

Minutes



Council

Date: 18 July 2023

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Reeks, S Cocks, E Stowell-Corten, J Harris, A Screen, L James, T Harvey, P Bright, J Peterson, A Pimm, D Batrouni, D Jenkins, P Drewett, B Davies, S Adan, M Pimm, C Baker-Westhead, J Reynolds, R Howells, A Sterry, J Jones, G Horton, J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, D Fouweather, D Harvey, M Kellaway, M Linton, D Mayer, R Mogford, J Mudd, M Spencer, K Thomas, C Townsend, T Watkins, K Whitehead, J Clarke, Y Forsey, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, W Routley, A Morris, F Hussain and B Perkins

1. Preliminaries

1.i Apologies

The Presiding Member will report any apologies.
(Councillor M Howells)

1.ii Declarations of Interest

None received.

1.iii Presiding Member's Announcements

The Presiding Member requested that Council observe a minute silence to remember former Mayoress Helen Truman, who sadly passed away last month.

Before commencing with Council business, the Presiding Member was pleased to announce that Newport City Council had recently received a number of honours and awards.

Rhys Thomas, Food Safety and Public Health Manager received honorary recognition by the Faculty of Public Health, part of the Royal College of Physicians. Rhys was acclaimed as a Member of Distinction due to the work he carried out in Public Health Work and on Covid between 2020 to 2022.

Richard Drew, of Ysgol Bryn Derw was awarded Head Teacher of the Year at the Schools and Education Awards, as mentioned in the South Wales Argus recently.

The Presiding Member introduced two Accolades Project Videos for Oaklands and Newport Community Connectors Service, and praised Sally-Ann Jenkins, Strategic Director, for the dedication of the social services staff for their achievements.

The Presiding Member also introduced Mike Wallbank, Assistant Head of Legal Services who was recently appointed and was standing in for the Head of Law and Standards.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the previous meetings: 25 April and the Annual General Meeting 16 May 2023.

Councillor Evans hoped that the Minutes would be sent out in a timely manner and not when the agenda was circulated.

The Minutes of 25 April:

Item 5 – Notice of Motion: City of Sanctuary, Councillor Evans referred to the UK statistics and not Newport, when he mentioned that over 450,000 people had been offered sanctuary since 2015.

Item 5 – Notice of Motion: City of Sanctuary, Councillor Clarke also referred to the debate where Councillor Routley had said that the Leader’s statement was misleading and the Leader had requested an apology.

The Minutes of 16 May:

Item 5 – Appointments to Committees, Councillor Evans mentioned the change to Standards Committee, Councillor Fouweather was replaced by Councillor Routley.

Item 5 – Appointments to Committees, Councillor Whitehead also mentioned that for the Chair of Performance and Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate, Cllr Cleverly was replaced by Cllr Mark Howells.

Item 3 – Appointments to Leader of Council and Cabinet, Councillor Marshall’s name misspelt, (only one ‘l’).

3. Appointments

To consider the proposed appointments set out in the report.

Councillor Clarke moved the appointments set out in the Report, as agreed by the Business managers, subject to the additional appointments set out below and requested that Jackie Littlejohns be removed from Jubilee Park School.

Councillor Evans requested that Councillor Reeks be nominated to be LEA Governor for Jubilee Park School. Councillor Clarke agreed that this would be taken back to Education Services for confirmation, and it would therefore be reported at the next meeting.

Councillor Reeks seconded the report.

Resolved: That the following appointments be agreed.

Governing Body Appointments

Governing Body	No of Vacancies / Re-appointments	Nominations Received
Glasllwch Primary School	Re-Appointment	Gilliam Hyland
Malpas Court Primary School	Re-Appointment	David Mayer
Malpas Park Primary School	Re-Appointment	William Langsford
Ringland Primary School	Re-Appointment	Laura Lacey
Langstone Primary School	Resignation	Ray Mogford

4. Police Issues

The Presiding Member introduced Chief Superintendent Dr Carl Williams of Gwent Police, who provided council members with an update on Police issues within East, West, and Central Newport.

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to address Chief Superintendent Dr Williams.

The Leader mentioned the potential challenges in communities over the summer holidays and confirmed that there were diversionary activities underway with partner agencies. The Leader asked for assurances from the Police that the concerns of citizens would be acted upon, regarding the reporting and tackling of fires, and that the Police would be working closely with South Wales Fire Service.

The Chief Superintendent agreed that this is a challenge, and fires were more likely to occur when land was dry. The Chief Superintendent considered that this is also an educational exercise in order to make sure people are aware of the risks. The Police are working with South Wales Fire Service and will act on any intelligence received. The Chief Superintendent assured the council that the confirmed that residents can call anonymously through Crime Stoppers.

Questions to the Police raised by Councillors:

- Councillor Evans referred to the use of e-bikes, quad bikes on roads. Councillor Evans had witnessed proceeding through two sets of red lights and speeding on Queensway. Councillor Evans said he observed that there was a Police van on the opposite side of the road that did not appear to take any action. Councillor Evans went on to say that whilst he appreciated the sensitivities around this, and asked if the Chief Superintendent could explain why it was not as easy to stop these bikes in some cases. The Chief Superintendent agreed that it was not as simple as stopping a car or other licensed vehicles. The Chief Superintendent added that whilst the police had to act proportionately, this did not excuse people to break the law. The Chief Superintendent went on to say that there are specialist trained officers to deal with these matters and whilst residents may not see police pursuing a vehicle, there are specific operations in place. The Police take the strongest preventative approach to seize the vehicles and prevent these vehicles from being on the road in the first place.
- Councillor Harvey referred to additional CSOs coming to Always Ward and asked when there would be more police officers, as CSOs did not have the same powers as police officers. The Chief Superintendent felt it was important to have the right mix of staff in terms of CSOs and police officers to support the community. Police regularly look at the demand and deploy staff appropriately. This includes traffic police, armed response officers and dog teams.
- Councillor Lacey mentioned that as LGBTQ+ Champion she had some concerns raised by the community. Councillor Lacey asked if information could be provided on measures taken by the Police to ensure that the LGBTQ+ community feel safe, and how Gwent Police addressed online harassment. The Chief Superintendent said that he was Chair of the LGBTQ+ network and it was crucial to allow people to be themselves without prejudice. The police have looked at this element of hate crime that at and provided specialist officers and support officers to support victims. The Chief Superintendent went on to say that an officer with specialist training would automatically be allocated to provide support, guidance, and signposting. School liaison officers in education also go into schools to talk about equalities, inclusion, and diversity training. The Chief Superintendent said that ever cyber/online report is taken seriously, and specialist teams can trace who has written online posts in order to take appropriate action.

- Councillor Mogford referred to the use of e-bikes and e-scooters along the SDR towards Spytty and queried whether the perception held by the public that police are not making an impact could be changed by promoting successes in tackling this. The Chief Superintendent agreed that promotion was key; this is done via Twitter and more could be done in terms of the newsletter for council to make sure that everyone was informed about police action. For example, the police are working closely with government and retailers concerning their corporate responsibility regarding illegal sales of goods. The Chief Superintendent took on board the comments and would take back to the communication team.
- Councillor Adan referred to the recent activation of speed cameras along the SDR and asked how 'Go Safe' communicated to the public about these changes. The Chief Superintendent considered that success was catching zero people with cameras because it means that people are driving within the limits. The Chief Superintendent felt that the police are transparent about this, and speed camera signs are in areas where speed cameras are used as a preventative measure. There have been significant deaths on roads across Wales and the UK and the police make no apologies in putting out speed camera vans in Newport to combat one of the top five causes of collisions and fatalities. The Chief Superintendent went on to say that the police provide speed cameras and vans in places where there are significant public reports of speeding, or where there have been deaths or serious injuries.
- Councillor Reeks mentioned recent thefts from cars overnight in the Rogerstone area and asked for an update on this and potential increases in police patrols. Also, a pedestrian was recently hospitalised due to a cyclist crashing into them at speed in the city centre; Councillor Reeks asked about the powers the police have to limit the speed of cyclists in pedestrian areas. The Chief Superintendent mentioned that cyclists are subject to speed limits and can be issued with fines however they do not receive points like motorists. Regarding the spate of car thefts, the Chief Superintendent reported a downward trend in June to July and confirmed an arrest had been made considering the incident in Rogerstone.
- Councillor Morris referred to the figures in relation to the high number of calls the police are receiving, which he considered to be a huge number of calls for a small force. Councillor Morris asked what the current serving numbers of police officer are in comparison to numbers of 10 years ago and the police are recruiting increase this. The Chief Superintendent was pleased to that the UK wide initiative, Operation Uplift was adding 20,000 additional officers to the service. Whilst the Chief Superintendent could not give exact figures, police in Gwent would move to a position of more than 1,500 officers soon. The Chief Executive considered that there are positive benefits of young officers joining the service and Gwent is one of the youngest work force: these inexperienced officers will receive the best training and nurturing to provide an excellent service for residents of Gwent.
- Councillor Marshall remarked upon noisy vehicles, revving in the night, disrupting residents along the SDR. Secondly, in relation to Party in The Park, the additional number of cars parked in and around the residential area caused issues regarding access. In one case, an ambulance was not able to access St Brides Crescent to attend to a resident. Councillor Marshall asked whether extra patrolling would be put in place for these events to prevent this happening in the future. Finally, Councillor Marshall congratulated the Chief Superintendent for making the Pink List. The Chief Superintendent thanked Councillor Marshall. The Chief Superintendent confirmed that the information relating to the SDR Road would be passed on to traffic police officers as a priority. In terms of the dangerous parking, basic ticketing was a matter for the Council, but this was unacceptable in terms of the ambulance, and this would be factored into future planning.

5. 2022/23 Treasury Management Year End Report

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to introduce the report.

The Leader gave an outline of the Council's treasury management activity for 2022/23 and treasury activities to confirm compliance with the Treasury Strategy previously considered and set by Members.

The report compared activity with the year-end position for 2021/22 and detailed the movement, and the reasons for those movements, throughout 2022-23. This is the second of two reports that Council received on treasury management during the year.

The Report on the Treasury Management Outturn Report, 2022/23 presented the following information:

- Reminder of the treasury strategy agreed.
- Details of borrowing and investment activity throughout the year.
- Wider economic considerations e.g., pandemic, economic climate.
- An update to the International Treasury code on commercial investment funding.
- A medium to long term outlook for borrowing need.
- An examination of activity against prudential indicators, confirming compliance.
- The report also confirms that the Council invested in three covered bonds within the year 2022-23, totalling £10m, in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

The report was presented to Governance and Audit Committee in May and was endorsed by the committee prior to the report being considered by Cabinet in June. The Governance and Audit Committee also received a training session delivered by the Council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, which was well received.

The key highlights included the level of borrowing, which as of 31 March 2023, decreased by £3.5m in comparison to 2021-22 outturn levels, at £138.6m. This decrease was in relation to a number of loans which were repaid in instalments over the life of the loan and the redemption of a small PWLB maturity loan at the end of September, which did not need to be re-financed.

The level of investments also decreased by £11m to £47.2m, by using up internal resources as a more cost-effective alternative to arranging new external borrowing.

This approach is a cornerstone of effective internal borrowing, and even in an environment of increasing interest rates, the cost of new borrowing is still more expensive than any increasing returns on investments, so it continued to make sense to use the existing surplus cash balances as an alternative to arranging new borrowing.

As previously mentioned, towards the end of the financial year, the Authority invested in three covered bonds totalling £10m, to comply with the MiFID II (Markets in Financial Instruments and Derivatives Directive) minimum investment balance requirement and to retain professional client status. The report detailed the benefits of having covered bonds within the investment portfolio – first and foremost that they provide a high level of security, whilst providing a good level of yield.

Within the report was a forward-looking indicator called the Liability Benchmark, which provided a graphical illustration of the Council's existing and future borrowing requirement. Going forward, this would be shared with Council on a more regular basis following recent changes in guidance.

This is an important indicator to understand as it demonstrates the impact that decisions taken in relation to capital expenditure has on the long-term net borrowing requirement, which ultimately impacts upon the revenue budget in the form of capital financing costs.

To highlight some of the important points, this indicator showed that between 2023 and 2025, the gross need to borrow increased, but the calculated need for actual/real borrowing increased more sharply. This was because the Capital Programme commitments added to the need to borrow but at the same time, the internal borrowing capacity was predicted to reduce, as reserves were utilised, and investment levels reduced.

During the same window, actual borrowing reduced as loans were repaid. The combination of this, and the sharp increase in the need to borrow, meant that actual new borrowing in the region of £50m could be required by the end of 2025.

The Council's underlying long term need to borrow, coupled with the need to refinance existing loans, means the Council will be exposed to a higher level of interest rate than experienced over recent years. Because of this, the Council continued to defer the need to take out long-term borrowing for as long as possible. It is hoped that, by adopting this approach, interest rates might reduce from their current levels by the time new borrowing is required, reducing to some extent the impact of undertaking new borrowing on the revenue budget. Any decision regarding undertaking additional long-term borrowing would be made in line with advice from the Council's treasury advisors and only where there was a clear financial benefit and need to do so.

The final aspect to outline was prudential indicators. The Authority measured and managed its exposure to treasury management risks using various indicators which could be found in Appendix A. The report confirmed that the Council complied with the prudential indicators set for 2022/23.

Comments from Councillors:

Councillor Reeks referred to point 20 Non-Treasury Investments within the report, and loans to developers of £10.3M. Councillor Reeks asked whether officers provide a written response on assurances the Council have in place in the event that developers go bust. The Leader advised that it would be put to the Head of Finance to provide a written response.

Resolved:

That Council noted the report on treasury management activities for the period 2022/23.

6. Welsh Language Annual Report

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to introduce the annual report, which detailed the Council's progress in complying with the Welsh Language Standards as part of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The report provided an overview of the Council's progress in meeting the Standards, included information required to be published on an annual basis, a summary of key achievements during the year, and highlighted priority areas for future work.

The Leader hoped that Council colleagues agreed with the positive comments made at Cabinet last week.

Whilst this is a Newport City Council report, engagement, development, and co-production is at the heart of all activities and events. Da iawn pawb.

Members noted the key highlights from the year including:

- The significant increase in delivery of Welsh Language Awareness sessions for the council's workforce with 99 members of staff being trained.

- The adoption of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 by Council which was then approved by Welsh Government.
- The launch of the Council's the Welsh Language Skills Policy demonstrating the Council's commitment to the Welsh language through recruitment and training.

The report also identified key priorities for 2023-24 including:

- Building on the creative partnership arrangements developed outside the public and voluntary sector to better raise the profile of the Welsh language across Newport with opportunities at the Dragons RFC and Newport County AFC.
- Delivering a cohesive approach to Welsh language skills development across OneNewport partners through the Right Skills Board.
- An even greater focus on recruitment, retention, and development of Welsh speakers across all services areas within the council, and
- Facilitating and supporting events throughout the year and looking at the cross-cutting themes around equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The Leader thanked Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation and lead for Equalities and Welsh Language to comment, and thanked Councillor John Harris for supporting the work in his role as Welsh Language Champion. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Resolved:

That Council approved the final monitoring report published on the Council's website, in accordance with statutory deadlines.

7. Director of Social Services Annual Report

The Presiding Member informed colleagues that the Leader would present the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

The Leader informed Council that the Strategic Director, as the designated Director for Social Services, had a statutory duty under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and as amended by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 to produce an annual report to the Council.

The report must set out the personal assessment of the Director of Social Services of the performance of Social Services in delivering its social care functions during the preceding 12 months.

The report covered the period of 2022/2023. Guidance on the format of the report was currently a matter of consultation with Welsh Government. This year, the Director used a combination of case studies and examples from staff to demonstrate the work of Social Services.

During this period, the restructured Senior Management team became established. The delivery of social care during 2022/2023 was profoundly impacted firstly by the work to recover from the pandemic, followed by the cost-of-living crisis.

Despite the significant issues and challenges of 2022/2023, the Director of Social Services was satisfied that the Council continued to comply with its statutory duties.

The Leader was pleased to note that despite the difficulties of 2022/2023, social services staff were able to look beyond the day-to-day demands and delivered innovation, continued their development of services, and strove for excellence. The Leader emphasised the effort that Social Services staff make, and the importance of understanding the exceptional service provided.

The statutory annual report reflected the Director's personal assessment of the performance of Social Services and was, therefore, being presented to Council for information purposes.

Throughout the report, the Director of Social Services emphasised the commitment, enthusiasm, and determination of staff to deliver the best possible services. The Leader thanked all staff for their outstanding work and commitment during this period and their continued efforts to deliver quality social care for our residents across the city.

Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor M Evans echoed the comments of the Leader and added that the report was clear and concise. Councillor Evans also requested that future reports provide percentages to contextualise the figures.
- Councillor Drewett mentioned that he had seen the hard work put into the report in Performance Scrutiny Committee – People and knew the in-depth quality of the excellent work that the social services team provided for Newport and congratulated the Director of Social Services on her report.
- Councillor Hughes thanked the Strategic Director - Social Services for producing the report and all those who have made contributions to its completion, including scrutiny committee. Councillor Hughes reflected that this was a challenging year for Social Care as society continued to deal with the repercussions of Covid. Demands on services increased at a time when the Council faced unprecedented budgetary and workforce challenges nationally as well as the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Hughes noted that Newport continued to comply with its statutory duties and remained innovative and committed to transforming services with priorities focussed on prevention and inclusion, collaboration with partners, strong engagement, and the wellbeing of staff. In Newport strong leadership and committed staff are the backbone of services and the Council recognised their efforts in supporting residents through these incredibly difficult times.

Councillor Hughes also thanked the prevention and inclusion services, carers and community connectors and welcomed those staff who had joined the social services team; Social Services has over 870 staff in full time equivalent employment, and they deserved the thanks of the Council.

Councillor Hughes thanked the Strategic Director for sharing the individual case studies with council colleagues, which reflected the experiences of those who engaged with staff. Social services often deal with people when they were in desperate situations and Councillor Hughes was confident that staff work their hardest to make a positive difference.

Councillor Hughes also thanked colleagues in health, the voluntary and third sector for collaborative efforts to support residents and looked forward to strengthening those partnerships.

- Councillor Cockeram stated that it was vital to have case studies within the report to show the outstanding work carried out by social services and thanked the Director and the team for their contribution.

Resolved:

That Council

1. Noted the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.
2. commented on the content of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

8. Annual Safeguarding Report

The next item introduced by the Presiding Member, was the interim Annual Report for Safeguarding.

The Leader was invited to present the report, which was the Head of Corporate Safeguarding's evaluation of 2022/23 performance for the Local Authority.

This is an interim report because of changes in Welsh Government guidance and Newport synchronising its reporting cycle, therefore a full report will be presented to Full Council early in the new year.

Safeguarding and protecting both children and vulnerable adults is absolutely of the highest priority for Newport City Council.

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy set out the Council's duty and commitment to safeguard and promote the health, well-being and human rights of adults and children at risk.

The report assessed the Council's proactive actions and responses to safeguarding.

The report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in June and the Leader was pleased that there was a constructive and helpful discussion on the content of the report.

The report noted the challenges across the Council in respect of safeguarding due to the pressures brought about by Covid and the restrictions of the pandemic. Unfortunately, this still has an impact across Social Services and indeed across all areas of work.

Despite the pressures, the outcome of the safeguarding self-assessment for all areas of the Council demonstrated a very high level of compliance with statutory requirements and a determination to continue to place the highest priority on safeguarding for all our citizens.

The Council is continuously evaluating Corporate Safeguarding and ensuring that the governance and reporting structures are robust and fit for purpose with the premise that Safeguarding is everyone's business in Newport City Council.

The challenges of ensuring all staff, volunteers and Members are accessing and engaged with training for all areas of safeguarding is noted in the report and continues to evolve both within Newport and more regionally and nationally.

The Council was working to ensure that safeguarding was maintained in all areas of service and over the coming year, would work with the revised guidance for Corporate Safeguarding to ensure continued compliance.

Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor M Evans referred to the compliance targets suggesting that access to training should be made easier for members and officers to attend, as safeguarding is important.

- Councillor Hourahine mentioned that this had already been addressed with the Leader and a response had been given by officers through Scrutiny.
- Councillor M Evans responded by saying that he had not yet received a response.

Resolved:

That Council received the Annual Safeguarding Report (interim) by the Head of Corporate Safeguarding.

9. Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) Annual Report

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to present the report.

The report set out the Members Scheme of Allowances for 2023/24 as set out in the annual report of the Independent Remuneration Committee.

The Council was required to adopt and publish a scheme of allowances for Members for the current municipal year, based on the salaries prescribed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, known as “the IRP”.

The IRP is the statutory body set up by Welsh Government to determine the appropriate level of remuneration paid to elected members in Wales.

The IRP published its Annual Report in February of this year, and Council is required to formally adopt their recommendations and approve the allowances for 2023/24.

There is no discretion regarding the amount of the salaries as they are fixed by the IRP.

The IRP determined that the basic annual salaries for elected members for 2022/23 should be re-based at £17,600 to take account of inflationary increases and to ensure that remuneration is linked to average salary levels. Senior salaries were also increased and re-set in line with relevant comparators.

The increases in basic salaries would take effect as from 1 April 2023 and backdated payments would be made to Members. Any changes to additional remuneration for senior salaries would be payable as from the date of appointment of the post-holders at the Council AGM on 16 May 2023.

Comments from Councillors:

Councillor Cleverly mentioned that her name was misspelt in the report.

Resolved:

That Council approved and adopted the Members Schedule of Remuneration 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

10. Review of Standing Orders

The Presiding Member invited Councillor Mogford, the Chair of Democratic Services Committee to present the report.

Councillor Mogford presented to Council the recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee regarding Standing Orders under Part 4: Rules of Procedure of the Constitution regarding Questions at Council to the Leader of the Council. Whilst Councillor Mogford was

the current Chair of Democratic Services Committee, this item was considered by the Committee before his appointment at the AGM in May.

Council was requested to approve and adopt the amended Standing Orders under Part 4: Rules of Procedure of the Constitution.

At the Council meeting on 24 January 2023, it was resolved that Democratic Services Committee consider Standing Orders in place under Part 4: Rules of Procedure of the Constitution, regarding Questions at Council to the Leader of the Council.

The current Standing Orders under Part 4: Rules of Procedure do not reference any specific provision regarding the role of the Deputy Leader in Leader's questions, including Leader's announcements, on such occasions when the Deputy Leader is deputising in the Leader's absence at Full Council meetings.

Clarification of the requirements of the Deputy Leader when deputising for the Leader in full Council requires a new Standing Order to confirm the correct rules of procedure concerning Leader's announcements and Leader's questions.

In addition, at their meeting on 27 January 2023, members of the Democratic Services Committee wished to debate the time limit for Leader's questions under the same Standing Order 4.2, as they felt that the time allotted did not afford a sufficient opportunity for Opposition members to ask questions of the Leader in Council.

The Democratic Services Committee debated potential options and proposed that the Standing Orders make provision for the Deputy Leader to make Leader's announcements as part of their deputisation duties at Council.

The Committee also recommended that the deputisation role for the Deputy Leader at Council did not require answering Leader's questions at Council, citing the existing provision in the Standing Orders for submitting questions to be answered by the Leader outside of the Council meeting; for example, through Standing Order 4.8 Formal Questions at any other time.

When considering Questions to the Leader, the Committee recognised that Newport City Council took a unique approach to Leader's questions at Council meetings whereby questions did not have to be submitted in writing in advance like other Local Authorities in Wales.

The Committee recommended that some elements of Questions to the Leader remained the same; questions could still be asked of the Leader at Council without submitting the full question in writing beforehand, and the total time for Leader's questions remained at 15 minutes.

The Committee recommended that the Standing Orders be amended to state that supplementary questions to the Leader should be submitted in writing following Council, instead of being asked verbally at the meeting as a follow-up.

The Committee considered that this would provide a fairer opportunity for more Councillors to submit questions that would be addressed by the Leader in Council.

Councillor Mogford therefore asked that the Council consider and approve the recommendations from the Democratic Services Committee concerning Standing Orders, and for the revised Standing Orders to be published under the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Hourahine moved the report.

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Comments from Councillors:

- Councillor M Evans wished to move an amendment to the proposal in the report, which was to restrict the time allotted for answers to the Questions for the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members to two minutes.

Councillor Morris agreed to second the amendment.

- The Presiding Member reminded Councillor Morris that he was referring to protocols from many years ago, and it was important to have open debate in the Council Chambers.
- Councillor Whitehead agreed with Councillor Morris and mentioned that questions could be raised at any time outside of full council. Councillor Whitehead also hoped that the Leader could respond to questions in future in a much shorter timeframe to afford other councillors the opportunity to speak.
- Councillor K Thomas informed colleagues that the Democratic Services Committee recognised that councillors needed ample opportunity to speak and receive a response and that it was the supplementary questions that were taking up the time; removing the supplementary questions would allow more councillors to put questions to the Leader.

Councillor M Evans asked for a point of clarification on whether the Democratic Services Committee gave the option that less time should be given to the Leader to respond to questions at Council.

- Councillor D Harvey suggested that this was the reason why supplementary questions should be submitted in writing, to make sure that more councillors could ask questions.
- Councillor Al-Nuaimi spoke to the amendment and was surprised that the amendment was moved. Councillor Al-Nuaimi considered that two minutes was not adequate for the Leader to provide a detailed answer and therefore voted against the amendment.
- Councillor Reynolds echoed Councillor Al-Nuaimi's comments as there may be a complicated question would need a complicated answer and therefore voted against the amendment.
- Councillor Corten clarified that this was debated at length by the Democratic Services Committee and considered that there are ample options to ask a Question at Any Time. Councillor Corten went on to say that the Leader would need more than two minutes to answer a meaningful question, and this was not good enough for members of the public.
- Councillor M Evans spoke on the amendment and mentioned that it was an opportunity to shorten the question and allow for more councillors to speak. This would ensure that all members of all parties had an opportunity for a swifter debate and therefore hoped that the amendment would be supported.

Councillors were invited to vote on the amendment. The amendment was lost, and the Presiding Member asked were there any questions from councillors on the substantive motion.

- Councillor Mogford wanted to be clear that the removal of the supplementary questions was a removal of the clarification to answers on the primary questions. Councillor Mogford gave an example of a supplementary question raised to the police earlier regarding e-bikes and the supplementary question was on Twitter. Councillor Mogford felt that removing the supplementary was replacing quantity over quality.

- Councillor Evans spoke against the substantive motion and considered that the Deputy Leader should be able to answer questions in the Leader's absence at Council. If there were questions that the Deputy Leader could not answer, these could then be put in writing. The simplest answer would be to extend Leader's Questions to 30 minutes. Councillor Evans felt for the proposal was regressive.

Presiding Member advised that the supplementary could be put in written form for everyone to see.

- Councillor Hourahine asked for a closure motion vote to be taken to end the debate for the substantive motion and recommendation be taken. Councillor Harvey seconded that the vote be taken.
- Councillor Morris advised that the next item was whether the vote should go through.
- Councillor Evans requested that a recorded vote be taken.

At this point, five councillors were required to come forward in support of a recorded vote to close the motion.

Councillors Evans, Morris, Mogford, Sterry, Reeks and Jones put themselves forward in support of the closure vote.

	Councillor Name	Apologies	For	Against	Abstain
1	Adan, Saeed		1		
2	Al-Nuaimi, Miqdad		1		
3	Baker-Westhead, Claire		1		
4	Batrouni, Dimitri		1		
5	Bright, Paul		1		
6	Clarke, James		1		
7	Cleverly, Janet				1
8	Cockeram, Paul		1		
9	Cocks, Stephen		1		
10	Davies, Bev		1		
11	Davies, Deb		1		
12	Drewett, Pat		1		
13	Evans, Matthew			1	
14	Forsey, Yvonne		1		
15	Fouweather, David			1	
16	Harris, John		1		
17	Harvey, Debbie		1		
18	Harvey, Tim		1		
19	Horton, Gavin		1		
20	Hourahine, Phil		1		
21	Howells, Mark	Apologies			
22	Howells, Rhian		1		
23	Hughes, Jason		1		
24	Hussain, Farzina		1		
25	James, Lauren				1
26	Jenkins, Debbie		1		
27	Jones, John			1	
28	Jordan, Jason				1
29	Kellaway, Martyn			1	
30	Lacey, Laura		1		

31	Linton, Malcolm		1		
32	Marshall, Stephen		1		
33	Mayer, David				1
34	Mogford, Ray			1	
35	Morris, Allan			1	
36	Mudd, Jane		1		
37	Perkins, Bev		1		
38	Peterson, James			1	
39	Pimm, Alex		1		
40	Pimm, Matthew				1
41	Reeks, Chris			1	
42	Reynolds, John		1		
43	Routley, William			1	
44	Screen, Allan		1		
45	Spencer, Mark		1		
46	Sterry, Andrew			1	
47	Stowell-Corten, Emma		1		
48	Thomas, Kate		1		
49	Townsend, Carmel		1		
50	Watkins, Trevor		1		
51	Whitehead, Kevin		1		
	Total		35	10	5

The Presiding Member invited Councillor Mogford to speak. Councillor Mogford requested that the vote be taken on the recommendation as outlined within the report.

Resolved:

That Council approved and adopted the amended Standing Orders under Part 4: Rules of Procedure of the Constitution.

11. Questions to the Leader of the Council

Before commencement with questions, the Leader made the following announcements:

Homewards

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- Last month, we announced that Newport is one of six flagship locations across the UK which will be working with the Royal Foundation’s Homewards programme to end homelessness.
- The five-year, locally led programme aims to demonstrate that through partnership working, it is possible to end homelessness, making it rare, brief, and unrepeatable.
- Homewards will support local partners to form and grow locally led coalitions of committed individuals, organisations, and businesses who will work together to create and deliver a tailored plan to prevent homelessness in their areas – based on local needs and local expertise.
- At the end of the five-year programme, the aim is for the towns and cities involved to be on a path to ending homelessness for good and to create a tried and tested model that can be scaled across the UK and beyond.
- As part of the launch, His Royal Highness Prince William visited Maindee Primary School and Linc Cymru’s Hill Street development.

- We were honoured to welcome Prince William to Newport, to hear first-hand accounts from tenants about the difference that the support and housing available at Hill Street has made to them.
- We have a clear commitment in Newport to transform services and end homelessness. This is already demonstrated by excellent local partnership working, and harnessing the opportunities that the Homewards programme is offering gives us the chance to take this work to another level.
- Homelessness is not simply a housing issue. We need partners from across all sectors to work together to deliver real change, and we believe that the Homewards programme will help to accelerate this change and in preventing homelessness.

Events

Wales National Armed Forces Day

- Last month, I was filled with pride to see Newport host this year's Wales National Armed Forces Day event. It was great to see so many people out in the city centre to join in with the celebrations for everything that our armed forces do, and to show our gratitude to service personnel and veterans.
- HMS Severn, Newport's affiliated Ship was also welcomed back to Newport and was available for members of the public to visit.
- There were so many engaging activities and displays that took place, from the military parade to start the day, the Red Arrows flypast, to the concert at Rodney Parade, and it was great to see such a buzz about the city throughout the day's proceedings.
- Large scale events such as Armed Forces Day help showcase the city to a wider audience, and I'd therefore like to express my utmost thanks to everyone who helped organise the day and for making it such a special occasion. The Leader added that the cross-party support was tremendous and thanked Councillor Evans who was in attendance for events throughout the day as well as colleagues from other political parties.
- I was also honoured to be able to re-sign the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the council. The council is a proud signatory of the covenant, and it was an honour to be able to reaffirm our pledge to treat those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, with fairness and respect.
- Thanks to Tracey Brookes, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, Joanne Parcell, Destination Development Officer - Events and Sonny Hawkins, Destination Development Officer. The Leader also thanked officers who turned up on the day to help and support.

Clean Air Day

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- Another event I had the pleasure of attending last month, was the third annual Clean Air Day event.
- This year, the event was held at Jubilee Park primary school, where pupils from Jubilee Park, High Cross, Mount Pleasant, Pentrepoeth, Rogerstone and Bassaleg school joined together to learn about air quality, why it is important, and what we can do to help reduce air pollution.

- The pupils explored the air quality around the school through a number of fun activities, with help from air quality experts, and through demonstrations of air quality-related technology.
- Clean Air Day is an important campaign which encourages us to take time to reflect and think about what we can do in our own lives to help tackle poor air quality.
- Supporting nationwide campaigns such as this will help us to raise greater awareness of the issues around air quality. It is particularly important to engage young people as much as possible, and the event certainly did that.
- Hopefully they can help spread the message and encourage their family and friends to get involved however they can!

Awards

Finally, I'm pleased to be able to report on some recent awards for some of our services.

Youth and play service.

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- Our youth and play service were recently rewarded for the work that they do with young people in the city, receiving the Education Workforce Council's Bronze Quality Mark for youth services in Wales.
- The team works with children and young people, aged from 5 to 25, by supporting their wellbeing and advising on options for their future after the age of 16.
- They also work hard to prevent youth homelessness and are also available for young people to talk to a trusted adult with a listening ear.

Social services

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- Two of our services were recognised at this year's Social Care Wales Accolades.
- Our Oaklands short break service won the building bright futures for children and families award, for their work providing short term breaks for children with additional needs, while our community connector service was highly commended in the supporting unpaid carers category, for its work providing advice, information, and assistance to our city's unpaid carers.

Green Flag awards

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- Finally, I'm pleased to report that it was announced earlier today that Belle Vue Park, Beechwood Park, and the Gwent Crematorium have retained their Green Flag status for 2023/24. In Belle Vue Park's case, this will be the sixteenth year in a row it has retained Green Flag status.
- These awards are all a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our officers, and their commitment to serving the people of Newport. Congratulations to the four community sites, Bishton Village Pond, Lliswerry Pond, the Glade Community Garden and Laundry Gardens that were also recognised with a Green Flag Status. The Leader thanked the volunteers for all these sites.
- On a final point it was important that Newport was committed to its climate change action plan to protect and preserve the environment for future generations. The Leader recently

met Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales (YCA Wales) which was an apolitical group of 15 young climate activists from across Wales who campaigned to raise awareness of different issues. Their current campaign is to raise awareness on the impact of climate change on refugees. This is a youth led organisation that aims to amplify young and unrecognised voices. Climate Change was a complicated issue that matters both at grass roots level and on the international stage. The organisation is working on the legitimisation of climate refugees in the UK, and we only have to look at the news today to see the impact that global warming is having on the world. Considering the ever-increasing risk of displacement because of climate change, YCA Wales aims to present a petition to the House of Commons calling for this recognition. The Leader supported this petition and hoped that colleagues was also consider supporting the petition.

Questions to the Leader

Councillor M Evans:

The UK Conservative Government were continuing with their holiday activities and food programme in England to provide support for the most vulnerable children on Free School Meals (FSM). The Welsh Government withdrew this whilst giving the Council £1.5M for street signs alone, Councillor Evans therefore asked if the Leader considered that the Welsh Government had their priorities right.

Response:

The Leader advised that in Wales representative democracy is made of a number of different political parties and Welsh Government (WG) operated under the auspices of a co-operative agreement with Plaid Cymru. Colleagues that watched the media coverage at the Senedd would see that it showed a difference of opinion between those two parties that form the coalition. The Leader was deeply disappointed that Plaid Cymru did not agree to release funding under the co-operation agreement to continue with Free School Meals during the summer holidays. Whilst the question from Councillor Evans was about priorities, the Leader agreed that it was a question of priority but would not look to the WG in terms of those priorities but would instead cast her gaze at Plaid Cymru.

Councillor Whitehead:

Millbrook Primary School closed in July 2022 this impacted on many people, the children being the most affected. Good teachers had retired early, parents had removed children, staff sickness rates were through the roof and supply staff were reticent to attend. There is no definite date for a plan of action and education standards would be affected. On top of this there are transport costs, taking and collecting children to and from Brynglas. There are approximately 60 children in a classroom with two teachers; education standards would surely be affected because of this. Councillor Whitehead therefore asked if the Leader could meet with everyone concerned within the whole Millbrook scenario and decision makers to speed up the situation. Time is vital to these children. Would the Leader also kindly take receipt of a plea statement from the Governors and the Save the Children Team.

Response:

The Leader was happy to accept the plea statement, which was handed to her by Councillor Whitehead and began by thanking all educational professionals and everyone involved in the work for schools. The Leader understood the challenges faced by moving to a temporary location and appreciated their dedication and commitment to the children in their care, which was outstanding. It went without saying that everyone, the Local Authority and the Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years, all wanted the best outcomes possible for all on the Bettws Estate and for the children to thrive and flourish.

One of the challenges is where to put the children and to learn from the situation at St Andrews Primary School who faced similar challenges.as children attending there were transferred into the connect centre. The planning permission had recently been approved for their new school. This provided a realistic understanding of the timeframe it took to work

through these issues. If the Leader could create a space for the Bettws Children to be as close as possible to their school she would create it, unfortunately we were not in that position. The Leader thanked everyone that worked so hard to make the Brynglas Centre a positive environment and recognised the disruption caused to families. Officers were ensuring that parents, stakeholders, and elected members were kept aware of developments and had received a range of correspondence from parents, governing body, and Save the Children. The Chief Executive' Office has invited the head teacher and chair of governors to a meeting with the Deputy Leader, the Head of Education, and the Leader to talk through their concerns.

The challenge is the time frame for any construction related activity, but an option is needed for the future, and it must be the best possible option for the children. Currently, a feasibility work is taking place to better understand decisions required and to share the recommendations with the community. This, however, is not straightforward and the first item on the agenda, colleagues would recall, is the Treasury Management report; at Cabinet a week before, the Capitol Outturn report had been discussed. There is very limited Capitol headroom available, and therefore the Council must be prudent when borrowing and would also need to seek support from WG in terms of Capitol finance to support the right solution for the community as a one-off investment opportunity to help the children to build a successful foundation for the rest of their lives. This meant that there were no quick decisions and there is presently nothing that the Leader could do to expedite this. The Leader hoped the work would be concluded soon and looked forward to receiving a response from the head teacher and the chair of governors at the proposed meeting. The Leader looked forward to receiving a response to take to WG with Band C proposals to ensure that Millbrook Primary School was a priority. The Leader understood the frustrations, however there are real limitations to go through as part of this process. The Leader confirmed she is open to dialogue on the issue and had extended the open offer to the head teacher and governors.

12. **Questions to the Cabinet Members**

There was one written question to the Cabinet Members:

Question 1 – Cabinet Member: Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor Chris Reeks:

With Newport City Council currently falling short of its recycling targets would it not be a prudent move to boost these targets and to help encourage the younger generation about the need to recycle more by offering free recycling services to all schools within Newport?

At present schools are classed as a business and would have to pay Newport City Council to take their recycling away, with some schools potentially choosing not to recycle their waste. Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that by offering this service it would demonstrate to the community that the Council is committed to meeting its targets and helping to educate children about the benefits of recycling and not just using this as a money-raising exercise?

Response from Councillor Forsey:

There is a legal requirement for all who produce, keep, or dispose of waste of any type to comply with the various regulations and the Duty of Care under Environmental Protection legislation. Waste generated at schools is classed as commercial waste by virtue of the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012, and as such is not free at the point of delivery.

Schools need to meet all legal requirements, and since 2015 there is an obligation to segregate cardboard, paper, plastic, metal, and glass separately from the non-recyclable waste, so all schools should have recycling collections already in place. From April 2024, legal requirements will change to include the need to separate at source all those elements

for recycling (until now there was an option for all recyclable materials to be collected mixed together) and to recycle food waste if more than 5kg are produced per week.

Schools receive funding to cover the cost of their waste collections via the DSB. While they don't have to use the Council trade waste collection services for their collections, the waste department offer a flexible, inexpensive alternative to private commercial operators, and they already collect waste from 48 out of 57 schools in Newport, with 42 of them benefiting from recycling collections via our partners Wastesavers. Recycling collections are cheaper than residual waste collections, meaning that the incentive and arrangements to recycle are already there. The waste department will fully engage with schools and encourage them to recycle as much as possible ahead of the legislative changes in 2024.

Supplementary:

If 48 out of 57 schools were using alternative operators, how could we encourage the remaining nine schools to use these services.

Response from Councillor Forsey:

Councillor Forsey attended a school's conference earlier today regarding recycling organised by Chartwells at St Joseph's Primary School, which was extremely interesting and was happy to see all the very enthusiastic young children there. Councillor did not think that it would increase the recycling rate, there would be more recycling and more residual waste. It was therefore not going to change behaviour. Councillor Forsey looked forward to the regulations coming in for April 2024, where all schools were required to segregate their waste, because the more that was segregated at source, the better the outcome.

13. **Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place on 16 September 2023 at 5pm.

The Presiding also took the opportunity to thanked both Sally-Ann Jenkins and once again, Mike Wallbank for standing in for the Chief Executive and the Head of Law and Standards respectively.