

Minutes



Cabinet

Date: 16 October 2024

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors D Batrouni (Chair), R Howells, S Adan, P Drewett, E Stowell-Corten, D Davies, J Clarke, Y Forsey and L Lacey

1 Apologies for Absence

None received.

2 Declarations of Interest

None received.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes from the 18 September were accepted as a true record.

4 NCC Social Values and Outcomes in Procurement Report

The Leader introduced the second report of the outcomes delivered through the Newport Themes, Outcomes, Measures (TOMs), adopted by Cabinet in March 2023. The Leader highlighted the achievements made during the second 6-month reporting period up to April 2024.

The Leader asked Cabinet to note the contents of the report, and the achievements made during the second reporting period, which demonstrated the added social value contracts could bring to the wider community and evidenced the commitment to the wellbeing of Newport's future generations.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Forsey applauded the report and noted the positive utilisation of local people and products within the project.
- Councillor Lacey noted the significant work done to secure a contract for care of Newport residents and noted the positive impact of additional care being provided within the setting.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the social value outcomes delivered during the period November 2023 to April 2024, where TOMs were included in the tender/contract.

5 Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report 2023/24

Councillor Drewett, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Poverty Reduction introduced the final report on the Council's third Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP) and highlighted that the

report provided an overview of the progress made towards meeting the Council's Equality objectives in compliance with statutory duties within the final year and throughout the delivery of the SEP 2020-2024, which ended in March 2024.

The Cabinet Member asked Cabinet to consider and recommend the report to full Council.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Davies noted that the equality objectives were important not only in leadership and governance but also in their focus on inclusivity. Councillor Davies highlighted the importance in celebrating those protected characteristics as well as ensuring a level playing field for all. Councillor Davies noted that Newport City Council recognised the need for change and had been leading by example whilst utilising work and policies developed by the Welsh Government. Councillor Davies concluded by praising the Staff Equalities Network and thanking them for their hard work and support.
- Councillor Howells highlighted that there were a number of face-to-face services available at Newport Central Library and noted that it was important that residents are aware that those services are available. Councillor Howells added that there had been improvements made concerning accessibility at the Library and encouraged residents who had previously encountered challenges to visit again to see the changes in person.
- Councillor Lacey wished to speak in her capacity as the outgoing LGBT Champion to thank the officers for going above and beyond. Councillor Lacey informed Cabinet on the success of the Fast Track Newport project and added that Janice Dent, Policy, and Partnership Officer had recently been invited to speak about the exemplary work Newport had undertaken at a conference in Edinburgh. Councillor Lacey explained that Fast Track is part of a Welsh Government initiative to end the transmission of HIV and added that work had begun in collaboration with other Gwent Local Authorities to create Fast Track Gwent services.
- The Leader stated his first-hand experience with the Staff Networks in his previous role as Cabinet Member for Equalities and noted that although great progress had been made in terms of gender equality and closing the pay gap, there was more work to do to ensure that the Council workforce reflected the demographics of Newport.
- Beverly Owen, Chief Executive, noted her thanks to the Staff Networks and stated that a large amount of work happening in the Authority would not have been possible without them.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the report and recommended it to full Council for adoption prior to publication in line with statutory timescales

6 Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self-Assessment 2023/24

The Leader introduced the report on the Council's Annual Corporate Plan Self-Assessment Report 2023/24, which provided a self-assessment of the progress against the Corporate Plan and the extent to which it has met its statutory requirements. The Leader informed Cabinet that the report had been presented to the Overview Scrutiny Management Committee and Governance and Audit Committee in September, and that their feedback had been included in the report.

Cabinet was requested to approve the draft annual Corporate Plan Self-Assessment Report and recommend the report to be presented at full Council.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Davies praised the team for the high calibre of work and noted that the information in the report was accessible for all and easy to interpret whilst still being comprehensive. Councillor Davies noted that Education services had been mentioned a number of times and wished to draw Cabinet's attention to the high-quality teaching and learning outcomes described as well as the focus on continuous development. Councillor Davies stated that there were no schools in special measures and that eleven schools had been asked to provide case studies on best practice, which Councillor Davies described as unheard of. Councillor Davies noted her pride in the building programme and highlighted two projects of note. Councillor Davies noted the Council's People Plan and stated that the Council's vision was to have a representative, engaged and motivated workforce to create a culture of collaborative and effective working in Newport.
- Councillor Clarke noted the positive outcomes within the report and wished to highlight the range of projects that the Council had supported via Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) funding. Councillor Clarke noted that the Placemaking Plan had been developed with the views of residents and businesses. Councillor Clarke added that a cross-party task force had been established to support further development and reflected that partnership working was key to delivering positive outcomes.
- Councillor Howells noted that there was a misconception that asset rationalisation meant divestment of all assets and went on to explain that it was concerned with optimisation of assets and making the best use of them for Newport City Council and the community. Councillor Howells noted the complementary element of asset rationalisation to the Climate Change Programme.
- Councillor Forsey noted the new playparks provided for the city and stated that opening the refurbished playparks had been one of the most joyous aspects of her portfolio. Councillor Forsey praised the work that had been done on the canal as well as the work towards Net Zero and decarbonisation and highlighted the positive work that can be done when the funding is available.
- Councillor Lacey noted the work done on supporting individuals to maintain independence and stay in their own homes through the Smart Hub in the library.
- Councillor Drewett highlighted the positive nature of the report. Councillor Drewett referenced Newport's position as the fastest growing city in Wales and stated that the report could only increase that growth. Councillor Drewett stated he supported and commended the report.
- The Leader thanked Cabinet for their comments and noted the excellent work done by officers. The Leader stated that it would be remiss of him not to mention the key challenges faced such as housing. The Leader noted the tremendous pressure on the Housing team and thanked the officers and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning for their support. The Leader noted that Newport was growing twice as fast as Cardiff, that support was required from Welsh Government and Westminster to be able to match services to the population growth.

Decision

Cabinet agreed the Annual Corporate Plan self-assessment report and recommended the report to be presented at full Council.

7 Gwent Wellbeing Plan Annual Report 2023/24

The Leader introduced the annual progress report on the Gwent Wellbeing Plan which covered a period of 9 months and set out the progress of the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) against its plan. The Leader informed Cabinet that the Gwent PSB was established in

October 2021 to enable collaboration between Gwent Public Bodies. The Leader explained that the first regional Wellbeing Plan had been agreed and approved by full Council.

The Leader requested Cabinet note the contents of the annual report and approve it for publication, in line with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the previously agreed Wellbeing Plan arrangements.

Decision

Cabinet noted the contents of the annual report and approved it for publication.

8 Sustainable Communities for Learning (Band B)

Councillor D Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years introduced the report and provided an overview of the second wave of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (known as Band B) and the proposed projects within the funding envelope. Councillor Davies informed Cabinet that although there were projects ongoing, the Band B Programme had come to an end.

Councillor Davies requested Cabinet:

- a) Consider the approval of the reprofiled programme outlined in the report, to enable the funding allocated to specific project budgets to be increased in line with latest cost estimates, and in doing so, formally agree the removal of the two withdrawn projects.
- b) Consider whether the remaining funding should be allocated to support the next wave of investment, known as rolling programme, which commenced in April 2024.

Comments of Cabinet Members:

- Councillor Adan stated that he had been to view the development at the new Pillgwenly Primary School site and that he was unable put his feelings into words. Councillor Adan stated that the work was scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.
- Councillor Lacey noted her support for the reallocation of funding to support the priorities identified. Councillor Lacey noted the phenomenal improvement for the students of Bassaleg School following the opening of the new building and stated that students could now take pride in their school. Councillor Lacey stated that the mental health and wellbeing improvements this brought could not go uncredited.
- Councillor Drewett noted supported the movement of funding to key priorities where it could be utilised for the wellbeing of the children of Newport.
- The Leader noted the commitment of the Council to Newport schools and highlighted the scaled of the work required in Caerleon to create a new school. The Leader commented on the incredible opening event for the new block in Bassaleg School and stated that all children should have the opportunity to use such facilities.

Decision

Cabinet:

- a) Approved the reprofiled programme and thus enabled the funding allocated to specific project budgets to increase in line with latest cost estimates, so that they would be delivered in a timely manner, and to formally remove two withdrawn projects from the programme.
- b) Agreed that the saving on the overall programme budget would be allocated to support the next phase of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, known as the rolling programme, thus increasing the 'funding envelope' previously agreed by Cabinet.

9 Work Programme

This was the regular monthly report on the work programme.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed the Work Programme.