

Minutes



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

Date: 29th July 2022

Time: 10am

Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present: Councillors P Hourahine (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, L James, B Davies, G Horton,

Beverly Owen (Chief Executive Officer), Paul Jones (Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability), Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate), Tracey Mckim (Head of People, Policy & Transformation), Mark Bleazard (Digital Services Manager)

Neil Barnett (Scrutiny Advisor), Taylor Strange (Governance Support Officer).

1. Apologies

Councillors L James and B Davies, Sally Anne Jenkins (Strategic Director for Social Services).

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

A committee member raised the issue of naming the committee member whose absence was incorrectly recorded.

A committee member noted that a recommendation was not recorded correctly and stated that the fortnightly community meetings with the Police should include other members of the community so that there is better integration. The committee member would like this query reflected in the minutes when they raise the issue.

A committee member noted that their request for a precise definition for “net zero by 2030” was not recorded in the minutes.

- The Chair confirmed that since it being a request that the answer will be given outside of the Committee once the Officer responsible has looked into it.

The minutes of the previous meeting held 23rd September 2022 were **accepted as a true and accurate record**.

4. Draft Corporate Plan Wellbeing Themes 2022-27 (Pages 3 - 18)

Invitees:

Beverly Owen – Chief Executive Officer

Paul Jones – Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability

Rhys Cornwall – Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate

The Chief Executive Officer gave an overview of the report and explained its purpose. The Chief Executive Officer highlighted its links with Future Generation and Wellbeing Act goals. The Chief Executive Officer advised that the goals within the report spanned a 5 year period. The Chief Executive Officer explained that the report reflects the regional, local, and national context. The Chief Executive Officer noted that the report is in consultation and that has yet to finish but highlighted that positive feedback has been seen so far.

The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate advised that the report focused on 4 key themes. The Strategic Director highlighted the recent challenges and how the organisation looked at future demands.

The Chief Executive Officer presented the first Well-being Objective for Economy, Education and Skills. The Chief Executive Officer highlighted the development within the last 10 years, including the Newport Indoor Market but stressed the desire to see continuing improvement over the next 5 years. The Chief Executive Officer expressed a desire to develop a new City Centre Master Plan and noted that the Corporate Plan would be updated in accordance. The Chief Executive Officer highlighted working with residents and making sure that the plans for economic development are accessible for both businesses and residents as a key focus.

The Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability presented the second Well-being Objective of Newport's Environment and Infrastructure. The Strategic Director highlighted the Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency with the focus not just being on becoming Carbon Net Zero but rather to stop environmental collapse. The Strategic Director advised that Newport is the fastest growing area in Wales, and that the road and transport needs to respond to that growth with investment into public transport but noted the Burns Report which would see delivery over the next 5 years.

The Head of Adult and Community Services presented the third Well-being Objective of Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care. The Head of Adult Services highlighted the diverse culture of Newport and the need for a more cooperative approach to this.

The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate presented the fourth Well-being Objective - An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council. The Strategic Director highlighted the focus of needing to provide the right services to the people who need them.

The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate highlighted that the Transformation Plan is a 5-year plan and that work was being carried out regarding plan delivery and noted that the Digital Plan would be finalised soon. The Strategic Director noted that the report showed intent and was reflected internally in the 11 service area plans.

Questions:

A committee member noted that feedback from the consultation presented to committee should show both positive and negative feedback and questioned the wording of the feedback survey to include as many public opinions as possible.

- A committee member also noted a running theme in the committees work regarding survey feedback, and highlighted the bus surveys were not enough to capture public opinion.

A committee member felt that other cities were stimulating the economy more effectively than Newport and noted Newport had a long way to go. The committee member felt that they had not seen much in the way of impactful investment within Newport. The committee member noted the need for a focus on jobs.

- The Chief Executive Officer highlighted that all town centres were facing a contraction, and that Newport has a higher level of inward migration than others. The Chief Executive Officer also highlighted that a major focus is on how people access jobs, but they are aware of the challenges.
- The committee member expressed the hope for improvement in the next five years.

A committee member welcomed the report and noted that Newport had a lot to offer as a gateway into Wales, such as the Transporter Bridge, the Newport Ship and Caerleon's Roman site, which is a significant Roman site within Europe. The committee member felt that these were a strong selling point for Newport. The committee member hoped that this would be included in the heritage offer.

- The Chief Executive agreed with the Member, with it being noted in the plan that heritage has been looked at, with the economic strategy and cultural strategy picking up on the heritage further.

A committee member noted that there wasn't one specific way to improve the economy and felt that the focus should be on the 1% improvements and building on them. The committee member noted the difficult climate but felt that Council needed to pursue opportunities nonetheless.

- The Chief Executive Officer agreed for the need for creative ways to deal with issues and highlighted the partnership working with One Newport for help.
- The Chair noted the question may be better suited for a different Performance Scrutiny Committee and asked for this to be done.

A committee member agreed that heritage needed more focus and noted about increasing bio-diversity in the city by using space under bridges.

- The Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability highlighted that work has been done on bio-diversity with an update provided. The Strategic Director noted the issue of space as many things require it.

A committee member noted the desire to maintain the running of events in the city and noted the recent 'Pride at the Port' event as they are important to inclusivity.

A committee member requested if some of the terminology within the Plan, such as 'to become' and 'to create' could be amended in order to get the correct terms to enhance what has been done.

A committee member raised concern regarding the lack of university students in Newport despite the funding given to the university and asked that these concerns be forwarded to relevant areas and for a response to be issued.

It was queried whether a committee member needed to declare an interest due to working for Caerleon Museum while they made a point in favour of the importance of Caerleon's historical heritage.

- It was stated that only when voting on the matter did, they need to declare interest as the current meeting was for feedback.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending.

5. Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report 2021-22 (Pages 19 - 60)

Invitees:

Finn Madell – Head of Corporate Safeguarding

Mary Ryan – Head of Adult Services

Natalie Poyner – Head of Children Services

The Head of Corporate Safeguarding gave an overview of the report. The Head of Corporate Safeguarding noted that while the report was presented last year, the reporting cycle had been postponed due to a new scrutiny cycle and a new Head of Service being appointed. The Head of Corporate Safeguarding informed committee that a final report would be brought to committee within the next two years following more work on this interim report.

The Head of Corporate Safeguarding noted that the post pandemic effects were still being dealt with. The Head of Corporate Safeguarding also noted that the authority still has improvements to make such low compliance in Safeguarding training especially when benchmarked with other authorities. The Head of Corporate Safeguarding informed committee that the RAGS training has not yet started but would be starting soon. The Head of Corporate Safeguarding highlighted that a focus was to ensure enough information was available online so citizens knew the responsibilities and remits of department.

Questions:

A committee member asked how training was delivered.

- The Head of Corporate Safeguarding explained that the learning is done primarily through E-Learning, with some school staff having done face-to-face training. The desire to reintroduce face to face training was noted, however they highlighted the focus should be on what the individual people need.
- The Head of Adult Services also mentioned the difficulty in getting staff away to go to all day training conferences.

A Member was pleased to note that the Service Area listened to the comments and recommendations that were made in last year's meeting and made the appropriate amendments. The Member then commented that the number of referrals had gone up by 14% in 3 years.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that while that number was true, 50% of referrals were sent to early intervention, and the number used to be higher. The Head of Adult Services then explained that in Adult Services there was an 80/20 split that were sent to early intervention and noted that carer needs are much higher.

A committee member asked whether funding has been received from the Welsh Government for children leaving care.

- The Head of Children's Services advised that funding was received in July 2022, and also advised that that Citizens Advice also sit within the office to support the Young Person Adviser to make sure that money is being spent as it should be.

A committee member felt that more specific data was needed throughout the report to contextualise information given, such as percentages so members could have a clearer picture of comparison. The committee member also asked if it would be possible to find out from within the percentages how many children in the figures are the same child being safeguarded, and how many are single incident children.

A committee member asked whether a question he had raised previously regarding objective training was addressed and whether this was satisfactory focusing on how many hours they have completed and whether it is enough. The committee member also noted that the number of those who have done the security training was given but not the percentage.

- The Head of Adult Services advised that every 3 years registered staff must re-register, however unregistered staff are encouraged to do the training.
- The committee member also asked whether staff training was up to date regardless of high turnover.
- The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they were.

A committee member wished to thank the service areas for their work, and noted that this specific area of work is extremely difficult.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance.

6. Conclusions of Committee Reports

Draft Corporate Plan Wellbeing Themes

The Committee noted the Draft Well-being Objectives and strategic priorities of the Council to support the Well-being of Future Generations seven Well-being Goals, and wished to make the following comments and recommendations:

- The Committee noted the development of a Corporate Plan which delivers on key priorities for the citizens of Newport. Members were also pleased with the objectives.
- The Committee appreciated that consultation has continued via buses and internet surveys, but requested that there be more independent research on various groups in the city. Members felt that it would be beneficial to have officers in the city centre to consult with different demographics on a face to face basis. They felt that this

would allow more properly structured consultations to be carried out in order to have a complete view of both the issues and concerns which affect a lot of residents across the city. Members also felt that it could be good to be able to see the results of future consultations.

- The Committee requested if some of the terminology within the Plan, such as 'to become' and 'to create' could be amended to more accurate language relating to actions being undertaken to enhance understanding of what has been done.
- The Committee felt that more consideration could be given to the Heritage Offer given Newport's many heritage sites, including the Roman sites in Caerleon, the Transporter Bridge and the medieval ship etc as heritage is strongly linked with the aims of the Plan.
- The Committee raised concerns regarding a lack of university students in Newport despite the funding given and asked that these concerns be forwarded to relevant areas and for a response to be issued.

Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report

The Committee noted the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Executive Summary report, and wished to make the following comments and recommendations:

- The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers for their hard work. Members wanted it recognised that they appreciate that this specific area of work is extremely difficult.
- The Committee were pleased to note that the Service Area listened to the comments and recommendations that were made in last year's meeting and made the appropriate amendments.
- The Committee felt that more specific data was needed throughout the report to contextualise information given, such as percentages so Members can have a clearer picture of comparison. Members also queried if it could be possible to find out in the percentages of how many children in the figures are the same child being safeguarded, and how many are single incident children.
- The Committee asked that the area of focus regarding whether "the structure for the Newport Safeguarding Unit Structure and Individual Teams Key Priority Plans is appropriate to meet the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding matters" be removed as it was outside of the Committee's expertise. (This is more so an action for Scrutiny to not include in future cover reports but wanted to make you aware that the Committee wanted it noted).
- The Committee asked for an update regarding training progress be given to committee including more specific data to contextualise any information given, such as percentages to how many staff members have completed the training. Members also queried if it would be possible to have update on figures such as training and referrals received, on a half yearly basis

7. Scrutiny Adviser Reports

Invitee:

- Neil Barnett – Scrutiny Adviser

a) Forward Work Programme Update

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Forward Work Programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next committee meeting:

Friday 21 October 2022 at 10am, the agenda items; -

- Annual Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report 2021-22
- Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self-Assessment Report

Friday 2 December 2022 at 10am, the agenda item; -

- Planning and Performance Risk Management Framework

b) Action Sheet

The Committee were advised that recommendations and comments from the previous meeting have been sent to Officers. The Committee were advised of the actions that are waiting to be completed, so the Scrutiny Adviser will chase information from officers.