

Minutes



Council

Date: 29 June 2021

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, C Ferris, D Fouweather, G Giles, J Guy, D Harvey, I Hayat, Councillor R Jeavons, M Kellaway, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, Councillor J Mudd, M Rahman, J Richards, M Spencer, T Suller, H Thomas, C Townsend, Councillor R Truman, T Watkins, R White, K Whitehead, D Wilcox, D Williams, G Berry, J Clarke, T Holyoake, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, H Townsend, J Watkins and A Morris

Apologies: Councillors C Evans, K Thomas, M Whitcutt, V Dudley and Y Forsey

1. Preliminaries

1.i Apologies

Councillors Whitcutt, K Thomas, Dudley and C Evans

1.ii Declarations of Interest

None received.

1.iii Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor held a moment's silence for former Councillor Peter McKim. Peter was the Labour ward member for Graig and served two terms, leaving the council in 2004.

The Mayor also mentioned the recent resignation of another Graig ward member, Councillor Cornelious on grounds of ill-health, and wished her all the best of the future.

The Mayor invited the Leader to announce that Councillor Stephen Marshall had been invited to become a member of the Order of St John's, which was an incredible achievement. The Leader continued that most of her colleagues would be aware that Councillor Marshall had been a volunteer for St John's Ambulance and was supporting the vaccination programme. The award also recognised his dedication to training younger members. This award was sanctioned by the Queen and was therefore a tremendous honour for one of the councillors in Newport.

2. Minutes

The Minutes from 27 April and Council AGM 11 May 2021 were recorded as a true and accurate record.

3. Appointments

To consider the proposed appointments set out in the report

Councillor Harvey moved the appointments set out in the Report, as agreed by the Business managers, subject to the additional appointments set out below.

Resolved: That the following appointments be agreed.

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	No of Vacancies / Re-appointments	Nominations Received
Bassaleg School	1	Yvonne Forsey
Caerleon Comprehensive	1	Jason Hughes
Glan Usk Primary	1	Phillip Hourahine
Glan Usk Primary	1	Merille Hourahine
Malpas C/W Primary	1	Laura Lacey
Mount Pleasant Primary	1	Yvonne Forsey
St Julians Primary	1	Mark Spencer
St Julians School	1	Graham Berry
Maindee Primary	1	Richard Morgan
Caerleon Comprehensive	1	Joan Watkins
Crindau Primary	1	Herbie Thomas
Gaer Primary	1	Stephen Marshall
Langstone Primary	1	William Routley
Llanwern High	1	Deborah Harvey
Millbrook Primary	1	Jason Jordan
Newport High	1	Herbie Thomas
Ringland Primary	1	Malcolm Linton
Marshfield Primary	1	John Tobutt
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon	1	Hywel Jones
Pillgwenlly Primary	1	Debbie Jenkins
Charles Williams Primary School	1	Gail Giles

In addition to the above appointments, Councillor Harvey informed Council of the need to agree dispensation for Councillor Val Dudley's absence, due to ill-health in accordance with section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved:

To approve six month's absence for Councillor V Dudley.

4. Police Issues

Superintendent Mike Richards provided an update on current local policing priorities, before inviting questions from Members.

The Leader welcomed Supt Richards to the Council meeting and referred to the demand on service provision and the safer streets funding. She also reflected on partnership working and moving forward, recognising the different pressures of moving into covid recovery. As custodians of our communities, we should highlight to resident services that aren't provided by the police and we all have a role to play in accurately signposting residents to the right services. The Leader also commented that it was fantastic news on the new Police recruits.

The Leader also asked about the active travel bids and being able to introduce safer streets pilot with 20mph speed limit. Residents were still expressing concern about people breaching speed limits and asked MR if we could work together with Go Safe around speeding enforcement, as we didn't want to lose the momentum.

The Superintendent endorsed the Leader's comments about the need for partnership work between the Police and the Council.

Questions from Councillors:

Councillor Holyoake asked which streets in Pill would be benefitting from the Safer Streets initiative and have speed cameras installed. Supt Richards highlighted that these would be Commercial Road and Francis Drive. Insp Blakemore would also make contact with Cllr Holyoake to discuss this in detail.

Councillor Jeavons thanked the Superintendent for the update on Operation Snap in Alway and Ringland.

Councillor Suller congratulated the Superintendent on the apprehension of the drug dealers and raised concern regarding 'boy racers' in Coedkernew, A48 and Imperial Way and asked whether traffic calming measures could be put in place. Supt Richards would ask the local inspector to make contact with Councillor Suller in relation to this.

Councillor Harvey thanked the Superintendent on the speed of the arrests made in relation to the tragic incident in Always that took place in early June.

Councillor Rahman thanked the Superintendent for the street surgery arranged for the Bryn Derwin Road area and referred to incidences where a vehicle which was related to drug dealing a couple of years ago was spotted recently on Bryn Derwin Road. Residents wanted assurance that by ringing 101 to report crime that the Police would act on the intelligence received so as not to lose faith in the police. Supt Richards assured Councillor Rahman that all 101 calls were responded to and would ask Insp Cawley to make contact with the Councillor.

Councillor Forsey referred to the increase in cycling its related accidents, including one fatality in Newport and asked if Operation Close Pass would be implemented in Newport. Supt Richards advised that Gwent Police were looking to implement this in Newport imminently and would provide timeframes to the Councillor.

Councillor Linton informed the Superintendent that the local arsonist had returned to Ringland and referred to an incident which took place the previous evening at the Friendship Pub. What were the police doing to look into this? Supt Richards advised the councillor that he was meeting with Inspector Cawley and would ask him to share plans with Cllr Linton.

Councillor Hayat mentioned that the installation of CCTV cameras in the Pill area was good news and was looking forward to meeting with Insp Blakemore and his fellow ward member Councillor Holyoake in the near future.

Councillor Spencer referred to several accidents along Chepstow Road about 18 months-2 years ago due to speeding cars. Residents were waiting for feedback on this and asked if this could be chased up for the residents. Supt Richards would make contact with both Inspector Cawley and the councillor to provide this information.

Councillor Fouweather welcomed the Safer Streets funding for Pill but advised that there were other parts of the city that needed funding and that the initiative would make it difficult for criminals in Pill to move around, which might mean that they would move to other parts of

Newport, spreading crime further afield. Councillor Fouweather therefore wanted to know if funding would be made for other parts of Newport. Supt Richards advised that funding would be available and the bid for Stow Hill last year was unfortunately unsuccessful. These bids were set by the Home Office and the criteria had to be met in order to receive funding, therefore Pill met the strict criteria for Safer Streets. The next bid needed to be in by 15 July and that was for violence against women and this would probably focus on the city centre.

Councillor Routley reported the issue of speeding traffic in Langstone, along the A48, Rock and Fountain to Coldra/Magor Road. There were no speeding cameras on road and residents raised concern, horses recently bolted from speeding, which could have been very serious. Councillor Routley therefore requested a meeting with the Superintendent along with Councillor Mogford his fellow ward member to look into a resolution to ease the speeding problem. Supt Richards agreed to this and would be happy to set something up in the near future.

Councillor Al-Nuaimi thanked the Superintendent for their recent meeting regarding stop and search powers, which allayed Councillor Al-Nuaimi's fears. Councillor Al-Nuaimi also mentioned that any more information on how things were progressing would be gratefully received. Councillor Al-Nuaimi also expressed his thanks to Inspector Davies after the recent issues of anti-social that were addressed at Belle Vue Park.

5. **Notice of Motion: Diversity in Democracy**

The Council considered the following motion, for which the necessary notice had been given. The motion was moved by the Leader and seconded by Baroness Wilcox.

Newport City Council recognises that much work has been undertaken in the last decade in Wales to measure and improve the diversity of councils. More work is in the pipeline in preparation for the 2022 elections. There is a national communications campaign to encourage people from underrepresented groups to vote, engage with local democracy and stand for office. New mentoring programmes are being delivered with the Womens' Equality Network Wales and the Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales. Stonewall Cymru and Disability Wales will also soon be offering mentoring programmes. The Welsh Government and Senedd Commission are working with Councils, schools and youth councils and developing resources to encourage 16 and 17 yr olds to get involved and vote. The WLGA has a new Be a Councillor website and, is part of the Pan UK civility in public life campaign and are working with Councils to continue to improve the range of support and development provided to members.

Newport City Council commits to being a Diverse Council.

We agree to:

- **Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy**
- **Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct**
- **Continue to take forward the recommendations of the WLGA Diversity in Democracy working group**

Comments from Councillors:

In seconding the motion, Baroness Wilcox comment that, on Friday 5 March this year on the eve of International Women's Day, the WLGA Council endorsed a series of significant recommendations from a cross-party working group, which included the use of voluntary quotas, local targets, and council declarations to become 'Diverse Councils'. This was as a result of the setting up of a cross- party working group on underrepresented groups under

Baroness Wilcox's former leadership of the WLGA and Baroness Wilcox was pleased to chair it until November 2019 when its initial proposals were delivered to the WLGA Council.

The WLGA agreed to take steps to advance gender equality and diversity in Councils before the 2022 elections. This was in recognition of the lack of diversity in Welsh Councils. The group's remit was to explore broader underrepresentation in democracy and bring about change through a series of actions and pledges.

Local communities were diverse in their life experience, priorities, and needs. Councillors from all parties should reflect this diversity in the skills and experience that they bring to council.

This was not simply a matter of equality, important though that was, but a need for council chambers to be filled with people who had a diverse range of life experiences and different aspirations; better diversity will lead to better decision-making.

Councils and councillors played a critical, central and prominent role during the COVID 19 pandemic. Councils demonstrated that they were uniquely placed at the heart of their communities and public service delivery and councils and councillors had invariably been the first port of call for the most vulnerable or those in need of support or assurance.

Taking the ideas of the working group forward, the WLGA in consultation with Welsh Government had therefore developed an action plan covering a range of ideas including awareness and the value of the role Councillors play in their communities, introducing more measures to deal with Councillor abuse, which has grown exponentially in recent years with the growth of anti-social media, progress greater training and development for Councillors including mentoring schemes, making greater provision for flexibility and job-sharing at all levels and supporting individuals with protected characteristics.

In conclusion, Baroness Wilcox was delighted to second the Leader's motion that this Council committed to being a Diverse Council and that it agreed to provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy, demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promote the highest standards of behaviour and conduct and set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the 2022 local elections.

Councillor M Evans advised that on behalf of his group the motion and the recommendations were welcomed and after the last elections a record number of people were selected from ethnic minority backgrounds and were keen to encourage more women to stand in the forthcoming elections. They were not keen on giving 16-17 year olds voting at the recent elections but supported diversity in democracy and would do everything they could to get them involved, although they could not stand in elections. It was however the electorate that would decide on who would be voted in and not the political groups. An open culture, high standards and good conduct was welcomed. However their candidates were selected on merit first and whoever stood had to represent their communities to the best of their abilities and ultimately it was up to the electorate to decide. They would not however give the WLGA a blank check in relation to their plans on diversity and democracy as they did not know what would be planned for the future. Although they respected that Baroness Wilcox views on equalities, they did not support women-only short-lists. Therefore, Councillor M Evans advised that his group would abstain from the vote.

The Leader paid tribute to Baroness Wilcox on her work and leadership role with the WLGA. The Leader also mentioned that the WLGA had full cross party support on this work and that Monmouthshire County Council had already addressed this and had approved it at full council recently. This was an important motion and it was democratic that all councillors had their say on this issue. The Leader stressed that Newport was at the heart of democracy and that this was one further step in moving Democracy forward.

Agreed:

That the Diversity in Democracy Motion be carried.

6. **Notice of Motion: Freedom of Newport - Royal British Legion**

The Council considered the following motion, for which the necessary notice had been given. The motion was moved by The Leader and seconded by Councillor Spencer.

Newport City Council resolves to appoint the Royal British Legion as Honorary Freeman of the City of Newport in recognition of their 100th Year Anniversary on 15th May 2021 and to honour the charitable work of the organisation supporting ex-service men and women and their families.

The Royal British Legion was formed in May 1921 by the merger of four veterans associations of the First World War. Its purpose was to:

- **provide help to veterans and their families who are in need of help,**
- **campaign for improved conditions, and**
- **to champion Remembrance.**

In moving the motion, the Leader Commented that, in 1921, the British Legion Founder and President Earl Haig announced that Armistice Day on 11 November would be known henceforth as Remembrance Day and that it would be a 'Poppy Day' to raise funds for veterans relief.

Over six million men served on the front line during the war and of those who came back, 1.75 million suffered some kind of disability and half of these were permanently disabled. We also needed to remember the emotional and financial impact this had on those who were left behind – wives and children, widows and orphans as well as the parents who had lost their sons.

Out of this concern, the Legion was established and they have helped the Armed Forces community and their families ever since. The Legion provided lifelong support to serving members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families. Their wide ranging activities included support through debt and emergency situations, employment, dementia care and supporting places with Remembrance parades and services.

In Newport we were fortunate to have four branches of the Royal British Legion – the Newport Men's branch, the Newport Women's branch, the Rogerstone branch and the Caerleon branch.

The difference that the Royal British Legion made to people's lives could not be underestimated and as they marked their 100th year in May, the Leader believed it was important for Newport to formally recognise the contribution this organisation made to the people of Newport. Granting them honorary Freedom of the City felt like an appropriate honour, on behalf of the people of the City of Newport and elected members of this Council, the Leader was privileged to formally request that in their centenary year, Newport City Council granted the Royal British Legion honorary Freedom of the City.

If this request was granted, a more formal presentation ceremony would be held later in the year and it was hoped that such an event would enable the Council to fully celebrate the work of this incredible organisation and fully recognise the honour bestowed on them.

Comments from Councillors:

Councillor M Evans welcomed and fully supported the motion, although he was disappointed not to have been consulted beforehand.

Councillor Cleverly supported this motion with her member of family being in the Armed Forces.

Councillor Harvey supported this motion with her son being a member of the Royal Navy.

Councillor Truman supported this motion.

Councillor Whitehead supported this motion with brothers in the Armed Forces.

Councillor J Watkins, received support from the Royal British Legion when she lost her husband during his service in the Royal Navy. It was disappointing however, that they decided to move away from local offices to being centralised in London but Councillor J Watkins supported the motion.

Councillor Hughes had a serving member of family working for the Armed Forces and acknowledged the Caerleon branch and their hard work.

Councillor Spencer mentioned that it was a great pleasure to second this motion for the Royal British Legion which had helped veterans for many years supported what our service personnel were doing. As an ex soldier, Councillor Spencer praised the support from the Royal British Legion and the hard work carried out in the past and hopefully long into the future.

The Leader welcomed the positive contributions from colleagues, which showed the high esteem in which the Royal British Legion were held and recognised the work that they did.

Agreed (unanimously) That the motion be carried.

7. **Management Structure Report**

The Chief Executive presented the report to Council, highlighting the consultation with political group leaders and union representatives as well as working closely with the Welsh Local Government Association. A phased approach in recruitment would take place along with a recruitment panel of members. This would be conducted in an open and transparent manner. In terms of the financial implications, this would be kept to a minimum level of investment in line with the council's revenue budget.

The Leader moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor M Evans.

The Mayor invited councillors to ask the Chief Executives if they had any questions in relation to the report.

Councillor Cleverly asked the Chief Executive if staff would have to re-apply for post or would they be job matched and in addition to this, would there be redundancies. The Chief Executive advised that no existing Head of Service would be detrimentally affected and therefore they would be matched to a role within the proposed structure, with tweaks to the aligned service areas and, during the initial implementation phase, there would be no staff redundancies.

Councillor T Watkins asked what was the timescale for these posts to be in situ. The Chief Executive advised that recruitment process would take place with immediate effect and that it was anticipated to be in place within the next three to five months.

Councillor Fouweather mentioned that there were difficulties in past recruiting senior officers and therefore were the salaries competitive within the market. The Chief Executive agreed

that it was good to encourage competition and director's salaries were competitive. The Heads of Services were commensurate with other salaries within Local Government.

The Leader was pleased to support the Chief Executives report to implement much needed revisions to the senior management structure of the Council.

Over the last few months, the Chief Executive, in her role as Head of Paid Service, worked closely with the WLGA to review the chief officer structure at Head of Service and Director level.

The senior structure was reduced by 39% since 2011, but the Council's change agenda and its expectations for the City continued to grow significantly at the same time – the review therefore supported the need to create strategic capacity to maximise the Council's opportunities.

The Chief Executive, in her report, detailed the need to strengthen the senior leadership team to ensure that the council continued to take the City forward and maximise the Council's role at a local and national level. We were engaged in ambitious regional and national agendas such as the Western Gateway and Cardiff Capital Region. Community expectations were increasing and the council would be dealing with the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic for many years to come – all of which required robust senior leadership.

The Chief Executive presented this report to Council to seek approval for a future proof structure – to enable senior officers to refocus on the Council's strategic priorities and the transformation of our services in a thematic way. The Leader therefore moved the adoption of the report and hoped fellow members would do the same.

Councillor M Evans on behalf of the conservative group recognised that the current senior management structure was not fit for purpose and therefore welcomed that the council made attempts to redress this and that the changes were more commercially minded. Ultimately the Council must improve front line services for residents. Clearly concerns on the cost of the recruitment were addressed and would be monitored therefore Councillor M Evans fully supported the report.

Councillor K Whitehead thanked the Chief Executive for involving him in the consultation process and said that the Chief Executive had been dynamic and open in her approach and fully supported this report and hoped the relationship would be maintained with the potential recruitment. From a financial point of view, the cost would benefit the Council in the future and therefore fully supported the report.

Councillor Hourahine referred to the need of strategic thinking within the local authority and therefore fully supported the report.

The Leader thanked the councillors for their comments and commended the Chief Executive on the report and her inclusive approach in developing the report and recommendations and therefore moved the report.

Agreed:

That Council approved the proposed revisions to the senior leadership structure and authorised the Chief Executive to proceed to implement the new structure within the Council's recruitment framework for Chief Officers.

8. Public Space Protection Order

The Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulation presented the report to Council.

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was designed to prevent individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour in a public space. They could be used to implement restrictions where the behaviour was having, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; and the behaviour was, or was likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature.

Only the Council could make a PSPO, but they could be enforced by Gwent Police and Council Officers.

The PSPO before Council today would be the second PSPO to be implemented within the Pill Ward. The previous PSPO expired in July 2020 and contained three restrictions. This new PSPO implemented an increased number of restrictions that were specifically targeted at addressing Anti-Social Behaviour in the defined area.

Anti-social behaviour was being experienced in Pill, to the detriment of its residents. The previous PSPO was limited in its application and use. Through close working between the Council and Gwent Police, it was proposed that the Council implement a new PSPO to provide additional and relevant enforcement powers to Gwent Police and Council staff to help deal with the issues residents were experiencing.

A public consultation exercise ran for one month in March 2021 and was responded to by over 150 individuals and organisations. Almost all of these responses were from people who lived or worked in Pill. The public consultation was overwhelmingly supportive of the restrictions within the new PSPO.

The Oversight and Scrutiny Management Committee oversaw the drafting and consultation process for this new PSPO and also reviewed the outcomes of the consultation. In its April meeting, the Committee recommended that the Council adopted the PSPO.

At the request of the Police, the Scrutiny Management Committee recommended that Prohibition 8 should be removed from the draft Order that was the subject of public consultation. In the light of the subsequent objections however, that were received from the local community about the removal of this measure and the widespread public support for the restriction of "kerb-crawling", it was recommended that the draft PSPO set out in Appendix A to the report be amended to include an additional prohibition number 8

"No person shall enter the restricted area and attempt to buy sexual services from another person"

Subject to this amendment, the Cabinet Member moved that the Council formally approves and adopts the new Pill PSPO as set out in the Report

Councillor I Hayat thanked Cllr Truman and considered that it was vital to have this in place. This PSPO with additions would help the police. Pill was a multi ethnic and diverse place that welcomed people to invest within the ward therefore Councillor I Hayat fully supported the report.

Councillor Lacey as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, advised that cross party discussion took place and the recommendations were carefully considered and therefore fully supported the amendment.

Councillor Holyoake, referred to the safe houses proposed in 2015 which residents and councillor objected to, but it took place anyway. Councillor Holyoake and her ward colleagues fought to right this wrong. This had encouraged deviancy and sex work to take place, especially during the past year with the pandemic, also causing anti-social behaviour. Pill had the second highest crime rate ward in Newport. There had been positive intervention

from the Police with multiple arrests, leading to hefty fines and criminal convictions. The PSPO would give police and wardens the power to act accordingly if this is seen on the streets. This would give residents the right to feel free and protected. Councillor Holyoake therefore fully supported the PSPO.

Councillor M Evans mentioned that residents and businesses alike were affected by this and that no woman should feel unsafe and welcomed tougher action. Aggressive begging was on the increase and the Council should have a complete ban on this in the city centre and Pill. Councillor M Evans supported the report.

Councillor Whitehead suggested that the visual presence of police was important. Another concern was the grenade effect of a PSPO. Councillor Whitehead sympathised with the residents of Pill, some of whom had moved away from the area.

Councillor Harvey fully supported the report saying that the residents and local ward members needed this PSPO.

The Leader thanked all partners and stakeholders for their contribution towards the PSPO and mentioned that a significant amount of work went into this. It was important to recognise the concern of displacement and importance of partnership working. This report ensured a range of tools to address and the challenges. People should not have to tolerate this kind of behaviour on their doorsteps. The Leader referred to correspondence received by residents, the most difficult to read was from one of the high schools where a pupil was repeatedly late to school because of the nocturnal activities going on outside her house every night. All residents should feel safe and children should sleep at night to attend school.

Councillor Truman thanked all those who spoke in support of the report and moved the report.

Agreed:

That the Council adopts and implements the Pill PSPO (2021- 2024).

9. Questions to the Leader of the Council

The Leader shared the following announcements with Council:

- **Levelling up fund**

Earlier this month, Cabinet supported a proposal to make a significant bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund with the aim of further boosting the regeneration of our city.

It was a competitive bidding process and up to £20m of capital funding was available for regeneration and cultural investment schemes. There was no guarantee that we would be successful, but an ambitious bid, for the full £20 million would be submitted, which would see the further transformation of the Northern Gateway area of the city centre.

A number of transformational schemes were already underway or were in the pipeline in this area including the refurbishment of the Newport Indoor Market and Market Arcade, the proposed creation of a co-working and incubator hub in the Information Station building and the provision of a new active travel footbridge between Devon Place and Queensway.

This additional money would be used to enhance the public realm in this area, it was hoped that when people arrived to Newport, that they would be met with a view that reflected the quality of the place that Newport actually was, that represented our ambitions and was positive and welcoming for visitors and investors alike.

There would be a focus on green infrastructure, active travel, the wider Newport Offer and of course reflecting the ethos of the Placemaking Charter.

The Leader would provide a regular update on the bidding process as it progressed.

- **Clean air day**

Earlier this month the Council marked Clean Air Day 2021 with an excellent event at the Geraint Thomas National Velodrome for Wales.

The purpose of Clean Air Day was to highlight air pollution, build awareness of how it affected health, and explore some of the things that could be done to tackle the problem.

Every year, air pollution caused up to 36,000 deaths in the UK. The World Health Organisation and the UK Government recognised that air pollution was the largest environmental health risk we faced today.

The Leader was delighted to welcome Lee Waters MS, the new deputy minister for climate change, to the event where we showcased some of the work that both the council and our public sector partners were doing to improve the air quality in the city.

This included installing renewable energy generating solar panels on 27 of our buildings, including the largest rooftop installation in Wales at the Velodrome itself.

The showcase also featured a number of electric vehicles, which included our electric refuse collection vehicle, the first of its kind in Wales, one of Newport Transport's electric buses, and an electric taxi.

We still had a long way to go in making our air cleaner for future generations, but there was a lot of good work already throughout Newport, and the actions being taken today would deliver a greener, healthier city for tomorrow.

- **Success of No Mow May**

Another project we have recently taken part in that focused on sustainability in Newport was No Mow May.

The campaign encouraged individuals, councils and stakeholders to support bees, butterflies and other wildlife by letting wild flowers grow on lawns and green spaces throughout May instead of mowing them.

We pledged our support in recognition of our status as a Bee Friendly City, and on our duty to enhance nature and take actions that helped counter the impact of climate change.

The move to support the campaign also followed successful trials of different programmes of grass management, and different wildflower seed mixes in our designated 'leave to grow' pilot sites.

As a direct result of reduced mowing, we saw some lovely examples of flora including beautiful Bee Orchids blooming on our verges.

We would review this year's experiences and learn from them, but had every intention of continuing to support such schemes that benefitted the environment across our city.

- **Generation rent**

Together with campaigning body Generation Rent, we recently launched a new project to improve engagement with people who were privately renting their homes.

While most properties in the city were in good condition, a number of landlords broke the law by renting out homes that were substandard or not fit to live in.

A survey was currently running that aimed to get a better understanding of the challenges faced by private renters as well as discover what they understood about their rights.

Initially, it would be seeking the views of people living in the Stow Hill, Victoria, Pillgwenlly and Lliswerry wards where there were high numbers of privately rented homes.

After the consultation ended, the project would move to stage two with focus-group discussions and forums with private renters.

The Leader urged residents to take part and share their views by visiting:
Newport.gov.uk/haveyoursay

- **Foster care fortnight and Carers week**

The Council recently celebrated Foster care fortnight and carers week. Both events were marked with some excellent reflections and communications around the amazing commitment shown by these groups of people.

Around 580 unpaid carers were known to us, but the 2011 Census reported that about 16,500 people in Newport said they were caring for someone.

They included young carers who were helping to look after a parent or sibling; parents looking after children with additional needs or serious conditions; "sandwich" carers juggling the needs of parents and children and anyone caring for someone who could not manage without help.

The Leader wanted to take the opportunity to encourage carers to get in touch so that they could offer help and support.

Foster carers, who did so much to support some of the most vulnerable young people in our city should also be commended.

Unfortunately, Newport was always in need of more foster carers and the Leader also urged anyone who may be considering it to get in touch and find out more about what could be an immensely rewarding experience.

- **EUSS**

Finally, the Leader wanted to repeat the reminder that the deadline for applications to the European Settlement Scheme was the end of this month.

The Council had heard that the government would allow some exceptions for late application, but we did not want anyone living in our city to face any difficulties in staying or in their everyday lives due to a late application.

Support was available and if anyone knew of someone in this position, the Leader asked that they get in touch, either online or through the contact centre; we were able to help.

Questions to the Leader

Councillor M Evans

Councillor Evans referred to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure's statement in February where it was mentioned that the conservative group had not put forward an alternative budget since elected in 2012 and advised that this was not the case and fully

costed alternative budgets were put forward up until 2016/217. Councillor Evans therefore asked whether the Leader thought that the Cabinet Member should apologise.

The Leader mentioned that it was interesting to note the feedback from members during the budget consultation and that it was important to hear from a range of people. If an alternative budget had been put forward for the budget and this was evidenced, then the Leader would acknowledge this and move on.

Supplementary Question

Councillor M Evans said that he assumed that was a yes and that she apologised. The councillor went on to mention promoting high standards in conduct and referred to Councillor Truman provided an apology when he had got something wrong. . Councillor Evans thanked the Leader for her answer and hoped that he would get a full and frank apology from the Cabinet Member.

Leader replied that Councillor M Evans might want to reflect on the recording of her answer to see what actually said rather than reframing the Leader's response.

Councillor K Whitehead

Councillor Whitehead had tendered a motion that David 'Bomber' Pearce receive a posthumous Freedom of the City Award to the previous Leader, Baroness Wilcox. Unfortunately, this was not possible but the Baroness actively encouraged councillor Whitehead to look into the Spirit of Newport Award. There was however no progress on this, the Rocky initiative was still ongoing and a young sportsman had been granted funding. Councillor Whitehead therefore wondered if this process would be revisited.

The Leader commended the collective community spirit in erecting the statue for David 'Bomber' Pearce. The Spirit of Newport award however, was put on the back burner because of Covid but the Leader would look into this and the criteria, sometime in the near future. The Leader was keen that a way should be found to acknowledge the contribution for a range of citizens, especially during the pandemic, small acts of kindness should be acknowledged as well. The Leader reiterated that this had not been forgotten and that the pandemic has raised the need for some form of recognition.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Whitehead also mentioned that people under the Rocky legacy, had supported the homeless and therefore hoped that David 'Bomber' Pearce would get his recognition.

Councillor C Townsend

Councillor Townsend asked if the Leader could update council on the Friars Walk situation.

The Leader advised that the Council was faced with challenges during pandemic and following on from it, and that the Council needed to prepare for the economic impact. One of the challenges for Newport was that the majority of the property in the city centre was in private ownership. We had limited discussion with the owners at Friars Walk and they were looking into a number ways to revive Friars Walk and a number of units had been let, there were ongoing discussions but it would not be appropriate at this stage to disclose the commercially sensitive information in this public forum. An update however would be provided to councillors as discussion progressed.

Councillor T Holyoake

Councillor Holyoake asked if the Leader could provide an update to the Council on the Covid 19 recovery strategy.

The Leader advised that she attended a recent strategic recovery group and across Gwent there was a huge response to move towards recovery. There were four strategic recovery aims: 1) To support education and employment and the challenges Covid presented such as loss of business and vulnerable learners. 2) The environment. 3) The health and wellbeing of citizens and 4) To support citizens post Covid 19. The Leader had worked closely to support schools to safely re-open and continued to work closely with them. From the middle of June onwards, lateral flow test kits had been made available for staff in schools and was important for recovery. Around 7,000 Digital devices in were being distributed to schools and there was still degree of uncertainty but blended learning was ongoing. The council was also aware of the need for learners to have access to internet and ensured that pupils had that access.

Job opportunities was also a priority, one example of this was that the Leader was working with The Celtic Manor, who had a number of vacancies and would be linking these with our Youth Academy to help people find employment.

The Cabinet had also put in a number of bids towards the Community Renewal Funding to help towards the Covid recovery.

The Council was also able to continue to distribute grants to small businesses and regulatory services had to be commended for their work they were undertaking.

The Leader also invited colleagues to view Cabinet via the Live Event where regular Covid recovery updates were provided.

10. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

There are five written question to the Cabinet Members:

Question 1 – Cabinet Member: Culture and Leisure

Councillor C Ferris

Given the importance of the National Trust's stewardship of Tredegar House and the hope that this would provide a boost for tourism in Newport, may I ask when you last had a meeting with the National Trust?

Response

Whilst the Lease agreed by the previous administration bound the Council to ongoing financial payments which added pressures to budgets year on year, surprisingly the lease did not set out any formal requirements for the National Trust to meet with representatives of the Council.

However under my direction this financial burden has now been settled and the Culture and Continuing Learning Manager meets property managers to discuss property developments, repair and conservation work and marketing. The Culture and Continuing Learning Manager has also attended the regular Team Tredegar workshops arranged by the National Trust staff at Tredegar House. All of this information is provided to me during my briefings with officers and up until the start of the pandemic, I have been satisfied that the stewardship arrangement is being well managed. I am sure you are fully aware of the impact the pandemic has had on tourism and the ability of tourist attractions to operate. However the National Trust have managed to successfully navigate their way through a very difficult time and I am pleased to see that access to parts of the house as well as the café, parks and gardens is open throughout the week and that advance booking are recommended for the weekends, such is the popularity of the venue.

Supplementary Question

Given the importance of this and although Pandemic has had an impact, would there be an opportunity to meet up sometime in the future.

Councillor Harvey thanked councillor Ferris for his supplementary question and referred to her previous response.

Question 2 – Cabinet Member: Leisure and Culture

Councillor M Evans

Since August 2017 you only appear to have taken 4 formal decisions according to the Council's website, that's just one a year. Whilst I appreciate you would have been involved in the Transporter Bridge funding which we fully support, and the proposed new Leisure Centre, can you tell Council why you haven't taken any decisions over the Medieval Ship for instance, and why you didn't consult with members when you decided to introduce a pedal power scheme?

Can you also give Council an update on this scheme?

Response

The Medieval Ship project has yet to complete the freeze drying process. Progress on this was significantly affected by the pandemic. As you will appreciate, until this is complete it is premature to formally propose the next stage of the project. You are right to point out that the Transporter Bridge has been the focus of my efforts and I have been directly involved with negotiations and meetings which supported and championed the project. The Cabinet report in February detailed the work and commitment which had gone into this project to obtain over £8m from HLF and £1.5m from Welsh Government.

Your information on how many decisions I have taken as Cabinet Member is incorrect. You have failed to take account of decisions I have made as part of a joint report. There have been a number of joint decisions since August 2017, including approving the Newport Wales Marathon. We do not work in silos Cllr Evans.

In respect of the pedal power scheme, I assume you are already aware that the use of Section 106 funding for leisure purposes is managed under the Council's scheme of delegation. The benefits of the project are clear and enable people with varying degrees of mobility, family members and carers to participate in a leisure activity together'.

The project is being delivered by the Newport Live Leisure Trust under the branding of 'Wheels for All'. The booking of specific bikes and time slots will be possible through the Newport Live web site and app. A bike and equipment cabin has been provided at Tredegar Park, along with the necessary security system and CCTV. Adjacent disabled public toilets have been fitted out with hoists and other equipment to support people using the scheme and improvement works have been completed on upgrading pathways throughout the park to accommodate those using the scheme alongside other cyclists and pedestrians. Newport Live staff have received specialist training for using the bikes and adaptations and the full range of bikes that will be available for hire was showcased on 9 June at Tredegar Park. Once the full lockdown restrictions are lifted and the booking mechanism is live this fantastic scheme will be available at no cost to the residents of Newport.

Supplementary Question

The Newport Medieval Ship decision was taken in October 2014. In addition, in February 2019 proposals were being developed for Tredegar Park and options would be presented to the Cabinet in due course. Councillor Evans mentioned that Councillor Harvey advised that she had not visited Tredegar Park since she was Cabinet Member, therefore, where was the evidence that there was scrutiny to see if grants were available and how was the decision

taken, was it an informal decision. Council Evans considered that there were a lot of unanswered questions and requested evidence of this by the Cabinet Member.

Councillor Harvey mentioned that as there was more than one supplementary she would provide Councillor Evans with a written response.

Question 3 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor W Routley

With gridlock on the M4 from Magor to the Brynglas tunnels most weekends and bank holidays, will the Cabinet Member inform us on what plans he has alleviate overburden alternative routes?

Response

The recent introduction of the 50mph speed limit on the M4 through Newport by Welsh Government, will deliver both improved air quality and reduced congestion using average speed cameras to constrain traffic speeds, smooth traffic flow and improve journey times.

Lower speeds also aim to reduce the number and severity of collisions along the M4 corridor, which have historically impacted on the city's highway network journey times due to diverted traffic seeking alternative routes.

The Council has welcomed the South East Wales Transport Commission (Burns) recommendations, which set out an ambitious yet achievable range of alternative transport options for both the city and the region to relieve congestion on the M4.

Council officers continue to work closely with Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and other stakeholders to deliver these proposals for the City.

Supplementary Question

The M4 relief road alternative was known as the Magor Road and speed changes on road had led to several near misses. Would the Deputy Leader and officers look into this to help alleviate speed on the roads.

Councillor Jeavons replied that he would be happy to meet with Councillor Routley, along with officers and the Police to discuss this matter.

Question 4 – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member: City Services

Councillor R Mogford

Scientific studies are showing the truly devastating impact climate change is predicted to have on Wales over the next generation or two.

Recently, many Newport residents have experienced, first hand, the extreme flooding conditions throughout the low-lying parts of Newport.

Can the Cabinet member update the council on:-

- i) What lessons are being learned from the last flooding event in December 2020 and what solutions are being implemented as a result.
- ii) What further steps if any are being taken to minimize the risk of severe flooding in Newport, both in the medium and the long term.
- iii) What new financial resource does the Cabinet Member expect to become available to assist in flood prevention measures going forward.

Response

As I advised earlier this year Cllr Mogford, like many other areas across Wales and the UK, Newport did experience sudden, heavy rainfall and incidences of flooding last December. Such flooding events are subject to a section 19 investigation and those in relation to the recent incidences in Newport have commenced, and the findings will be made public in due course. Such investigations involve all relevant bodies, including National Resources Wales, the Council and Welsh Water, and until this work is complete, I am unable to comment further.

In terms of planned works, the Council's programme is set out in the Highway Asset Management Plan, on which Members were consulted, but the majority of large scale flood defence work is carried out by NRW.

Supplementary Question

In terms of the Section 19 report, Councillor had asked back to December, could the Deputy Leader advise when would the report be available.

Councillor Jeavons could not provide a date but would let Councillor Mogford know when it was available for the public.

Question 5 – Cabinet Member: Licensing and Regulation

Councillor W Routley

Can the cabinet member please inform Council as to what plans are in place regarding monitoring the Air quality for communities living adjacent to the M4 corridor?

Response

As you are aware, Newport City Council has declared 11 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), 5 of which are directly associated with air pollution from the M4 motorway. These are spread along the stretch of the M4 within Newport's boundary, with 2 to the East of the River Usk and 3 to the West. All the AQMAs were declared years ago because Nitrogen Dioxide emission levels exceeded the Air Quality Objectives set by Welsh Government.

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare and implement an Air Quality Action Plan to address these air quality issues. The Air Quality Action Plan is currently being refreshed and updated to complement the Council's Sustainable Travel Plan, as air quality, Climate Change and Carbon Reduction are all part of the same agenda. In the meantime, Environmental

Health Officers will continue to closely monitor air quality emissions within the AQMA's and at the locations along the M4 corridor where problems have been identified.

We have 77 monitoring tubes located across all of the AQMA's, which are continually monitoring levels of emissions. In addition, we have secured additional SEWTA grant funding for the purchase of 3 sensors which will provide real-time data as well as levels of particulates, which are more pervasive than CO2 and NO2 emissions.

The monitoring data for the last 12 months has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 travel restrictions and the substantial reduction in the number of car journeys on the M4, with many people working from home. So, the last reliable data dates back to 2019, but even then the monitoring data was very encouraging, demonstrating a downward trend in the levels of exceedances compared with previous years. This shows that we are making progress in reducing emissions and improving air quality. At December 2019, the direction of travel with regard to air quality at all AQMAs adjacent to M4 junctions was positive. Currently, the St Julian's AQMA which abuts the M4 has been identified by Welsh Government for revocation as it has not breached the Air Quality Objectives for a number of years. Revocation of this AQMA will take place later in 2021. The remaining AQMAs which are adjacent to motorway junctions also exhibit a gradual reduction in emission levels and are moving towards compliance. However, it is not possible to give any exact timescale for compliance, at the present time, as most of the mitigation measures in relation to the M4 are matters for Welsh Government.

Supplementary Question

In Newport Matters the Cabinet Member referred to a duty of care to the environment in Newport and climate change. The Cabinet Member celebrated Clean Air Day where he recognised the 36,000 deaths due to pollution, which was a serious amount. Wales had declared a climate emergency, which covered Newport. Councillor Routley went on to say that one in 22 deaths in Newport were linked to air quality. In 2017 there were 113 deaths in relation to air pollution in Newport. The problem with M4 was that it was not travelling at 50mph but was in gridlock which was polluting the air. Traffic was seeking alternative routes, instead of the A48 and the M4.

The Mayor advised that the time was up and that the Cabinet Member would respond in writing.

Question 6 – Cabinet Member: Education and Skills

Councillor R Mogford

Prior to the pandemic, both Newport Schools St Julian's Comprehensive and Newport High were in 'special measures'. Can the Cabinet Member for Education provide an update on how improvements to these schools are progressing and when they are likely to come out of 'special measures'?

Response

In the period leading up to the pandemic, the governing bodies of both schools have secured the employment of new head teachers who have both taken up post during the pandemic. I applaud how both head teachers have met the challenge of taking up their roles at such an unusual time.

Both head teachers and their governing bodies have fully engaged with Education Services, EAS and Estyn during the period of the pandemic to address the recommendations of their inspections, alongside adapting provision for learners which includes the development of blended learning and providing childcare for vulnerable learners and children of key workers.

When the pandemic started Estyn suspended all planned inspections and official monitoring activity for schools in a statutory category. However, Estyn have continued to work with both St Julian's and Newport High in a support capacity and formal monitoring activity has resumed for some schools during summer 2021.

Newport High and St Julian's are participating in a new National multi-agency programme initiated by Welsh Government to support schools across Wales that are in a statutory Estyn category to make the required improvements. Education Services, Estyn, Welsh Government and the individual schools are working in a coordinated manner to ensure that school progress out of a statutory category as soon as possible.

Only Estyn are able to determine when a school should be removed from a category of special measures and it would not be appropriate for the Local Authority to suggest a timeline for this.

However, Education Services and EAS share the view of Estyn that both schools are making progress and are supportive of the leadership direction facilitated by the governing bodies and head teachers of both schools.

Supplementary Question

It was pleasing to hear that there were two new head teachers and looking at their webpage, Councillor Davies was chair of Governors but was also Cabinet Member. Could Councillor Davies therefore clarify how long she had been a governor and if she were still chair.

Councillor Davies confirmed that she had been a governor of St Julian's since 2014 and was Vice Chair in 2016 for two years and remained Chair of Governor for two years and that the school was in special measures and would it be disruptive to stand down as governor and change leadership during the process. ESTYN was aware that Councillor Davies was Cabinet member but also considered that it would not be appropriate to stand down at this time but if there were any conflict of interest, Councillor Davies would ask the Vice Chair to stand in for her.

Question 7 – Cabinet Member: Sustainable Development

Councillor C Townsend

The Cabinet member will be aware of the difficulties that HMO planning applications are having on neighbouring residents and businesses.

The Council's own SPG on HMOs makes reference to adverse impacts on community cohesion/amenity, parking and absentee landlords.

Given the difficulties that Newport City Council appears to be having with Planning Inspectors on HMO appeals, will the Cabinet member instigate a review of the SPG – which was last updated in 2017 – with a view to strengthening the local rights of residents and businesses?

Response

It is acknowledged that planning applications for HMOs can often be contentious. Indeed, poorly managed and high concentrations of HMOs can potentially lead to issues affecting local residents and often the tenants themselves. However, we must also remember that well managed HMOs can integrate well with the local community and will often provide housing opportunities for a variety of people, including young professionals. Therefore, care must be taken not to tarnish all HMOs with the same brush.

The Planning Inspectorate are following national policy and guidance. Most HMOs recently refused in Newport have been refused due to lack of car parking. The national direction of travel is very much towards sustainable transport; walking, cycling and public transport. The

private car is at the bottom of the transport hierarchy. Therefore, refusals based on lack of car parking need to be thoroughly robust and it must be demonstrated why the developments are not in accessible and sustainable locations. If they do not, Planning Inspectors are allowing appeals. The Chief Planning Inspector has recently held a feedback session with the Planning Committee on this very topic.

I am familiar with member concerns and the issues HMOs can cause. However, I believe new or updated Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is not the solution. An SPG is guidance only. It provides additional guidance on the main policy or policies within the Local Development Plan (LDP). In relation to the current HMO SPG, Policy H8 of the LDP only permits HMOs if:

- The scale and intensity does not harm the character of the building and locality as well as cause an unacceptable reduction in the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or result in on street parking problems.
- The proposal does not create an over concentration of HMOs in one area.
- Adequate noise insulation is provided and adequate amenity for future occupiers.

Councillor Townsend will be aware that the Council has recently approved the review of the LDP. It would be much more effective for us to review policy H8 rather than produce more guidance. Any new HMO policy will need to be examined by an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Government and the evidence supporting any new policy will therefore need to be robust. We will engage with partners such as Gwent Police and review complaints made to other Council services to gather such evidence. Consultation with residents, Members and stakeholders is at the heart of the LDP review process and I would welcome Council Townsend's engagement in the review of the HMO policy.

11. **Democratic Services Committee Minutes: 29 April 2021**

The minutes of Democratic Services Committee 29 April and Governance and Audit Committee 27 were before the council for noting.

But there were recommendations from both Committees for Council to agree the necessary changes to the Constitution as a consequence of the amendments to the name, terms of reference and membership of the Governance & Audit Committee. The Mayor moved these recommendations from the chair and this was duly seconded

Agreed:

That the recommendations from the Democratic Services Committee and Governance and Audit Committee regarding the proposed changes to the name, terms of reference and membership of the Governance & Audit Committee be approved and adopted and that the necessary changes should be made to the Constitution to reflect these changes.

12. **Governance and Audit Committee Minutes: 27 May 2021**

As agreed in item 11 (above).