

Minutes



Council

Date: 26 September 2023

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Reeks, S Cocks, E Stowell-Corten, J Harris, A Screen, T Harvey, M Howells, P Bright, J Peterson, A Pimm, D Batrouni, D Jenkins, P Drewett, B Davies, S Adan, M Pimm, J Reynolds, R Howells, A Sterry, J Jones, G Horton, J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Evans, D Harvey, M Kellaway, R Mogford, J Mudd, M Spencer, K Thomas, C Townsend, K Whitehead, J Clarke, Y Forsey, P Hourahine, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, A Morris, F Hussain and B Perkins

Apologies: Councillors L James, D Fouweather, M Linton and J Hughes

1. Preliminaries

1.i Apologies

Councillors Linton, Jordan, James, Hughes and Fouweather.

1.ii Declarations of Interest

None received.

1.iii Presiding Member's Announcements

The Presiding Member reflected that some members had left the last Council meeting early. The Presiding Member noted that he had observed this also happening during other meetings too. The Presiding Member requested that members stay until the end of the meeting or convey their apologies to the organiser before the meeting if they must leave early.

The Presiding Member also noted that the item for Leader's Questions at the previous Council meeting had fallen slightly short of the allocated time and apologised for this. The Presiding Member noted that there was a new clock in place to monitor timed agenda items to prevent further errors.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting 18 July 2023 were accepted subject to the following.

Councillor Evans referred to Item 2: Minutes of the Previous Meeting and his previous request that minutes needed to be circulated in a timelier manner and not when the agenda was circulated. Councillor Evans also requested that the Presiding Member look into this, however this was not recorded. The Minutes from 18 July were again circulated on 20 September. The Presiding Member apologised and would look into Councillor Evans' request.

Councillor Evans referred to Item 11: Questions to the Leader of the Council, Welsh Government priorities, where it was recorded that he referred to the sum of £1.5m for street signs alone and Councillor Evans could not recall if he had said that the Council was given £600,000 or spent £32M on signs but this was inaccurate.

3. **Appointments**

To consider the proposed appointments set out in the report.

Councillor Clarke moved the appointments set out in the Report, as agreed by the Business Managers as set out below.

Councillor Reeks seconded the report.

Resolved: That the following appointments be agreed.

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	Appointments/ Resignations	Name
Glan Lyn Primary School	Reappointment	Howard Mason
Glan Lyn Primary School	Reappointment	Martyn Kellaway
Glasllwch Primary School	Reappointment	Allan Hyland
Jubilee Park Primary School	Appointment	Jackie Littlejohns
Jubilee Park Primary School	Appointment	David Hopkins
Jubilee Park Primary School	Appointment	John Reynolds
Bassaleg School	Appointment	Chris Lacey
Llanwern High School	Appointment	Kath Bevan
Crindau Primary School	Appointment	Gill Lee
High Cross Primary School	Appointment	Chris Reeks
Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed	Appointment	Lona Jones-Campbell
Eveswell and Somerton Primary School	Appointment	Alex Pimm
Maes Ebbw School	Appointment	Dimitri Batrouni
Maes Ebbw School	Resignation	Stephen Marshall
Jubilee Park Primary School	Resignation	Elizabeth Thomas
Jubilee Park Primary School	Resignation	Chris Lacey
Jubilee Park Primary School	Resignation	Martin Bentley
Bassaleg School	Resignation	Gavin Horton
Llanwern High School	Resignation	Mandy Shide
Crindau Primary School	Resignation	Colin Seeney
High Cross Primary School	Resignation	John Reynolds
St Joseph's RC Primary School	Resignation	Alex Pimm

4. **Police Issues**

The Presiding Member introduced Superintendent J White of Gwent Police, who provided council members with an update on police issues within East, West, and Central Newport.

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to address Superintendent White.

The Leader welcomed Superintendent White and thanked the police on behalf of Newport City Council for their policing support made during the Pride Event. The Leader reflected that

this had been an outstanding example of community policing and commended the police and PCSOs who engaged with the public on the day.

The Leader mentioned a variance in police engagement with elected members meant that communication and correspondence received differed in the west of Newport by comparison to the east, where ward colleagues were well informed about recent changes to the police force. The Leader asked if the Superintendent would address this to ensure that all ward colleagues within Newport were informed and updated.

Superintendent White agreed that there were disparities. With regard to the recent changes to the west of Newport, Sergeant Merve Priest was stepping up as Inspector and there was a new Chief Inspector, Amanda Thomas, who was clear in her views around consistency of engagement to elected members and residents and this would be seen in all communication going forward.

The Leader referred to the police monitoring of 30mph and 20mph speed limits and requested that they look into speeding issues along Almond Drive, outside the primary school. Whilst the Council's enforcement officers could demonstrate some activity, a PCSO presence would also be welcomed, around school times.

Questions to the Police raised by Councillors:

- Cllr Evans asked a hypothetical question about his back garden and the Superintendent advised that such instances would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and could be deemed as criminal damage, but similar situations would be checked with other agencies such as Welsh Water before making a determination on this.

Councillor Evans asked what judicial powers the police had in relation to travellers and how difficult this was to enforce. Superintendent White stated that Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 2022 was introduced to give police more powers to deal with illegal encampments, however, three criteria under this legislation had to be met before this could be enforced: significant damage to land, significant disruption, and significant distress. Encampments had set up in Newport in the past with pockets of incidents of theft, damage, and disorder but it was not deemed to be significant. Whilst the Superintendent understood the frustration of residents, guidance from Welsh Government Policy advised that the determining factor of significance lies with the police.

- Councillor Jenkins was contacted by elderly residents and asked what could be done to tackle the anti-social behaviour at the back of Asda in Pillgwenlly. Superintendent White confirmed that dedicated patrols were carried out around the area. The police have powers and PSPOs in place that they can use. The Superintendent considered that links with the community was important, and more patrols would be carried out. Councillor Jenkins advised that the incidents are happening constantly, the youths would disperse when the police were called, but would return once police had left. Superintendent White confirmed that this would be raised with the new Sergeant in the area, Chris Johnson who would discuss concerns with the Councillor and put in place a plan of action.
- Councillor Howells referred to issues taking place around Pontfaen Shops and asked for an update on how issues would be taken forward. Councillor Howells reflected that the local Inspector had been proactive with issuing dispersal orders which helped on a short-term basis; however, ward councillors were looking for a long-term solution. The Superintendent confirmed that analytical work had been conducted to see where the damages were taking place and looking at intelligence to identify the suspects; this included trawling through CCTV footage and engaging with the community. There would be dedicated patrols in the areas to provide reassurance to Councillors and the community. At a recent operation, seven e-bikes were seized, within the Lliswerry and Pontfaen area. The Presiding Member asked what happened to the e-bikes after they

were seized. The Superintendent advised that most of the e-bikes would be crushed, and this would be filmed and shared through social media. The Superintendent confirmed that he is in discussion about using seized e-bikes as part of a police fleet, as the Metropolitan Police have done this, and have identified appropriate training and policies.

- Councillor Reeks referred to the increase in crime across Newport. At a recent ward meeting for Rogerstone North, residents questioned whether this was due to the lights being switched off by the Council at night. The Superintendent observed that the crimes of theft referenced by Councillor Reeks had occurred during the day, whilst nighttime offences such as residential burglaries had reduced in number.
- Councillor Al-Nuaimi referred to the recent change in speed limits in Wales and the that he felt signage was important to indicate where drivers should limit their speed to 20mph. The Superintendent advised that signage is the responsibility of Welsh Government and referred to the Highway Code; streetlamps 200 yards apart dictate a 30mph speed limit, however this would now be a 20mph limit unless there is signage that indicates otherwise.
- Councillor Drewett mentioned that it was Bonfire Night soon and asked for assurances of a police presence in Ridgeway. Superintendent White advised that police were preparing for Halloween and Bonfire Night and putting embargos on police officers requesting annual leave to provide maximum resources along with the Fire Services.
- Councillor Hourahine wanted to mention three PCSOs who carried out outstanding work in St Julians and wanted to pass on their first names to the Superintendent, Annabel, Caitlin, and Clare.
- Councillor Morris referred to CCTV footage involving a drug related incident on an e-bike, and asked if he could he pass the information on to Superintendent. The Superintendent confirmed he would make contact outside of the meeting.
- Councillor Batrouni thanked officers for fighting crime across the city. Councillor Batrouni referred to the comments made by the Superintendent about the rise in crime and asked if was this related to the cost-of-living crisis. Superintendent White mentioned that most acquisitive crime is due to prolific offenders. The Superintendent believed that the police needed to engage with offenders at probation much earlier to stop the cycle. The cost-of-living crisis did not help matters but from personal experience those committing offences were prolific offenders.

Councillor Hussain had attended the Police surgery in Victoria Ward with PCSOs where residents raised concerns about the Box Hotel in Llanwern Street. Councillor Hussain thanked police for the update and had passed the information on to residents. In addition, there had been many complaints regarding Cyril Street and Councillor Hussain asked was there any update relating to the property. Councillor Hussain also mentioned that the PCSOs Inspector Giles, kept ward colleagues updated and therefore wanted to pass on her thanks. Superintendent White was aware that the Box Hotel was causing significant issues to residents. Proceedings are ongoing and the police are working with partners including closures to stop this happening time and again. The Superintendent would ask Inspector Giles to speak with Councillor Hussain outside of the meeting about problematic premises with the area, as he was keen to get closure motions in place.

5. **Replacement Local Development Plan**

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to present the first report on the agenda, the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy and sought Council's

approval to endorse the Preferred Strategy and commence the formal community consultation in October.

This recommendation is in line with the timeline included in the Revised Delivery Agreement previously approved by Council and confirmed by the Welsh Government in January 2023.

Having an up to date and fit for purpose Local Development Plan is not only important for seeing the city grow and prosper up until 2036 but is also a statutory requirement.

The Preferred Strategy is a formal stage in the development of a new Local Development Plan and the purpose of the Preferred Strategy outlines a suggested approach to new development, future growth, and conservation.

Newport has been identified as a National Growth Area in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. This was the top tier of the Development Plan for planning purposes and all local level plans; including our Local Development Plan, needed to be in accordance with the national plan.

A public consultation on the Growth and Spatial Options has been conducted and the responses received were used to inform the proposed Preferred Strategy. 68 consultation responses were received from a wide array of stakeholders. These consultation responses and the proposed responses were considered by Cabinet on 13 September and the recommendations were approved.

Alongside the consultation responses received, a considerable amount of background evidence and reports, were used to inform the Preferred Strategy.

To formally progress a Preferred Strategy, further formal consultation is required. The regulations state that this should be for a minimum of six weeks, however it was proposed that the consultation would begin in October and run for eight weeks. The consultation plan included various methods of engagement and exercises to reach as wide an audience as possible.

The Place and Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the Preferred Strategy and the proposals on 11 September. There was a positive discussion on this matter and the Committee were content to endorse the public consultation exercise. The Leader welcomed the request from Committee members that careful consideration be given on how to promote and raise awareness of the consultation.

A target of facilitating the development of 570 new homes and the creation of 8,640 new jobs is set under the Preferred Strategy. With this level of growth, Newport will be a destination where people want to live, work and visit.

To deliver this growth, it was proposed that a hybrid spatial strategy is adopted. This would focus on Previously Developed Land as well as acknowledging that some greenfield land within and adjoining settlements, would be required along with some smaller developments in villages. Details of proposed key sites of 300+ dwellings are outlined in the strategy.

This strategy is for consultation, views and opinions of all stakeholders are welcomed. All responses will be considered in detail and used to inform the Deposit Plan which will be brought back to Council around this time next year.

The report was seconded by Councillor Clarke.

Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor Evans supported the proposal for consultation and noted that there were applications within the Allt-yr-Yn Ward to build on green belt land. Councillor Evans felt that building on green belt land should be a last resort and asked if members could receive information on their own ward.
- Councillor D Davies supported the proposal, adding that the 2021 census demonstrated that Newport is a maturing city and is becoming an attractive place to settle. More housing is needed to sustain the thriving economy.
- Councillor Clarke mentioned that as Cabinet Member, he was responsible for Planning and was happy to endorse the report. Adopting a new LDP is no different to the planning applications process and it is vital to gather people's views. Councillor Clarke considered the positive response levels with nearly 70 responses to the growth options consultation from the community. These responses had shaped the strategy presented to Council. Councillor Clarke attended the Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and welcomed the positive feedback. Councillor Clarke thanked officers for their considerable work and was confident that the strategy was suitably ambitious whilst remaining achievable.

Resolved:

Council approved the Preferred Strategy consultation paper provided in Appendix A and commenced with formal community consultation.

6. Climate Change Annual Report

The Presiding Member advised that the next report to be presented by the Leader, was the Climate Change Plan Annual Report for 2022-2023.

The purpose of this report was to provide the organisational emissions for 2022-2023 and an update on the projects supporting the Council's decarbonisation efforts.

This is the first full annual report of the Climate Change Plan which was signed off in March 2022.

The Climate Change Plan sets out how the organisation would achieve Net Zero by 2030 in line with commitments.

Turning to the report itself, overall, Carbon emissions were down, excluding procurement, and operational emissions; this figure had reduced by 7.69% since 2021-2022. This figure is lower than previously reported due to changes in the reporting guidance and initiating engagement with our supply chain to start to build more detailed figures specific to Newport.

With a City-wide Local Area Energy Plan in place, actions in year 2 of the climate change plan have a much tighter focus on organisational emissions. The majority of actions for Year 2 of the plan have in-year completion dates.

An important detail to note is the recommendation for the separation of Action Plans from the main Organisational Plan. Action Plans would be publicly available but separating them from the body of the Plan itself meant that the Plan did not need to be amended and re-published on an annual basis in its entirety.

Climate Change projects of note in the past year included:

- The roll-out of Carbon Literacy training to members and senior managers and the achievement of Bronze Accreditation status.

- The establishment of the Climate Change Staff Network which had over 30 members who met monthly.
- The installation of further solar panels through Egni, the community solar co-operative.
- Installation of Air Source Heat Pumps at Caerleon Comprehensive.
- The achievement of Tree City of the World Status in recognition of the management of tree stocks.
- Completion of the Devon Place Bridge to support active travel across the city.
- Changes to procurement processes to support decarbonisation through the larger purchases made, soon every procurement over £75,000 would need endorsement from the climate change team.

In the coming year, the main areas of focus for the Climate Change Plan would be the ongoing decarbonisation of heat in Council buildings, removing the need to use fossil fuels where possible, delivery of widespread EV charging, evaluating the decarbonisation potential for Council owned land and the development of internal and external communications plans to ensure that there is effective communication and engagement with staff and the public.

The report was seconded by Councillor Forsey.

Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor Forsey considered the progress under the comprehensive report on retrofitting to buildings, replacing fleet vehicles, and being awarded Bronze Carbon Literacy Accreditation Status. Councillor Forsey referred to extreme weather events and the toll this has on lives and food production. It was therefore vital that we continued with this work. Councillor Forsey concluded that whilst good progress had been made it is vital that this must continue.
- Councillor Davies advised that the Council had a commitment to achieve net zero by 2030 and throughout the city by 2050. Councillor Davies was proud that the plan was already achieving results, such as reducing carbon emissions by 29%, and increasing energy efficiency in buildings.
- Councillor Corten felt proud of progress under the climate change plan and felt that all actions taken to address this as a city added up to a greater sum.
- Councillor Morris concluded that there had been many changes in expectation in terms of climate change response, and the Council needed to work together to address this.

Councillor Evans called for a pragmatic, proportionate and realistic approach to addressing climate change for those on all levels of income and felt that the Council needed to work together to address this.

- Councillor Routley referred to traffic emissions in Bishton and Langstone that are perceived as an air quality concern.
- Councillor Hourahine stated that he had attended a clean air zone meeting for Chepstow and Caerleon Road and the indication from the officers was that it had vastly improved and would be re-assessed as a clean air zone. Councillor Hourahine considered that this was largely due to the electric vehicles and electric busses that have been introduced.

The Leader summed up by thanking everyone for their contribution. The Leader concluded that the report set out great achievements and wanted to recognise the commitment of officers.

Resolved:

Council reviewed progress and approved the Annual Report.

7. **Market Arcade Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**

The Presiding Member invited the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing, to present the report.

Council colleagues were asked to consider and agree the renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the Market Arcade.

The arcade is an important area within the city centre and the subject of much improvement and regeneration over recent years.

In 2020, the Council considered a similar request as a response to antisocial behaviour in the arcade at night where vandalism and other anti-social behaviour occurred.

The 2020 order included a provision to place gates at either end during the evening and nighttime.

As the arcade was a right of way an alternative route was highlighted and consulted upon. Members of the public and businesses who responded to the consultation expressed strong support for this approach.

This single measure all but eliminated antisocial behaviour and allowed businesses to re-enter the area with increased confidence.

Councillor Mudd seconded the report.

Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor Thomas reflected that there was a huge commitment in the development of these areas of the city and it was important to protect them for the enjoyment of residents.
- The Leader seconded the proposal and remarked on the regeneration of the Market Arcade. The PSPO was intended to protect this space and hoped that colleagues would support the report.

Resolved:

Council approved the renewal of the Market Arcade Public Spaces Protection Order.

8. **Maesglas Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**

The Presiding Member moved to the next item on the agenda, which was presented by the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing

Council colleagues were asked to consider and agree the reinstatement of the Public Spaces Protection Order for an area within Maesglas.

In 2018 Council considered a similar request as a response to antisocial behaviour from residents and businesses within the area.

The order included restricting access to a public path behind Maesglas shops on Cardiff Road.

As that pathway is a right of way, an alternative route was highlighted and consulted upon.

There was a high level of response to the consultation, and the public and businesses who responded indicated that anti-social behavioural problems remained in the area and these additional controls would help tackle them.

It was noted that many responders to the consultation expressed a wish for the area of the PSPO to be extended. Officers planned to explore this option without delay and may consider an extension in the coming months.

Councillor Marshall seconded the report.

Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor Perkins supported the reinstatement of the Maesglas PSPO and referenced the positive response from the residents to the PSPO.
- Councillor Mark Howells considered this to be a pro-active step taken by the Council to deliver positive outcomes for the community and recommended that officers consider PSPOs in other areas experiencing similar issues.
- Councillor Batrouni thanked officers, councillors and J Bryant, MS for their involvement and whole heartedly supported the report.
- Councillor Marshall seconded the report to address the issues in Maesglas and remarked on the support from residents in the consultation feedback.
- Councillor Morris referred to the importance of engaging with young people and hoped that measures could be put in place to support engagement and activities in this area.

Resolved:

Council agreed to a Public Spaces Protection Order in the Maesglas area.

9. South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Scrutiny Arrangements

The Leader invited the Monitoring Officer to present the last report on the agenda, this was the proposal for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to be appointed to discharge the authority's scrutiny functions in relation to the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC).

The SEWCJC was formally established in April 2021, made up of the Leaders of the 10 Local Authorities in Southeast Wales including Newport.

The CJC has a responsibility for strategic development planning, regional transport planning and promoting the economic well-being of the Southeast Wales area.

The SEWCJC is currently in a transitional phase, building up governance structures in preparation for becoming fully operational in April 2024 when it is intended to take over the functions of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Joint Committee.

As a key part of the CJC's government structures, arrangements must be made to ensure that there are appropriate overview and scrutiny arrangements in place to provide effective scrutiny of the functions discharged by the CJC.

The report sets out the following proposals:

- Each of the 10 Local Authorities to agree to appoint the existing JOSC, which currently scrutinises the CCR, to scrutinise the SEWCJC under separate terms of reference (Appendix 2).
- The existing JOSC confirmed its agreement to take this on (as Appendix 1) and each of the 10 Local Authorities are now being asked to seek approval for the proposals from their Councils, with the proviso that the terms of reference be reviewed by the JOSC themselves to ensure that the scrutiny arrangements are robust, transparent, and accountable.
- Any subsequent changes to the terms of reference would need to be referred back and approved by each of the 10 Local Authorities represented on the JOSC.

The JOSC met on 27 July 2023 and indicated their agreement in principle to the proposal.

Newport City Council was represented on the JOSC by the Chair of Newport City Council's Overview, Scrutiny and Management Committee.

The report was seconded by Councillor Davies.

Resolved:

Council agreed to appoint the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for SEWCJC.

10. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Before Commencement with questions, the Leader made the following announcements to Council:

The Leader offered her condolences to those who had families in Libya who were victims of the recent flooding.

Pride in the Port

I'd like to start by saying how fantastic it was to see so many people supporting the second Pride in the Port weekend at the start of this month.

The whole weekend, from the parade and festival to the fringe events, was a wonderful celebration of our LGBTQIA+ community.

I spoke to many people who were so happy to be able to experience this event, and importantly felt they were able to be their authentic selves. Inclusivity and acceptance are vital aspects of our city's character where everyone feels welcomed and embraced for who they are. It shows why events like this matter, and I'm already looking forward to next year's celebrations.

Food Festival

There is just over two weeks to go until the Newport Food Festival returns to the city centre, and I'm delighted that this year's event will be bigger than ever, taking place over three days instead of one.

The festival has become established as one of the highlights of Newport's events calendar, and we're sure that this year's programme will prove popular with residents, visitors, and businesses alike.

The festival kicks off with a supper event on the evening of Friday 13 October at the Mercure Hotel's NP20 Bar and Kitchen.

The festival's patron chef, Hywel Jones, will be taking diners on a culinary exploration of fabulous Welsh, Georgian and German cuisine, to celebrate Newport's links with our twin cities of Kutaisi and Heidenheim.

Tickets for the supper are on sale and can be booked through the food festival website.

Saturday will see the traditional food market set up in the city centre, with street entertainment, chef demonstrations in Newport Market, a vegan and vegetarian village in John Frost Square, and the return of the final of the Teen Chef competition. Finally, on the Sunday there will be a new event for the festival, with live music and street food vendors taking over High Street.

We have worked closely with local bars Le Pub, McCanns, and Madame JoJo to put together a fabulous line-up of entertainment for the Sunday event, which we are sure is going to be a popular addition to the festival programme.

The Leader added that the impact on the local economy should not be underestimated and encouraged residents to attend the festival.

Market Arcade

I am pleased to confirm that the final set of restoration works at the historic Newport Market Arcade are now underway.

The restoration project, which began back in 2018, has seen the council transform the once declining arcade into a vibrant and viable commercial attraction within the city centre.

This phase of the work will see internal refurbishments to several of the units in the arcade, as well as the remaining external refurbishments.

The transformation of the Market Arcade would not have been possible without the generous support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, CADW and Welsh Government's Transforming Towns fund.

Plaques have been installed at either end of the arcade and the ongoing support allows us to run activities and events in our pop-up heritage centre in Unit 14 and to manage and maintain the site in future years.

Business Grants

We have also just announced further good news for our businesses and economy with a new business grant scheme.

For several years, the council has given grants to small and medium-sized businesses in the city to help with start-up and other costs and this is continuing.

Thanks to funding from the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund, as part of its levelling up agenda, we are now able to offer grants of between £25,000 and £75,000 towards capital investment.

We know businesses have faced many challenges in recent years and so we want to continue to offer support whenever and however we can. The accelerated growth programme is aimed at well-established or new companies to set up premises, or for existing city businesses to accelerate their plans for growth.

Potential applicants are invited to get in touch with the Council's business services team who can talk them through the process and assess their eligibility.

Dogs Home

I am delighted to report that Newport City Dogs Home won gold in two categories at the 2023 RSPCA Cymru PawPrint Awards for their work with stray dogs.

This is the twelfth year that the team has been recognised with a gold award in the stray dog category for their hard work looking after the dogs in their care. They also won a second gold award for their work with kennelling stray dogs.

I'm sure you will join me in congratulating the team on the wonderful work they are doing.

Graffiti Wall

I was pleased to be part of the recent unveiling of a new graffiti wall in Glebelands Park.

The dedicated space gives artists a place to display their works, whilst bringing a splash of colour to the area, and is already proving popular.

The designation of a legal graffiti space aims to encourage innovation and creativity in a safe environment, while reducing the level of graffiti in unauthorised areas.

Thank you to the ward councillors in St Julian's and Councillor Yvonne Forsey, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity, who have worked in partnership with Welsh Government and the South Wales Trunk Road Agency who helped to bring this project to life.

Digital Strategy

The council has recently published its new digital strategy that defines the digital aspirations for the city over the next five years and sets out how the council will use technology to transform the delivery of its services.

It will support and improve the wellbeing of residents and employees, as well as enabling businesses to thrive in the city based on four key themes: digital transformation, digital skills and inclusion, data and collaboration, and digital infrastructure and connectivity.

Over the last few years, we have seen some of the biggest changes in society and how people interact with public services. It has also highlighted inequalities in our communities regarding access to digital technology and the skills to use it effectively.

The new digital strategy aims to address these issues and support the delivery of our objectives set out in the corporate plan.

One of the initiatives is a new city centre hub which showcases the latest in assistive technology.

Recently opened in Newport Market, the hub is a place where people can speak to members of the Council's occupational therapy team and get advice about using the latest in assistive technology, helping residents to live independently and safely at home.

Tigers Jump

A reminder that The Tigers, one of the British Army's leading parachute display teams, will be making a spectacular landing in Newport this Saturday.

They will be dropping into Rodney Parade just before kick-off for the Dragons v Ospreys match.

They were due to descend on Newport as part of the Wales National Armed Forces Day celebrations, but unfortunately the conditions were not in our favour, so fingers crossed for this weekend.

The team always puts on an impressive show, and it promises to be a real spectacle. It's also a great opportunity to find out more about a career with the Army. Make sure you've got your match tickets!

Questions to the Leader

Councillor Evans:

Regarding the recent WG 20mph enforcement, there was a Senedd Parliament e-Petition which had received over 40,000 signatures submitted, requesting to rescind the 20mph speed limit. The figures are growing, and a conservative estimate showed that over 40,000 signatures were from Newport residents. Would the Leader listen to the residents of Newport and review this policy and ensure consistent signage.

Response:

The Leader mentioned that 120 countries signed a declaration acknowledging that speed reduction improved road safety in 2020. This speed limit is therefore not unique to Wales. In the UK, 28 million people already live in local authorities where 20mph was accepted as the speed limit. Scotland will follow by 2025. In England, many communities including Norwich, Tunbridge, and Chichester already have 20mph limits. In Europe, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Finland, and Sweden all used 30kmph extensively in urban and built-up areas. The Leader will continue to review on a regular basis and will consider any requests for amendments and exceptions to the 20mph speed limit.

Councillor Morris:

Considering the recent appointment of the City Centre Manager did the Leader consider that all procedures were followed.

Response:

The Leader advised that there was no councillor involvement in recruitment of officers below the Head of Service level and asked that Councillor Mogford direct his question to the Head of Paid Service or Monitoring Officer who would be happy to respond.

The Chief Executive advised that staffing queries were not appropriate for discussion in Full Council and councillors could direct their questions to officers in private. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that officers could not be discussed in public meetings due to data protection legislation.

Councillor Whitehead:

Councillor Whitehead referred to reports from residents in his Ward concerning lack of response from Home Options and other services such as City Services. Councillor Whitehead asked that officers provide residents with a response to keep them updated or issue a standard reply to confirm responses would be delayed in busier periods.

Response:

The Leader said that Councillor Whitehead had raised an important issue that affected residents. The Leader recognised the importance of effective communication across the Council and that it was important that residents required a prompt response. It was noted that members had experienced frustration when using web-based systems. The Leader was pleased to announce that investment to improve the Newport City Council's website and access was underway, which would help residents and Councillors too. Home Options are in particular demand, putting extreme pressure on the service, which could mean a delay in responses. The Leader was pleased to say that under the guidance of the Cabinet Member, the Home Options system was being reviewed and there is an excellent Head of Service in place who is leading on delivering improvements for applicants. The Leader welcomes feedback on specific issues in relation to untimely responses and commended the Heads of Service within Newport City Council for their hard work.

Councillor Bright:

Councillor Bright asked if the Leader could provide an overview of the work on the CCR, City Deal and planned progress following the report considered by Council this evening.

Response:

The Leader thanked Councillor Bright for his question and considered there would be elected members unfamiliar with the structure and the important role it played to Newport City Council. The Leader gave an overview of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deals which includes the 10 Local Authorities in Southeast Wales: Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Torfaen, and Vale of Glamorgan. Across the area, there is a population of around 1.5m, which equates to about half the population of Wales.

This is a diverse region with two cities: Cardiff and Newport, a range of market towns, rural communities, and a coastal belt. In 2016, the £13bn Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal, which was funded by UK Government, Welsh Government and the 10 Southeast Wales Local Authorities, was established. CCR had several priority cluster areas to invest in and develop. These areas are the compound semiconductor cluster, Fintech, cyber security and analytics, the creative economy, MedTech, sport, energy, and environment. Within this group are several key areas of focus, including skills, digital, property, and innovation. £735m of the fund delivered tangible developments within the Southeast Wales metro. £495m wider investment funds sits with CCR and is being invested across the region in a whole range of projects and is on track to add £179m Gross Value Added (GVA) to the region's economy every year. £44m of this was through the Compound Semiconductors (CS) Foundry Project in Newport. New funds have been established, including a strategic premises fund, housing viability gap fund, local wealth building challenge fund and an innovation fund. CCR owns two companies limited by shares, alongside a ranging portfolio of investments. CCR recently invested in a 500-acre former coalfired power station, which is in the early stages of comprehensive redevelopment for domestic clean energy generation. This has been successful in securing two UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Strengthening Places Fund Awards.

Today the Council had considered the CJC, and it is important to note that Wales does not have primary legislative powers to create combined authorities, however through a piece of work undertaken by WG, the framework for regional investment in Wales had resulted in legislation for CJC's. These new corporate entities have been built around four regions in Wales and mirror the city and growth deal. The CCR is a voluntary undertaking, whilst the CJC is a statutory requirement. This arrangement provides a range of powers to regional bodies, putting them on par with other public bodies. The transition from CCR to the CJC will see the CCR become a corporate legal entity public body with a number of corporate duties, alongside the statutory requirement for regional land use, transport planning and economic wellbeing duty.

The Leader was proud to say that emerging findings from the UK Competitiveness Index indicated an increase in competitiveness in the region as a whole and within this there was emerging evidence of an increase in competitiveness for Newport. This is the impact of 10 local authorities coming together for the benefit of the region.

11. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

Question 1 - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Regulation and Housing

Councillor Debbie Jenkins:

The Corporate plan aims to make Newport a fairer, safer, and thriving City. As Regulation is part of your portfolio, can you update Council on what the Public Protection team is doing to achieve these strategic goals?

Response from Councillor James Clarke:

Our Public Protection teams carry out a wide range of activities on different regimes, so I would like to provide some detail on recent activities on each of these areas to illustrate the splendid work delivered by Council officers.

Regarding Trading Standards:

Investigations relating to counterfeit goods and illegal dog breeding are ongoing. The combined fraud value is more than £5million.

During a recent illegal tobacco enforcement operation in Commercial Street, officers carried out surveillance on illegal tobacco shops leading to seizures and four arrests. Officers closed five shops using ASB Closure Orders.

Illegal disposable vaping devices are prevalent; 3,370 illegal disposable vapes have been seized and several prosecutions are under way in relation to illegal vapes and vapes sold to underage persons.

Several investigations into the activities of rogue/itinerant traders are at various stages of completion.

Officers carry out a risk assessed inspection programmed at food businesses across the city and a project is underway to tackle residential rental and commercial premises that fall beneath acceptable energy performance standards.

Regarding Environmental Health

The Section continues to support safe events, deliver food controls etc. The service is targeting businesses where there are inappropriate practices such as using unsafe equipment. For example, using illegally converted kitchen gas appliances to LPG, causing risk of explosion. More prohibition notices have been served in the last year, than the last four years.

Several food hygiene improvement notices, prohibition notices and food seizure, detention and destruction actions have been taken. Two prosecutions have taken place.

Regarding Licensing:

This Section continues to monitor licensed businesses. Action has been taken relating to pubs and nightclubs breaching their conditions. Checks with the taxi trade continue. Examples of incidents that have happened would be that one taxi driver was investigated by the team and found to be lying about a speeding offence. That driver subsequently received a suspended sentence and a fine. Two taxi drivers had refused to allow guide dogs into their cars. These drivers had their licences suspended pending retraining.

Regarding Community Safety:

The Community Safety Team are active in the City Centre and deal with noise nuisance, health and safety issues, there have also been incidents of fly tipping where in some incidents a Community Protection Warning has been issued.

A Community Protection Warning was issued in relation to a large-scale fly tipping problem in Maesglas followed by an Environmental Protection Act Notice which resulted in the accumulation of 2 tonnes of rubbish being cleared.

139 Section 115 Crime and Disorder Act meetings have been attended.

I would like to finish by acknowledging all the hard work and dedication of the Team.

Question 2 – Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation

Councillor Emma Stowell-Corten:

Could the Cabinet Member outline how the new digital strategy supports our goal in becoming a data city?

Response from Councillor Dimitri Batrouni:

The Council's goal in becoming a Data City recognises the value of data and supports the need to harness the vast repositories of data held by Newport City Council, our public partners, and existing and future business investors; ensuring that as a city we are data driven and decisions are based on sound evidence.

Developments such as the National Technology Institute are keystones to delivering our Data City aspirations with both public and private partners. The new Digital Strategy 2022-2027 is complimentary to delivery and achieving this goal through its Data and Collaboration theme to support decision-making, service delivery and planning through better and more effective use of data; ensuring that appropriate data protection, information security and sharing protocols are in place to facilitate access to readily available, up-to-date, and meaningful data which is available to citizens, business, and visitors.

Question 3 – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor Farzina Hussain:

As the implementation of three weekly refuse collections continues, can the Cabinet Member give an update on phase 1 of the move to three weekly residual waste collections and outline progress towards phase 2 of the move to three weekly collections?

Response from Councillor Forsey:

Phase 1 of the three weekly collections roll out started in June this year and included approximately 11,500 properties. The waste team have been monitoring collections over the last few months, so far results show the following:

- A decrease of 15% in the amount of residual waste collected from these properties. If this is repeated across Newport as part of the wider roll out, NCC will meet the 70% recycling target, which is the main aim of this change.
- Our waste engagement team are available to assist residents who may struggle with managing their waste. Since the roll out started, they have received 84 enquiries and completed another 91 proactive visits/contacts.
- In terms of compliance with the 'no excess waste' policy, to date the waste team have only issued a total of 166 warning letters due to additional waste presented by residents, with only seven getting to the next stage due to repeated behaviour. Considering that over the same period more than 35,000 3 weekly collections have taken place, this represents compliance levels over 99%.

Overall, these are excellent results that show the new system is delivering the expected results and that residents are coping well with the changes.

The waste team are getting ready for the second phase of the roll out, that will bring three weekly collections to many Newport residents. Further details will be available soon on the Council's website and social media channels, but three weekly collections of non-recyclable waste are scheduled to start between the second part of October and the beginning of November. Garden waste collections stop during the winter months at the end of November, but they will continue with the current frequency until then. Collections will take place every three weeks once they resume in March next year. All residents will receive a letter and leaflet by post confirming the changes, in October.

Question 4 - Cabinet Member for Social Services (Adult Services)

As the Cabinet Member was not present the response would be provided in writing to Councillor T Harvey and included in the Minutes.

Councillor Timothy Harvey:

Within the context of considerable media coverage of health and social care, can the Cabinet Member provide an update on what the council is doing to support our Newport based residents for longer within their communities?

Response from Councillor Jason Hughes:

Newport adult services preparedness for social care needs of the city is a whole year activity due to the workforce pressures across all service areas and increase in complex referrals. We work across the Gwent region to maximise resources and facilities for our residents with care and support needs. 92% of adult services is focussed on supporting individuals to remain in the community/at home and avoid hospital admissions.