

Minutes



Council

Date: 30 April 2019

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors M Al-Nuaimi, P Cockeram, M Cornelious, D Davies, C Evans, M Evans, C Ferris, D Fouweather, G Giles, J Guy, D Harvey, I Hayat, M Kellaway, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, A Morris, J Mudd, M Rahman, J Richards, M Spencer, T Suller, H Thomas, K Thomas, 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, L Lacey, S Marshall and J Watkins

Apologies: Councillors J Cleverly, K Critchley, R Jeavons, C Jenkins, C Townsend, J Clarke, W Routley and H Townsend

1. Preliminaries

i) To receive any apologies for absence

The Monitoring Officer reported apologies for absence.

ii) To receive any declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

iii) To receive any announcements by the Mayor

Ron Morris

The Mayor led the Council in offering tributes for the former Councillor and Mayor Ron Morris, who sadly passed away last month.

Jordan Routley

The Mayor led the Council in offering condolences to the Mayor Elect, Councillor William J Routley, and his family in the wake of the tragic death of his Grandson, Jordan Routley.

The Mayor led a minutes silence as a mark of respect and remembrance to Ron Morris and Jordan Routley.

Mayors Charity Events

The Mayor updated the Council on recent events hosted by the Mayors Charity including the Elvis night on 12 April, and the Golf Day at the Celtic Manor on 17 April. The Mayor thanked those who has supported these events.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 February were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendment:

- List of abstentions added to the vote in item 5 - Revenue Budget 2019-20 and Medium Term Financial Plan.

3. Appointments

Councillor Harvey presented the report and updated the Council on the proposed changes to Committee appointments.

Resolved

To approve the following nominations:

Internal Appointments

Committee	No of Vacancies / Replacements	Nominations received
Licensing Committee	1	Cllr Allan Morris to be removed, no replacement (Vacancy)

Appointments to External Organisations

Organisation	No of Vacancies / Replacements	Nominations received
None		

Governing Bodies

Governing Body	No of Vacancies / reappointments	Nominations received
Millbrook Primary	1	Mrs L Stannard to be reappointed
Clytha Primary	1	Mrs Anne Timbrill to replace Cllr C Ferris

4. Police Issues

The Mayor offered the Council's congratulations to the Chief Constable on the news of his imminent retirement. The Mayor thanked the Chief Constable for his service and support to the City during his time with Gwent Police.

The Chief Constable Nigel Lewis gave a presentation with an overview of issues within City Centre Policing.

The Leader thanked the Officers for attending the meeting to discuss their work with the Council, and thanked the Chief Constable for his hard work and commended him for the relationship he has built with the Council during his time in post. The Leader wished the Chief Constable best wishes for his retirement.

Councillors asked the following questions:

- In response to a question from Councillor Hourahine, the Superintendent Ian Roberts outlined the success of Operation Harley which had targeted the illegal use of off road bikes.
- Councillor M Evans raised concerns regarding safety in the city centre, Detective Superintendent Ian Roberts outlined that there were around 30 incidents in the city centre and the police work with those affected to consider the underlying issues. When considering homelessness and rough sleeping, the officer outlined the importance of striking the balance between supporting vulnerable people and taking appropriate enforcement action.
- Councillor J Watkins asked whether Newport has an issue with people coming from outside the city to beg in the city centre. Inspector Lewis noted that there was an issue with people coming from outside the city who were being signposted to their own local authorities for support.
- Regarding the wands being issued to stop and search people going into night clubs, Councillor T Watkins questioned whether this had been successful in people being refused entry. Inspector Lewis confirmed that there has been a number of arrests for possessions of offensive weapons as a result of these searches, the volume was particularly high and not comparative to cities such as Manchester and London.
- Councillor C Evans spoke of the balance of enforcement action for violent offences, compared to those vulnerable people who needed support.

The Mayor thanked the Police for their attendance and contribution at the meeting.

5. **Boundary Commission Review**

It was clarified that Members could speak to each recommendation as they would be considered individually by Council.

The Leader presented the report outlining the process undertaken by the Council to establish a Cross Party Group to review the evidence and the formulation of proposals for future electoral arrangements in the city, for debate by Council.

The Leader thanked all group representatives and the supporting Officers for their contributions within a challenging timeframe. The Leader also thanked the Commission for their support during the process and for agreeing for the short extension to enable the Council to debate the options at this meeting.

Recommendation 1:

It was **resolved** that the Council support the minor amendments to boundaries set out in the Minor Anomalies section of this report.

Recommendation 2:

Option 2a was moved and seconded.

Councillors Kellaway spoke against option A as he felt it ignored the community differences of the areas affected that would result in the demise of the Llanwern area. It also did not take into consideration the natural typography and roads within the wards.

Councillor Mogford spoke in support of Option B – to move Bishton Community Council area, comprising Bishton and Underwood Community Wards, into Langstone. He felt that Bishton Community area would fit well within the semi-rural ward of Langstone and that there was a strong synergy of Communities within this option.

It was **resolved** that the Council support option 2a – *Move Llanwern Community into Ringland.*

Recommendation 3:

Option 3a was moved and seconded.

Councillor C Evans spoke against option 3a, citing the practical implications of dividing the community in this way. He spoke in favour of the status quo in Rogerstone as he felt the division was unnecessary.

Councillor M Evans spoke in support of option 3a, as it addressed the under-representation of Rogerstone in the most practical way within the options available, and provided 2 wards of 2 councillors each, rather than creating single member wards.

It was **resolved** that the Council support option 3a – *Create two new wards of Rogerstone West Community Ward (2 Councillors) and combining Rogerstone North and East community wards. (2 Councillors)*

Recommendation 4

Option 4a was moved and seconded.

Councillor M Evans spoke against option 4a. citing the discussion supported at the Democratic Services Committee that the Mon Bank area of Pillgwenlly was closer in proximity to Stow Hill which made Option 4b a more practical option.

Councillor Fouweather spoke on the recommendation, noting that it was a difficult choice with no clear solution. He noted that Option 4b would be splitting a community, whilst option 4b (moving the new estate of Mon Bank to Stow Hill) was potentially more practical as it was moving a community in its entirety.

It was **resolved** that the Council support option 4a: *Add the “Riverside” area of Pillgwenlly to Stow Hill.*

Recommendation 5

Option 5b was moved and seconded.

Councillor R White spoke against option 5b, as he felt it broke the local community ties of St Brides and Peterstone that together form the Wentlooge Community Council area. The proposal would also not have clear boundaries and would not be effective or convenient for Community Council to operate effectively over two city council electoral wards should it go ahead. The Councillor spoke in favour of option 5a.

Councillor T Suller also spoke in favour of option 5a.

It was **resolved** that the Council support Option 5b: *add St Brides and CoedKernew Wards to Tredegar Park.*

Recommendation 6 and 7

Options 6a and 7a were moved and seconded.

Cllr D Davies spoke in support of recommendation 6a, noting the geographical divisions of the Beechwood ward into 4 distinct areas. It was noted that the Beechwood ward contained distinct communities which each had their own identities. Should the Councillor numbers be reduced to two, it would be untenable and difficult to manage.

Councillor M Evans spoke against increasing the overall size of the Council by one, and spoke in support of the Boundary recommendation to reduce by one Councillor to a total of 49.

Councillor K Whitehead spoke against any reductions, suggesting that the changes were unnecessary and the calculations did not properly take into account those adults who were not on the electoral register and therefore were not able to be counted in the modelling.

It was **resolved** that the Council support option 6a: *Retain three Councillors in Beechwood, and option 7 a: Retain three Councillors in Bettws resulting in a Council size of 51.*

Recommendation 8

Cllr C Evans queried why this ward was not being split in the same way that Rogerstone had been in Recommendation 3. The Head of Law and Regulation explained that the Boundary Commission would not accept any new 4 member wards, however where the Council had existing 4 Member wards that were within the parameters in terms of their representation, as was the case for Lliswerry.

It was **resolved** to support the proposal to retain four representatives in Lliswerry, and retire the old spelling of Liswerry in favour of using Lliswerry as the English form.

6. Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report

Councillor Charles Ferris presented the report as the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) was the body tasked with setting the remuneration levels for Councils in Wales and that this report presented their Annual Report for 2019-20.

The Democratic Services Committee had reviewed these proposals at draft stage and provided comments back to the Remuneration Panel as part of their consultation process. As Chair of Democratic Services Committee, Councillor Ferris outlined his attendance at a meeting with Democratic Services Chairs from other Authorities to discuss these changes with the Panel directly.

The principle changes for this year are as follows:

- An increase of 1.97% to basic salaries, equating to £268
- An increase of £800 to executive member salaries, inclusive of the basic rate rise
- A change in banding for the civic and deputy civic heads, removing the separate scale of payments for these posts

Resolved

That the Council adopt the determinations within the independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2019-20, and approved the draft schedule for Remuneration attached at Appendix 1 of the agenda.

7. Pay and Reward Policy

The Leader presented this report to the Council and advised that the Pay and Reward Policy was an Annual Report that the Council was required to approve, setting out the internal mechanisms for remunerating Council Officers.

The Leader advised the Council on key update this year:

- The NJC pay structure for the majority of Council staff has been altered as a result of the nationally agreed pay award for 2019. This affects all Councils and we have been required to review and update our pay grades to reflect the new, national position.
- A new collective agreement had been signed by the recognised trade unions representing those NJC workers and comes into effect this month. The lowest paid Council employee would now receive contractual pay equivalent to the Foundation Living Wage hourly rate of £9.00 per hour.
- In addition to this change, this Pay and Reward Policy reported the annual gender pay gap. The gap has increased to 4% from last year's reported 1% and analysis of data shows that this was because significantly lower paid men had left the workplace than women.

Resolved

That the Council approve the updated Pay and Reward Policy in order to meet statutory requirements for a 'pay statement' to be published.

8. Capital Strategy Update - Commercialisation Approach

The Leader presented the report and outlined the reasons for the Council adopting the approach in the current financial context.

The Council was faced with finding £30 million from its budget over the next 3 years for which it was considering the options available to address the size of the challenge. At its last meeting the Cabinet had agreed an approach to establish a trading company to capture and generate profit making activities, further research was needed on this and the proposed report allocated up to a maximum of £100,000 to undertaken this for Cabinet to review.

Commercial properties, and set up an investment Board allocated borrowing capacity up to £50 million for potential investments. The primary objective of this approach was to support the vision rooted within the Corporate Plan and to promote social value. The second objective was to generate a profit that would be used to support core services of the Council.

The report was moved and seconded.

Cllr M Evans moved the following amendment:

'Note that Cabinet recommended that these approaches be pursued, including the establishment of a **£25m** commercial property fund to create a net income for the Council, subject to the Councils consideration through their inclusion in the Council's Capital Strategy'

The amendment was seconded by Cllr D Williams. When put to the meeting, the amendment was declared **lost**.

The substantive motion was debated.

Points made against the substantive motion:

- £25 million was considered a more prudent and proportionate amount to mitigate the risk;
- It was argued that the Council has adequate resources and expertise to undertake the feasibility study in house.
- the balance for commercial responsiveness and the need to ensure public accountability.

Points made in support of the report

- Investment of capital was needed to support spending on core services and this approach was necessary to bridge the funding gap.
- Expert advice for the feasibility study was required to ensure risk minimised and ensure investment compliant with the prudential code;
- £25 million would not result in the critical mass to support the necessary spend on core services.

It was **resolved**

That the Council:

1. Note the development of the commercialisation approach, in particular the two options outlined as the first step towards implementing this approach, as a strategy to contribute towards the Council's on-going financial challenges.
2. Note that Cabinet recommended that these approaches be pursued, including the establishment of a £50m commercial property fund to create a net income for the Council, subject to the Council's consideration through their inclusion in the Council's Capital Strategy.
3. Consider the benefits & risks of the proposed commercialisation strategy recommendation from Cabinet, in particular the establishment of a £50m property investment fund.
4. Note the Council will be committing to a long-term indebtedness and the risks associated with this, highlighted in this report, alongside existing risks.
5. Having regard to the above:
 - o Approve the update to the capital strategy extract in Appendix 1 which sets out these options to the Council's commercialisation approach.
 - o Approve a borrowing limit of £50m and associated approved limits in the Appendix 2

9. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Leader's Announcements

The Leader made the following announcements:

- This weekend Newport will be hosting the ABP Newport Marathon and 10km run.
- Dying to Work Charter – the Council will be reviewing sick pay and policy to reflect this. By signing the Charter the Council has demonstrated its commitment to employees facing tragic personal circumstances.
Missing a bullet point - Young Person's promise – sets out the rights of children and young people when accessing Council services. The Charter for Newport has been developed by young people for young people and includes the commitments that matter most to the young people of Newport.
- The Newport Economic Network has announced a proposal to establish a National Technology Institute in the city. This would be a world-leading institution delivering higher education technology programmes emphasising innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialisation. It would produce the skills necessary for Wales to benefit from opportunities for our communities.

Newport Economic Network

Councillor M Evans raised concerns regarding the Cabinet's stated commitment to openness and transparency; firstly citing that a Cabinet Member had refused to answer a questions at Scrutiny Committee relating to the Newport Economic Network; and secondly citing examples of significant decisions being taken in private. In order to promote openness and transparency, the Leader was asked whether a public meeting with local business people would be held to listen to their concerns and issues.

The Leader outlined that the Newport Economic Network was an external meeting, and the answer to the question asked needed to come from the Network rather than the Cabinet Member. The Leader agreed to pass on Cllr Evans comments to the Chair of the Network and seek clarification on the points raised. In relation to the decisions taken confidentially, the Leader highlighted the established precedence for this approach and issues of commercial confidentiality that can impact on the availability of information ahead of decisions relating to major projects.

As a supplementary question, Cllr Evans queried the amount of detail included in the minuted decisions in the examples cited.

In response, the Leader asked that the advice previously given by the Chief Executive and the Head of Law and Regulation regarding public access to reports be circulated.

Litter Picking

Councillor Whitehead commended those who took part in the city wide litter pick recently, and outlined issues of fly tipping and traffic congestion around Docks Way following the roll out of the new size rubbish bins. The Leader was asked whether Officer Support from the Council could be provided to the many litter Groups operating in the city. It was noted that there were increasing instances of these groups dealing with hazardous material such as sharps.

The Leader also commended the efforts of volunteers participating in litter picks, and recognised the national issue of fly tipping, however due to limited resources within the Council, it was unlikely that direct Officer Support would be available for these activities.

Councillors Whitehead asked whether a liaison officer would be able to provide training and support in other ways to these groups. The Leader agreed to look into this suggestion.

Welsh Government Circular Economy Fund

Councillor Hourahine asked the Leader whether the fund launched by the Deputy Minters for Local Government minister yesterday would be of benefit to Newport.

The Leader confirmed that the Deputy Minister for Local Government had launched the fund of £6.5 million to drive Wales towards a circular economy. Grants of between £25,000 and £750,000 would be available to business to look at their use of recycling materials. This fund was investment from the Welsh Government to available to businesses to look at their use to recycled materials in manufacturing and it was intended that this would stimulate secondary recycling materials the more that was recycled packaging produced in wales would increase the demand of this over the raw material. The Leader highlighted the ambitious targets set by the Welsh Government of 75% recycling within the Zero Waste Strategy.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hourahine asked for an update on how the roll out of the new bins was progressing, and whether there was any indication of this increasing recycling since its implementation.

The Leader advised the Council that local authority waste targets were challenging and the Council was acutely aware of the need to protect the environment and meet these targets. The Cabinet Member had approved a number of recommendations recently aimed at improving the recycling rate, and the introduction of the smaller bins began on the 1 April 2019. 20,000 bins had been issued, which had generated 4,000 additional requests for recycling bins. It was still in the early stages of implementation, however the early indications show that the volume of rubbish had reduced by approximately 30%, food waste had increased by 25% and gardening waste had increased. If these figures were maintained, the Council would exceed its target and save the Council money. 98% of residents were complying with the policy, and the Leader thanked the people of Newport for this.

10. Questions to the Cabinet Members

There were no questions for Cabinet Members.

11. Questions to the Chairs of Committees

There were no questions for Committee Chairs.

12. Standards Committee Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting of the Standards Committee were noted.