

Minutes



Council

Date: 24 April 2018

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors M Al-Nuaimi, J Cleverly, P Cockeram, M Cornelious, K Critchley, D Davies, C Evans, M Evans, C Ferris, D Fouweather, G Giles, J Guy, D Harvey, R Jeavons, M Kellaway, D Mayer, R Mogford, J Mudd, M Rahman, J Richards, M Spencer, T Suller, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, R Truman, T Watkins, M Whitcutt, R White, K Whitehead, D Wilcox, D Williams, G Berry, V Dudley, Y Forsey, R Hayat, T Holyoake, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, S Marshall, W Routley, H Townsend and J Watkins.

Apologies: Councillors C Jenkins, M Linton, A Morris, J Clarke and L Lacey

1. Preliminaries

i) To receive any apologies for absence

The Monitoring Officer reported apologies for absence.

ii) To receive any declarations of interest

None.

iii) To receive any announcements by the Mayor

The Mayor led the Council in offering congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the birth of their third child.

2. Minutes

The following amendments were put forward for the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2018:

- On item 6 (Questions to the Leader of the Council) Councillor Matthew Evans asked that the minute show he had asked for details of the money allocated for the footbridge project in 2014, as was reported at the time in the South Wales Argus.
- On item 7 (Questions to the Cabinet Members) Councillor Gail Giles asked that the minute show that there had been some confusion over the question ask by Councillor Watkins, as this was different from the question submitted.

With the amendments above, the minutes for the meetings held on 27 February and 27 March 2018 were confirmed as a true record.

3. Appointments

The following appointments were agreed:

Internal Appointments

Committee	No. of Vacancies / Replacements	Nominations Received
Democratic Services Committee	1 replacement	Cllr Laura Lacey to replace Cllr Jane Mudd
HR Appeals	2 replacements	Cllr Laura Lacey to replace Cllr Jane Mudd Cllr Deb Davies to replace Cllr Deb Harvey

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	No. of Vacancies / Re-appointments	Nominations Received
Alway Primary	1 re-appointment	Rodney Webb
Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary	1 re-appointment 1 vacancy	Cllr Gail Giles Cllr Jason Hughes
Llisbury High	1 re-appointment	Rita Reynolds
St Andrews Primary	3 re-appointments	Cllr Roger Jeavons, Cllr Ken Critchley, Rita Reynolds
St Julians Primary	1 re-appointment	Elaine Bryant
The John Frost School	1 re-appointment	Cllr Debbie Wilcox
Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd	1 re-appointment	Daniel Davies
Caerleon Comprehensive	1 vacancy	Ann Price
Pillgwenlly Primary	1 vacancy	Fabi Berrettoni
Milton Primary	1 vacancy	Umber Ahmed

4. Police Issues

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

- In response to a question from Councillor Matthew Evans, Superintendent Roberts assured Council that Gwent Police would continue to carry out parking enforcement until those powers were transferred to the Council. While general parking

enforcement had to be prioritised alongside other police work and resources, Members were assured that flagged issues would be investigated and followed up.

- Superintendent Roberts agreed to follow up on the issues raised by Councillor Wilcox and Councillor Marshall in relation to off road bikes, drug use, and speeding vehicles within the Gaer ward.
- Councillor Jeavons raised concerns about resources to tackle issues within Black Ash Park, which the Superintendent agreed to follow up.
- In response to a query from Councillor Mogford about police parking on double yellow lines, the Superintendent confirmed that this would only be appropriate in an emergency situation, and agreed to follow up on the example given.
- Councillor Deb Davies urged the Police to increase patrols around parks to tackle anti-social behaviour in the summer months. The Superintendent confirmed that the force was aware of the issues within the parks and was working on addressing these.
- Councillor Hourahine asked that thanks be passed on for the time spent on a walking tour ahead of scrutiny of the City Centre PSPO.
- Councillor Joan Watkins requested feedback in addressing reported issues of drug dealing in Caerleon, so that progress could be fed back to residents.

The Mayor thanked Superintendent Roberts for attending.

5. **Notice of Motion: Period Poverty**

The Council considered a motion for which the necessary notice had been provided. The motion was moved by Councillor Wilcox and seconded by Councillor Whitcutt:

That this Council will

- 1. research the availability of free sanitary products in all Secondary Schools in the city as an acknowledgement that they are as essential as toilet paper for the personal hygiene of female pupils.**
- 2. Request that a report be presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee - People which will consider the availability of hygiene products in Newport schools and, if appropriate, bring forward recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet in respect of this matter relating to dignity, equality, health and wellbeing and its effect on education in a city that has a considerable number of pupils living in poverty.**

In moving the motion, Councillor Wilcox highlighted the funding announced in March by Welsh Government to address period poverty, in the form of a one off capital grant and a two year revenue grant. The Leader confirmed that the Council was currently working on how to direct and use those funds, however it was proposed through this motion that a longer term solution was needed. The Leader highlighted the impact of period poverty, including the research showing links with female underachievement.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Whitcutt echoed the Leader's comments on the significance of period poverty, and highlighted the links between this issue and matters of equality and human rights.

Speaking in favour of the motion, Members raised the following points:

- That this was a real issue facing girls and women in Newport.
- That this will make a difference to attainment and attendance of girls at school.
- That facilities were needed to ensure girls have the dignity they deserve.
- That this issue needed to be discussed and brought into the open.
- That this was not just a high school issue - facilities were needed in primary schools too.
- That action could be taken now, for example on social media and the #endperiodpoverty campaign.
- That demand for sanitary products was increasing at food banks.

It was unanimously

Resolved

To adopt the motion as set out in full above.

6. Notice of Motion: Newport to Ebbw Vale Rail Track

The Council considered a motion for which the necessary notice had been provided. The motion was moved by Councillor M Evans and seconded by Councillor Wilcox:

This Council is frustrated by the many delays in the opening of the Newport to Ebbw Vale rail track. It urges Welsh Government to act as a matter of urgency on this matter.

In moving the motion, Councillor M Evans cited the campaign by the South Wales Argus in 2002 to get the Ebbw Vale line “back on track”. There was cross party support then and now for the reopening of the line, and progress was needed as a priority.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Wilcox highlighted the importance of the line to the economic development of the area, and reiterated her commitment to pressing for progress on this issue in all forums, local and national.

A number of Members spoke in support of the motion, praising the consensus on this issue from across the floor, and the importance of this link for the economic and social prosperity of the region.

It was unanimously

Resolved

To adopt the motion as set out in full above.

7. Local Wellbeing Plan

The Leader of the Council introduced the report, asking Council to approve the One Newport Public Services Board’s Wellbeing Plan for 2018-23.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act required the Council to take account of the long term, take a partnership approach, and involve people. The Act also established the Public Services Board (PSB) chaired by the Leader of the Council. The PSB was responsible for an assessment of local well-being and a Local Well-being plan.

The Local Well-being Assessment for Newport was published in May 2017. A Local Well-being Plan, setting out objectives and the steps the PSB would take to meet them, had to be published by May 2018.

The draft plan under consideration was developed by the partnership based on the outcomes in the Well-being Assessment and community profiles. The report outlined 13 priorities that came out of a series of workshops and were agreed by the PSB:

- 1) Newport has a clean and safe environment for people to use and enjoy
- 2) Improve Air Quality across the city
- 3) Communities are resilient to climate change
- 4) People feel part of their community (community cohesion & resilience)
- 5) Participation in physical activity is important for people's physical and mental well-being and resilience
- 6) Participation in arts, heritage and history is important for people's well-being
- 7) Improve the perceptions of Newport as a place to live, work, visit and invest
- 8) Drive up skill levels for economic and social well-being
- 9) Support regeneration and economic growth
- 10) Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
- 11) Long and healthy lives for all (equalise up health life expectancy and life expectancy and health inequalities)
- 12) Ensuring people feel safe in their communities, by reducing crime and antisocial behaviour and fear of crime
- 13) People have access to stable homes in a sustainable supportive community

The next step was to develop a Response Analysis. This was the link between the Local Well-being Assessment and the Local Well-being Plan. The response analysis informed the selection of local objectives and assessed how local services (in a collective sense) were, and could be, addressing them.

Working with 30+ organisations, five cross cutting interventions were identified which spanned the emerging priorities, and maximised the contribution to the well-being goals.

These were:

- The Newport Offer
- Strong Resilient Communities
- Right Skills
- Green and Safe Spaces
- Sustainable Travel

The consultation responses including the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner were outlined in the report. These were considered by the PSB and the Plan had been amended accordingly.

The next stage was for the statutory organisations to adopt the Plan prior to this being finalised at the May PSB.

The Leader concluded by paying tribute to the officers involved in producing this plan, and the huge amount of hard work which had gone into the process.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Support for the content of the plan, and recognition of the work that had gone into it.
- Concerns about the monitoring of the plan, and how success would be measured.
- Concerns about the resources available to deliver the plan.
- The role played by the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships in reviewing the draft plan in its development, and scrutinising its outcomes in the future.

Resolved

To approve the One Newport Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan 2018-23.

8. Pay and Reward Statement

The Leader introduced the report, outlining the annual statement that is updated every April and must be agreed by Council.

The content remained mostly the same as last year, with one main addition for 2018/19: reporting on the Council's gender pay gap. This was reported in the Pay and Reward Policy, would be reported in the annual Strategic Equality Duty report, and had been published on the gov.uk website. There was no requirement for Welsh local authorities to publish on the gov.uk website but was submitted in the interests of openness and transparency.

From running and verifying the data, it was confirmed that the Council's gender pay gap as at 31st March 2017 was 1.2%, which was some way below the national average of 18.4%

It was noted that the pay and grading exercise in 2015 had contributed to this outcome, as has the increasing number of women in managerial roles across the Council. The Council currently had more female service managers reporting directly to Heads of Service than male, and the flexible working policies in place encouraged greater take up of women progressing to senior roles and balancing commitments outside of work.

The remainder of the policy remained unchanged, however some comparative data was included in the report to show the changes to pay relativity ratios year on year. This showed a consistent narrowing of the gap between our highest and lowest paid employees.

Resolved

To approve the updated Pay and Reward Policy in order to meet the statutory requirement for a pay policy statement to be approved and published by Council on an annual basis.

9. Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report

Councillor Charles Ferris, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, presented the report outlining the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) for adoption by the Council.

Councillor Ferris outlined that remuneration levels would remain static, except for a £200 uplift in the basic allowance for all Members. Senior salaries would remain at the same level. The report also recommended that the rate of payment for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor remain the same as our existing arrangements.

It was also confirmed that the IRPW had removed the provision for a two-tier level of payment for Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs. This provision had been questioned by this Council previously, and had not been used by any Council in Wales.

Finally Councillor Ferris highlighted the IRPW's promotion of the provision for reimbursing costs of care, and the recommendation in the report that any claims made under this provision be anonymised in reporting.

Resolved

That Council

- i) adopts the determinations within the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report 2018-19;
- ii) approves the draft Schedule of Remuneration attached at Appendix 1; and
- iii) agrees that any claims made for reimbursements of costs of care should be anonymised in future reporting of NCC allowance payments.

10. Questions to the Leader of the Council

Leader's announcements

In answer to the first question from the Mayor, the Leader made the following announcements:

- Thanks to the outgoing Mayor on what would be his final Council meeting.
- The inaugural ABP Newport Marathon being staged at the weekend, which was estimated to bring £1.1million into the local authority.
- Congratulations to Newport RFC on reaching the finals of the WRU Challenge Cup.
- The announcement expected soon on the bid for lottery funding for the Transporter Bridge.
- Completion of the recent works to the City Footbridge.
- The £2.5million grant awarded in March to the Living Levels Partnership, for a series of projects designed to restore and enhance the natural heritage and history of the Gwent Levels' unique landscape.
- The success of the Cardiff Capital Region bid, let by Newport officers, for £6million worth of funding from the local full fibre wave two challenge fund to enable improved digital technology in south-east Wales.

Congestion charges and parking levies

Councillor Matthew Evans reported that Cardiff Council were considering introducing congestion charges and levies on car parking, and asked the Leader to rule out any similar plans being introduced in Newport. The Leader responded that she recognised the particular issues with parking in Cardiff, but could not comment upon the actions of another Council, and would not be drawn into any promises to rule this out. In response to a supplementary question, the Leader confirmed that there were no immediate plans to look at such measures.

David 'Bomber' Pearce

Councillor Kevin Whitehead referenced the current campaign to recognise the sporting achievements of local man David "Bomber" Pearce, and asked whether he could be given a posthumous award, for example the Spirit of Newport award or the freedom of the city. The

Leader confirmed that the statue of Mr Pearce would be unveiled on 7 June in the city, and agreed to talk to officers about a potential award.

Great Western Cities Partnership

Councillor Carmel Townsend asked for an update on progress of the Great Western Cities Partnership signed by the former Leaders of Newport and Cardiff, and the former Mayor of Bristol. The Leader confirmed that the authority was pushing for progress, which had been made difficult with changes in the different personnel. There was a clear synergy with the South West region, and discussions were ongoing to try and move this forward, including the potential to expand the partnership to include other cities such as Bath and Swansea.

Newport Market

In response to a question from Councillor Graham Berry, the Leader confirmed the progress that had been made in communications with the traders at Newport Market. Long term options for the Market were being considered, meanwhile regular meetings were being held with traders to discuss short term solutions to improve footfall and organise events.

Transporter Bridge

Councillor Charles Ferris asked whether any contingency plans were in place in case the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the Transporter Bridge was unsuccessful. The Leader confirmed that pressure was being applied at the highest level for Welsh Government support, and the situation would need to be reviewed after the outcome of the bid was received. While the authority was committed to preserving the Transporter Bridge, the level of funding needed was beyond the reach of the Council, and would have to be considered against the delivery of statutory services.

11. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

The following questions were submitted and answered.

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Councillor Joan Watkins asked:

After a recent visit in March by Estyn Inspectors St Julians comprehensive School remains in special measures. Newport High School in Bettws is also in the special measures category. Stemming from recent Welsh Government rankings assessment, in Jan 2017 Llanwern High School slipped into the red zone.

Can the Cabinet Member responsible for Education give a cast iron guarantee that Llanwern High School will not also sink into the special measures category and what actions are being taken to prevent this happening.

The Cabinet Member responded:

The Cabinet Member referenced the similar question answered at the Council meeting in February, and added that all schools had areas of strength, and there was a lot to be proud of within Newport schools. Every local authority had schools in all categories, including red schools, but Newport had the highest number of green schools in the region. GCSE rankings had improved, and performance was above expected levels for the numbers of children in receipt of free school meals.

The Cabinet Member stated that Estyn and the EAS were experts in identifying needs for support, and red categorisation ensured the highest level of support. Support was provided

by the EAS and the local authority working in partnership to consistently review the capacity of schools to move forward. The Cabinet Member also noted that Newport had never been placed in special measures, and with the high levels of success this was unlikely to happen in the future.

The Cabinet Member recognised Estyn as Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools, who gave an unquestionable judgement. The local authority would continue to do what it could, but there could not be any cast iron guarantees as inspection judgements were for Estyn to determine. In reference to Llanwern High School, all appropriate support had been put in place, and outcomes were looking significantly better than last year. The Cabinet Member closed by thanking the school staff for their continued hard work, as well as the governors, community and education department for their ongoing support.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Watkins' questioned whether raising standards was Estyn's responsibility, and stated that the authority should be doing what it could to raise standards. In response the Cabinet Member confirmed that the authority fulfilled all requirements for its responsibilities, and support given was down to all agencies and schools working together.

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing

Councillor William Routley asked:

Between April 2016 to March 2017 Newport Council received £174,400 in 'transitional funding' from the Welsh Government to help assist the authority with Homelessness Prevention. Between April 2017 and March 2018 Newport Council received another £139,440. Also, in August 2017, a further £159,615.51 in funding was received. The Council has also made £75,000 available from its own budgets from 2016 to 2018. It is good that £58,933.06 has been spent on assisting Edengate with opening an all year night-shelter. However if all the funding were channelled more efficiently into one project such as funding the renovation of a block of flats and incorporating a permanent night-shelter on the ground-floor, does the Council feel this would greatly reduce homelessness in the City?

The Cabinet Member responded:

Homelessness across the UK was rising, for many and varied reasons. Street homelessness was at the acute and visible end. The authority in fact saw around 2,000 households each year who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The problems varied greatly, so a multifaceted approach was required. The funding was to support delivery of the authority's duties under the Housing Act 2015. The majority of this was revenue funding, so could not be used for capital projects, so negotiations would be needed with officers for any capital funding to support a night shelter. Additional interventions were also needed for rough sleeping and developing other support schemes, and the Cabinet Member did not feel that putting all funding into one project would benefit the many causes of homelessness, as solutions needed to be varied.

Supplementary question:

In response to Councillor Routley's supplementary question on the allocation of transitional funding for homelessness prevention, the Cabinet Member confirmed that a considerable amount of money was received through grant funding, being fed into a wide range of different projects, including Llamau mediation, securing more private rented accommodation, additional rough sleeper interventions, increasing funding for homelessness prevention, the Solas café, extending night shelter provision, and increasing the supported lodging scheme. The focus has been on homelessness prevention and each pound invested saved £4 for Council services, and £8 across all public services. The most recent rough sleeper count for

Newport was 18 people – while this was 18 people too many, rough sleeping was at the acute and visible end of homelessness, and needed to be considered in the context of interventions for 2,000 households each year.

12. **Questions to the Chairs of Committees**

No questions were submitted on this occasion.

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm