

Minutes



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

Date: 30th September 2022

Time: 10am

Venue: Hybrid Meeting

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

B Owen (Chief Executive Officer), P Jones (Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability), R Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate), T Mckim (Head of People, Policy & Transformation), M Bleazard (Digital Services Manager)

N Barnett (Scrutiny Advisor), T Strange (Governance Support Officer).

1. Apologies

Councillors L James and B Davies, S 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. This is in reference to the meeting that took place on 23rd September 2022. When considering the Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 2021-22, the committee member referenced a previous concern, raised at a meeting of the committee in September 2021 when considering the Strategic Equalities Plan. The concern raised in the 2021 meeting was that community cohesion work taking place at that time between police and ethnic minority communities should include white people. The committee member would like this query reflected in the minutes when they raise the issue. As the report reflected the engagement work taking place in 2021, an up to date summary of current engagement work involving communities in Newport has been shared with the Committee.

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, Strategic Directors and Head of Adult Services gave summaries of relevant area’s challenges and achievements.

Questions:

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

The committee noted a theme in the committee’s work regarding survey feedback, and requested alternative forms of securing feedback from residents, other than the surveys conveyed through wi-fi on buses and in public buildings in Newport.

A committee member felt that other cities were stimulating the economy more effectively than Newport and noted Newport had more work to do in this area. 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.

The committee 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 hoped that this would be included in the heritage offer.

- The Chief Executive agreed with the committee that Newport’s heritage is an asset, and noted in the plan that heritage has been looked at, with the economic strategy and cultural strategy picking up the heritage theme.

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 further opportunities.

- The Chief Executive Officer agreed that seeking creative channels to address these issues is key, and highlighted the partnership working with One Newport as an example of this.
- The Chair noted the question may be better suited for a different Performance Scrutiny Committee and asked for this to be taken forward.

The committee agreed that heritage needed more focus and suggested that bio-diversity could be increased by using spaces 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 requirement to make creative use of space to encourage bio-diversity across the city.

The committee highlighted the importance of maintaining the running of events in the city and highlighted the success of the recent 'Pride at the Port' event as they are important to inclusivity.

The committee requested that some of the terminology within the Plan, such as 'to become' and 'to create' could be reconsidered in order to better convey the achievements that have been delivered.

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, 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 clarified that whilst it is good practice to declare interests whenever they occur, this scrutiny meeting was for feedback on the report only. A declaration of interest when voting on the matter at Council would mean that the Member would not be able to take part in the decision.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending.

Conclusions:

- 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, and 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 better reflect actions being undertaken to make what has been achieved much clearer to readers of the report.
- The Committee felt that more detail could be included in the report on the Heritage Offer, given Newport's many heritage sites, as this would support the aims of the Plan.
- The Committee raised concerns regarding a lack of university students in Newport and asked that information regarding the student numbers and support provided via funding are shared as a response from the relevant service area.

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.

Questions:

The committee asked how training was delivered.

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

The committee was pleased to see that the Service Area had made significant progress which reflected previous comments and recommendations. The committee noted 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.

The committee 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 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.

The committee 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 also asked if it would be possible to find out from within the percentages how much of the figures are the same child being safeguarded multiple times, and how many are single incidents for children.

The committee asked whether a question that had been 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.

The committee 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.

Conclusions:

- 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 however 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

6. Conclusions of Committee Reports

The committee asked that the minutes be changed so that conclusions be included at the end of each relevant agenda item.

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.