

Minutes



Cabinet

Date:	14 June 2017
Time:	4.00 pm
Present:	Councillors D Wilcox (Chair), P Cockeram, G Giles, R Jeavons, D Mayer, J Mudd, R Truman and M Whitcutt
In Attendance:	W Godfrey (Chief Executive), M Nicholson and B Owen (Strategic Directors), G Price (Monitoring Officer), M Rushworth (Head of Finance), R Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change), K Duffin (Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing).
Apologies:	Councillor D Harvey

1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2017 were confirmed as a true record.

2 Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2016-17

The Deputy Leader presented the annual monitoring report on the Council's progress against its Welsh language commitments during 2016-17. The following points were highlighted:

- This year has been the first full year of implementing the majority of the Welsh Language Standards which came to force on the 30th of March 2016.
- The implementation of the Welsh Language Standards remains on the council's Risk Register although the risk level has been reduced to Medium Risk.
- To address the risk we have implemented the Standards in a systematic way, with resources identified for translation and roll-out of the Standards. To improve accountability, the Welsh Language Implementation Group, which has representation from all service areas as well as Newport Norse and Newport LIVE, meets every month and reports to the Strategic Equalities group.
- We've undertaken a lot of work to make the council culture 'Welsh language friendly'. The Welsh language is more visible in the environment, with door signs and posters around our buildings, and council staff greet people bilingually. Welsh speaking Council staff feel encouraged to use the language in the workplace, and our Welsh language learners practice their new skills.
- In consulting on the 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy for Newport people told us that they valued the language and supported people having services and education through the medium of Welsh – if that's their choice. Welsh speakers were all very positive about the changes we've made, and feel more included and engaged.
- In the year ahead we've identified areas of work including:

- Delivering the 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy for Newport, with our partners
- Testing, and improving the resilience of our Welsh language customer service
- Rolling out a revised Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment, which includes the Welsh language
- Identifying and recording the customer's choice of language

The Leader and Deputy Leader both congratulated staff in all areas of the Council for the excellent progress made against the new Welsh language standards.

Decision:

To approve the attached report and publish it on the Council's website in accordance with statutory deadlines.

3 Strategic Equality Plan - Annual Report

The Deputy Leader presented the annual report for 2016-17 on the Strategic Equality Plan. The following points were highlighted:

- This year has been the first year of delivery of the new Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020.
- The Plan identified nine equality objectives that the authority would measure itself against over the next four years. The objectives chosen were based on the work that had been delivered in the previous Equality Plan and as well as the Welsh Language Scheme. This has been done in line with the new ways of working as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- In the past 12 months we have made positive progress towards meeting our equality objectives and a great deal of hard work has been carried out to promote equality of opportunity for all. Progress has included
 - Development of the Workforce Planning Template and data dashboard
 - Publishing our 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy
 - Continued reduction in the number of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training)
 - Established a support team to deliver the Home Office Syrian Refugees Resettlement Scheme
 - Improved engagement with our Deaf Community
 - Delivered 'Ask and Act' training in order to improve awareness of Domestic Abuse
 - Responding to over 3,200 referrals to the accommodation-based and floating support services
- Progress on the Plan is monitored by the Strategic Equalities group which is chaired by the Deputy Leader and includes representation from the Fairness Commissions, elected members, Heads of Service and lead officers.
- The report also includes equalities data pertaining to our own staff and this enables us to gauge the extent to which we are representative of the community we serve as well as highlight actions that we need to take in order to better represent our electorate. We have also included information on how the authority collects data and uses the information in setting strategic direction, services planning and within the decision making process.
- In the year ahead we will be continuing our efforts to deliver on the plan and focus our efforts on mainstreaming equalities so it becomes part of our everyday business.

In considering the report, Cabinet raised the issue of compliments and complaints, commenting that as an authority we needed to be better at recording and sharing positive

feedback. The Head of People and Business Change agreed that this was an area that needed further development, and noted that a number of compliments had been received in relation to our work on Equalities and Welsh Language.

The Leader commended the staff in People and Business Change for the excellent progress made in delivering the Strategic Equalities Plan.

Decision:

To note the attached report and progress made against the Equality Objectives.

4 **Early Year End Performance Indicator Analysis**

The Leader presented the report informing Cabinet of the early analysis of the Council's performance figures for 2016-17. In presenting the report, the Leader highlighted:

- The report contained the initial analysis of the authority's figures. More detailed information and analysis would be presented later in the year after the all-Wales comparator information is released.
- Performance continued to improve in 2016-17, against a background of legislative changes, political uncertainty nationally, budget reductions, and an increasing population. Despite these challenges, the authority had continued to set itself stretching targets, and had achieved 57.5% of service plan measures meeting or exceeding their targets. The authority also continued to perform well against its improvement plan priorities.
- 30% of measures were showing as amber (within 15% of the target). Reasons for this were understood and included the very stretching targets put in place, but also, in some cases, targets being set for new measures where there was no precedent to follow. There would be a period of adjustment for these measures, and targets would be amended this year to more accurately reflect achievable outcomes.

Cabinet Members commented upon the challenging circumstances faced by the local authority, including reductions to the budget and increasing responsibilities from new legislation.

The Chief Executive and Cabinet Members commented on the positive results achieved in difficult circumstances, congratulating staff for the continuing improvements to performance across the authority.

Decision:

To note the contents of the report, and receive a further update on the final year-end position once the data is available.

5 **Improvement Plan 2016-18: Quarter 4 Update**

The Leader presented the latest update on performance against the Improvement Plan. Overall progress against the plan this quarter was rated as "Green - good".

The Leader highlighted the two measures shown as "Amber – slightly short of target", and explained the reasons for these variances:

- In objective 1, Improving Independent Living for Older People, two of the five performance measures were showing as red. As was referenced in the performance analysis report earlier on the agenda, these were two of the new measures introduced by the Social Services and Wellbeing Act last year, so the targets set needed to be adjusted to make them more realistic.

- In objective 8, Preventing Offending and Re-Offending of Young People, this area had been subject to major changes this year which had naturally impacted upon performance. However, significant progress had still been made here, and above expectations, thanks to the dedication and hard work of the staff in that service.

The following points were discussed:

- The excellent progress made in Improvement Objective 5: supporting young people into education, employment or training. The “NEETs” rate (young people not in education, employment or training) had fallen further, and the authority was performing far above expectation, and was the 8th best performing authority in Wales in this field. Cabinet also congratulated the staff involved for being nominated for an award for their work in this area.
- The Leader reported that she was working to develop a “Newport Guarantee”, to ensure that every young person left school with a choice of a job, training or further education. Discussions were also taking place with neighbouring authorities to see if this could be developed regionally.
- The excellent progress made in Improvement Objective 7: increasing recycling. For the first time, the authority was expected to hit the target of 60% of municipal waste reused, recycled and composted. Cabinet Members and Officers commended the staff involved on this achievement.

Decision:

To note the progress made during the fourth quarter of 2016/17 regarding key actions and measures; and to agree the corrective action to be taken to address areas of underperformance.

6 Revenue Budget Out-Turn 2016-17

The Leader presented the Revenue Budget Out-Turn for 2016-17, highlighting the following points:

- The confirmed use of the underspend, as was reported to and agreed by Cabinet at its meeting in March 2017. Following this series of one-off investments, the final position showed a balanced budget with a small underspend of £326k.
- The key issues arising from the out-turn, which Cabinet would be monitoring closely over the coming months, in implementing the 2017-18 budget and planning for 2018-19.
- The overspends returned in some areas. The reasons for these variances were understood, and outlined in detail within the report. However, thanks to the prudent financial management of the Council’s staff, these overspends would be offset by underspends achieved in other areas, resulting in a balanced budget.

Decisions:

- To note the out-turn position, which is subject to audit and the major variances for the year (paragraphs 3-7).
- To note the current level of general and specific reserves (appendix 4).
- To approve the use of the underspend as set out in paragraph 20 of the report.
- To note the concerns around on-going financial management given the recurring nature of some of the issues which have arisen during 2016-17.

7 **Capital Budget Out-Turn**

The Leader presented the Capital Budget Out-Turn for 2016-17. The following points were highlighted:

- The report included a number of carry forward requests. The reasons for slippage on these projects were understood and justified, and Cabinet were working closely with officers to monitor these schemes and ensure they are kept on track.
- Taking the carry forward requests into account, there had been a small underspend of £753k on completed projects.
- 2016-17 was the third year of the four year capital programme. As a newly elected administration, Cabinet would be looking at its spending priorities going forward, and putting a new capital programme together over the coming months.

Decisions:

- To note the outturn position for the 2016-17 capital programme and to approve budget carry forwards requested to cover slippage into 2017-18.
- To note the balance of and approve the future earmarking of Useable Capital Receipts as detailed in the report. This includes the proposed use of Joint Venture receipts and the decision-making process for these, which is subject of another report on this agenda.

8 **Treasury Management**

The Leader presented the Treasury Management report for 2016/17. This report had been presented to Audit Committee according to the required process, and would be forwarded to Council for final approval. The Leader highlighted the following points:

- No specific feedback had been received from Audit Committee, only a note to highlight the need for member training to understand this highly technical report. The Leader underlined that member development was a key priority for the administration, and appropriate training would be offered on this for all Members.
- The excellent news that the sale of Friars Walk had been completed. The details of the sale would be the subject of a full report to Cabinet in July. The Leader reported that she had attended a very positive meeting that afternoon with a representative of the buyer, who had commended the authority on the bold decisions taken to secure the development.

Cabinet Members and Officers echoed the comments made regarding Friars Walk, particularly paying tribute to the hard work of the Head of Law and Regulation and the Head of Finance in brokering the negotiations and securing the final agreement.

Decisions:

- To note the Annual Report on Treasury Management for the Financial Year 2016/17.
- To note that 2016/17 Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management were in line with those set by Council in February 2016.
- To note that these will require formal review and approval by full Council.

9 **Agreed Internal Sign Off Process for Welsh Government and NCC Joint Venture Monies**

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing outlined the proposed agreement to establish a protocol for joint venture monies between Welsh Government and Newport City Council. The monies between both parties result from Newport Unlimited activities where it

was agreed there would be a split on any income accrued within regeneration activities undertaken by Newport Unlimited.

In order for Newport based economic regeneration projects to have access to the £2.6 Million accrued from Old Town Dock Development, and Alacrity House Rent of £244,000, there is a requirement to create an internal protocol, in order to satisfy our own audit requirements, but also Welsh government as a fund holder.

Welsh Government have already committed to £150,000 for USW National Cyber Academy and £150,000 towards creating a digital hub that will be taken from the monies accrued.

There are also further projects which may accrue profit in the future, which we wish to capture within this proposal. These are:

- University Option land (south of campus)
- University Campus
- Land at Mission Court
- Land south of SDR
- Alacrity House – (further potential rental)

Decision:

To approve the order of the protocol as outlined below:

External Arrangement

1. Cabinet approve the protocol
2. All funds would be spent on economic Regeneration activities within Newport, until such time as a new City Centre Masterplan is agreed.
3. A letter confirming Newport City Council's position is sent to Welsh Government to confirm this and agreement obtained from them in writing.

Internal Arrangement (Option 1 agreed)

1. Approval sought from Infrastructure and Development Board / Welsh Government
2. Cabinet member report to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration setting out how it meets the City Centre Masterplan. (previously City centre economic regeneration)

10 **Cabinet Work Programme**

The Leader presented the Cabinet Work Programme, including the following additions to the programme for July:

- Newport Economic Network
- City of Democracy

Decision:

To agree the proposed programme.