



Cabinet report

Date **9 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Title **REFERRAL OF MOTION FROM FULL COUNCIL - NEWPORT CITY STATUS**

Report of **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A motion was laid before Full Council on 21st July 2021 requesting that the council prepare an application for city status for Newport in partnership with Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council (NCCC). Full Council referred this matter to cabinet for discussion.
2. This paper sets out issues for consideration by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION

3. Option 3: Support the motion and lead the preparation of a bid contingent on assistance towards the development of the bid being provided as part of the Shaping Newport Steering Group.

AND

4. Option 4: The bid to be approved by those delegated to act on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council, NCCC and the Shaping Newport Steering Group.

BACKGROUND

5. In June 2021, to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 a [Civic Honours competition was launched](#).
6. Local authorities are being encouraged to prepare nominations for "city status" for towns within their areas. Closing date for applications is 4pm on 8th December 2021.
7. At their July meeting, NCCC unanimously supported the motion that had been submitted to Full Council, resolving that "*NCCC supports the proposal by Cllr. Oliver to IW Council that Newport be nominated for an application to receive City status as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee recognitions.* "
8. NCCC has been asked whether it would be prepared to develop a bid for nomination, which the council would then submit by the December deadline. This approach was

made as the council only has limited resources and capacity to allocate to the work necessary to prepare a bid. The majority of its resources are currently fully committed to delivering council priorities and projects. However, NCCC has confirmed that it is unable to prepare the bid but remains supportive of the proposition.

9. There are currently 66 cities in the UK. City status is rarely granted, with only 14 new cities created during the 20th century.
10. There is a “tradition” of bestowing city status linked to civic celebrations. Sunderland gained city status in 1992 after winning a competition to celebrate the Queen’s 40th year on the throne. There is no doubt that since 1992 the city has changed immeasurably, but there is no evidence that this has been as a direct result of Sunderland becoming a city.
11. In 2000, to mark the new millennium, Brighton and Hove, Inverness and Wolverhampton were awarded city status and in the last contest held in 2002 to celebrate the Queen’s Golden Jubilee city status was awarded to Preston, Newry, and Lisburn were also among the winners.
12. There has been no assessment undertaken which clearly identifies the benefits associated with attaining city status, although there is some indication that the sense of civic pride that accompanies being awarded city status is beneficial for an area. There is no doubt that the title of “city” is highly coveted and this alone may be the value of city status.
13. Developing civic pride in Newport and promoting it as a “Destination “is at the heart of the ‘Shaping Newport’ project led by the council’s regeneration team and delivered in association with local businesses NCCC and the local community. The Shaping Newport Steering Group has access to the skills and information necessary to help support the preparation of the bid which could be coordinated by the Isle of Wight Council. At its most recent meeting the Shaping Newport group agreed to support development of a bid with Isle of Wight council support.
14. This approach is consistent with that recommended in the original motion referred from Full Council. However, given the timescales for the submission of a bid it would be extremely unlikely for it to be completed in sufficient time for Full Council’s approval when it meets on the 17 November. It will therefore be necessary for the bid to be approved by those delegated to act on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council, NCCC and the Shaping Newport Steering Group.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

15. The Alliance Group’s priorities are yet to be formally agreed via cabinet and will set the direction for the council for the next four years.
16. As currently set out, covid recovery is a key priority and the council recognises that the Island does benefit from a strong community spirit which was demonstrated through the covid pandemic. In terms of recovery civic pride is important to our community and this motion may provide an opportunity to build civic pride.

CONSULTATION

17. As set out in earlier NCCC have confirmed unanimous support for the development of a Newport city status nomination. However, it is unable to lead the preparation of the bid which would therefore need to be undertaken by the Isle of Wight Council itself if it is to proceed.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18. The issue is to be considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee when it meets on 7 September and will be reported verbally to the Cabinet meeting.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

19. Whilst the application guidance encourages those developing nominations not to incur additional spend to produce glossy submissions were the council to develop a nomination resource and funding would be required. It is estimated that to develop the nomination would require two/three weeks staff time.
20. There is little capacity within current resources to provide this support without directly impacting on the delivery of other council priorities. However, with some assistance from the Shaping Newport Steering Group then it may be possible to reduce the council's direct staff input to perhaps a week which would minimise its impact on the delivery of other plans and priorities.

CARBON EMISSIONS

21. No impact identified.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

22. There is no legal requirement on the council to develop a nomination for city status. This is a competition open to all local authorities. The only requirements to be aware of are those set out in the entry guidelines and application form (see background papers section of this report).

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

23. The council as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It is not considered that there are any direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no property implications arising from this proposal.

OPTIONS

25. Option 1: Not to support the motion.

26. Option 2: Support the motion, conditional upon the council securing agreement from Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council to prepare the submission for nomination.
27. Option 3: Support the motion and lead the preparation of a bid contingent on assistance towards the development of the bid being provided as part of the Shaping Newport Steering Group.
28. Option 4: The bid to be approved by those delegated to act on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council, NCCC and the Shaping Newport Steering Group.

RISK MANAGEMENT

29. This motion relates to a competition launched for local authorities to enter should they wish to do so. There is no direct risk associated with the decision to develop a nomination. However as set out in the financial section of this report if the council were to support the motion resource would need to be identified to undertake the work to support a nomination. This is resource and capacity that the council currently has allocated to other council priorities. Moving resource and capacity would therefore be likely to impact on the delivery of current council priorities.
30. Were NCCC prepared to develop a nomination for submission this would mitigate the risk identified and set out in paragraph 20. However, absent the support of NCCC it is possible that the council could still lead a bid aligned to the Shaping Newport project, on the understanding that some of the resource required for the bid preparation would come from that project.

EVALUATION

31. The approach suggested under option 3 in this paper is that which is most consistent with the original motion proposed to Full Council and has the least financial impact to the council and therefore the delivery of its current priorities. A bid for city status should be seen as recognition for the whole Island and look to build on the sense and value of community that has been enhanced in responding to the covid-19 pandemic and that will be necessary as the Island works to recover from it.
32. Should a motion be approved at Full Council in September it will take all of the time available between then and the deadline date of the 8 December to prepare a bid and therefore it would not be possible for the Full Council to 'approve' the final bid before its submission. This would need to be undertaken by those delegated to do so from the interested parties and reported in retrospect at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

33. [Civic Honours competition launch](#)
34. [Platinum Jubilee civic honours competition entry guidelines](#)
35. [Platinum Jubilee civic honours competition application form](#)

36. [Full council motion – item 8c](#)

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