

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2020

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Cllrs Jane Mudd (Chair); P Cockeram, D Davies, G Giles, D Harvey, R Jeavons; D Mayer, M Rahman, R Truman

In attendance: Mrs B Owen, Mr M Rushworth, Mr R Cornwall, Mr O James, Mr R Thomas, Mrs J Evans.

Part 1

The Leader opened the meeting and asked everyone to bear in mind the significance of today being Armistice Day and to remember those that have given their lives in conflict; she thanked all those that had attended the Remembrance Service at the Civic Centre this morning.

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

4 Treasury Management Monitoring Report

The Leader presented the report, informing Cabinet of the Treasury Management activities for the first half of the year to 30 September 2020. It was a backwards looking report and confirmed that the Council continued to follow its strategy of maintaining investments to a minimum, rather than taking out new long-term borrowing.

The report showed that in the first half of the year there was a reduction in net borrowing from the end of March from £153.8 million to £121.1 million. The main reason was the reimbursement from extra borrowing from the Council at the end of March to front-fund the business grants at the start of the pandemic.

Welsh Government also front-loaded the revenue support grant in the first half of the year, resulting in a positive cash flow. Moving to the second part of the year, it was anticipated that the level of investments will fall to minimum level, which might lead to more borrowing towards the end of the financial year.

In terms of the investments, with the current economic climate and uncertainly, the priority was security rather than return, and investments were short-term and mainly held with UK or local government, which were considered safe.

The report had been to Audit Committee for noting and comments, which were included within the report for noting and consideration.

Overall, the report confirmed that the limits and indicators were met in line with the approved strategies.

Cabinet were asked to note and provide any comments prior to the report being taken to full Council for approval.

Decision:

- Cabinet noted and would provide positive comments to Council on the activities outlined in the report for the period to 30 September 2020.
- Cabinet noted the comments from Audit Committee on the report.

5 Quarter 2 Corporate Risk Register Update

The Leader to Cabinet an update of the Council's Corporate Risk Register for the end of Quarter two (30 September 2020).

Cabinet were asked to consider the contents of the report and note the changes to risks in the Corporate Risk Register.

The Council's Risk Management Policy and Corporate Risk Register enabled this administration and officers to effectively identify, manage and monitor those risks, which could prevent the Council from achieving its objectives in the Corporate Plan (2017-22) and undertake its statutory duties as a local authority.

The Quarter two risk report would also be presented to the Council's Audit Committee in January 2021 to review the Council's risk management process and governance arrangements.

Following the presentation of the quarter one Corporate Risk Register, the Council's Audit Committee welcomed the receipt of the report and acknowledged the impact(s) that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the delivery of the Council services.

The Council's Audit Committee were asked for mitigating actions to be included in the register and from this quarter's report, these have been included.

The report update identified 56 risks that were recorded across the Council's eight service areas. The risks that posed the most significant risk (Red Risks), to the delivery of Council services and achievement of its Corporate Objectives were escalated to the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

The Leader explained in detail further figures from severe to moderate risks at the end of quarter two, as well as the possible risks and uncertainty due to Brexit negotiations. The Leader concluded that Cabinet Members were asked to agree the contents of the Quarter 2 Risk Report and continue to monitor progress of actions taken to reduce the impact of the risks in the report.

The Leader invited comments from Cabinet members.

The Deputy Leader referred to Risk 5, Ash Die back and the devastating effects on the trees and the works carried out along Caerleon Road. Appropriate discussion was taking place with WG and the Council would monitor other areas as time went by. The Leader complimented the team on their excellent work in removing the trees along Caerleon Road.

Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the update of the Corporate Risk Register.

6 Audit Wales – Audit of Newport City Council’s Assessment of 2019-20 Performance (Certificate of Compliance)

The Leader presented the report advising that this was the second Certificate of Compliance issued by Audit Wales as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Audit Wales were the Council’s External Auditors and had a duty to ensure that public bodies such as Newport Council had the necessary arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources to deliver Council services.

As part of the Local Government Measure, Newport Council was required to publish its Annual Report for the previous financial year (2019/20) before 31st October.

To meet this requirement, Cabinet endorsed the Council’s Annual Report 2019/20 at the October Cabinet meeting, which was subsequently published on the Council’s website.

The Auditor General for Wales had published the second Certificate of Compliance acknowledging the Council was discharging its duty under sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Measure.

The report also outlined the audit reviews completed in 2019/20 and 2020/21 of services delivered by Newport Council and also consideration of the national reviews of services delivered by councils across Wales.

This Cabinet acknowledged this work delivered by Audit Wales in providing the necessary assurance and where required recommendations for services to deliver continuous improve.

The Leader proposed that Cabinet accepted the conclusion contained in the Auditor General’s second Certificate of Compliance.

The Leader invited comments from Cabinet members.

Councillor Harvey thanked staff, saying that it was a testament to their hard work that they were still continuing to protect the residents of Newport.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the positive outcome of the Certificate of Compliance in relation to meeting its statutory duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

7 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report

The report was out of timescale with the Cabinet timetabling functions in 2019/20 due to Covid-19 measures imposed in March 2020 when it was due to be presented to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Safeguarding progress within the Council continued through the ‘lock down’ period and work that was planned was completed. For example the safeguarding champions were now embedded across the Council and currently met virtually.

Other legislative changes that would have provided a challenge to the council and workforce was the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) to Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) which were due to be implemented in October 2020, and postponed until March 2022. This would enable the workforce and the regional consortium to plan, and train the workforce in readiness for the changes to practice.

The Scrutiny Committee received the full Annual Report on Corporate Safeguarding on 30 October 2020, with the caveat that progress was made in the intervening months, this report was now being presented to Cabinet.

The committee were advised, in order to assure and improve the accountability for corporate safeguarding arrangements across Newport City Council that all future reports to scrutiny committee would comprise of the following information:

A council-wide set of performance and information as identified by the WAO recommendations; presentation of the Welsh

Government Key Performance measures for safeguarding specifically, local indicators/measures from the teams comprising the Safeguarding Unit, and the presentation of any identified risks/challenges likely to be encountered within the authority and the actions available to mitigate these risks.

Newport City Council remained an active member of the “Gwent Safeguarding Board”, which was an amalgamation of the two former specific regional boards; the South East Wales Safeguarding Children’s Board (SEWSCB) and Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GWASB). Newport continued to host the regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) team and work closely with the regional Partnership Board (VAWDASVB).

The proposals outstanding for 2019/20 were also highlighted and the options available to be considered were:

1. Council to view safeguarding training as a social services responsibility only.
2. Council to acknowledge the importance of having an informed and responsible workforce aware of legislative requirement for safeguarding citizens when representing the council.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Social Services to present the report.

The Cabinet Member advised that everyone had a responsibility towards safeguarding and read out the Council’s Statement sent out to all staff, highlighting their duty of care.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to inform Cabinet that due to the successful pilot in Newport this training model would be implemented across Wales.

Decision:

Cabinet reviewed the progress of the key priority work plans for both corporate safeguarding arrangements and the safeguarding of specific teams as identified in 2019/20.

8 Director of Social Services Annual Report

The Leader introduced the Corporate Director of People to present the report.

It was highlighted that 2019/20 was another demanding year characterised by the maintenance of quality and standards of service delivery and the beginning of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

In acknowledgement of the need to respond to the Pandemic, Welsh Government suspended the requirement to report year-end figures therefore not all data was available. A new performance framework that was due to be in place from April 2020 was also delayed but the measures would be in place from April 2021. During 2021/22 the Council would be making the necessary changes to recording and reporting processes to ensure full implementation.

The year was characterised by a considerable increase in demand across adults and children's services. Assessment numbers were up by 2,245 The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 continued to influence the provision of Early Intervention and Preventative services and in the ongoing work to manage demand.

The well-being objectives wind through all Social Services operations and tied closely to the Council's Corporate Plan, notably:

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
- To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
- To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services thanked Chris Humphrey for standing in as Interim Corporate Director of People and proceeded to provide the following figures and that 2019/20 demonstrated a further significant increase in demand for services:

- **4,038 adult assessments** - Number increased by **891** (3147 in 2018/19)
- **5,944 children assessments** - Number increased by **919** (5025 in 2018/19)
- **188 carers assessments** - Number increased by **135** (71 in 2018/19)
- **3,000 Housing Support referrals** – Number increased by **300** (2,700 in 2018/19)

Continuous efforts was made during the year to minimise costs, identify savings and improve integrated working between health and social care. Services were adapted to the Coronavirus Pandemic to ensure continuity but we were still in the midst of a Public Health crisis and uncertain about the medium to long-term impact of the Pandemic.

Comments from Cabinet:

Councillor Harvey reported that relationship between staff and young people was warm, and that a child in care had thanked the team for their excellent care. Child exploitation was taking place within Newport and Councillor Harvey mentioned that Newport City Council staff were on another level when it came to the professional care afforded to the children in Newport.

The Leader also thanked the Cabinet Member for his dedication to the services as well as thanking Chris Humphrey, Interim Director of Social Services for her continued hard work. The Leader however mentioned the pressure that staff were under and that their solution focussed approach, going above and beyond was greatly appreciated, especially during the last year, and offered her sincere thanks.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/20.

9 Endorsement of RR DA Recommendation for Consultation

The Leader introduced the report to Cabinet who were already aware that the Council endorsed the LDP Annual Monitoring Report in October, which gave the green light to reviewing our LDP. The creation of a Review Report and Delivery Agreement were the next stages in the process towards delivering a replacement LDP.

The Review Report and Delivery Agreement were currently in draft form and Cabinet was asked to approve the documents for public consultation starting in January. Comments and proposed changes would be reported back to Cabinet in March 2021, and if satisfactory, would go before Full Council in April 2021. Approval by Full Council would mean that the documents would be sent to Welsh Government, and following their acceptance, would signal the legal commencement of the LDP review process.

The Draft Review Report set out the changes in National policed and legislation since the adoption of the LDP in January 2015. Most notably, the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (April 2015) and the

pending National Development Framework now known as 'Future Wales'. These were important policy changes, not least the identification of Newport as an area of national growth.

The report summarised the main findings of the previous five Annual Monitoring Reports, assessing the current LDP and identifies where changes might be necessary, for example:

- New development sites would be needed
- Retail policies may need reviewing to reflect the changing picture of retailing
- Renewable energy, climate change and air quality policies may need strengthening as we move towards a more sustainable and carbon neutral position

Public consultation on the draft Review Report would help to identify what residents and stakeholders thought of the LDP and what policies should be reviewed.

The purpose of the report was to agree to launch the consultation on the review report and the delivery agreement, the Leader had no reservations in recommending this to Cabinet.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development to speak.

The Cabinet Member supported moving to the next stage of public consultation, which was a vital component to feed in to the development of the plan. The Cabinet Member looked forward to hearing the feedback from the public at the Cabinet meeting in March 2021.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the draft review for public consultation.

10 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill Consultation

The Leader introduced the report to Cabinet. The current local government structure in Wales consisted of 22 county and county borough councils (known as "principal councils") and was established in 1996 by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994.

In recent years there were a number of reports, commissions and white paper consultations, with the aim of reforming the local government structure, strengthening democratic accountability and increasing diversity of representation.

In 2019 the Welsh Government introduced the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. The Bill proposed to reform the legislative framework for local government electoral arrangements, democracy, performance and governance. It was anticipated that the Bill would receive Royal Assent early in 2021 in time for the 2022 local elections.

The report provided an overview of the Bill and proposed a response to the consultation regarding the establishment of Corporate Joint Committees.

Bill Overview

This was an extensive piece of legislation, a brief summary of key points were therefore highlighted:

Part 1 Elections

Part 2 General Power of Competence

Part 3 – Promoting Access to Local Government

Part 4 – Local Authority Executives, Members, Officers and Committees

Part 5 – Collaborative Working by Principal Councils:

This focussed the creation of corporate joint committees (CJCs) for two or more principal councils to deliver specified functions.

These CJCs could be seen as an evolution from existing regional arrangements such as the City Deal, school improvement consortia and regional planning and transport arrangements.

CJCs would be a new form of governance body, comprised of the democratic leadership of local authorities in its area, rather than traditional committees.

Part 6 - Performance and Governance of Principal Councils:

This section would be the subject of a further Cabinet Report.

Part 7 onwards:

The Bill also provided principal councils with the opportunity to merge voluntarily.

In terms of local government finance, the Bill introduced new measures in relation to non-domestic rates.

There was also a number of miscellaneous provisions. These included information sharing between regulators; and the merging and demerging of Public Services Boards.

Impact on Newport City Council and Consultation response

Colleagues would be aware that an all member seminar took place and there was a range of views expressed.

These were carefully considered in the draft consultation response, which was included as an Appendix to the report. Key points from this were:

- The intention to provide a general power of competence to local government was helpful, although its use may be limited in practice.
- Members welcomed the intention to extend the voting franchise to include 16 and 17 year olds and foreign nationals which reflected the principle of involvement. This was also in keeping with our Young Person's Promise. However, it was recognised that the proposals to allow changes to the voting system could be confusing for the electorate.
- The Council had already proven track record of working collaboratively on a local and regional footprint. We had formed formal and informal partnerships with neighbouring Authorities and third sector partners, including the Public Services Board and Regional Skills Partnership.
- Members had however voiced concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability of the proposed CJCs, and the consequent impact on local government resources, skills and expertise.
- Members were also rightly concerned that the move to more regional bodies may not represent the views of local communities, and that was reflected in the response that is attached.

The report acknowledged that the proposed changes were continuing at pace but it was felt that a number of points should be raised through the consultation about how this would work in practice. This included workforce conditions and management, the impact on local government finances and skills, and most importantly that the voice of our communities was reflected in decision making through the engagement of members of the Council.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation to speak.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that Newport City Council had always remained flexible and compliant with any changes and would continue to do this. The electorate however, would have concerns and the Cabinet Member felt that decision making should be made at local level. CJCs would move away from a local community engagement and the issues that needed to be addressed from Central Government to Welsh Government. We would continue to work with what we were given, but it was reiterated that decision making needed to be closer to people.

The Leader invited the Chief Executive to speak.

Chief Executive echoed comments of the Leader that this was an important document for Local Government and the report accurately reflected the feedback from members at the all member seminar and as the Cabinet Member had mentioned, the Bill had made significant progress through the Senedd and would continue to do so. It was therefore important to work with councillors so that whatever model

was adopted in terms of CJs would be brought to officers, the Council would be working closely with members to ensure that they would be brought forward for further discussion.

Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and agreed the consultation response for submission by the closing date of 4th January 2021.

11 Covid-19 Recovery: Update

The Leader gave an update on the progress made by Newport Council and its partners to support the City to comply with the necessary restrictions in place and continued to support Newport's communities as part of the Council's Strategic Recovery Aims.

Since the last report presented to Cabinet in November the Council had seen significant steps taken in the rollout of the vaccine across the nation however Covid-19 continued to impact on many families, communities and businesses.

Covid-19 has continued to and would remain prevalent across Newport's communities throughout this winter period.

- In response, the Welsh Government had implemented further restrictions during December. This meant that the Council maintained social distancing measures across households and also further restrictions on the City's indoor entertainment and hospitality sector.
- We understand the (entertainment and hospitality sectors) frustrations and concerns with these measures at what would normally be their busiest time of the year. But at this point in time the health and wellbeing of the wider community and the most vulnerable has to be put at the forefront of our minds.
- The Leader of Newport Council strongly urged all of those businesses affected to seek the necessary financial support and take up the grant funding being offered by the Welsh Government.
- The Council echoed the statements of the Welsh Government and leading scientific advisors for households to continue to practice social distancing in this period and to use their common sense in protecting their most vulnerable family members.
- The road to recovery would be hard and we must not forget the many lives that had been impacted by the disease and measures taken to restrict wide spread transmission across communities.
- What Covid-19 highlighted was the inequality that still remained in society and the work that this Council and our partners needed to undertake in order to make Newport a fair place for all to live, work and prosper now and into the future.
- There were many people that lost their jobs, children and young people's education impacted, businesses that had closed and marginalised communities that were impacted the most by Covid-19.

As highlighted in the report, Council Officers, supporting organisations and public services had continued to deliver throughout Newport. The report highlights the challenges being faced by Council Services but also the achievements being made despite the issues faced.

- Many schools across Newport were still reporting positive cases across different year groups. The schools in response to these cases have been reacting to ensure Welsh Government guidelines are followed and ensuring young people, children and their families have the necessary support to continue home schooling.
- The supermarket voucher scheme had continued to support young people and children since the October half term and would be supporting families during the Christmas period.
- Newport Council was completing a bid for the DWP's Kick-start scheme to help improve the employability and chances of sustained employment for at risk people in the 16-24 year old age group.
- Continuing work was being undertaken to support BAME community working in partnership with EYST to develop digital literacy skills.

- Total of 25 grant applications had been approved for the Transforming Towns' fund.
- The Council has been successful in securing over £1million of additional funding for affordable housing in Newport and would support the development of units on two RSL developments.
- NCC owned car parks were free for visitors and residents in Newport to support the City Centre retail and encouraged shoppers into the centre.
- Newport City Council alongside its partners in the Public Services Board signed up to the Gwent Healthy Travel Charter. This aimed to promote active travel, encouraged the use of public transport and agile working for staff. All of this would help the Council and the City of Newport to achieve its goal of being Carbon neutral by 2030.
- Housing support was extended to assist homeless people to move into temporary accommodation.
- The Council worked closely with Charity and Not for Profit groups to support the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless to find long term housing and support solutions.
- Since the Halloween break reflecting back on the Council's partnership work on the Op Bang initiative was deemed a success adopting a zero tolerance approach.
- Perception and engagement work on the delivery of Council's services was extended to Bus Wi-Fi surveys and the Participatory Budget programme was underway to enable local groups to access funding to support local initiatives.

The Leader Concluded that everyone had a responsibility to keep Covid safe and to Track, Trace and Protect and continued to thank all staff, partners, charities organisations and Councillors for supporting communities and services throughout this very difficult 2020. Further updates on the Council's progress would be provided next month.

The Leader invited Cabinet Members to give their comments.

- The Cabinet were unanimous in thanking the staff for their hard work during this difficult time and urged members of the public to stay at home and take advantage of the Track, Trace and Protect system.
- The vaccine was in sight however, Wales was in Tier 4 and it was reiterated that everyone have a happy and safe Christmas.
- The socio economic impact was difficult and thanks to volunteers working at food banks working hard to ensure that families did not go hungry and free food parcels provided by the hub by contacting the City Contact Centre.
- There was great concern regarding misinformation regarding the vaccine and residents were urged to obtain information from trusted sources, such as Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales.
- Staff were also thanked for their continued support for vulnerable young people, IT provision and those officers dealing with skills, supporting young people from 16-25 to find work.

The Leader echoed comments of the Cabinet and reiterated that information should be obtained from trusted sources, including Newport City Council. There would also be impact on service provision due to staff self-isolating or suffering from Covid themselves therefore the Leader thanked residents for their patience.

Finally the Leader's key message was that residents contacted by Track, Trace and Protect follow the actions indicated to ensure that lives were saved.

Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and agreed the consultation response for submission by the closing date of 4 January 2021.

12 Brexit Update Report

The Leader reported to Cabinet on the current status of the EU Trade Negotiations between the UK Government and the European Union; and Newport Council's ongoing preparations for a post 31 December trade arrangements.

Since the last Cabinet Report in November, the UK Government and European Union remained locked in negotiations. Many of the outcomes of this negotiation was out of the Welsh Government and Council's hands.

The Welsh Government had published its 'End of Transition' Action Plan which set out its priority areas in preparation for 31 December and life beyond this date.

In addition to the Trade negotiations, new immigration rules would be coming into place that would impact residents living in or wanting to live/work in the UK.

EU citizens living in Wales and Newport (already living in the UK before 31 December) were also being encouraged to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme before the 30 June 2021 deadline and the Leader wanted to assure EU citizens that they were welcome to live and work in Wales.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation to speak.

The Cabinet Member agreed that this was a difficult time for forward planning as no agreement had been made to date. Officers in regulatory and environmental services were waiting for guidance on new Regulations after 31 December. Training would also be required on the new regulations and what was compounded was that regulatory services were also working on the Track and Trace services and their resources were already stretched.

In conclusion, the Leader requested that Cabinet to accept the contents of the report and receive regular updates as progress was made through the transitional period whilst there was a huge degree of uncertainty.

Decision:

Cabinet considered the contents of the report and noted the Council's Brexit preparations.

13 City Centre Leisure and Learning

The Leader presented the report to seek approval to consult on plans for a new leisure and wellbeing facility in the city centre, The Leader was excited to present this report on the next stage of the Council's ambitious plans for the City Centre, which focused on Leisure and Learning right in the heart of the City.

The city centre Masterplan adopted in January 2019 identified key areas of the city as priority locations for regeneration, linked by commonalities of use and economic drivers. The ongoing regeneration of Usk Way is critical to the City Core.

At the heart of the regeneration proposals was the development of the Newport Knowledge Quarter, which would re-locate the provision of further education into the city centre, close to the city's existing higher education provision. Early development work was on-going with Coleg Gwent to relocate their campus from Nash Road to the city centre, creating an enhanced learning offer as well as bringing footfall into the city centre.

The existing Newport Centre building, constructed over 35 years ago, was suffering from a range of structural issues and required significant investment to bring it up to modern day standards. Following closure of the centre as a result of the Covid lockdown, inspections of the pool had found it required investment up to £2.5 Million to enable the pool area to be re-opened to the public. Following wider survey work, it was estimated that an additional investment of approximately £9.1 Million would be needed in the medium term to maintain the site within operational standards. The existing Newport

Centre building configuration was neither efficient nor sustainable and changes in demand over the decades meant that it was no longer able to compete with modern facilities.

It was therefore proposed to build a new environmentally sustainable and energy efficient leisure and wellbeing facility on a brownfield site overlooking the River Usk, near the existing centre. The land on which Newport Centre was currently located would be released to facilitate the relocation of Coleg Gwent's further education campus into the city centre. As part of the proposals for a new leisure and wellbeing facility, the opinions of residents and stakeholders were welcomed in order to ensure that the development delivered a scheme which was ambitious, fit for purpose and reflective of the needs of our residents.

Costs to improve Newport Centre was £2.5M for swimming pool roof, with £9.1M wider maintenance needed over the medium term. There were two options to be considered:

- Option 1 – Larger pool, but smaller sports facilities
- Option 2 – Smaller pool, but multi-functional hall

Both options offered a modern swimming pool, fitness suites, family friendly changing, roof garden and café and the proposed development would also provide:

- BREAM excellent with active travel connections
- Coleg Gwent to close Nash and release for housing. No disruption to learning.
- 2,000 students at new site
- Cost £19.7M
- Funded by £8.2M Operational saving, £7M TRI, £4.5M NCC capital borrowing

The proposals will bring increased footfall into our City Centre and help support retail and hospitality business as it sought to recover from the impact of Covid.

Whilst the project would cost £20M, a large part of this would be financed from efficiency savings as a result of operating from a modern facility which would attract greater patronage. The council was also seeking capital investment from Welsh Government through its Targeted Regeneration and Investment Fund.

The last 9 months have been extremely challenging, but throughout the pandemic, we have not stopped working on plans to improve the City and the lives of our residents and in particularly supporting our City Centre to return stronger.

Two broad options had been developed, but the council wanted to hear the views of the Newport residents to understand what they wanted in their new facility. The Leader therefore sought approval from cabinet to consult on these plans.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture to speak.

The Cabinet Member was excited about the proposals set out in the report, which was long overdue. The new centre was future proof and would provide excellent modern facilities for students and families alike. The Cabinet Member urged residents to go online and provide their feedback on the consultation.

The Leader invited Cabinet Members to give their comments.

- The Cabinet was unanimous in their support for the public consultation to commence on the development of a new leisure facility within the city centre.
- The Cabinet were looking forward to hearing from residents of Newport on the new development which would be a huge benefit for families and students.
- The proposal would increase footfall and businesses and links to Coleg Gwent within Newport as well as providing a wellbeing facility.

- Colleagues reflected on the use of the Newport Centre over the past 35 years and felt that this would be an ideal opportunity to sustain a positive use of facilities in a newer build.
- With the increase of population and household, the proposed development was welcome.
- The building was delivering on a new accessible building that would deliver on the wellbeing and the equality of residents as well as being a green and sustainable build.
- The development was welcome for Newport and was brilliant news under the circumstances.
- The modernisation of the city centre and the facilities for student was excellent and the university intake figures had improved which was also another positive reason for the build to take place.

The Leader invited the Chief Executive to speak.

The Chief Executive echoed the comments in particular those regarding education and Coleg Gwent being a key partner. Dialogue was ongoing with Coleg Gwent and University of South Wales to have two facilities co-located within the city centre. It had been a difficult year and we were working with Friars Walk and the Business Improvement District on how to improve the city centre during these challenging times. This was public sector led investment fit for the future and more particularly fit for Newport. The investment would inspire residents for Newport and be attractive to businesses and the Chief Executive welcomed the views and outcome of the public consultation and would listen to and incorporate these views.

The Leader picked up on a few points made by Cabinet from a personal perspective with positive memories of using the Newport Centre. It also met the policy aspirations of the Welsh Government. This was also about sustainable development and the impact on wellbeing and the inclusive nature of the proposed scheme. The Leader asked the citizens of Newport to consider the potential of the development, that Newport was a listening council and that she was personally looking forward to feedback from residents.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed to commence with a public consultation for plans to build a new leisure and wellbeing facility in the city centre, enabling the release of land to Coleg Gwent to support the creation of the Newport Knowledge Quarter.

14 Cabinet Work Programme

This was the Cabinet's regular monthly report on the work programme. The Leader asked Cabinet to move acceptance of the updated programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the updated programme.

15 Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider whether to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following item on the grounds that its consideration involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 and the exemption outweighs the public interest disclosure

16 Pension Arrangements Newport Transport Limited

Councillor Harvey declared and interested and left the meeting at this point.

Cabinet were presented with the report outlining details relating to the pension arrangements for Newport Transport Limited.

Decision:

Cabinet considered and noted the key issues and agreed to the proposals as set out within the report.

17 Date of Next Meeting

Friday 8 January 2021 at 2pm.