

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 22 March 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

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

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes from 15 February were accepted as a true record.

4 Newport City Council Core TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) for Measuring Social Value in Contracts

The Leader introduced to colleagues the report on the Council's use of 'Themes, Outcomes and Measures' or 'TOM's' on procurement activity when buying goods and services, which were designed to leverage in 'social value' for communities and city.

The report set out the long list of those core measures to be used when purchasing goods and services.

Newport City Council recognised that the way in which it managed spending with suppliers, service providers and contractors could make a significant contribution to priorities in enhancing the social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of the city by securing long-term added value and social benefits which achieved this.

The TOMs achieved this social added value through a measurement framework that allowed for an unlocking of social value through its integration into procurement activity. The methodology was developed in conjunction with the WLGA National Procurement Network and the National Social Value Task Force Wales, which was a cross-sector working group combining both public and private sector organisations.

From a list of over 90 measures in the national framework, the Council's procurement team worked with officers around the Council to develop a core list of about 45 measures, representing this Council's 'long list' of measures for use locally.

Council tenders for contracts would incorporate a smaller number of these (around 2-5 mainly) which were suitable to the nature of those services and goods being procured and these would be 'scored' alongside the other criteria of price and quality. These were shown in the reports Appendix.

Measures in relation to our suppliers 'carbon footprint' and its reduction would be required to be used as default. In doing this, it clearly sent a message to all our suppliers and partners that we look to leverage in social and value and other key benefits when spending the Newport pound.

In addition to these specific measures, our tenders would make it clear that as a Council, we strongly encouraged suppliers to pay their staff at least the 'real living wage' and information gathered through the TOM's on suppliers' performance in this regard as well as ensuring their 'fair work criteria' was also robust ensuring their workers were treated with fairness and equality.

Cabinet was asked to approve the developed Newport City Council Core List of TOMs for measuring Social Value delivery through Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management and their associated reporting.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor D Davies welcomed the report which ensured the delivery of social values, promoted local supply chain development, and would meet the Council's wellbeing objectives. The Deputy Leader gave an example of where this would work was prioritising local supply chains where there was an emphasis on employing local workforce. This would help the Council meet its carbon neutrality objectives within the city. It would also strengthen key objective one, for education and employment. Measuring social value in financial terms meant that the return on the investment ratio could be calculated and outcomes could be measured in real terms that were understandable and easily demonstrated.
- Councillor Hughes recalled the original approval of the overarching framework that went to Council in early 2022 and was pleased with the report put forward to Cabinet, supporting social care value. The Cabinet Member for Social Services supported the commissioned theme which would create a stronger relationship and promoted social care and work with voluntary organisations and social enterprises. The report focused more on community than money and healthier, safer more resilient communities in Newport. It was a tool that would recognise the council's ambition as a driver of local economy and procurement therefore Councillor Hughes supported the report.
- Councillor Forsey welcomed the introduction of these measures. Selecting procurement on price did not consider important aspects such as supporting people locally. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity also considered the report supported jobs, training opportunities and good working conditions. Councillor Forsey highlighted the environmental benefits of these measures. Procurement was one of the hardest to tackle sources of greenhouse gasses, some of the activities valued in the scheme were resource efficiency, CO2 savings, sustainable eco-system management and the protection of native wildlife and biodiversity.
- Councillor Batrouni wanted to emphasise how the report related to the corporate plan wellbeing objectives and this was a demonstration of Cabinet's strong commitment. The Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation reminded colleagues of three of the objectives: economy and education skills, environment and infrastructure and an inclusive and fair sustainable council. Councillor Batrouni therefore supported the report.

Decision

Cabinet approved the developed NCC Core List of TOMs for measuring Social Value delivery through Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management and associated reporting.

5 **Corporate Risk Register Update (Quarter 3)**

The Leader presented the Council's Corporate Risk Register for the end of Quarter three (1 October to 31 December 2022) to colleagues.

The Council's Risk Management Policy and Corporate Risk Register enabled this administration and officers to effectively identify, manage and monitored those risks which could prevent the Council from achieving strategic priorities and undertake its statutory duties as a local authority.

The quarter three risk report would also be presented to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee later this month to review the Council's risk management process and governance arrangements.

Considering the financial challenges, the increasing demand and pressures on the Council's services and the cost-of-living crisis, it was noted that several risks increased the 'Target Risk Score', which meant the Council was having to accept / tolerate more risk.

This was not a position which any Council administration wanted to manage, but Cabinet and senior officers would ensure these were closely monitored and where appropriate take necessary action(s).

At the end of quarter three Newport Council had 47 risks recorded across the Council's eleven service areas.

Those risks that were deemed to pose the most significant risk in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and services were escalated to the Council's Corporate Risk Register for monitoring.

At the end of quarter three, 14 risks were recorded in the Corporate Risk Register.

- Seven Severe Risks (15 to 25).
- Seven Major Risks (7 to 14).

In comparison to quarter two, there were no new and/or escalated risks and 13 risks remained at the same score as quarter two.

One risk, Ash Dieback Disease had its risk score reduced from 16 to 12 because of the Council undertaking significant works on its tree stock across the city.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Davies highlighted that the purpose of the risk register was to identify high level risks that could impact on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and as Cabinet Members, they had to mitigate these risks identified in the respective portfolios. As Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years, Councillor Davies was aware of the financial pressures that schools were facing. Councillor Davies wanted to assure Newport residents that schools were working hard to ensure on their budgets and that professional advice and support was available for all schools in planning their budgets.

Decision

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

6 **Policy Review: Customer Feedback - Compliments, Comments and Complaints**

The Leader introduced the next report, which was a policy review of the Customer Feedback - Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy.

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval of the amended policy.

The primary driver was to simplify and refine the policy and outline how Newport City Council administered customer feedback.

The policy remained relevant and continued to reflect the latest statutory and legislative requirements.

There is also an annual report on complaints, comments, and compliments performance and this was on the work programme for later in the year.

The main priority for the review was to simplify and refine the policy whilst clearly outlining how Newport City Council administered Corporate and Social Services complaints.

The Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy was based on the model document published by the Complaints Standards Authority. As a result of revisions to the policy, it would ensure that residents' expectations were managed from the outset and a clear complaints process was followed.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) had legal powers to investigate complaints about public services, was independent of all government bodies and issued a model complaint handling guidance policy in 2020. Their feedback was considered in the policy amendments.

The policy remained relevant and continued to reflect the latest statutory and legislative requirements.

As a listening council, complaints were valued, and feedback was used as an opportunity to improve the services provided.

The absence of complaints did not necessarily indicate excellent services – just as an increase in complaints did not necessarily indicate poor services.

- Simplification and refinements to the Policy.
- Refusal criteria detailed.
- Clarity between processes for Corporate and Social Services Complaints.
- A reduction in timeframe for accepting Corporate Complaints from 12 months to six months.
- Including performance monitoring details.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Batrouni emphasised that the public services ombudsman wrote to all councils to ensure that the compliments and complaints system was consistent, and that Newport City Council was adhering, as a required. In addition, the Council was not only adhering to those requirements but strive to seek excellence, which was a never-ending process. The Council would continue to be customer facing that would deal with the concerns of residents and would learn from their comments, both complimentary and critical.
- Councillor Davies supported Councillor Batrouni's comments and understood that the report was a review on how the complaints were managed and this was a process to ensure that we were listening to residents and responding to their concerns. Councillor Davies also welcomed the readability and accessibility of the document for residents.
- Councillor Hughes mentioned that whilst the focus was on the negative however recently, social care had introduced the complementary feedback into their briefings which was an opportunity to recognise the fabulous work in social care. This week a resident sent a

letter praising a member of staff in the reablement team and moving forward how this would help to acknowledge successes and recognise the importance of not only complaints but also compliments.

- Councillor Marshall also mentioned the positive feedback regarding members of staff. Whilst it was important to learn from feedback regarding complaints, it was hard to learn from compliments and Cabinet Members and staff had to capture and focus on positive comments to provide the confidence to live, learn and promote when staff to well and bring forward development of this culture.
- Councillor Clarke considered that the report was a positive move and the start of the process. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing advised that this would not happen overnight and was an ongoing challenge. Everyone in the council would get behind this report which would benefit the residents of Newport.

Leader all feedback was important and as a listening council were behind this and used as an opportunity to improve and share good practice.

Decision

Cabinet reviewed and approved the proposed amendments to the policy.

7 NCC External Pressures Update

The Leader presented the March update for Members on the pressures being faced by Newport residents, communities, and services.

The cost-of-living crisis continued to be the main area of concern for residents, the council, and communities and the report provided information the wider impact it was having along with examples of collaborative advice, guidance and support available across the city.

As in previous Cabinet meetings, the Leader urged residents who were experiencing difficulties to contact the council for information and signposting on the advice and support available to help you with household finances.

As indicated in the report, inflationary and cost of living pressures were continuing to persist and costs in energy, food and other living costs continued to impact on household budgets.

There were also reports of supply chain issues with fresh produce and suppliers reporting increasing energy bills, and poor weather affecting crops which was having both a direct impact on residents and the availability of produce for dissemination through food banks.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis was also affecting how we welcomed people seeking sanctuary, for example, with noticed reductions in offers for accommodation on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The nature of these pressures facing residents, communities and services required a collaborative approach to support, this was not something the council could do alone.

As Chair of the One Newport partnership, it was clear how offices and partner organisations were working together to provide as much advice, support, and guidance as possible.

The Council's collaboration with GAVO continued to support Community Food Organisations in Newport and the facilitation and promotion of warm centres were central to helping residents to eat well, keep warm and provided an opportunity for people to get together and find out about other help available. Such as the Money Guiders Programme aimed at helping residents to maximise income and reduce debt.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Harvey thanked officer teams and GAVO for their hard work. Operation overview for council and GAVO showed that in December 2022 to November 2023 that 149 sessions were held in warm spaces and that there were 1,160 attendees, which was startling. It was easy for things to spiral for residents. Continuing to work and do what we could do to support residents. Newport City Council delivered 50 sessions and 152 people came to that with north, east, west, and central hub, some community centres and GAVO delivered 99 sessions where over 1,000 people attended. This was done very quickly by Newport City Council and GAVO, therefore the Councillor for Community Wellbeing gave her heartfelt thanks to those who were involved.
- Councillor Batrouni mentioned the effects of the cost of living for Newport residents and noted the report.
- Councillor Davies mentioned that children from low-income families faced practical day to day challenges with clothing, equipment, accessing food and transport. 31% lived in poverty with insufficient resources for food and quality of life. Newport had risen to the challenge with PGT funding, food banks and uniform provision. Helping to secure the human rights of people was a moral duty and purpose especially looking after children. The Cabinet Member for Education and Early years met with Head Teachers on Monday and launched an anti-poverty campaign in line with the wellbeing objectives to improve outcomes for children in poverty.
- Councillor Clarke cabinet was speaking from the heart and thanked volunteers from Malpas for their help. The Leader echoed Councillor Clarke's comments and praised the support from kind and generous people that gave their time.
- Councillor Forsey referred to the cost-of-living sessions and thanked colleagues and officers for their support. Some help was available, as well as some benefits but was under claimed but because of the cost-of-living sessions residents claimed for things that they were not aware of, and Councillor Forsey therefore encouraged residents to get in touch with the Council for advice, support, and help.

Decision

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

8 One Newport Summary Document

Cabinet noted the summary of business.

9 Work Programme

This was the regular monthly report on the work programme.

Please move acceptance of the updated programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the Work Programme.