

Unison Response to NCC budget 2021

This year's budget proposal comes amid a year that nobody would have anticipated.

Newport's figure is better than expected which is always good news. There are still going to be redundancies and cuts to services.

Newport have in the past tried to avoid compulsory redundancies by deleting empty posts and asking for staff to volunteer for redundancy. This avoids compulsory redundancies which Unison would always challenge. This avoids financial impact on individuals but is not impact free on services or staff.

When service areas delete empty posts it is seen as a painless cost cutting exercise but it often leaves the remaining staff trying to cope with the same volume of work with less staff resource. It also affects the robustness of a team to manage annual leave/sickness and support staff with work/life balance requests.

If two vacant posts from a team of eight posts are deleted that's a twenty-five percent decrease in staffing resource this is after ten years of austerity measures that have decimated staffing levels within local government. Volume of work will not decrease and new ways of working are usually untested or can take time to implement with the remaining staff taking up the strain.

The introduction of the outreach service is a welcome change of direction seeing a new service within social services after the last few years in which the supported living service was lost and extra care was outsourced to Radis. With Brynglas unable to open due to Covid restrictions for the last year and for the foreseeable future.

The new outreach service will not be supporting all of the client groups that use Brynglas and there are some concerns around how existing staff from Brynglas will be able to support the service if they are non-drivers but these have been raised directly within that proposal.

Whilst understanding the position that Newport find themselves in facing having to make cuts and changes to services making savings in the ball park figure of ten million over the next three years forced on them from central government. After many years of austerity cuts there are no easy or simple ways to make those savings. Cuts that were once billed as trimming the fat are now hollowing out the bone marrow in the body of local government.

Stress and anxiety at work are a major cause of sickness absence at work. This will only increase when councils are continuing to have to sweat their resources to meet their legal requirement to remain within budget. When speaking of equipment this phrase is understandable but we cannot and will not allow staff to become the resource that is pushed beyond their limits.

APPENDIX 4b - Specific responses to consultation

We would ask that Newport continue to challenge the year in and year out issue of having to do more with less when in discussions with Welsh Government around financial support. We would also like to point out that NCC staff are its greatest asset and have shown time and time again over the last twelve months why that is. We urge Newport City Council to protect that asset with no further outsourcing to private or arm's length company's in future budgets.

Peter Garland Branch Secretary

Unison Newport City Branch

Coedkernew Community Council

Coedkernew.co.uk

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Ms S Gonzalez-Lopez
Newport City Council
Civic Centre
Newport
NP19 4UR

02 February 2021

Dear Ms Gonzalez-Lopez

Members of Coedkernew Community Council have asked me to write to you regarding the proposed new charges for householders using the refuse centre for DIY waste, although we see there could be an income of £20,000 we fear that a lot of people will not pay this and therefore could possibly fly tip in the rural areas.

As you are aware we have seen an increase in fly tipping in the Coedkernew area, we feel that this collection of the extra fly tipping could wipe out the possible income expected on the new charges.

We would be interested in your thoughts on the pros and cons on this anti social issue faced by all wards within the city.

Yours sincerely

Heather Boswell
Clerk to Coedkernew Community Council

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Newport City Council

NEWPORT

Dear Sirs

In response to your proposed budget, we draw your attention to the planned charges for certain items of waste at the recycling centre in Newport.

As an Authority which is currently blighted by fly tipping and significant clean-up costs it appears that this suggestion is very single minded. We feel that the charges proposed would only push more people to fly tip around the Newport City area and in turn increase the clean up costs of the Authority to a far greater amount than the £21,000 saving they are looking for at the Centre.

As the Authority does not have a good track record for prosecutions as shown from a recent FOI request no monies would be recovered to offset the increase.

We have responded to the consultation but felt compelled to write direct on this matter due to, not only the effect on the environment but also the wellbeing of those people who are affected by fly-tipping

Yours faithfully

Maria Mulcahy

Clerk to Wentlooge Community Council