to record all direct work, manage caseloads, facilitate provider payments and access historical records. The software supplier, Advanced have informed local authorities that they will no longer be supporting the system and are pulling out from the social care market. The servers/platform will be unsupported by Microsoft from 1st January 2026, which increases security risks. NCC alongside Gwent LAs, ADSS, WLGA and Welsh Government are examining all options to manage procurement and implementation of the replacement system.
Parent Service(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adult Services ▪ Children Services ▪ Prevention & Inclusion
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Social Services



Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting Care Gwent Steering Group of all Social Services Directors and Heads of Service have been overseeing the procurement exercise for the new system. • The existing regional WCCIS group will oversee the implementation of the new system (following the completion of the procurement exercise). • NCC Procurement Gateway process has overseen the procurement exercise of the new system which will be completed by December 2024. • Project Board is being established to oversee the implementation of the new system. The new Project Board will be created in line with NCC project management approach. • Delivery of the project will be reported to Social Services Directorate Management team and Executive Board once it has commenced.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of the new system has been undertaken through the Council's Procurement Gateway Process. • As noted above, Project Management arrangements will need to be established following the completion of the procurement process to oversee and deliver the project. • All aspects of system implementation, migration and training will be delivered through the project team.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current contract is in place for 6 years to 2024 with an option to extend by further 2 years. Discussions are ongoing to align all contracts. • NCC has representatives at existing WCCIS groups to manage the current WCCIS system.

Direction of Risk

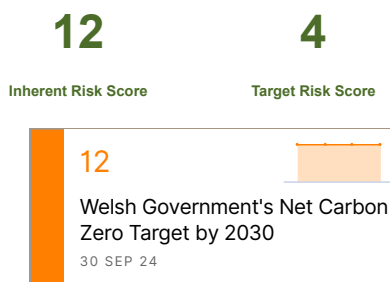
	DoR	Comment
WCCIS Replacement	➔	At the end of quarter 2 the risk score remains the same at 20. The procurement process will be drawing to a close by the end of the calendar year to award the contract to a new supplier. The Council is in progress of developing a project team to support the implementation and training of staff.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Delivery of the new Social Services system	01 Dec 2024	31 Jan 2026	31 Jan 2026	
 Develop and present a project proposal to the Council's Executive Board	01 Apr 2024	30 Sep 2024	30 Sep 2024	
 Establish Project team to implement the new Social Services system.	01 Oct 2024	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2024	
 To review business continuity arrangements for WCCIS	01 Apr 2024	30 Sep 2024	30 Sep 2024	

Welsh Government's Net Carbon Zero Target by 2030

Risk Overview	Welsh Government has set a target for all public sector bodies to be net zero carbon by 2030. To achieve this target, NCC has a Climate Change Plan 2022-27 to deliver key actions and projects.
Parent Service(s)	Environment & Public Protection
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Climate Change









Existing Arrangements to Manage Risk

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Climate Change Plan is overseen by the Climate Programme Board. Six subgroups are in place to lead on each of the themes which reports to the Climate Programme Board. Strategic Director (Environment & Sustainability) is the chair of the Climate Programme Board and lead officer of the Climate Change Plan. Strategic Director (Transformation & Corporate) is Deputy Lead and Vice Chair.
Internal Controls & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports are reported to the Programme Board and Cabinet Member and half yearly reports are reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. An Annual Report which includes council carbon emissions is reported to Cabinet each year. Action plans are reviewed on an annual basis to agree work for the following year.
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is working with partners to implement the Local Area Energy Plan which is the route map to a carbon net zero energy system by 2050 for the whole of the local authority area. The council is also working with One Newport partners to develop a Newport-wide strategy.

Direction of Risk

	DoR	Comment
Welsh Government's Net Carbon Zero Target by 2030	➔	There is no change in the risk score for quarter 1. The organisation is making good progress against the delivery of the Climate Change Plan.

Risk Mitigation Action Plan

Mitigating Action	Start Date	Target Date	Estimated Completion Date	Performance
 Identify and apply for funding to support actions across the Climate Change Plan.	01 Apr 2022	31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2025	★
 Our Buildings: Complete building related actions in the Climate Change Plan (24/25)	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Transport: Complete the transport related actions of the Climate Change Plan (24/25)	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Wider Role LAEP Domestic energy efficiency schemes	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Wider Role LAEP Industry and Heat opportunities	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★
 Wider Role LAEP Transport: accelerate the roll out of EV Charging for residents.	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2025	★

Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject **Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2024**

Purpose To provide Cabinet with an overview of all Corporate and Social Services compliments, comments and complaints received during 2023/2024.

Author Complaint Resolution Manager

Ward All

Summary This report provides an overview of how the Council manages compliments, comments and complaints and the Council's performance in 2023/24. Complaints about schools are reported separately as they are subject to a distinct statutory framework, however, complaints about Education services such as administrative processes are included.

The report provides an overview for the year, broken down by service areas and complaint types. The report highlights key trends and themes drawn from the data for consideration, reflects on lessons learned and actions to deliver improvements.

Effective management and resolution of complaints, as well as learning from them, helps ensure that Council services meet the needs of residents and communities. A key principle is of continuous improvement, reviewing complaints processes and systems to improve the way the Council serves the people of Newport. The report details activities that contribute to this.

Proposal Cabinet is asked to endorse the Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2023/2024 and proposed actions.

Action by Complaint Resolution Manager

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Governance & Audit Committee
- Heads of Service
- Head of Law and Standards – Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance – Chief Financial Officer
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation
- Strategic Director for Social Services

Signed

Background

In May 2021, the Governance and Audit Committee agreed new terms of reference to align with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. One of the new requirements of the Committee is to: *Make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.*

This is the fourth annual report to the Committee and provides an overview of how the Council manages Compliments, Comments and Complaints and the annual report on the Council's performance in 2023/24. All annual statistics and corporate actions for improvement are included in the Annual Governance Statement and Annual Corporate Self-Assessment Report.

The policies and procedures in place for Compliments, Comments and Complaints comply with the legislative requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and associated standards, specifically ensuring that the Council promote the 'Active Offer'. Social Services statutory requirements remain in operation alongside the Corporate Policy to ensure they are aligning with; Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, ("the Regulations").

The Compliments Comments and Complaints Annual Report 2023/24 (attached) outlines the progress made, alongside actions for improvement. These include development of the My Council Service (MCS) system providing a bespoke Complaints Dashboard and complaint specific training for staff. It also includes a complaint handling awareness session held with Governance and Audit Committee delivered by Complaints Standards Authority from The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW). Revision of contract documentation with colleagues from the All-Wales Complaints Officers Group (AWCOG) and a review of the Unacceptable Actions by Customer (UAC) Policy. We recognise the important feedback that compliments, comments and complaints provide for the Authority and will continue to further develop our reporting arrangements into 2024/25.

Report

This report provides an overview of how the Council managed compliments, comments and complaints and performance in 2023/24.

This report provides an overview for the year 2023/2024, broken down by service areas and complaint types. The report highlights key trends and themes drawn from the data for consideration.

The report reflects on lessons learned for the council to improve and actions to deliver these improvements.

For 2023/24, additional engagement and training has been provided to Council employees to raise awareness of the importance of effective complaint handling. A complaint handling awareness session was held with Governance and Audit Committee delivered by Complaints Standards Authority from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).

Complaints policies have also been updated and the Unacceptable Actions by Customers policy will be finalised and implemented shortly.

Newport City Council is committed to ensuring that customers have a positive experience in transactions and interactions. However, sometimes things go wrong. When this happens, we encourage people to speak up so that we can put things right. Effective management and resolution of complaints, as well as learning from them, helps ensure that Council services meet the needs of residents and communities. A key principle is of continuous improvement that includes reviewing the Council's complaints processes and systems to improve the way the Council serves the people of Newport. This report details activities that contribute to this. Analysis of the main areas for complaints is included in the report, providing further insight.

Improvements have been made in 2023/2024 to the way in which data is utilised and shared with departments across the Council. The development of a bespoke Complaints dashboard within the MI Hub system has enabled greater visibility and analysis of the complaints data.

Feedback from complaints is also used to inform service improvements including the implementation of the Customer Contact project. Data from complaints will be used to prioritise activity and also analyse the success of improvements made. A further example can be linked to the reduction of comments received into the complaints department in 2023/24. This reduction can be attributed to clearer categorisation of feedback and streamlined processes by directing service requests to the appropriate teams, improving the customer journey.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

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 the requirements of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) in dealing with complaints	H	L	The Council has. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies have been reviewed in line with Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 Policy revised in March 2023 Best Practise shared with colleagues from the All-Wales Complaints Officer Group (AWCOG) 	Complaint Resolution Manager Digital Services Manager
Failure to meet the public's expectation for dealing with complaints	H	L	The Council has. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulted with the public to find out what is important to them relating to complaints and complaint handling Consulted with officers to find out what support is needed to help them respond to complaints effectively 	Complaint Resolution Manager Digital Services Manager

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Newport City Council is committed to dealing effectively with any compliments, comments or complaints about its services.

[Customer Feedback Policy Compliments, Comments and Complaints](#)

Our Corporate Plan outlines the importance of the views of communities and service users and this policy is one of the ways we support this.

As outlined below there are also links to the Strategic Equalities annual reports.

Options Available and considered

1. To consider and agree the contents of this report.
2. To request further information or reject the contents of this report.

Preferred Option and Why

1. Option 1 is the preferred option with recommendations raised by the Audit Committee to be considered and reported to Cabinet and Officers in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There will be no financial impact as a result of this report. Any recommendations for improvements will need to be considered using existing budget provision.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

As set out in the body of the report, in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, it is a function of the Governance and Audit Committee to review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively. The report has been reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee who have provided comments. It is for the Cabinet to consider the comments of the Committee and note the report.

Comments of Head of People Policy and Transformation

This report asks Cabinet to consider the process and performance of the Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Annual Report 2023/24 and to make any recommendations for improvement.

The proposal is in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 vision of 'an ambitious, fairer, greener Newport for everyone', and supports its four Well-being Objectives, ensuring the principle of being 'a listening council' is achieved. The principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its five ways of working are supported, with the report identifying the actions being put in place to ensure the Council is able to respond to feedback and complaints in the short and long-term, preventing similar complaints from occurring again. This is done through collaboration across all service areas supporting them through improved training and guidance to ensure customer concerns are listened to.

A Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment was not required for this report. There are no staffing or HR related issues arising directly from this report although staff training and development will continue to take place to support policy implementation and improve standards.

Scrutiny Committees

Not Applicable, however complaints are also reported through certain service plans to performance Scrutiny Committee.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

• Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

This report enables Members to monitor the current position of the council's performance, this helps to drive improvement over the short and long-term and prevent poor performance.

Performance measures are also reported through the service plans and the improvement plan, which consider the sustainable development principle promoted in the Act and the five ways of working; long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement.

Any changes to service provision because of feedback received would consider the five ways of working and the sustainable development principle as part of the decision-making process.

- Long term: the actions being put into place will ensure that the Council is able to respond to feedback and complaints now and in the future.
- Prevention: Understanding what is important to residents and why we have received complaints will help the Council to make improvements that prevent similar complaints from occurring again.
- Integration: Reviewing the Council's policies regarding feedback from residents will help to ensure that the principles of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 are embedded in service provision.
- Collaboration: the approach to responding to feedback from complainants requires collaboration across the Council. All service areas receive and deal with complaints and their feedback as part of consultation will inform the development of training, guidance, and support.
- Involvement: Public consultation has provided valuable insight into what is important for customers when they are unhappy with a service provided by the Council. This will be used to inform the development of training, guidance, and support.

● **Equality Act 2010**

Not applicable as this is an information only report to the Governance and Audit Committee. We work closely with the equalities team as part of the Strategic Equalities Group, and this work is reported in the Strategic Equalities Annual Report.

● **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The Welsh Language Measure is considered in this report and is also covered by the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy.

Consultation

Governance and Audit Committee considered the contents of the report on 28th November 2024, and their draft comments were as below:

- The Committee recommended that a clear definition of a complaint was provided to elected members and residents and for the compliments, comments and complaints process to be streamlined to make it easier for residents to engage with.
- The Committee recommended that further work be done to encourage residents from underrepresented communities to engage with the Council's compliments, comments and complaints process.
- The Committee recommended an update report be brought to Committee to update on the progress made against the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2023/24 Annual Letter recommendations.
- The Committee recommended that the figures related to missed collection complaints was shared with the public, to contextualise the volume.

These comments are considered in the report and follow up actions.

Background Papers

PSOW Annual Letter 2023-24



PSOW Annual Letter
2023-2024.pdf

[PSOW Principles of Good Administration and Record Management](#)
[Newport City Council Customer Feedback Policy Compliments Comments and Complaints](#)
[Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints 2022/23](#)

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Compliments, Comments and Complaints Annual Report 2023/24

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	3
Compliments	5
Compliments (Corporate)	5
Compliments (Social Services).....	6
Compliments by Service	7
Comments	8
Comments by Service	8
Complaints	9
Complaints (Corporate) – Summary	9
Complaints (Corporate) - Stage 1 and Stage 2 Split by Quarter	10
Complaints (Corporate).....	12
Complaints (Corporate) - Stage 1	12
Complaints (Corporate) - Stage 2.....	12
Complaints - Social Services	13
Complaints (Social) – Summary	13
Complaints (Social Services) - Stage 1	13
Complaints (Social Services) - Stage 2 Independent Investigations	13
Complaint Analysis by Ward	14
Complaints to Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)	15
Unacceptable Actions by Customers	19
Lessons Learned.....	20

Executive Summary

Background

- The Council has a statutory requirement to process Corporate Complaints in line with the Customer Feedback Policy Compliments, Comments and Complaints and a statutory obligation in line with the All-Wales Statutory Social Services Complaint Handling Process. Complaints are logged in line with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) All-Wales Model Complaints policy
- The Council values customer feedback and uses it as an opportunity to improve the services that we provide. We use information from complaints to ensure good outcomes, and the more complaints we accurately record, the more able we are to do this. The absence of complaints does not necessarily indicate excellent services, just as an increase in complaints does not necessarily indicate poor services
- This is the fourth Annual Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report which provides statistics and insights into complaint handling arrangements for Newport City Council

Compliments (Corporate)

- 92 corporate compliments were recorded in 2023/24, compared with 106 received in 2022/23 representing a 13% decrease
- A renewed focus is required across services to promote recording of compliments

Compliments (Social Services)

- 43 compliments were received for Social Services during 2023/24, compared with 36 in 2022/23, representing a 19% increase

Comments

- 290 comments were received in 2023/24 compared with 2,693 in 2022/23 a decrease of 89%
- A review was made in July 2022 which refined and improved the customer journey, and requests are now sent directly to the service area
- This was further improved in 2023/24, removing the option of submitting service requests via the complaints form, ensuring these are categorised correctly
- 124 of the 290 comments are related to Waste and Cleansing, 112 of which were related to the quality of service provided linked to the change in frequency for waste collection. The next highest being 50 comments relating to Highways (including Streetlighting and Parking)

Complaints (Corporate)

- 437 corporate complaints were resolved in 2023/24 – 386 Stage 1, 51 Stage 2. In addition, 338 complaints were refused in line with policy (Refused 256, Duplicate 60, Discontinued 12, Withdrawn 8 and Request for Service 2)
- 88% of corporate complaints were resolved at stage 1
- Corporate stage 1 complaints: 386 complaints resolved in 2023/24 compared with 341 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 13%
- Corporate stage 2 complaints: 51 complaints resolved in 2023/24 compared with 46 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 11%
- This increase is indicative of complaint recording process refinement and alignment with the PSOW model complaint handling policy
- We implemented the revised [Newport City Council Customer Feedback Policy, Compliments, Comments and Complaints](#) in 2022/23 and as anticipated complaint figures increased as a result of this and associated awareness raising

Complaints (Social Services)

- 28 Social Services complaints resolved for 2023/24 – 21 stage 1, 7 stage 2. In addition, 47 Complaints were refused in line with policy (Refused 41, Discontinued 5, Withdrawn 1)
- Social Services Stage 1 complaints: 22 complaints were resolved in 2023/24 compared with 20 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 10 %
- Social Services Stage 2 complaints: 7 complaints were resolved in 2023/24 compared with 5 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 40% but note the small numbers involved

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

- The PSOW reviewed 52 corporate complaints and closed 51 during the period. Of the 51 cases investigated, 5 cases required early resolution/voluntary settlement to resolve. Accordingly, the PSOW intervention rate for the Council was 10% which is better than the previous year

Communications and Awareness Raising

- Complaints Handling training was delivered to 100 officers with ongoing delivery planned
- Induction Programme for new starters includes complaint handling processes
- Reporting 6 monthly to senior managers through CMT for oversight and discussion

Policy update

- The Unacceptable Actions Policy was reviewed by the Complaints team and a task and finish group of key Council officers. Consideration has been taken to ensure that restrictions placed upon customers' interaction with the Council is proportionate, is regularly reviewed and NCC staff and members are protected in line with HR Policies and Health & Safety. This is ready for final review, engagement, and formal approval due to take place in 2024

Reporting Functions and recording

- Development of My Council Services (MCS) system to maximise its effectiveness for reporting, this supported improvements to the Council's website. This has enabled the development of a Complaints Dashboard within the MI Hub system that provides greater visibility and analysis of the raw data with a view to providing greater insight
- Identified areas which were under reporting complaints via the complaint's awareness/training sessions, implementing procedures to capture and record with teams across NCC
- Worked with colleagues in residential settings to align their complaint procedures with the revised Customer Feedback Policy
- Worked with Customer experience to determine what lessons can be learned, outcome of which means additional recording now takes place within MCS to enable analysis to be provided

Equalities

- Optional equalities form introduced in April 2023 on MCS. Analysis of this data has shown that feedback was made predominantly by White British Female residents aged between 45-54 years of age, closely followed by White British Female residents aged between 55-64 years of age, then White British Male residents aged between 55-64 year of age

Service Development highlights for 2023/24

- The My Council Services (MCS) system went through further development during 2023/24 to maximise its effectiveness for reporting. This enabled the development of a bespoke Complaints Dashboard providing greater visibility and analysis of raw data and improved insight

- Complaint specific training delivered to over 100 Council Officers across multiple sessions – a by-product of this identified under reporting of complaints. Further procedures have been implemented to capture and record this
- Bespoke Councillor complaint handling awareness session held with Governance and Audit Committee delivered by Complaints Standards Authority from The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)
- The Complaints team delivered sessions with colleagues in residential settings to align their complaint procedures with the revised Customer Feedback Policy. This service is now updating its own processes in line with this
- A review was made of the contract documentation with colleagues from the All-Wales Complaints Officers Group for Independent Investigators. These documents have been reviewed, updated and improvements implemented including procurement processes and legal review
- Working with colleagues in Customer experience; additional recording now takes place within the My Council Services (MCS) System to enable analysis to be provided
- Unacceptable Actions by Customer Policy review, the policy has been reviewed by the Complaints team and a task and finish group of key Council officers. This is now ready for final review, engagement, and formal approval

Actions for Improvement 2024/25

Below outlines the actions that the team will be undertaking in 2024/25 to improve the delivery of the service.

- Introduce improved and more regular reporting processes across key stakeholders within the Council. Inclusion of Complaints data into Mid-Year and End of Year performance reports to Performance Scrutiny Committees. Working with services, developing greater insight of Council performance from complaints data
- Working with the Customer Contact Review to determine what lessons can be learned from the review, and best practice shared to ensure timely responses to Complaints
- Engagement with services across the Council to minimise escalation within complaints process, raising awareness of complaints and its function in NCC and importance of the Ombudsman
- Complaints training provided by PSOW to be given to service areas across NCC to embed positive culture of ownership and resolution of complaints across the Council
- Promote the complaints service through various publications, especially for customers who have not got access or wouldn't normally access our services online
- Develop a renewed focus across our services and contacts to promote the ability to give positive feedback, aligning this to complaint reporting processes
- Finalise Unacceptable Actions by Customers Policy (UAC) review and implement new policy creating awareness of the change in policy. As part of the implementation, we will ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed for UAC cases accordingly

Background

The Council values customer feedback and uses it as an opportunity to improve the services that we provide. The Council has a statutory requirement to process Corporate Complaints in line with the [Customer Feedback Policy: Compliments, Comments and Complaints](#) and also a statutory obligation in line with the [All-Wales Statutory Social Services Complaint Handling Process](#). The policies and procedures in place for Compliments, Comments and Complaints comply with the legislative requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and associated standards, specifically ensuring that the Council promote the 'Active Offer'. Social Services statutory requirements remain in operation alongside the Corporate Policy to ensure they are aligning with Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, ("the Regulations").

This is the fourth Annual Report. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Compliments, Comments and Complaints for Newport City Council for the year 2023/2024 and how these are managed. Data is separated to provide detail for Corporate and Social Services Compliments, Comments and Complaints. The report contains Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) statistics and details where action is required by the Council to address weaknesses and make improvements.

Complaints data recording is captured through the Council's primary Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system called 'My Council Services' or MCS. Compliments, Comments and Complaints are submitted through various channels; customers can log these via the Newport City Council app, via email or through the Contact Centre. These are acknowledged via My Council Services by the Complaint Resolution Officers and all correspondence is stored securely in the system.

In line with best practice, the Council accepts corporate complaints provided they are submitted within 6 months. It is better to look into concerns while the issues are still recent, which enables a thorough investigation to take place. The Council may, in exceptional circumstances, look at concerns which are brought to its attention later than this. It would, however, ask for evidence as to why these concerns were not brought to the Council's attention earlier. In any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago. Social Services complaints are accepted within a 12-month period as per the guidance produced by Welsh Government on handling Social Services complaints.

The Complaint Resolution team collaborate with and provide support to all service areas to enable them to compile complaint responses appropriately. This ensures that timescales are adhered to, and the team work proactively with service areas to implement lessons learned.

Service development information outlining progress made in 2023/24 is provided and Actions for Improvement are set out for 2024/25. In 2023/24, The Complaint Resolution Team evaluated and reviewed processes. This resulted in a more consistent approach to complaint recording and handling in both corporate and social services, without compromising the equity of support provided to the service areas.

As a result of the implementation of the revised [Customer Feedback Policy: Compliments, Comments and Complaints](#) in 2023, complaints should be recorded formally and consistently. Complaint figures were expected to increase as a result of this. Where the PSOW identify low complaint rates per population size, they have the power to investigate procedures and can declare Authorities non-compliant.

Compliments

Compliments (Corporate)

A total of 92 Corporate compliments were recorded in 2023/24 a 13% decrease on the 106 recorded in 2022/23.

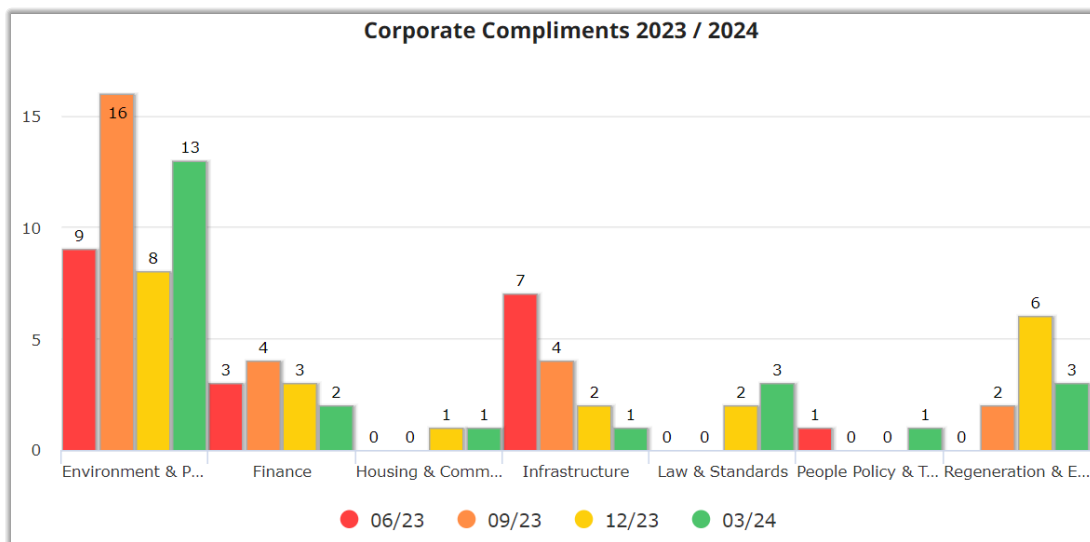
The opportunity to provide positive feedback is accessible to residents using improved webforms, the Council app or directly through customer accounts. A renewed focus needs to be implemented across our services and contacts to promote the ability to give positive feedback and ensure this is recorded appropriately.

Environment and Public Protection received the most compliments (they also received the most comments and complaints as shown later within this report), due to the high number of interactions with these services for residents.

The highest volume within the Environment and Public protection area was for the Waste and Cleansing team – compliments received for

- Cleansing Operatives - *“who are making a huge difference...it is notably cleaner than I have seen for a long time,” “I was so impressed with the thoroughness of the team completing this task that I walked to them to give them my thanks.”*
- Waste Collections/Recycling Centre - *“are always friendly and helpful – fantastic,” “The workers on site were so helpful, a willingness to help and great attitudes. The team are a real credit to you, I’ve never had such help and support”*
- Quick response to missed collections and fly tipping issues – *“Sent email this morning, within the hour they came and collected all the stuff that was fly tipped.”, “Speed of response , reported fly tipping at 8.18am and dumped couch picked by 10.15am”, “I reported 2 issues about the lack of a dumpster and the lack of rubbish pickup, and immediately the next day, the rubbish dumpster was brought to me, and the next day, my rubbish was also picked up. You have a very efficient and operative complaints service.*

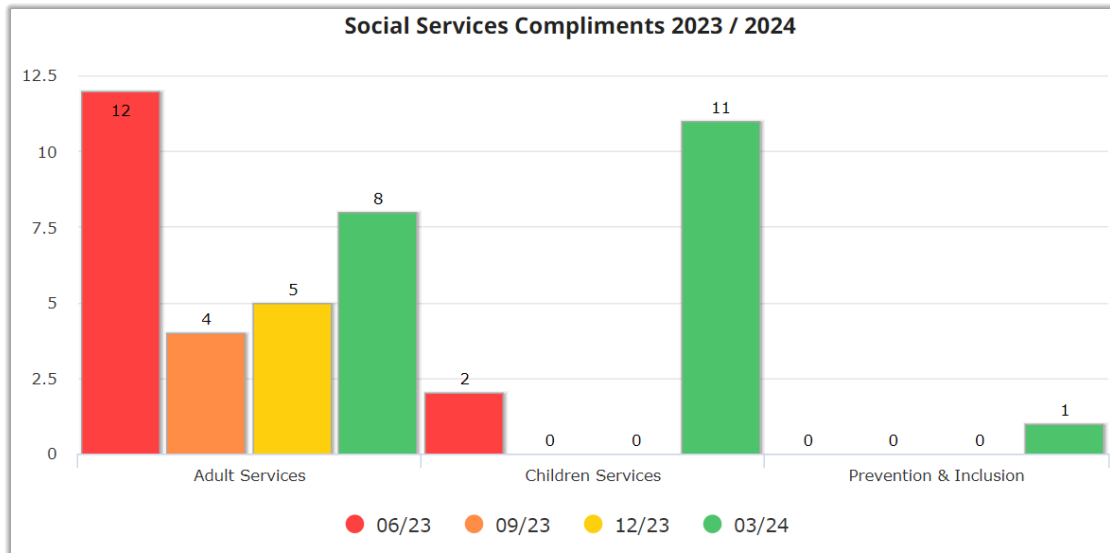
The graph below represents the number of compliments received by service area per quarter.



Compliments (Social Services)

A total of 43 compliments were recorded for Social Services during 2023/24. A 19% increase on the 36 recorded in 2022/23.

This was split by 67% for Adult Services, 30% for Children Services and 3% for Prevention & Inclusion across 2023/24. The graph below shows the breakdown by quarter:



Compliments were highest within the Adult Services department, and praise was given to Housing Adaptations, Reablement and the Adult Social Service teams:

- Housing Adaptations – *“Can you please pass on message from... that they are very pleased with the bathroom adaptations and couldn't praise everyone involved enough... said the contractors were so courteous and tidy.*
- Reablement – *“He has been very happy with the care and support they have shown, and he has praised the service.” “Huge Credit to you, you have moved this man on extremely well. Your hard work and persistence has given him a huge chance in changing his life.*
- KOMP (this is a one-button computer, made specifically for those who have little to no experience using smartphones, computers, and tablets.) – *“I connected with Dad on the KOMP today. It was so awesome to see him. I think he was quite surprised, and he was happy to be able to see and hear me quite well. Dad and I are both so pleased that you've set us up, I'm going to pass the info to my brother and his family so they can use it too. Thanks so much for making this happen. It means the world to us to be able to see him and have a conversation virtually like that. THANK YOU!”*

Compliments by Service

The total of 135 compliments (92 corporate and 43 social services) results in the totals per service area as below which are also split by month.

Council Area	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Infrastructure	0	5	2	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	14
Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment & Public Protection	4	1	4	6	5	5	5	2	1	1	5	7	46
Finance	0	0	3	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	12
Housing & Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Law & Standards	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	5
People, Policy & Transformation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Regeneration & Economic Development	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	2	11
Social Services - Adult	4	3	5	3	0	1	2	3	0	3	0	5	29
Social Services - Children & Families	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	3	13
Social Services - Prevention & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	9	10	15	15	6	9	15	6	6	13	9	22	135

Compliments are recorded throughout the year with the highest number in March.

Comments

290 comments were recorded during 2023/24 which is an 89% decrease from the 2,693 comments recorded in 2022/23. There were 4,267 comments recorded in 2021/22. 282 of these were Corporate Comments, 8 were Social Services comments.

As detailed in last year's report, changes were made in July 2022 as a large number of service requests were being recorded as comments. The customer journey was reviewed, and the process refined. A new form was introduced in November 2022 for the Waste and Refuse team. By adapting the process, it enabled the Contact Centre to direct missed collection reports directly to the Waste and Refuse team. This form was adopted by Wastesavers in March 2023. This resulted in a shorter customer journey and has demonstrated a more accurate assessment of service demand.

Further improvements made in 2023/24; removing the option of submitting service requests via the complaints form, ensuring these are categorised correctly. This has radically reduced the comments sent into the complaints department and is truer reflection of comments.

124 of the 290 comments are related to Waste and Cleansing, 112 of which were related to the quality of service provided and the change in timings for waste collection. The next highest were 50 comments relating to Highways (including Streetlighting and Parking).

Comments by Service

The total of 290 comments (282 corporate and 8 social services) results in the totals per service area as below which are also split by month.

Council Area	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total
Infrastructure	7	3	3	5	5	6	6	3	5	10	6	6	65
Education	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	5
Environment & Public Protection	14	13	6	18	15	6	10	7	8	22	14	19	152
Finance	3	1	2	1	2	4	0	6	5	0	3	5	32
Housing & Communities	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	8
Law & Standards	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
People, Policy & Transformation	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	8
Regeneration & Economic Development	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	2	9
Social Services - Adult	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
Social Services - Children & Families	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Social Services - Prevention & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	26	18	17	27	26	19	22	17	22	37	24	35	290

Complaints

Complaints (Corporate) – Summary

As detailed in the breakdown below, there are a total of 437 corporate complaints made up of 386 stage one and 51 stage two.

Year	Stage 1 Complaint	Stage 2 Complaint	Stage 2 Complaint %	Ombudsman Complaint
2018/19	271	28	9.36%	38
2019/20	354	33	8.53%	31
2020/21	261	39	9.50%	14
2021/22	271	31	11.44%	24
2022/23	341	46	11.88%	47
2023/24	386	51	11.67%	22

Complaints (Corporate) - Stage 1 and Stage 2 Split by Quarter

Quarter	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		TOTAL
Stage of Complaints	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2	
Active Travel	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Adult Social Work Teams	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
Benefits	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	7
Biodiversity	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Cemetery and Crematorium	2	4	8	2	4	0	3	2	25
Children's Social Work Teams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commissioning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Regeneration (Libraries, Hubs, Community Centres)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Coroners Office	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Customer Services	13	0	7	0	6	0	8	0	34
Democratic Services	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Digital Services and Complaints	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4
Early years, FIS & Play	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
First Contact	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flooding	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Fostering and Adoption	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grounds	3	0	6	0	2	0	2	0	13
Highways (including Streetlighting and Parking)	11	4	9	2	3	2	5	4	40
Housing Needs and Homelessness	3	1	3	2	5	2	8	1	25
HSG/Supporting People					2	0	1	0	3
Inclusion/ALN	2	0			1	0	1	1	5
Income and Tax	0	2	7	0	6	2	11	0	28
Legal					0	1	1	0	2
Managed Care	1	0							1
Parks and Recreation	3	0	2	0			1	0	6
Planning, Building Control and Development	1	3	3	1	3	0	2	1	14
Public Protection	2	1			3	0	3	1	10
Registration Services	1	0							1
Residential and Day Services			1	0					1
Residential and Operations			0	0	0	2			2
Resources and Planning			1	0					1
Safeguarding	0	0			0	0			0
Strategic Housing			1	0	1	0			2
Transport	2	0	1	0					3
Waste and Cleansing	41	2	55	0	48	0	43	4	193
Website	1	0							1

TOTAL	93	19	110	8	88	10	94	14	437
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Each complaint provides valuable insights into the experience of those impacted by our services, and by reviewing and analysing the type of complaints, identifying common themes and tracking trends over time we can identify areas for improvement.

Analysis of the top areas for complaints is included below, providing further insight.

Waste and Cleansing – 193 Complaints accounting for 44% of all complaints received for 2023/24. Newport City Council and Newport Wastesavers provide a weekly kerbside-sort collections service for recycling of food waste and dry recycling (cans, cartons and plastic, paper and card, glass, small electrical items, textiles). Nappy and hygiene waste is collected every two weeks, with non-recyclable black bag waste and garden waste collected every 3 weeks (garden waste collections stop for winter from December to February). This is provided for over 160,000 people living in more than 65,000 households It received just 193 total complaints compared with 162 complaints for 2022/23 a rise of 17%. This can be attributed to the change in residual waste collection frequency from every 2 weeks to every 3 weeks.

Highways (including Streetlighting and Parking) – 40 Complaints accounting for 9% of all complaints received for 2023/24. Majority of complaints reporting potholes and condition of roads.

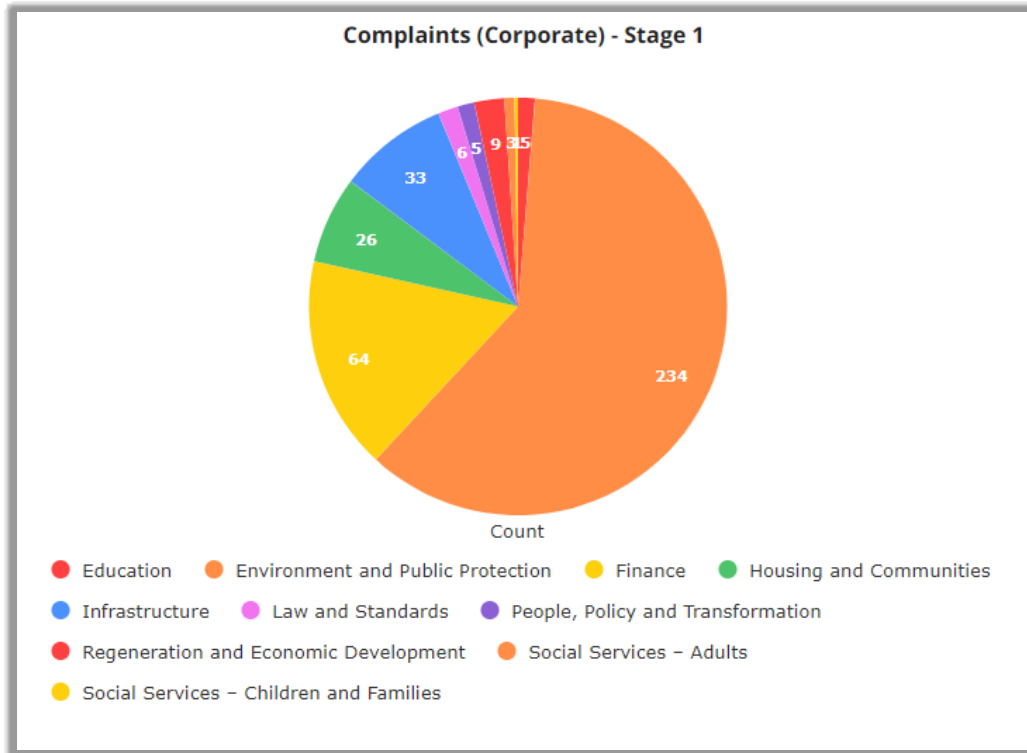
Customer Services – 34 Complaints accounting for 8% of all complaints received for 2023/24. Unhappy with wait times to get through to a Customer Service Advisor, and ability to report missed collections via the Contact Centre, having now to do this online via a form.

Improvements have been made in 2023/2024 to the way in which data is utilised and shared with departments across the Council. The development of a bespoke Complaints dashboard within the MI Hub system has enabled greater visibility and analysis of the complaints data. The team will also work in close collaboration with the Customer Contact Improvement Project using data from complaints.

Complaints (Corporate)

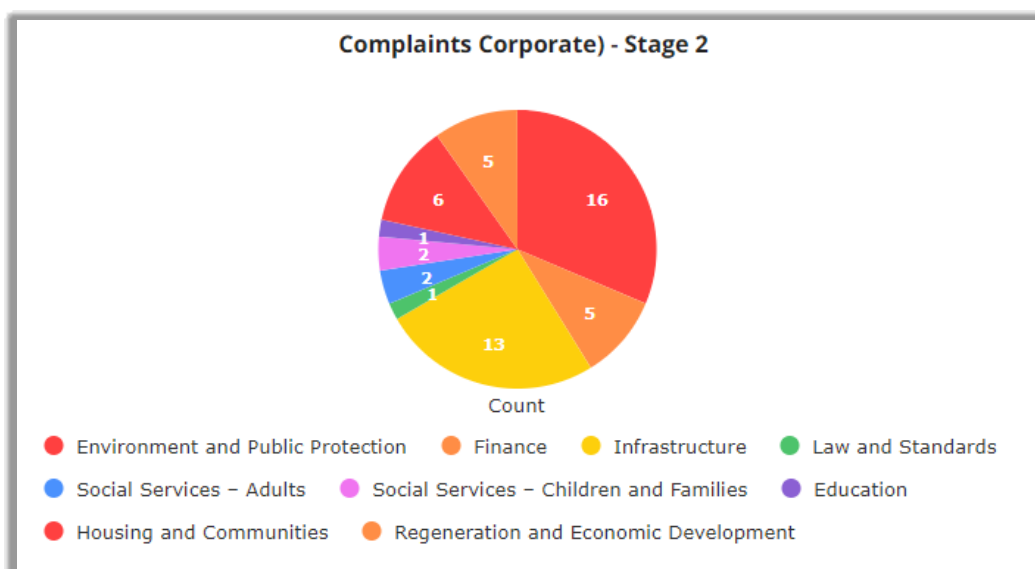
Complaints (Corporate) - Stage 1

- The breakdown below represents a total of 386 stage one complaints resolved by service area for 2023/24, compared with 341 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 13%. 88% of corporate complaints were successfully resolved at stage 1.



Complaints (Corporate) - Stage 2

- The breakdown below represents a total of 51 stage 2 complaints resolved by service area for 2023/24. Compared with 46 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 11%



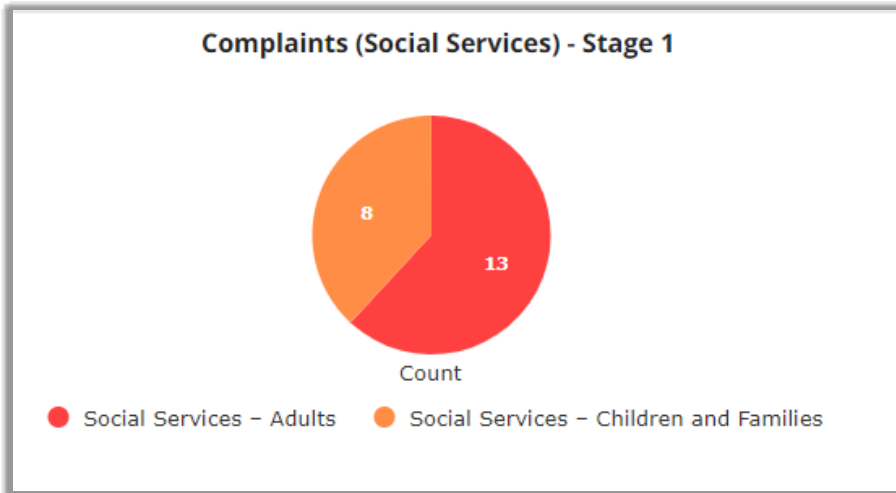
Complaints - Social Services

Complaints (Social) – Summary

Social Service Stage 1	Social Service Stage 2	Social Service Stage Total	Stage 2 Complaint %
21	7	29	24.14%

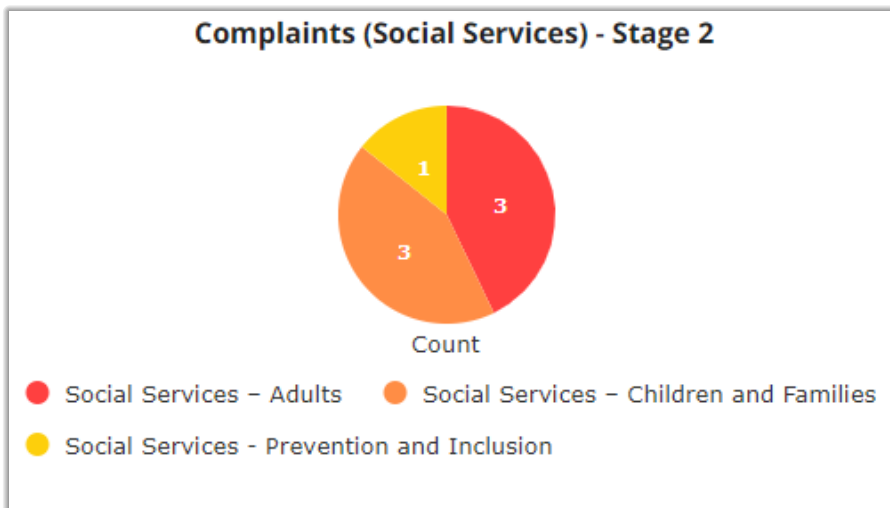
Complaints (Social Services) - Stage 1

The chart below represents a total of 21 stage 1 complaints resolved in 2023/24 compared with 20 in 2022/23, an increase of 10%.



Complaints (Social Services) - Stage 2 Independent Investigations

There was a total of 7 formal stage 2 Social Services complaints resolved in 2023/24, compared with 5 Stage 2 complaints resolved in 2022/23 an increase of 40% but note the small numbers.



The overarching reasons behind complaints for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 were around accuracy of information recorded, conduct of Social Service staff, cost and payments for care, and issues to meet individual's assessed needs. 41 Social Services complaints were refused after assessment, reasons included:

- Disciplinary
- Legal Proceedings underway
- Attention of Another Agency

Complaint Analysis by Ward

As was shown in the annual report for 2022/23 we are now able to analyse complaints by ward. This is at high level only at this stage and we plan to do more analysis in future. Included below are anonymous reports recorded without a location, and those from out of the Newport City Council boundary. At high level, the range of the number of complaints by ward is from 8 to 51. If we factor in population, we have a range of 1.43 to 4.37 complaints per 1,000 residents.

Ward	Number of Complaints	Population	Complaints Per 1,000 Residents
Allt-yr-Yn	24	9,575	2.51
Alway	23	8,445	2.72
Anonymous	51	N/A	N/A
Beechwood	19	7,766	2.45
Bettws	12	8,370	1.43
Bishton and Langstone	13	7,018	1.85
Caerleon	21	7,808	2.69
Gaer	21	9,040	2.32
Graig	15	5,288	2.84
Llanwern	16	3,810	4.20
Lliswerry	28	13,779	2.03
Malpas	20	7,604	2.63
Out of Newport	29	N/A	N/A
Pillgwenlly	19	8,630	2.20
Ringland	16	8,335	1.92
Rogerstone East	13	2,974	4.37
Rogerstone North	8	2,976	2.69
Rogerstone West	19	8,029	2.37
Shaftesbury	21	5,294	3.97
St. Julians	15	9,025	1.66
Stow Hill	24	6,466	3.71
Tredeggar Park and Marshfield	21	11,777	1.78
Victoria	17	9,497	1.79
Total	465	161,506	2.88

Complaints to Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

During 2023/24, the Ombudsman reviewed 52 complaints made regarding Newport City Council, broken down by subject areas (determined by PSOW) as follows:

Newport City Council	Complaints Received	% Share
Adult Social Services	2	4%
Benefits Administration	1	2%
Children's Social Services	6	12%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	3	6%
Complaints Handling	10	19%
Covid-19	0	0%
Education	1	2%
Environment and Environmental Health	2	4%
Finance and Taxation	0	0%
Housing	9	17%
Licensing	1	2%
Planning and Building Control	6	12%
Roads and Transport	9	17%
Various Other	2	4%
TOTAL	52	

52 cases were received, and 51 cases closed. Of the cases investigated, 9 were deemed to be out of jurisdiction, 12 were premature, 25 cases were closed after initial consideration by PSOW and 5 cases required early resolution/voluntary settlement to resolve (details in below table).

PSOW prefer to be able to put things right for a complainant at an early stage. If it appears from their initial review of a complaint that something has gone wrong and that there is an obvious solution, the caseworker will often contact the Council and ask it to carry out one or more actions to resolve the matter. If the Council agrees, then the case will be closed without an investigation. PSOW expects the Council to provide evidence on the actions agreed to resolve the complaint.

PSOW made 10 recommendations to Newport City Council during the year across 5 of the cases investigated that required early resolution/voluntary settlement, meaning Newport City Council's intervention rate was 10% for the year 2023/24. This rate is better than the previous year.

In 2023/24, 7 recommendations were due and 43% were complied with in the timescale agreed. The remainder were complied with, but outside the timescales agreed, or remain outstanding as of 9 April 2024. Clarity was sought directly with PSOW to clarify this and whilst NCC had complied and sent the outcomes/resolution to the complainant within the designated timescales it didn't also send evidence to the Ombudsman that this had been done. The Ombudsman has clarified with NCC and other authorities that Newport must complete the action *and* provide evidence to the Ombudsman within the timescale set to comply.

Number of Recommendations made in 2023/24	Number of Recommendations falling due in 2023/24	% of recommendations, complied with on time
10	7	43%

Complaints Received across Wales for each Local Authority

This shows that Newport City Council had 52 complaints referred to the Ombudsman for 2023/24, 0.33% received per 1,000 residents. The range is from 0.15 complaints per 1,000 residents to 0.58 complaints per 1,000 residents. Newport's rate is just below the average across Welsh local authorities. As detailed earlier, the absence of complaints does not necessarily indicate excellent services, just as an increase in complaints does not necessarily indicate poor services

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1,000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15	0.22
Bridgend County Borough Council	59	0.41
Caerphilly County Borough Council	56	0.32
Cardiff Council*	149	0.41
Carmarthenshire County Council	69	0.37
Ceredigion County Council	32	0.45
Conwy County Borough Council	36	0.31
Denbighshire County Council**	31	0.32
Flintshire County Council	51	0.33
Cyngor Gwynedd	38	0.32
Isle of Anglesey County Council	38	0.55
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	12	0.20
Monmouthshire County Council	29	0.31
Neath Port Talbot Council	35	0.25
Newport City Council	52	0.33
Pembrokeshire County Council	40	0.32
Powys County Council	54	0.41
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	64	0.27
Swansea Council	81	0.34
Torfaen County Borough Council	14	0.15
Vale of Glamorgan Council	77	0.58
Wrexham County Borough Council	76	0.56
Total	1108	0.36
* inc 2 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 1 Wales Penalty Processing Partnership		

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual Letter 2024/24

As discussed above when the PSOW investigates complaints, in some instances it will make some form of “intervention.” Interventions relate to an element of the complaint where the PSOW believes the Council could have provided a better service and may make recommendations such as to write a letter of apology to a customer. Therefore, the aim is to keep the quality of complaint responses high and minimise PSOW interventions. The PSOW intervention rate for 2023/24 for Newport City Council was 10% compared with 17% in 2022/23 which is a positive improvement. Notably, across all statutory bodies in Wales, 1,108 complaints were referred to PSOW regarding local authorities last year – broadly the same number as the previous year. During this period, PSOW intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 14% of local authority complaints – a similar proportion to recent years.

The table below represents complaint outcomes made by the PSOW for 2023/24.

Newport City Council Complaint Outcomes PSOW	Number	Percentage
Out of Jurisdiction	9	18%
Premature	12	24%
Other Cases closed after initial consideration	25	49%
Early Resolution/Voluntary settlement	5	10%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports - Upheld	0	0%
Public Interest Reports	0	0%
Special Interest Reports	0	0%
Total	51	100%

The table below includes some measures including comparisons with previous years

Year	New Complaints Received by NCC	Received per 1000 Residents	Cases with PSOW Intervention	% of Interventions
2020/21	31	0.20	5	17%
2021/22	40	0.26	4	11%
2022/23	42	0.26	8	17%
2023/24	52	0.33	5	10%

PSOW Code of Conduct Complaints

Code of Conduct complaints regarding City Councillors and Community Councillors are dealt with under a separate ethical standard’s regulatory framework. In accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, all complaints about breaches of the Member Code of Conduct are referred to the Ombudsman to consider whether any breach has been committed and, if so, whether that breach is serious enough to warrant any sanction. Serious breaches are then investigated and reported to either Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales. Standards Committee have the power to suspend a Councillor for up to 6 months and the Adjudication Panel can suspend for up to 1 year or disqualify for up to 5 years.

All Code of Conduct complaints received by the Ombudsman are reported to the Council’s Standards Committee, on an anonymised and confidential basis, and they are also notified of the reasons why the Ombudsman has decided not to accept or investigate the complaints. NCC Standards Committee also receive a copy of the Ombudsman’s Annual letter, and they submit an Annual Report to full Council in November, which includes a summary of these complaints. Each quarter all local authorities in Wales report to the Ombudsman. Further details are included within the PSOW Annual Letter.

In 2023/24, in Wales PSOW received 16% more Code of Conduct complaints than the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. The office made 21 referrals – to Standards Committees or the Adjudication Panel for Wales, an increase from 12 the previous year.

The table below shows the NCC Code of Conduct Complaints that were sent for 2023/24

Investigations	Number
Decision not to Investigate	4
Discontinued	0
No evidence of breach	1
No action necessary	0
Refer to Adjudication Panel	0
Refer to Standards Committee	0
Total	5

Independent Review

In March 2024, the PSOW became aware of inappropriate comments, of a political nature, made by a member of their staff via social media. These comments were widely reported in the media. The member of staff in question was suspended and subsequently resigned. However, the comments prompted questions about the office’s work on Councillor Code of Conduct cases.

In view of the seriousness of the matter, they commissioned an independent review of their Code of Conduct work and will be publishing the final report on completion of the review and sharing this with the Senedd’s Finance Committee this Autumn.

The PSOW continued their work on supporting improvement in public services last year and worked on a second wider Own Initiative investigation. The investigation included four local authorities and considered carers’ needs assessments the finalised report will be shared this, Autumn. The report will include recommendations to the investigated authorities and will ask all local authorities across Wales to make similar improvements. They have also continued their work on complaints handling standards for public bodies in Wales and now have 56 public bodies following their model complaints handling policy. These public bodies account for around 85% of the complaints they receive. Continuing their work to publish complaints statistics into a third year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 7% of complaints made to Newport City Council’s went on to be referred to PSOW.

PSOW continue to express that authorities and other organisations should not view complaints as negative. If complaints are too low questions may be asked around whether our processes are clear enough and whether customers are given enough opportunities and access points to raise these concerns. PSOW do not provide benchmarking, however they will support Local Authorities with advice and guidance.

We will continue to engage with the PSOW Complaints Standards work, accessing training for our officers, fully implementing the model policy, and providing complaints data.

Unacceptable Actions by Customers

The complaints team dealt with 5 cases through the Unacceptable Actions Policy for 2023/24 reporting year.

Consideration is made when implementing this policy to ensure that it is not used as a means to ignore legitimate request from customers who contact us regularly. The fact that a customer is unhappy with the outcome of a service and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause them to be labelled vexatious or unreasonably persistent. The Unacceptable Actions by Customers policy contributes to our overall aim of dealing with all customers in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair, and reasonable. The policy sets out how we will decide which customers will be treated as abusive, vexatious, or unreasonably persistent and what we will do in those circumstances.

The current policy was approved by Cabinet in May 2021 and there have been various changes since then, including organisational structure ones, which meant the existing policy needed a review, this was included in the action plan for the Compliments, Comments and Complaints report for 22/23.

An initial review of the policy was conducted in consultation with various stakeholders. A task and finish group were set up to assist in the review of the policy. This group had representation from Complaints, Health and Safety, HR, Customer Services and Democratic Services.

The Unacceptable Actions by Customers Policy (UAC) review has concluded, and the new policy is now being finalised for implementation. This will include awareness sessions for NCC staff, so they are familiar with the new policy and how to use this.

Service Development

The Council is committed to developing the service provided to meet the legislation and to meet the expectations of customers who wish to submit their feedback.

Progress made in 2023/2024:-

- The My Council Services (MCS) system went through further development during 2023/24 to maximise its effectiveness for reporting. This enabled the development of a bespoke Complaints Dashboard providing greater visibility and analysis of raw data and improved insight
- Complaint specific training delivered to over 100 Council Officers across multiple sessions – a by-product of this identified under reporting of complaints. Further procedures have been implemented to capture and record this
- Bespoke Councillor complaint handling awareness session held with Governance and Audit Committee delivered by Complaints Standards Authority from The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)
- The Complaints team delivered sessions with colleagues in residential settings to align their complaint procedures with the revised Customer Feedback Policy. This service is now updating its own processes in line with this
- A review was made of the contract documentation with colleagues from the All-Wales Complaints Officers Group for Independent Investigators. These documents have been reviewed, updated and improvements implemented including procurement processes and legal review
- Working with colleagues in Customer experience; additional recording now takes place within the My Council Services (MCS) System to enable analysis to be provided
- Unacceptable Actions by Customer Policy review, the policy has been reviewed by the Complaints team and a task and finish group of key Council officers. This is now ready for final review, engagement, and formal approval

During 2024/25, we will continue to work with service areas and refine our processes with My Newport Team and support colleagues in relevant service areas. The Council has also conducted a Customer Contact Review, examined the customer experience, and understood the Council's strengths and weaknesses towards enabling people to complete transactions online, in person and also signposting to the other organisations to access the services they need. The complaints team will be working closely with the project team to implement improvements across NCC. This review has recently been reported to Scrutiny Committee.

Lessons Learned

- Working closely with service areas identifying reoccurring issues, themes and making changes to improve
- Reducing callback requests by encouraging service areas to update customer notes on My Council Service (MCS) system
- More service area engagement to increase level of understanding in terms of the Ombudsman's powers and what they are looking to achieve
- Continued engagement with PSOW and areas within NCC with high level of complaints, increasing level of understanding of the Ombudsman. This is a significant piece of work that will be rolling year on year.

Actions for Improvement 2024/25

Below outlines the actions that the team will be undertaking in 2024/25 to improve the delivery of the service.

- Introduce improved and more regular reporting processes across key stakeholders within the Council. Inclusion of Complaints data into Mid-Year and End of Year performance reports to Performance Scrutiny Committees. Working with services, developing greater insight of Council performance from complaints data
- Working with the Customer Contact Review to determine what lessons can be learned from the review, and best practice shared to ensure timely responses to Complaints
- Engagement with services across the Council to minimise escalation within complaints process, raising awareness of complaints and its function in NCC and importance of the Ombudsman
- Complaints training provided by PSOW to be given to service areas across NCC to embed positive culture of ownership and resolution of complaints across the Council
- Promote the complaints service through various publications, especially for customers who have not got access or wouldn't normally access our services online
- Develop a renewed focus across our services and contacts to promote the ability to give positive feedback, aligning this to complaint reporting processes
- Finalise Unacceptable Actions by Customers Policy (UAC) review and implement new policy creating awareness of the change in policy. As part of the implementation, we will ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed for UAC cases accordingly

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Ombwdsmon Ombudsman

Cymru • Wales

Ask for: Communications



01656 641150



Caesinfo@ombudsman.wales

Date: 9 September 2024

Councillor Dimitri Batrouni
Newport City Council

By email only
leaders.office@newport.gov.uk
beverley.owen@newport.gov.uk

Annual Letter 2023/24

Dear Councillor Batrouni

Role of PSOW

As you know, the role of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is to consider complaints about public services, to investigate alleged breaches of the councillor Code of Conduct, to set standards for complaints handling by public bodies and to drive improvement in complaints handling and learning from complaints. I also undertake investigations into public services on my own initiative.

Purpose of letter

This letter is intended to provide an update on the work of my office, to share key issues for local government in Wales and to highlight any particular issues for your organisation, together with actions I would like your organisation to take.

Overview of 2023/24

This letter, as always, coincides with my Annual Report – “A New Chapter Unfolds” – and comes at a time when public services continue to be in the spotlight, and under considerable pressures. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – a 17% increase in overall contacts compared to the previous year, with nearly 10,000 enquiries and complaints received. Our caseload has increased substantially - by 37% - since 2019.

Page 1 of 12

ombwdsmon.cymru
holwch@ombwdsmon.cymru
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
Rydym yn hapus i dderbyn ac
ymateb i ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg.

ombudsman.wales
ask@ombudsman.wales
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
We are happy to accept and respond
to correspondence in Welsh.

During 2023/24 we considered and closed more enquiries and complaints than we ever have done before, and we reduced the average cost for each case and investigation. We started the year with a focus on reducing our aging cases, those over 12 months old, by 50% by the end of the year. These cases are often the most complex and distressing for the people making the complaint. I am extremely pleased to say we exceeded this target, reducing our aged investigations by over 70%. We are now well on track to meeting our objective to complete investigation of complaints within 12 months.

Public Services Complaints and compliance with recommendations

In total 1,108 complaints about local authorities were made to us last year – broadly the same number as the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 14% of local authority complaints – a similar proportion to recent years.

We received 52 complaints about Newport City Council in 2023/24 and closed 51. Newport City Council's intervention rate was 10%. Further information on complaints about your organisation can be found in the appendices.

We made 10 recommendations to your council during the year. To ensure that our investigations and reports drive improvement, we follow up compliance with the recommendations agreed with your organisation. In 2023/24, 7 recommendations were due and 43% were complied with in the timescale agreed. The remainder were complied with, but outside the timescales agreed, or remain outstanding as at 9 April 2024.

Recommendations and timescales for complying with recommendations are always agreed with the public body concerned before being finalised, and we therefore expect organisations to comply within the timescales agreed.

Our Code of Conduct work

My role is to investigate allegations that councillors have breached their Code of Conduct. Where an investigation finds evidence to support the complaint on a matter which is serious enough to require a referral in the public interest, these cases are referred either to the local Standards Committee or to the Adjudication Panel for Wales for consideration.

In 2023/24, we received 16% more Code of Conduct complaints than the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. My office made 21 referrals – to Standards Committees or the Adjudication Panel for Wales, an increase from 12 the previous year.

I am grateful to your Monitoring Officer for their positive engagement with my office over the last year. We will continue to engage with them on matters relating to the ethical standards framework, including Local Resolution Procedures this year.

Independent Review

As you will be aware, I became aware of inappropriate comments, of a political nature, made by a member of my staff via social media. These comments were widely reported in the media. The member of staff in question was suspended and subsequently resigned. However, the comments prompted questions about my office's work on councillor Code of Conduct cases.

In view of the seriousness of the matter, I commissioned Dr Melissa McCullough to conduct an independent review of our Code of Conduct work, and I have published the full [Terms of Reference](#) for that review. I and my staff are engaging closely with the Monitoring Officer Group and the National Forum for Standards Committee Chairs in relation to this matter. I will be publishing Dr McCullough's final report on completion of the review and sharing it with the Senedd's Finance Committee this Autumn.

Supporting improvement of public services

We continued our work on supporting improvement in public services last year and worked on our second wider Own Initiative investigation. The investigation includes four local authorities and considers carers' needs assessments. I am grateful to the investigated authorities for their co-operation and candour throughout the year, and we look forward to sharing our finalised report this Autumn. This will make recommendations to the investigated authorities and will ask all local authorities across Wales to make similar improvements.

We have continued our work on complaints handling standards for public bodies in Wales and now have 56 public bodies following our model complaints handling policy. These public bodies account for around 85% of the complaints we receive. We have continued our work to publish complaints statistics, gathered from public bodies, with data published twice a year.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a third year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 7% of complaints made to Newport City Council's went on to be referred to PSOW.

Action we would like your organisation to take

Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Consider the data in this letter, alongside your own data, to understand more about your performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and your organisation's compliance with recommendations made by my office.

- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.

I would like to thank you, and your officers, for your continued openness and engagement with my office. Our information shows that local authorities are looking into more complaints than ever before and are using information from complaints to deliver better outcomes for the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michelle Morris in black ink.

Michelle Morris
Public Services Ombudsman

Cc. Beverley Owen, Chief Executive, Newport City Council



Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1,000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15	0.22
Bridgend County Borough Council	59	0.41
Caerphilly County Borough Council	56	0.32
Cardiff Council*	149	0.41
Carmarthenshire County Council	69	0.37
Ceredigion County Council	32	0.45
Conwy County Borough Council	36	0.31
Denbighshire County Council**	31	0.32
Flintshire County Council	51	0.33
Cyngor Gwynedd	38	0.32
Isle of Anglesey County Council	38	0.55
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	12	0.20
Monmouthshire County Council	29	0.31
Neath Port Talbot Council	35	0.25
Newport City Council	52	0.33
Pembrokeshire County Council	40	0.32
Powys County Council	54	0.41
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	64	0.27
Swansea Council	81	0.34
Torfaen County Borough Council	14	0.15
Vale of Glamorgan Council	77	0.58
Wrexham County Borough Council	76	0.56
Total	1108	0.36
* inc 2 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 1 Wales Penalty Processing Partnership		



Appendix B - Received by Subject

Newport City Council	Complaints Received	% share
Adult Social Services	2	4%
Benefits Administration	1	2%
Children's Social Services	6	12%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	3	6%
Complaints Handling	10	19%
Covid-19	0	0%
Education	1	2%
Environment and Environmental Health	2	4%
Finance and Taxation	0	0%
Housing	9	17%
Licensing	1	2%
Planning and Building Control	6	12%
Roads and Transport	9	17%
Various Other	2	4%
Total	52	



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Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes (* denotes intervention)

Newport City Council		% Share
Out of Jurisdiction	9	18%
Premature	12	24%
Other cases closed after initial consideration	25	49%
Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	5	10%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports Upheld*	0	0%
Public Interest Reports*	0	0%
Special Interest Reports*	0	0%
Total	51	



Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	16	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	8	59	14%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	3	48	6%
Cardiff Council	28	144	19%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	0	3	0%
Carmarthenshire County Council	8	60	13%
Ceredigion County Council	7	32	22%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	37	0%
Denbighshire County Council	2	32	6%
Denbighshire County Council - Wales Penalty Processing Partnership	0	1	0%
Flintshire County Council	8	57	14%
Cyngor Gwynedd	6	39	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	10	41	24%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	3	14	21%
Monmouthshire County Council	3	32	9%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	34	15%
Newport City Council	5	51	10%
Pembrokeshire County Council	7	38	18%
Powys County Council	7	53	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	11	63	17%
Swansea Council	12	77	16%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	14	14%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	15	71	21%
Wrexham County Borough Council	7	79	9%
Total	158	1095	14%



Appendix E – Compliance performance comparison

Local Authority	Number of recommendations made in 2023-24	Number of recommendations falling due in 2023-24	% of recommendations, complied with on time
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	1	100%
Bridgend County Borough Council	18	20	35%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	9	9	11%
Cardiff Council	74	75	92%
Carmarthenshire County Council	25	25	52%
Ceredigion County Council	23	23	78%
Swansea Council	29	32	63%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	1	0%
Denbighshire County Council	5	6	67%
Flintshire County Council	17	17	59%
Cyngor Gwynedd	12	19	74%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	26	24	92%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	11	9	56%
Monmouthshire County Council	4	4	25%
Neath Port Talbot Council	14	14	29%
Newport City Council	10	7	43%
Pembrokeshire County Council	24	23	96%
Powys County Council	18	16	31%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	26	26	77%
Torfaen County Borough Council	3	3	67%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	50	48	92%
Wrexham County Borough Council	16	19	42%



Appendix F - Code of Conduct Complaints

Newport City Council

Decision not to investigate	4
Discontinued	0
No evidence of breach	1
No action necessary	0
Refer to Adjudication Panel	0
Refer to Standards Committee	0
Total	5



Appendix G - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Decision not to investigate	Investigations				Total	
		Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel		Refer to Standards Committee
Bishton Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Langstone Community Council	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Llanvaches Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. These complaints are contextualised by the population of each authority.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the compliance performance of each Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix G shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.

Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject Cabinet Work Programme 2024/25

Purpose To report and agree the details of the Cabinet's Work Programme.

Author Governance Team Leader

Ward All Wards

Summary The purpose of a work programme is to enable Cabinet to organise and prioritise the reports and decisions that are brought to each meeting. Effective forward planning by Cabinet also impacts positively upon the Council's other Committees, in particular Scrutiny, because work needs to be coordinated on certain reports to ensure proper consultation takes place before a decision is taken.

This current work programme runs to May 2025, but it is a working document. It is important that the work programme is owned and prioritised by Cabinet Members directly, so each month the Governance Team Leader brings a report updating Cabinet on any changes, so that the revised programme can be formally approved.

The updated work programme is attached at Appendix 1.

Proposal To agree the updated work programme for 2024/25

Action by Governance Team Leader

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chief Officers
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation

Background

The purpose of a work programme is to enable Cabinet to organise and prioritise the reports and decisions that are brought to each meeting. Effective forward planning by Cabinet also impacts positively upon the Council's other Committees, in particular Scrutiny, because work needs to be coordinated on certain reports to ensure proper consultation takes place before a decision is taken.

The Wales Audit Office's Corporate Assessment of Newport City Council, published in September 2013, highlighted the need to "strengthen committee work programming arrangements to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up". Since that report was published, these monthly reports have been introduced to provide Cabinet with regular updates on its work programme, and the opportunity to comment upon and shape its priorities as an executive group. The Democratic Services team have also been working to improve the links between this and other work programmes under its management (eg Council, Scrutiny, Audit) to ensure the various programmes are properly coordinated.

The current work programme runs to May 2025, but it is a working document. It is important that the work programme is owned and prioritised by Cabinet Members directly, so each month the Cabinet Office Manager brings a report updating Cabinet on any changes, so that the revised programme can be formally approved.

The updated work programme is attached at Appendix 1.

Financial Summary

There is no direct cost to adopting a programme of work.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
No action taken	M	L	Work programming arrangements are in place to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up.	Head of Democratic Services
The process is not embraced by report authors and members	M	M	If there is proliferation of unplanned or late items, the opportunity to ensure work programming is timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up will diminish	Head of Democratic Services

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

These proposals will help the Council provide the best possible service to members and will provide information to the public and elected members.

Options Available and considered

- To adopt the process and adopt or amend the work programme
- To consider any alternative proposals raised by Cabinet members
- To take no action

Preferred Option and Why

To adopt the proposals which should help to ensure work programming arrangements are timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications in adopting a programme of work.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications in adopting a programme of work.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

There are no specific HR implications in adopting a programme of work. The principles of open and transparent governance are consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan and objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

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

Dated: 28 November 2024

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Cabinet

Work Programme: June 2024 to May 2025

Meeting	Agenda Items	Lead Officer
Cabinet 19/06/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report ▪ Director of Social Services Report 23-24 ▪ 2023/24 Treasury Management Year End Report ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SD:SS ▪ SD:SS ▪ HoF ▪ GTL
Council 16/07/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments ▪ 2023/24 Treasury Management Year End Report ▪ Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report ▪ Director of Social Services Report 23-24 ▪ Safer Newport Plan ▪ Gwent Serious Violence Strategy Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL ▪ HoF ▪ SD:SS ▪ SD:SS ▪ SD: T&C/HPP&T ▪ HPP&T
Cabinet 17/07/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revenue Outturn Report - July ▪ Capital and Monitoring Report - July ▪ Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Report Update ▪ Urdd Eisteddfod 2027 ▪ Public Right of Way 406/58 Jubilee Park Rogerstone ▪ Property Services Review ▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 4) ▪ Welsh Language Annual Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HR&ED ▪ HR&ED ▪ HL&S ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T
Cabinet 18/09/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revenue Budget Monitor ▪ Capital Budget Monitor ▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 1) ▪ Annual Digital Report 23-24 ▪ Climate Change Annual Report 23-24 ▪ Placemaking Plan: Cross Party Working Group ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ HE&PP ▪ HR&ED ▪ GTL
Council 24/09/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments ▪ Welsh Language Annual Report 23-24 ▪ City Centre PSPO ▪ Maesglas PSPO ▪ Pill PSPO ▪ Scrutiny Annual Report 23-24 ▪ Standards Committee Annual Report 23-24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL ▪ HPP&T ▪ HE&PP ▪ HE&PP ▪ HE&PP ▪ DS&EM ▪ HL&S
Cabinet 16/10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCC Social Values Outcomes in Procurement Report ▪ Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 23-24 ▪ Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self-Assessment 23-24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gwent Wellbeing Plan Annual Report ▪ Sustainable Communities for Learning (Band B) Programme Reprofile ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HPP&T ▪ HoE ▪ GTL
Cabinet 13/11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September Revenue Budget Monitor ▪ Capital Programme Monitoring and Additions ▪ 2025/26 Budget Proposal ▪ Estyn Outcomes Report ▪ Gwent Regional Partnership Board Area Plan/Gwent Regional Partnership Board Annual Report ▪ Air Quality Action Plan Adoption 24-25 ▪ One Newport Summary of Business ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HoE ▪ SD:SS ▪ HE&PP ▪ HPP&T ▪ GTL
Council 26/11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments ▪ Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self-Assessment 23-24 ▪ Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 23-24 ▪ Gwent Regional Partnership Board Annual Report/Plan ▪ Air Quality Action Plan Adoption 24-25 ▪ Climate Change Annual Report 23-24 ▪ Democratic Services Annual Report ▪ Dissolution of Redwick Community Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ SD:SS ▪ HE&PP ▪ HE&PP ▪ HL&S ▪ HL&S
Cabinet 11/12/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treasury Management Half Yearly Monitoring Report ▪ Long Term Provision of Internal Audit Services ▪ The Middle Tier Review (School Improvement) ▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 2) ▪ Annual Compliments, Comments and Complaints ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HoE ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ GTL
Cabinet 15/01/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2025/26 Revenue Draft Budget and MTFP: Draft Proposals ▪ Revenue Budget Monitor ▪ Capital Monitor ▪ Mid-Year Reviews Service Area Plans 24-25 ▪ One Newport Summary Document (for info) ▪ 20MPH Report ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ HoI ▪ GTL
Council 21/01/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments ▪ Treasury Management Half Yearly Monitoring Report ▪ Council Tax Reduction Scheme ▪ Governance and Audit Annual Report ▪ Review of Standing Orders ▪ Schedule of Meetings 2025/26 ▪ Mayoral Nomination 2025/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HL&S ▪ GTL ▪ GTL

Cabinet 12/02/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2025/26 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy ▪ 2025/26 Revenue Budget and MTFP: Final Proposals ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ GTL
Council 25/02/25	<u>Budget:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments ▪ 2025/26 Council Tax and Budget ▪ 2024/26 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy ▪ National Non-Domestic Rates: Discretionary Relief: High Street Relief Scheme 2025/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL ▪ HoF ▪ HoF ▪ HoF
Cabinet 19/03/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 3) ▪ Pay and Reward Statement 2025/26 ▪ Property Services ▪ Regulated Services Reports 23-24 ▪ Placemaking Plan ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ HPP&T ▪ SD: SS ▪ HR&ED ▪ GTL
Cabinet 16/04/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WESP ▪ Capped Nine (KS4 School Outcomes) ▪ One Newport Summary Document (for information/ awareness) ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoE ▪ HoE ▪ HPP&T ▪ GTL
Council 22/04/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments ▪ IRP Annual Report ▪ Pay and Reward Statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL ▪ HL&S ▪ HPP&T
Council 13/05/25	<u>AGM:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL
Cabinet 21/05/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTL

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