monmouthshire
sir fynwy

County Hall
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

7th October 2014

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Special Cabinet** meeting to be held at **The Council Chamber, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Wednesday, 15th October 2014,** at **2.00 p.m.**

AGENDA

1.   Apologies for Absence

2.   Declarations of Interest

3.   Consideration of reports from Select Committees (none)

4.   To consider the following reports (copies attached):

   (i)   **HOUSING & REGENERATION MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - INTEGRATED APPROACH TO HOUSING OPTIONS**
   Division/Wards Affected: All
   Purpose: To approve an in principal proposal to establish an integrated approach to Housing Options delivery with Torfaen County Borough Council and to establish a new Housing Solutions Service for Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
   Author: Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager
   Contact Details: ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk

   (ii)   **EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE – GOVERNANCE CHANGES**
   Division/Wards Affected: Countywide
   Purpose: Cabinet to endorse changes to the governance structure of the South East Wales Education Achievement Service.
   Author: Paul Matthews, Chief Executive
   Contact Details: paulmatthews@monmouthshire.gov.uk

(iii) **SCHOOL LITERACY RESOURCE CENTRE**
Division/Wards Affected: All
Purpose: To consider closing the School Literacy and Resource Centre Service.
Author: Sharon Randall-Smith
Contact Details: Sharonrandall-smith@monmouthshire.gov.uk

(iv) **INFORMING THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL SERVICES**
Division/Wards Affected: All
Purpose: To propose the commissioning of a critical piece of work to inform options and opportunities for the future of Monmouthshire County Council's cultural assets and attraction.
Author: Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer Enterprise
Contact Details: kelliebeirne@monmouthshire.gov.uk

(v) **WRITTEN FEEDBACK REPORT FROM ESTYN MONITORING VISIT (2) JUNE 2014**
Division/Wards Affected: All
Purpose: To provide Cabinet with information contained in the second regulatory report been received by the Authority since May 2013 and the arrangements to follow up on any recommendations made.
This report details all of the regulatory feedback that has been received by the authority as a result of the second Estyn Monitoring Visit in June 2014.
Author: Sarah McGuinness, Chief Officer Children and Young People
Contact Details: sarahmcguinness@monmouthshire.gov.uk

(vi) **PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DRAFT STRATEGY 2014-17**
Division/Wards Affected: Countywide
Purpose: To introduce the Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy 2014-17.
Authors: Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer Enterprise
Contact Details: kelliebeirne@monmouthshire.gov.uk

(vii) **VALE OF USK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**
Division/Wards Affected: All
Purpose: To endorse and approve the draft Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy (LDS) for wider consultation with associated partners. The purpose of the LDS is to inform how the RDP funding for the 2014-2020 period will be spent.
Authors: Peter Davies, Head of Commercial and People Development / Cath Fallon, Head of Economy and Enterprise
Contact Details: peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk / cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS 2014

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Partnership and External Working	Ward
P.A. Fox (Leader)	**Organisational Development** Whole Council Performance, Whole Council Strategy Development, Corporate Services, Democracy.	WLGA Council WLGA Coordinating Board Local Service Board	Portskewett
R.J.W. Greenland (Deputy Leader)	**Innovation, Enterprise & Leisure** Innovation Agenda, Economic Development, Tourism, Social Enterprise, Leisure, Libraries & Culture, Information Technology, Information Systems.	WLGA Council Capital Region Tourism	Devauden
P.A.D. Hobson (Deputy Leader)	**Community Development** Community Planning/Total Place, Equalities, Area Working, Citizen Engagement, Public Relations, Sustainability, Parks & Open Spaces, Community Safety.	Community Safety Partnership Equalities and Diversity Group	Larkfield
E.J. Hacket Pain	**Schools and Learning** School Improvement, Pre-School Learning, Additional Learning Needs, Children's Disabilities, Families First, Youth Service, Adult Education.	Joint Education Group (EAS) WJEC	Wyesham
G. Howard	**Environment, Public Services & Housing** Development Control, Building Control, Housing Service, Trading Standards, Public Protection, Environment & Countryside.	SEWTA SEWSPG	Llanelly Hill
G. Burrows	**Social Care & Health** Adult Social Services including Integrated services, Learning disabilities, Mental Health. Children's Services including Safeguarding, Looked after Children, Youth Offending. Health and Wellbeing.	Gwent Frailty Board Older Persons Strategy Partnership Group	Mitchel Troy
P. Murphy	**Resources** Accountancy, Internal Audit, Estates & Property Services, Procurement, Human Resources & Training, Health & Safety.	Prosiect Gwrydd Wales Purchasing Consortium	Caerwent
S.B. Jones	**County Operations** Highways, Transport, Traffic & Network Management, Waste & Recycling, Engineering, Landscapes, Flood Risk.	SEWTA Prosiect Gwyrdd	Goytre Fawr
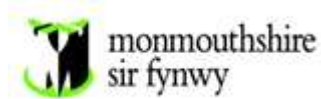
Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind
- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved
- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives
- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

SUBJECT:	Housing & Regeneration Medium Term Financial Plan Project Mandate – Integrated Approach to Housing Options
DIRECTORATE:	Enterprise
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	15th October 2014

1.   PURPOSE

1.1   To approve an in principal proposal to establish an integrated approach to Housing Options delivery with Torfaen County Borough Council and to establish a new Housing Solutions Service for Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   To adopt and approve the implementation of the proposal to deliver a combined Housing Solutions service for Monmouthshire and Torfaen, on a one year pilot basis. **(See Appendix 1).**

3.   KEY ISSUES

3.1   This proposal exploits the advantages of Housing & Communities Services team being co-located with Torfaen's Housing Service and continues to build upon and extend the level of collaboration already achieved.

3.2   The Cabinet will recall from the report dated 8th January 2014, the Council together with Torfaen, has participated in a Welsh Local Government Association Homeless Prevention Initiative, which made the case for combining the homeless services of both Councils. The initiative has been used to inform this proposal, as per the agreement of Cabinet. Housing & Communities has now established a proposal and structure to enable the start of a new joint Housing Solutions Service. The following are headline features of the proposal:

- A single Service for both Counties, providing increased resilience
- A new structure that will facilitate the delivery of the proposal through the creation of two new integrated teams - a Housing Solutions Team and a Private Sector Housing Team made up of employees from both Council's
- Staff affected will continue to be employed by their current Council employer under their existing terms and conditions
- The new service can be operational by November 2014 and will be implemented on a pilot basis for one year
- The service will be delivered through a more rationalised process
- Accountability will remain with each Council but could include joint scrutiny (pending TCBC approval)

3.4 The short-term priority is for the proposed new teams to be operational by November 2014. Once operational the following will be priority actions:

- Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with Torfaen
- Rationalising business processes and maximising consistency of service
- Looking to independently brand the new service of both Council's.
- Involving other sectors in the development and management of the model and considering establishing an advisory board
- Engaging and involving service users
- Identifying income generation opportunities
- Undertaking both an interim evaluation of the pilot service prior to April 2015 and prior to the end of the pilot.

3.5 To inform the development of the proposal, a joint risk assessment has been undertaken. The outcome of the risk assessment is that it is regarded that there are no high risks associated with the proposal. The assessment has helped to identify actions that have and are due to be taken to implement this proposal.

3.6 The implementation of this proposal and establishing the two new teams as a pilot project, is regarded as Phase 1 of establishing a new Housing Solutions Service. Phase 1 will include an interim and final evaluations of the pilot before the end of the period. Phase 2 will consider possible other functions becoming part of the new service

3.7 In co-ordination with the Council, this proposal is also going through Torfaen County Borough Council's approval process.

4   REASONS:
4.1 The proposal supports the implementation of the Housing & Communities Medium Term Financial Plan project, as agreed by Cabinet on 8th January 2014 and helps the Council to prepare for the impending duty to prevent homelessness in April 2015 arising from the current Housing Bill, in particular to ensure the provision of 'reasonable steps' to prevent homelessness.

5.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:
5.1 The project will save £55,000 over three years, including this financial year.

6.   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS
6.1 No implications have been identified in respect of this proposal. The Equalities Impact Screening is appended to this report. See **Appendix 2**

7.   **CONSULTEES:** Cabinet; Senior Leadership Team; Chair of Adults Select Committee; People Management Advisor, Programme and Employee Services; Unison; Head of Housing – Torfaen County Borough Council; Head of Finance. **See Appendix 3.** [Adults Select Committee has received specific reports on this proposal on 10th December 2013, 18th March 2014 and 9th September 2014].

8.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS:** 'Delivering a Combined Housing Solutions Service for Monmouthshire & Torfaen' Reports No.1 **(See Appendix 4)** & No.2 - Andy Gale, Housing Consultant, November 2013 and February 2014

9.   **AUTHOR:**   Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager

10.   **CONTACT DETAILS:**
      Tel: 01633 644479 **E-mail:** ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Proposal

Delivering a
Combined Housing Solutions Service
for
Torfaen & Monmouthshire

August 2014

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to propose to establish a pilot joint approach with Torfaen County Borough Council's Housing Service to deliver a Housing Option's service for both Councils.

The proposal relates, in part, to the Housing & Community Services Cabinet Project Mandate agreed by Cabinet on 8th January 2014. The proposal contributes towards the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan by saving £55,000 over three years between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

The proposal also supports the Council to prepare for the impending statutory duty to prevent homelessness with effect from April 2015 arising from the recent Housing Bill.

Recommendation
- On a pilot basis for one year, to establish a joint approach with Torfaen County Borough Council
- To restructure the Council's Housing Options Team (alongside and in tangent with Torfaen) to support the creation of two new joint integrated Housing Solutions and Private Sector Housing Teams.

Introduction
A key responsibility for the Council is the legal requirement to assess applications from households who claim to be homeless or threatened with homelessness under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. This responsibility includes the provision of accommodation under defined circumstances.

In addition, there is the expectation and requirement by Welsh Government for local authorities to prevent homelessness. Homeless prevention has been an increasing practice of the Council for a number of years now and as previously mentioned, the priority to prevent homelessness is to be strengthened through the activity becoming a statutory responsibility from April 2015. It is also planned that once the new Housing Act receives Royal Assent, that LAs will be able to discharge the homelessness duty into the private rented sector, (currently not the case).

The main responsibility for the provision of homelessness and homeless prevention is through the Housing Options Team within Housing & Community Services.

The Housing Options Team, together with the wider Housing & Community Services Team has been co-located with Torfaen County Borough Council's Housing Services team since January 2012. Torfaen provide a very similar homeless prevention and homeless service to the Council. Both Councils' have been taking advantage of the co-location to collaborate and work more closely together, essentially to make better use of resources and reduce duplication. Key successes to date have included:

- the Council accessing Torfaen's temporary accommodation (on occasions as an alternative to B & B)
- sharing furniture storage
- providing a joint out of hours service
- securing joint funding bids, one of which has facilitated the funding of a temporary joint Private Sector Access post
- establishing a joint private landlords forum
- developing a proposal for a joint private sector landlord 'offer.'

Due to the similarities of the respective teams and the co-location, the opportunity exists to further exploit the co-location and it has been provisionally agreed by both Council's to further build upon the collaboration to date and establish a joint approach to delivering Housing Options functions for both Council's.

Background & Methodology
During 2013, Welsh Local Government Association commissioned an independent consultant, Andy Gale, to undertake an evaluation of all Welsh Local Authorities position, in relation to each Council's respective ability to deliver housing services in light of the new Housing Bill and homeless prevention legislation to be implemented from April 2015. The aim of the project was to support Councils to strengthen homeless prevention and meet the increased responsibilities as a result of the Act being passed.

An initial baseline study undertaken highlighted key challenges for both Authorities were the under developed private rented sector, the lack of sufficient shared one bedroom units to deal with the impact of Welfare Reform and the need to increase focus on services to prevent homelessness. With regards to Monmouthshire specifically, the lack of social housing and the general lack of homeless related resources were also recognised as key challenges.

Torfaen and Monmouthshire subsequently further utilised the WLGA Homeless Prevention Improvement initiative to review the options for both Authorities in the delivery of homelessness and homeless prevention functions. The Council received a joint options report which considered the following three options: to continue delivery as individual local authorities; to contract out the housing option functions or to deliver the service jointly as a new 'Housing Solutions' model. The latter option was the recommended option

A further report and advice was then received which considered the possible detail for the detail the joint service.

The advice, reports and recommendations have been used to facilitate discussions between both Councils to inform the development of this proposal to establish and deliver a joint Housing Solutions Service on a one year pilot basis.

The Combined Housing Solutions Service Model – Broad Overview
The proposal is to merge existing services and resources of both Councils to develop a new Housing Solutions Service with two new integrated teams. The aim is to develop the service as a model of innovation and excellence, which will be the first such service, both in Wales and the UK.

The intention is that the service will be marketed and promoted as a new 'Solutions Service' that will offer help and advice to any resident in Monmouthshire and Torfaen in housing need, as well as practical help well before those residents who are threatened with homelessness reach the point of losing their home. This is a key objective of the new homeless legislation to be enacted in Wales. At the moment, the existing service is probably perceived as that of a traditional homelessness service dealing with people at the point of crisis.

The new service will be focused on providing help and advice for all in housing need thereby improving housing help for many more residents and seen to be essential and relevant service to many more residents. It is proposed that the new service will:

- Be able to respond fully to the new Welsh Government 'Preventing Homeless' duty without any increase in costs to either local authority.

- Improve the private rented sector as a viable housing solution
- Will operate, as with any business, by adhering to a strict budget and able to deliver an excellent customer service.
- Be business-like but not a business.
- Innovation and cultural change will be critical to its success. Accountability will remain to the local authority but the service will reach out to the voluntary sector and business sectors to guide its development, through an advisory group/board providing direction.
- aim to be independently branded of both Authorities
- have scope for additional services to be added in at in the future
- Customer led service

Due to the extent and complexities of the changes necessary, the new service will be introduced and established on a phased and evolving basis.

Strategic Context & Project Aims
The aims of the proposal will:

- Contribute towards vision of the Monmouthshire Single Integrated Plan – *Sustainable and Resilient Communities*

- Support the Council's priority to protect *Vulnerable People*

- Support the mission of the Community Led Delivery Service to *Invest in communities to enable them to build their own resilience*

The specific aims of the proposal are to:

- Establish a new customer led, joint Housing Solutions Service for Torfaen and Monmouthshire encompassing housing advice, homeless prevention, homelessness, temporary accommodation and the development of the private rented sector

- Build resilience and capacity within the service to deal with the anticipated increase in demand arising from the pending duty to prevent homelessness in April 2015.

- Steamline current business processes into one robust system for the service, improving efficiency and effectiveness and providing a consistent service to residents from both Counties

- Build a service with an increased focus on prevention of homelessness

- Develop an available stock of housing accommodation in the private sector to increase housing options in both Counties to meet housing need, to facilitate the discharge of the homelessness duty and the more effective prevention of homelessness.

- For Monmouthshire, the proposal supports the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan

Current Housing Options Structure & Functions of Monmouthshire & Torfaen
The following are the main Housing Options related functions provided by both Councils:

- Housing advice

- Housing Register
- Homeless prevention
- Homeless assessments
- Provision of temporary and interim accommodation
- Accommodation management

The following are the respective staffing structures for each Council, to deliver the above functions:
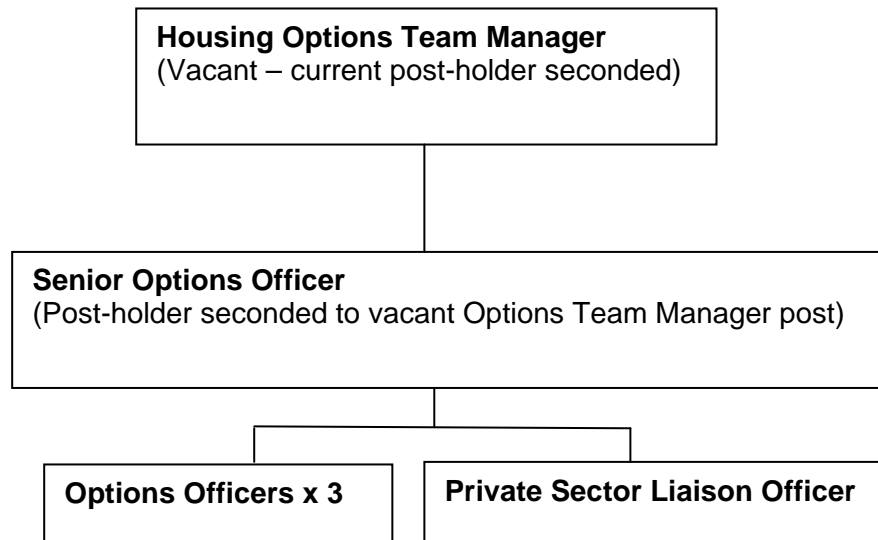
Monmouthshire:

Housing Access Function:

> **Monmouthshire Housing Register**
> Delivered under Service Level Agreement by Monmouthshire Housing Association
>
> The Council's Housing Options Team Manager is responsible for monitoring and contributing to the management of this function
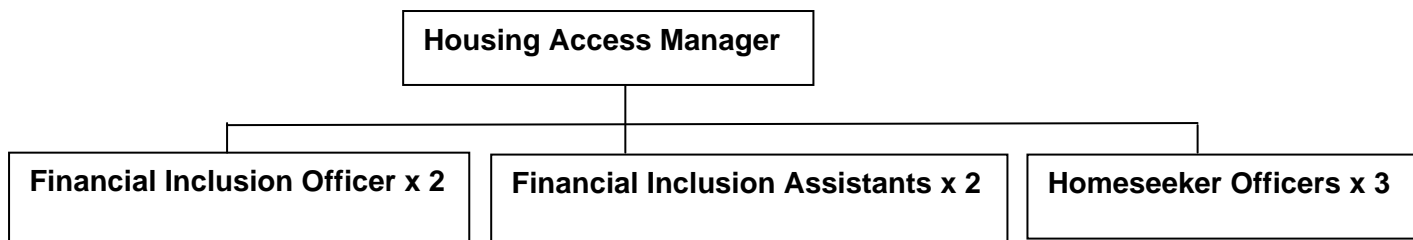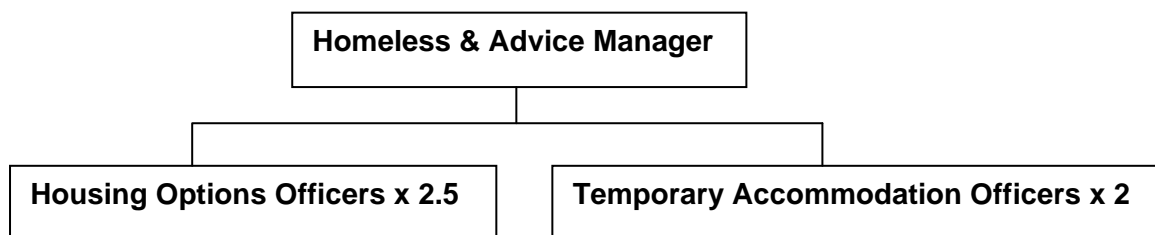
Housing Options Function:

> **Housing Options Team Manager**
> (Vacant – current post-holder seconded)

> **Senior Options Officer**
> (Post-holder seconded to vacant Options Team Manager post)

> **Options Officers x 3**

> **Private Sector Liaison Officer**

Post	SCP Scale	Salary	NI	Super	Total
Options Team Manager	41-45	38,422	3,189	8,107	49,718
Senior Options Officer	37-41	34,894	2,722	7,363	44,979
Options Officer	33-37	31,160	2,368	6,575	40,103
Options Officer	33-37	31,160	2,368	6,575	40,103
Options Officer	33-37	31,160	2368	6,575	40,103
Private Sector Liaison Officer	29-33	28,127	2,081	5.935	36,143
					251,149

Torfaen:

Housing Register Function

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Housing Access Manager  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
┌───────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────────┐ ┌────────────────────┐
│ Financial         │ │ Financial Inclusion  │ │ Homeseeker         │
│ Inclusion         │ │ Assistants x 2       │ │ Officers x 3       │
│ Officer x 2       │ │                      │ │                    │
└───────────────────┘ └──────────────────────┘ └────────────────────┘
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Housing Options Function:

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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │  Homeless & Advice Manager │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
              ┌───────────────────┴───────────────────┐
   ┌────────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Housing Options Officers   │      │ Temporary Accommodation          │
   │ x 2.5                      │      │ Officers x 2                     │
   └────────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────────┘
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Proposal for Delivering a Combined Housing Solutions Service

The proposal for the new combined Housing Solutions service is create two new integrated teams, on a pilot basis for one year:

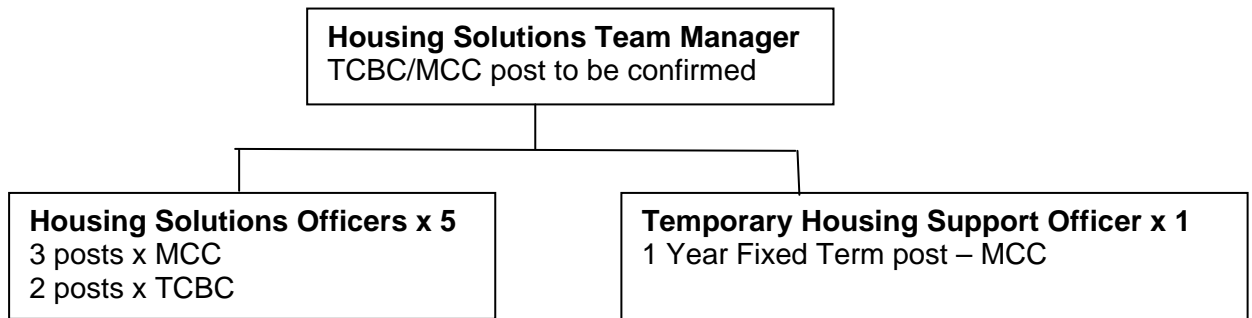- a Housing Solutions Team and
- a Private Sector Team

The Housing Solutions Team will cover the homeless or potentially homeless demand related part of the service and the Private Sector Team will cover the accommodation supply part of the service, with particular emphasis on increasing the use of private sector accommodation.

The proposed new teams will be integrated teams made up of staff from each Council to provide a combined single service to cover both respective Council areas. The staff affected by the proposal will continue to remain employed by their current Council employer under their existing terms and conditions.
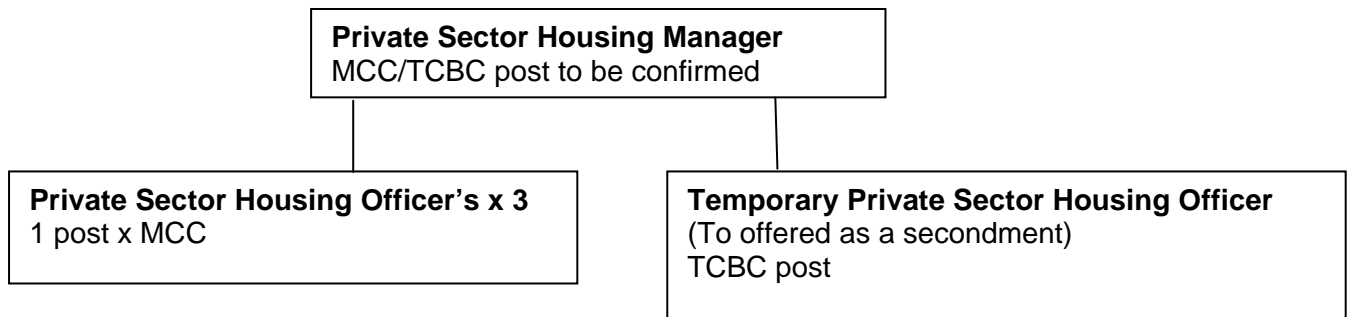
At this stage, it is not proposed that the Housing Register functions of each Council will form part of the new Housing Solutions Service due to the different delivery methods and the associated complexities. Monmouthshire Housing Association, therefore, will continue to deliver the Housing Register on behalf of the Council under the current arrangement. It is, therefore, recommended that the future of this function and possible joint delivery is considered at a later date after this proposal has had the opportunity to successfully bed in and the outcomes evaluated.

Proposed Structure

Housing Solutions Team:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Housing Solutions Team Manager     │
│  TCBC/MCC post to be confirmed      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
              │
      ┌───────┴───────────────┐
┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Housing Solutions        │  │ Temporary Housing Support        │
│ Officers x 5             │  │ Officer x 1                      │
│ 3 posts x MCC            │  │ 1 Year Fixed Term post – MCC     │
│ 2 posts x TCBC          │  │                                  │
└──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────────────┘
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Private Sector Team

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Private Sector Housing Manager     │
│  MCC/TCBC post to be confirmed      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
              │
   ┌──────────┴────────────────┐
┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Private Sector Housing   │  │ Temporary Private Sector         │
│ Officer's x 3            │  │ Housing Officer                  │
│ 1 post x MCC            │  │ (To offered as a secondment)     │
│                          │  │ TCBC post                        │
└──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────────────┘
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Post	SCP Scale	Salary	NI	Super	Total
Housing Solutions Manager	41-45	38,422	3,189	8,107	49,718
Senior Options Officer	Post to be deleted				
Housing Support Officer – Fixed Term	25-29	24,646	1,799	5,200	31,645
Housing Solutions Officer	33-37	31,160	2,368	6,575	40,103
Housing Solutions Officer	33-37	31,160	2,368	6,575	40,103
Housing Solutions Officer	33-37	31,160	2368	6,575	40,103
Housing Solutions Officer	Torfaen Post				
Housing Solutions Officer	Torfaen Post				
Private Sector Manager	Torfaen Post				
Private Sector Housing Officer	29-33	28,127	2,081	5.935	36,143
Private Sector Housing Officer	Torfaen Post				
Private Sector Housing Officer	Torfaen Post				
Total MCC Salary Commitment					**237,816**

On the basis of the above structure and arrangement, the proposal will make a financial salary saving of £13,334 for the Council.

Contribution to the Medium Term Financial Plan
This proposal forms part of the Housing & Communities Project Mandate agreed by Cabinet on 8th January 2014. The proposal is required to contribute to the Medium Term Financial Plan £55,000 over three years starting in 2014/15.

This proposal provides the required savings for the Council over the three year period through the above restructure and through the increase in homeless prevention and the reduction of Bed & Breakfast use.

Scope to use the model to identify opportunities to generate income will be an on-going activity.

Model for Service Delivery

The proposed team structure will base service delivery on a modernised delivery model, which the Council has already started to implement. The model is based around four distinct works-streams:

Workstream 1 -   Establishing an on-line self-assessment tool covering self-help on homelessness prevention, social housing prospects and wider options.

A template has been established for (Monmouthshire) and now needs IT support to finalise implementation.

Workstream 2 -   A front end and first contact arrangement (through face to face and telephone assistance) that delivers the service to the overwhelming majority of actions at the first point of contact. The principle behind the approach is on the basis that typical demand, it is reasonable to aim for actions and decisions to be completed at that first point of contact and/or on the same day for the majority of cases.

This is being implemented through a telephone duty system

Workstream 3 -   A back-office function to facilitate complex or time consuming homeless enquiries and prevention work. The guidance is that the back-office staff should also be able to do same-day home-visits

The telephone duty system frees up other members of the team to undertake the more involved case work.

Workstream 4 -   A distinct part of the service will be to manage and source private sector housing either prevent homelessness or end homeless duties. A key element will be to develop effective relationships with private landlords.

This proposal and the establishment of a Private Sector Team will facilitate this part of the model.

Streamlining Activity & Use of Resources

A key aim of this proposal is to reduce duplication through rationalisation and make better use of existing resources. Once the new proposed team structure has been established, the short to medium term priority will be to reduce the duplication and establish one system/procedure. This will take some time due to the number of individual systems and the need to run project development alongside the ongoing delivery of the service.   The intention though is to systematically review the respective systems/procedures, identify best practice and agree the most effective system for proceeding with. This will relate to activities such as:

- Referral and access arrangements
- Assessment procedures
- Case recording systems
- IT systems
- Performance monitoring
- Property management and maintenance
- Standard stationary

- Developing a joint landlord offer
- Continuing with the joint Landlord Hub

A key resource that the proposal will seek to combine will be the pool of accommodation. At present each Council has a separate portfolio of accommodation. The accommodation will be brought together and effectively managed as one. In addition to accommodation, the proposal will seek to identify and flexibly pool other available resources. Again this will be undertaken on a systematic and evolving basis once the proposal has been implemented and the new teams are operational.

It needs to be noted that in the short to medium term there will not be a consistent provision of service across both Counties. For example, Torfaen County Borough Council directly currently offer a Financial Inclusion Service (a housing support activity funded through Supporting People) through the Housing Service. However, Monmouthshire currently provides generic floating support (also housing support activity funded through Supporting People) under contract to a number of external providers.

However, it is an ongoing priority to consider opportunities to achieve a consistent service for the residents of both Councils. For example, through joint planning and joint commissioning and utilising pending funding opportunities that are anticipated through Welsh Government. The proposed Temporary Housing Support Officer will contributes towards achieving consistency.

How will success be measured?
It is proposed to measure the success of the project through:

- Increase in the number of homeless prevention cases and reduced homelessness

- Decrease in the use of B & B

- Increased customer satisfaction levels that demonstrate effective service delivery

- Achieve efficiency savings as per the respective budget pressures of each Council

- Reduced void rates of local authority and private rented temporary accommodation stock

- Reduced requests for homeless reviews

- Increase in the number of landlords working in partnership with both Council's

For the Council and Monmouthshire, it is also relevant that the proposal meets the £55,000 financial target of the proposal in respect of the Medium term Financial Plan.

Other Benefits
The following are some of the key wider benefits of the proposal:

- Reductions in resource, service and procedural duplication eg IT, MAPPA, MARAC, external contracts

- Identification and consistent implementation of good practice

- Shared work-force development and training

- Improved access to private sector housing accommodation, associated services and products as a viable and desirable alternative to social housing

- Potential income generation opportunities

- Improvements to the quality and availability of private rented housing

Risks of Proposal
The risks of the proposal have been considered and there are no risks associated with the project and the implementation of the proposal that are considered to be high.

Please see attached **Appendix.**

Consultation and Engagement
Engaging and consulting with staff, the Union and Personnel has been a priority to inform this proposal. The following provides an overview to the opportunities provided for staff to influence and help shape this proposal:

- Staff have been asked to comment on the detail of the service outlined in Andy Gales report. These comments will be used to help further inform and develop the proposal.

- Staff have been invited to establish a mechanism for contributing to influencing and shaping the proposal and to facilitate two way feedback. Staff have accepted the offer and established a representative staff group to liaise with management.

- Trade Unions and Personnel have been involved in this process.

- A joint away day was held with staff from both authorities to build relationships and consider how the authorities could best work together to build this new service.   This collated a list of options for service development, and considerations about improving customer journeys.

- After evaluation of the final report from Andy Gale, and comments from staff and trade unions, a proposal document detailing the joint model for operating a pilot/interim project to establish an integrated Housing Solutions Team.

- In addition to the staff group to liaise with management, subject specific staff working groups have been held develop proposals

Next Steps
The following are the next steps to implementing this proposal and delivering the new joint Housing Solutions Service:

- Both Authorities acquiring necessary permissions to implement the proposal. From a Monmouthshire perspective this will be through acquiring approval from Monmouthshire's Cabinet, scheduled for 1st October 2014.

- Subject to agreement, implement the agreed staffing structure by November 2014

- Through staff working groups, rationalise and streamline business processes and procedures.

  This will be an on-going part of the project and due to the number of individual systems is likely to continue throughout the pilot period. The initial emphasis will though, be on critical systems such as IT systems, in order that staff do not have to utilise dual systems to record and manage individual cases. A further element will be to consider systems relating to accommodation, with a view to releasing capacity to secure/ acquire accommodation and further develop relationships with private landlords, in addition to day to day management requirements.

  In addition, a key focus will be to develop the service to provide a consistent and standard level of service to residents of both Council's. This won't be possible in the short-term due to the configuration and commissioning of current services. For example, Torfaen CBC provides a specialist Financial Inclusion Service funded by Supporting People, whereas, for Monmouthshire, Supporting People funding provides a more generic housing support service through the Housing Support Gateway and individual housing support providers.

  Identifying and undertaking joint staff training and development will underpin the rationalisation of business processes.

- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding under which the new service will operate.

- Establishing an alternative brand and identity for the service that is independent of both authorities.

- The aim is for the new service to be a model of innovation and excellence. It will certainly be the first of its kind in UK. It is proposed that consideration be given to involving other sectors in the development of the model, perhaps by establishing an advisory board.

- In developing the new service, it is proposed that the service becomes a 'customer' led model. There will be a need to establish a mechanism for engaging and involving service users to provide the opportunity to influence the development of the service.

- There needs to be an interim review and evaluation of the pilot. It is proposed to undertake this before the end of March 2015 in order to fully understand the progress and success of the pilot prior to April 2015 and the introduction of the new statutory responsibilities through the Housing Bill. This will enable any required changes to be implemented that may be necessary in readiness for 1st April 2015

- The establishment of the new Housing Solutions Team and Private Sector Team is regarded as Phase I of establishing a combined Housing Solutions Team for Monmouthshire and Torfaen and effectively will run until November 2015. Consideration, therefore, during the pilot will be given to moving the project into a further Phase. Phase II will give consideration, particularly, to the future needs and demands of the service including access to social housing, consideration will be given as to whether it's appropriate to include other services to the model.

Appendix

Development of MCC & TCBC Joint Housing Options Service

Joint Risk Assessment

Risk	Reason	Level	Mitigating Action
The new joint service will not adequately prepare both Council's for the new Housing Bill, including the pending statutory duty to prevent homeless ness	There could be a significant increase in demand for homeless and homeless prevention services which both Council's cannot absorb	Low	The new service will reduce and/or eliminate duplicate activity, thereby, effectively releasing additional staff capacity to focus on the new statutory duty to prevent homelessness and the development of the private sector to facilitate the pending ability to discharge duty using private sector housing. By merging existing staff into an integrated new team, both Council's will become more resilient to possible changes in future demand The model is based on the advice and recommendation of an independent housing consultant, Andy Gale, an expert in the field of homelessness. The proposal has further been considered by a homeless specialist WLGA representative. The model has increased the level of staffing resource that is currently provided to develop private sector housing
Staff won't 'buy' into the project and support its aims and objectives	Staff not supporting the project could undermine the ultimate success of the proposal There is a pay differential between the staff of the two Councils.	Low	Staff, Union and Personnel engagement has been and continues to be a priority component of the project. A joint staff forum has been established to enable staff, unions and Personnel to engage with management and influence the development of the proposals. Staff working groups have been established to enable staff to contribute to the development of the proposal. There is a commitment for project documentation to be to be circulated to staff and the opportunity to comment.

The new service won't reduce costs or may result in additional expenditure	The project could fail to reduce existing costs. For example, by continuing to operate dual systems There could be some short-term set up costs that need to be incurred	Low	The project is designed to reduce to expenditure through joint working. A key element of the project is to rationalise and streamline business process and procedures. A key one being IT systems. By aligning activity, duplicate costs will be reduced/eliminated The project already has enabled both Council's to reduce costs through shared furniture storage, joint approach to out of hours, a shared Landlord Hub and sharing temporary accommodation The project is enabling Monmouthshire to reduce salary related expenditure through a restructure The Council is aware that Welsh Government is making available some short-term grant funding to support local authorities deliver the new short-term homeless prevention duty. The project will consider utilising this funding to support any short-term set-up costs identified
The new service won't improve service delivery	Performance could deteriorate due to new business processes and procedures eg being more cumbersome, inefficient etc		The new service will reduce and/or eliminate duplicate activity, thereby, effectively releasing additional staff capacity to focus on priority activity eg the new statutory duty to prevent homelessness and the development of the private sector to facilitate the pending ability to discharge duty using private sector housing. The intention is that in developing the service it becomes 'customer led.' Part of the proposal will be to develop an approach that establishes a structure that will enable service users to get involved and influence the future of the service. A priority of the service is to improve private sector housing. Increasing engagement and improving relationships with private landlords and supporting them to reduce their risks is a key element of the proposal.
The new delivery of the new service and the service quality could be jeopardised due a deterioration in relationships between the Councils.	An arising dispute between the two Councils could impact negatively		A Memorandum of Understanding will be established that will provide the basis for dispute resolution. Both Councils are already functioning from shared offices and

	on the project		will continue to ensure joint staff working arrangements and meetings take place on a regular basis.
There will not be a consistent level of service across both Council's	Each Council delivers the current Housing Options Service in a different way.	Medium	In the short to medium term and in order not to unnecessarily delay the implementation of the proposal, there will **not** be complete consistency of service for residents of each County. Through staff working groups, the project will continue to identify opportunities to rationalise and streamline business processes and procedures. A key area of difference between the two Council's is the use of Supporting People funding, particularly in relation to Financial Inclusion. This will be an on-going key area of development with feedback being provided to respective Supportive People Planning and Commissioning processes. The Council is aware that Welsh Government is making available some short-term grant funding to support local authorities deliver the new short-term homeless prevention duty. The project will consider this funding to help support service alignment.
Local Government may have an impact upon the future or long-term viability of the new service. There could be significant cost implications disruptions to dismantle the service.	Subject to the new local govt boundaries being agreed, there may be political pressure to cease the MCC & TCBC partnership	Medium	The service has been designed that will facilitate a straight-forward exit strategy. Staff will continue to be employed by their existing employer under their existing terms and conditions. One area of risk is in relation to the proposal to utilise one IT system for data management. The implications of possibly giving notice on a system will be fully evaluated prior to any decisions being made.
Locality differentials that lead to inconsistent decision-making in turn increasing complaint, customer dissatisfaction and the risk of serious challenge that could negatively impact on respective LA reputations	Each Council/Locality has different resources, housing markets and supply of services and service pathways at its disposal	Medium	In the short to medium term there will n**ot** be complete consistency of service for customers of each County. A key area of difference is Housing Support Services. Through staff working groups, the project will continue to identify opportunities to rationalise and streamline business processes and procedures. By continuing to work with the WLGA on the new homelessness

			legislation template and procedures, it is anticipated that commonality will prevail not only for both MCC and TCBC, but more widely across Wales.

The "Equality Initial Challenge"

Name: Service area: Housing & Communities Date completed: 24th October 2014		Please give a **brief description** of what you are aiming to do. Establish an integrated housing options service with Torfaen County Borough council	
Protected characteristic	Potential **Negative** impact Please give details	Potential **Neutral** impact Please give details	Potential **Positive** Impact Please give details
Age		x	
Disability		x	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		x	
Pregnancy and maternity		x	
Race		x	
Religion or Belief		x	
Sex (was Gender)		x	
Sexual Orientation		x	
Transgender		x	
Welsh Language		x	

Please give details about any potential **negative Impacts.**	How do you propose to **MITIGATE** these **negative impacts**
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢

Signed Ian Bakewell   **Designation:** Housing & Communities Manager   **Dated** 23rd October 13

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
Integration of Housing Options Service with TCBC	Housing Options Service
Policy author / service lead	**Name of assessor and date**
Ian Bakewell	Ian Bakewell

1. What are you proposing to do?

To deliver Housing Option Services jointly with TCBC and:

- Establish a new joint Housing Solutions Service
- Build resilience and capacity
- Streamline current business processes into one robust system
- Build a service with an increased focus on the prevention of homelessness
- Develop an available stock of housing accommodation in the private sector

This will be achieved by establishing a new Housing Solutions Service with two distinct teams – a Housing Solutions Team and a Private Sector Housing Team

2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way?   If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

3. Please give details of the negative impact

No impact

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

No specific action taken as not necessary. The proposal in itself is a step to mitigate against the risk of homelessness increasing in the future and homeless prevention becoming a statutory responsibility from April 2015

Staff engagement has been and continues to be a key component to the development of this service and has commenced already through the circulation of proposal reports to staff and staff meetings to discuss with staff. The Union and Personnel have and will continue to be engaged in the development of this proposal

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5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Homelessness and prevention related statistics

Signed Ian Bakewell **Designation** Housing & Communities Manager   **…Dated** 1st September 2014

The "Sustainability Challenge"

Name of the Officer completing "the Sustainability challenge" Ian Bakewell		Please give a **brief description** of the **aims** proposed policy or service reconfiguration Integrated delivery of Housing Option Services with TCBC	
Name of the Division or service area Housing & Communities		Date "Challenge" form completed 23rd October 2013	
Aspect of sustainability affected	**Negative impact** **Please give details**	Neutral impact **Please give details**	**Positive Impact** **Please give details**
PEOPLE			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		X	
Improve housing quality and provision			X The aim is to prevent more homelessness and help reduce the use of B & B
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare			X

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provision			The aim is to prevent more homelessness and help reduce the use of B & B
Promote independence		X	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		x	
Targets socially excluded			X Proposal will benefit many households, particularly vulnerable, who are often excluded for a variety of reasons
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		x	
Improve access to education and training			X The proposal will target households with homelessness and threatened with homelessness and link them with opportunities
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		x	
PLANET		x	
Reduce, reuse and recycle		x	

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waste and water			
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions			X Through being a more telephoned based service, there will be a positive impact on staff travelling
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water			X As above
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		x	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		x	
PROFIT		x	
Protect local shops and services		x	
Link local production with local consumption		x	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		x	
Increase employment for local people		x	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		x	

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Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		x	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		x	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to **MITIGATE** the **negative impacts** (include any reasonable adjustments)
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

The next step is to implement this proposal and establish the new Housing Solutions Service for Monmouthshire and Torfaen and create the two new integrated teams – Housing Solutions Team and Private Sector Housing Team.

On completion of this, key next steps will include: Rationalise and streamline business processes and procedures; Develop a memorandum of understanding; Establish an alternative branding for the new service; Consideration to establishing an advisory board; establishing a mechanism for engaging and involving service users; and an interim evaluation of the pilot before the end of March 2015 and a final review and evaluation by November 2015.

do to

N/A

Signed   Ian Bakewell   **Dated** 1st September 2014

Appendix 3

Comments Received

Arising out of the consultation on this report, a number of comments/queries were received. These are listed below, together with the subsequent replies.

Is this report and proposal about a specific MCC team of people here with this as their title? Or are you talking about the function?

This proposal is in relation to the Housing & Community Services Team, [of which the Housing Options Team is part of].

Will staff continue to work in their own Council areas? If not will they need to be able to use 2 sets of systems for accounting, invoicing, debtors etc depending on which Council area the activity they work on is taking place?

Staff will cover both Counties. Staff potentially may need to use two sets of systems. Processes and streamlining is being currently addressed.

How will the governance on this arrangement work in practice? Will there be 2 managers for each team to report into, one for MCC and one for TCBC?

Accountability will still remain with each Authority. Each manager [the new posts] will be responsible for the service in both Counties and will report into both Council's. Reporting and monitoring arrangements (eg WG returns) will still be undertaken as individual Council's. It is proposed that there is joint Select Committee scrutiny.

What is the advantage of implementing the short-term priorities detailed in the report, after the proposed new teams are operational in November 2014

The short-term advantage is resilience and flexibility created by a larger critical mass of staffing. The emphasis is on starting to deliver as soon as practicably possible. There has been a lot of work and discussions taken place already to get us to this stage, particularly with front-line staff. There has also been a Personnel and Union input.   The model will most definitely continue to evolve for some time and to complete the short-term priorities, some of which are less critical, would delay implementation.

Will [the project] mean using one system for invoicing, budget monitoring etc
This can't be answered definitively at this stage as this is currently being considered and options are being explored at the moment, but obviously the aim is to streamline and rationalise as far as possible. Support services will be involved to acquire advice and assistance. There will be a need to run with dual systems for the time being.

Are there clear lines of accountability in the proposal, as this feels like a risk area.

The main accountability sits with the Housing & Communities Manager in respect of Monmouthshire (together with the Head of Housing Services for Torfaen County Borough Council) under the responsibility of the Chief Officer for Enterprise.   Adult Select Committee is keen to establish a joint scrutiny arrangement with Torfaen.

The 'Resource Implication' section of the report needs to refer to the savings targets in the MTFP and whether they will be achieved by this proposal.

The report confirms that the £55,000 project mandate target will be achieved. Scope to explore further income generation will form part of the model.

Andy Gale   1/11/13

A Report Considering the Future Options For Delivering The Homelessness Function And Whether There Is a Strong Business Case For Delivering A Combined Service

Torfaen and Monmouthshire Councils – A Report Considering the Future Options for Delivering the Homelessness Function and whether there is a strong Business Case for Delivering a Combined Service

November 2013

1: Introduction

The brief set is to consider the options for delivering the Homelessness Services in Monmouthshire and Torfaen in the future. This is set against the background of the financial savings targets that have been set by both authorities and new legislation (likely to be enacted in April 2015), which will place a duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness.

I have been asked to examine the potential for delivering the Homelessness & Housing Options Service for both authorities as a combined service and the potential and options for delivering such a model.

My objective is to set out a model which would allow both authorities to deliver their current and future statutory homeless responsibilities within the new financial reality emerging for local government in Wales. Despite these constraints the model must be able to still deliver an excellent service to residents in Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

2: Recommendations

It is recommended:

1. To combine the Homelessness & Housing Options Services for Monmouthshire and Torfaen to create a Housing Future's Service.
2. To deliver the Housing Future's Service through a 'Memorandum of Understanding' arrangement in the first instance.
3. To undertake further work:

   a. To develop a draft business plan which sets out a suggested service structure for the Housing Futures Service and suggest the appropriate level of resources
   b. To map out in detail how each function would be delivered

4. Set up a Project Team Board to oversee the project consisting of the senior Policy and Operational managers for the service from both authorities.
5. The new Housing Futures Service should retain a clear social purpose but operate in a more commercial environment. The service should be set up within the reduced budgets

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set for both services for the next 3 years with an objective that the service should as far as possible be self-funding within 5 years

3: Background.

Both local authorities provide a service to meet the statutory duty to the homeless as required under the Housing Act 1996. Each service covers the functions for preventing homelessness, assessing statutory homeless applications and meeting any duty to provide temporary accommodation. In addition, Torfaen also provides the statutory duty to assess housing applications and allocate social housing under Allocations legislation contained in the Housing Act 1996, whereas in Monmouthshire this function has been contracted out to Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) - the organisation that took over the Authorities Council Housing.

In Torfaen the service is called the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service. In Monmouthshire it is called the Housing Options Service. For ease of understanding and consistency both services are referred to as the Homelessness Service in this report.

4: What are the options for the delivery of the Homelessness and Housing Options functions in both Torfaen and Monmouthshire?

Homelessness remains a statutory responsibility and there is a significant financial risk to both authorities if the service performs poorly or if there is an increase in homeless demand.

There will be in 2015 a significant extension of the statutory homelessness duty for local authorities in Wales. The Welsh Government on November 18[th] published a new Housing Bill which will impose a new duty on local authorities to take 'all reasonable steps to prevent homelessness' for anyone approaching the local authority who may be at risk of losing their home within 56 days. The new duty will apply to single people and families regardless of any local connection with the authority, priority need, or any issue as to whether their risk of becoming homeless is as a result of an intentional act. This will result in significantly higher numbers of homelessness applications and a new duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for each applicant whose circumstances trigger the new duty.

Homelessness is therefore a statutory service which will need to undergo considerable change in order to be able to meet the new 'preventing homelessness' duty in 2015. This duty will be in addition to the existing accommodation duty for households who are found to be homeless and in priority need which in itself poses a financial risk to both authorities through the requirement to provide temporary accommodation if demand rises, or the service underperform. Therefore from April 2015 if no new model is introduced to deliver the homeless function, both authorities are likely to need to increase resources for their respective Homeless Services to meet both current and the new statutory preventing homelessness duties. There is an indication that the Welsh Government will provide some

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resources to support authorities to implement the new duty. Resources may be available in 2014 and in 2015 to support the implementation of the new duty but there is no indication as to how much money each local authority will receive.

At the same time Monmouthshire and Torfaen Councils need to achieve considerable financial savings. Both Councils have made a commitment to fundamentally review the delivery of all services in order to realise savings. At the time or report drafting, Torfaen needs to find an estimated 40 million savings over the next 4 years and Monmouthshire's savings target is estimated at 25 -30 million over the same period. In Monmouthshire a specific savings figure has been set for the Housing Options Service of £55,000 over the next 3 years.

All options for delivering the statutory Homelessness Service must therefore be considered. This may be in the context of meeting the budget savings targets or minimising any increase in resources, which is not funded by the Welsh Government, that may be required to implement the new 'preventing homelessness' duty.

There are a number of options for delivering the service in the future. The test set for each option is would it deliver the authority's statutory duty as well as realising financial savings.

There are 3 options for delivering the Homelessness service in the future:

1. Continue to deliver the Homeless Service as individual local authorities.

2. Contracting out the Homeless Service or to contract out one or more functions within that service.

3. Delivering the service through a new partnership between Torfaen and Monmouthshire local authorities.

Analysing the 3 options

Option 1: The option to continue to deliver the Homeless Service as individual local authorities

This is in effect the 'continue as we are' option and is not sustainable unless each local authority is able to guarantee that funding will be maintained now and increased from 2015 to cope with the new prevention duty. For Monmouthshire this is not just about the resources to deliver the new preventing homeless duty but also the resources to deliver the current service. Monmouthshire has, with Ceredigion, the lowest staff resource to operate its statutory homelessness function in the whole of Wales. With no increase in existing resources combined with a savings target of a further £55k the Council will struggle to meet its current statutory homeless duties and will certainly be unable to meet any new 'preventing homelessness' duty in 2015.

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The reality is that the services in both authorities will be likely to have to contribute to existing and future savings targets regardless of statutory duties. Any year on year 'salami slicing' of core budgets will only reduce the performance of both services. This in turn will create the risk that the numbers in temporary accommodation are not controlled leading to increased costs which will exceed any budget savings made.

The 'do nothing' option is therefore not an option that can be recommended. Both authorities would be unlikely to achieve savings and 'doing nothing' may put both at risk of not meeting their current and future statutory duties to the homeless, in turn increasing the risk of challenge.

Option 2: The option to contract out the Homeless Service or contract out one or more functions contained within the service.

Would the option to contract out the homeless service realise savings and meet the current and future statutory duties? In considering the potential to contract out the Homeless function it is important to consider the experience of local authorities that have contracted out this function. The model implemented across the UK to date has been largely for authorities to contract out the homelessness function to a voluntary transfer partner at the point of transferring the housing stock. There are very few examples of authorities transferring the homeless service to a private sector 'for profit' organisation such as Capita or a similar private sector body.

Some limited information exists for Councils who have transferred their homeless function out to a stock transfer organisation in England. The following information reflects the known position at the end of 2011.

- Approximately 50 Councils have taken the decision to transfer their homelessness functions to their stock transfer partner Housing Association. Out of these 50% are known to have taken back or been handed back the homelessness function. A number of other authorities are considering the option of taking the homelessness function back under the control of the Council as either cost savings have not resulted or the service has underperformed. Ultimately, homelessness as the priority of a stock transfer housing association is not evident. The purpose of transfer is to raise finance and improve the stock and meet Government targets. The Homelessness service is often seen as an 'add on' and is not part of the core purpose of the stock transfer association and therefore performance can suffer as a result.

- Outside of the option to transfer the function to an existing Housing Association or a newly formed voluntary transfer housing association the market is very underdeveloped. There is only one example of the function being provided by a genuine private sector company (Westminster Council in London) and only one example of another local authority successfully bidding to take over another authority's service

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(Salford won the contract to provide the service for Trafford Council in Greater Manchester in 2012). The large private sector organisations such as Capita that have successfully bid and provide numerous local authority services have so far avoided this market due to, it is believed, to be their lack of expertise in what they perceive to be a highly specialised area of work or due to the consideration of the financial risks involved or lack of profit potential. The market to enable genuine competition is very immature at this point in time.

- Generally, performance on tackling homelessness amongst contracted out services is worse than for similar councils where homelessness is under the control of the authority. For example Herefordshire Council had been allocated 3 stars by the Audit Commission Housing Inspectorate for its homelessness service in 2003. The function was transferred out with the stock resulting in a rapid decline in service, high levels of homelessness acceptances, and increased costs to the authority, and a large number of families being place into bed and breakfast in breach of legislation. The Council took the service back in house and performance has improved significantly as a result.

- Other local authorities that have transferred the function have found that it is not possible to set performance or savings targets as homelessness is ultimately a demand led service where numbers and costs can change rapidly according to national and local economic factors. Performance indicators for contractors are often soft targets such as the time taken to process applications.

Given the resource constraints in Monmouthshire is there an option to contract or transfer the service to Torfaen to run? There are a number of practical issues here.

a) It is unlikely that this would be possible without a competitive tendering of the service which may or may not bring in other potential providers.

b) Politically there may be reluctance by Torfaen to 'take on' the risk of running the homeless service and much time may be lost whilst such a decision is reached.

c) There would be TUPE considerations and the whole process could take upwards of 12 months to complete the transfer leaving the service exposed during this period.

d) Given the low staffing resource in the Monmouthshire service and TUPE considerations this option is unlikely to lead to any or significant cost savings.

The contracting out option is unlikely to lead to cost savings for both authorities and may in fact increase financial risk due to increased temporary accommodation costs if the contractor were unable to maintain performance at the current level. Any contractor is likely to require increased funding to meet the new 2015 'preventing homelessness' duty and the experience to date is that contractors are un willing to take on any increased financial risk resulting from higher demand for the service.   In addition the overwhelming

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experience of many local authorities in England that have transferred their Homeless Service is that the quality of the service may suffer and cost savings are marginal.

Option 3: Delivering the service through a partnership between Torfaen and Monmouthshire Councils.

There is therefore a strong case for the option to deliver the service in the future through a partnership between the two authorities. There is a simple logic here as to why this will allow both authorities to work within the new economic reality and ensure that they can implement the new legislative duties in 2015. Both services operate from one location and to similar processes and approach. By teams work well together and by combining the teams there would be economies of scale and more can be achieved with the same level of resources as long as a robust business plan is implemented. The pooling of staff, knowledge, expertise and resources would assist in realising savings targets, and there would be greater opportunity to generate income. A full options as to how this model would work would be able to test this assumption and this is one of the recommendations.

If this is the preferred option for both authorities the next question is should this model work on the basis of informal cooperation or should a more radical approach be developed to deliver a new stand-alone combined service with an innovative approach to meeting both statutory functions and housing help to residents in the two local authority areas?

There are few examples elsewhere where all or parts of homelessness services have been combined. There has been some limited cooperation between authorities where, for example, a decision has been taken to combine Chief Officer and Operational Management for homelessness. This is often on a temporary basis to deal with problems in recruiting experienced senior staff. This has happened in the recent past in 2 Dorset authorities and is currently the model in East Hants and Havant Councils where one chief officer manages both services.

What hasn't been implemented yet elsewhere in the UK is a model to deliver the Homelessness Function through combining 2 services and at every level, covering both the management and all operational staff and functions.

If Torfaen and Monmouthshire were to agree to develop a combined service this would be the first model of its kind in the UK and would inevitably lead to interest from other Local Authorities.

Clearly the demography and supply of social housing is different in each local authority. However, there is a clear advantage in that both services are currently co-located in Pontypool and both services have transferred their council housing stock leaving the retained function for homelessness as the main housing still delivered. A further advantage to this option, as can be seen from the analysis in appendix 1, is that both services operate very similar structures and process for delivering their respective homeless services.

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5: The New Monmouthshire Torfaen Homeless Service Partnership – A model based on greater cooperation or a model that is a genuine combined service?

There are two clear models for delivering the service. It could be based on a model of increased cooperation or go far further where the service is formally merged. It is the second option that has the potential to deliver more and at a far lower cost.

A model based on increased Cooperation.

To some extent this is already beginning to happen. From November 4th the out of hour's service is being run jointly. There has been use of each authority's temporary accommodation stock and the intention of combining resources to develop a team to gain increased access to the private rented sector to prevent homelessness. More could follow with the introduction of common IT and common working processes but where the identity of each service remains separate. One group of staff would still work on Monmouthshire cases and the other on Torfaen cases.

There would undoubtedly be gains in efficiency and some gains financially but this model may miss the huge potential that can be gained from going a step further and formally merging the 2 services to create a stronger team. The closer cooperation model is only as strong as the resources that both authorities are able to put into the partnership allow. As further cuts are made the ability to work more cooperatively may be reduced.

The Model of merging the 2 services to create a combined Housing Futures Service

Under this model there is an opportunity to start with a completely 'blank piece of paper' and to decide

a) Who the service is for? - Should this be a traditional Homeless Service that aims to just meet the existing statutory homeless duty and the new preventing homeless duty or should it seek to reposition itself to provide services for many more residents in each authority that need help in resolving their housing problems and planning their housing future.
b) How delivering the functions as a Combined Service could produce cost and efficiency savings whilst at the same time providing a far more responsive customer focussed service for residents in both local authorities.

The recommendation is to merge both services and resources to develop a new Housing Futures Service which will be a centre of innovation and excellence and the first of its kind in the UK.

6: Housing Futures Service

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This is an opportunity to change the focus of the new service from that of a Homelessness Service to a Housing Futures Service which will offer help and advice for any resident in Monmouthshire and Torfaen in housing need. Critically, the new service would be focused on providing help and advice for all in housing need and is not just a service for the minority who are or are at risk of being homeless. Improving the service for residents must be a critical objective for combining the 2 services. Continuing to deliver the service independently against a background of further savings will inevitably lead to deterioration in the level and quality of service residents receive. The combined service option has the potential to deliver an even better service for residents.

Many residents in both local authorities have a housing need or need independent advice on a housing problem or just need advice on planning their housing future. The majority have nowhere to turn to for help and advice and most would see the Homelessness Service as somewhere you go only if you are homeless or in extreme risk of losing your home, when the costly crisis point both in terms of the strain on the public purse and the negative impact on people's quality of life has already emerged.

There are many residents that need housing help and advice and this figure will only grow as welfare reform impacts and the economic climate remains difficult. The new combined service presents an opportunity to move away from a traditional 'homeless only' type service and to deliver a service that is seen to be essential and relevant to many more residents.

The aim would be for the new Housing Futures Service to deliver help to the heart of the 2 communities embracing new technology and delivering help the way and at the locations that residents now demand. Whether a person needs help and advice on finding accommodation, preventing homelessness, leasehold, repairs, grants, loans, equity release, shared ownership or outright ownership the first place to naturally seek help and advice would be the Housing Futures Service.

Many need help on planning their housing future such as when to leave home and what accommodation options are available. The service could be made available to advise landlords as well. The approach taken would be to provide advice for people to help themselves and not for people to act as passive recipients of services as has been the case in the past.

There is also a big potential for the Housing Futures Service to help join up key agendas such as tackling debt; providing support for people who have difficulty in sustaining an independent tenancy and linking into employment and training.

This is not about providing services that have no added benefit. Many more residents will receive an essential and relevant service to help them resolve their housing need. More importantly by providing this help less people risk becoming homeless and needing to rely

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on the statutory duty. The purpose of the new legislation in 2015 is to prevent homelessness by tackling housing problems far earlier. The new Housing Futures Service would be fundamental to ensuring the Welsh Government's vision is able to be realised in Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will still remain a core part of the service. They will continue to receive a statutory homeless assessment and any duty that may arise from that assessment. However, the priority objective of the new Housing Futures Service would be to prevent homelessness and to provide housing help and advice to anyone that has a housing need or wishes to plan their housing future.

7: How would the new Housing Futures Service be delivered?

The aim would be to deliver the new Housing Futures Service through a far more flexible structure; streamlined processes; and a service that fully embraces new technology and new ways of working.

The team would be structured to deliver help and advice as quickly and efficiently as possible through 'face to face' contact or by telephone help and advice. Much of the work would be delivered through structured telephone help which is faster backed by streamlined processes. This would include using DIY self-help internet technology; standard forms, checklists, scripts, letters and help packs. New ways of working embracing new technology should mean that the service can be delivered at a lower cost.

The flexibility to deliver services helped by internship programmes and apprenticeships could also be deployed.

8: What would it look like?

There would need to be a number of guiding principles to be adhered to in developing the new service. These might, for example, be expressed as:

1) To be able to respond fully to the new Welsh Government 'Preventing Homeless' duty without any increase in costs to either local authority.
2) A stand-alone Housing Future's Service retaining a clear social purpose but operating in a commercial environment with a clear objective set that no new funding would be available and the ultimate aim would be for the new service to become more self sufficient.
3) The service would operate, as with any business, by adhering to a strict budget and able to deliver an excellent customer service.
4) The service would be business-like but not a business.
5) Innovation and cultural change would be critical to its success. Accountability would remain to the local authority but the service should reach out to the voluntary sector

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and business to guide its development. This could be channelled through an advisory group/board providing direction.

6) The service would be independently branded of both Authorities

There are a number of models that could be explored for delivering the service if this is the way both authorities wish to proceed. These include

a) A Community Interest Company
b) An arm's length company wholly owned by the local authority
c) A far less formal model based on a memorandum of understanding

Whatever model is chosen ultimate accountability needs to remain with each local authority given that homelessness is a statutory function. Each authority will need to explore how much autonomy the new service would have from day1 and what the ultimate aim might be for the service. For example under the Community Interest Company or Arm's length model there could be a Board for making day to day decisions which would have local authority significant local authority representation. Accountability would ultimately be with the local authority who might be the sole owner of any company but what would need to be established is what level of decision making would be delegated to the Board.

It could operate to start with on the basis of a 'memorandum of understanding' to operate the service for a period of time with an advisory board or group, with the intention to move to a Community Interest Company or Arm's Length Body within a set time period, after which the advisory board would formally be constituted as the Board for the local authority owned company.

Recommended reporting line back to each local authority.

Monmouthshire Housing Options Service is currently part of the Council's Regeneration & Culture Directorate. Torfaen's is part of the Social Care & Housing Service. Sensibly if a new combined service were to be developed there should be, in both authorities, a clear reporting line which allows decisions to be taken quickly and ensures that operational and policy priorities for the new service can be addressed quickly.. Accountability to Members could be achieved through progress and performance set as a standing item on each Council's Scrutiny Committee or through a joint authority scrutiny process.

9: How would it be financed?

Funding and each local authority's financial savings targets are critical issues which underpin the development of any new service. Initially the aim would be to retain the existing 2013/14 budgets for both services as core funding and to develop a business plan that achieves the savings set for both services over the next 3 years. Whether there would be any further revenue savings as a result of combining staff teams, temporary accommodation

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and associated functions would be fully assessed through the development of the business plan which would form part of the next phase of this project.

There may also be 'pump priming' money to help set up the new service. There is some indication that the Welsh Government may seek to support local authorities financially in the transition period leading up to the new 2015 preventing homeless duty. Timing here is important as any additional funding is likely to be one-off and funded from any 'slippage' in this financial year. Applications would be likely to be invited from November 2013 and the proposal would have to have enough initial support to justify a bid for funding to further develop the model.

It may also be possible to bid for funding to promote closer working between local authorities from the Williams Review proposals. To date, there have only been limited examples of authorities working closer together to deliver services and this would be a prime project for any funding which again may be available from slippage in the 2013/14 financial year.

There may, or may not be, 'new burdens' funding attached to the 2015 Preventing Homelessness duty and if any funding is received this could be incorporated into the core budget for the service producing a saving to the existing budget.

The commitment to core funding should have some clear longer term objectives set for the service. These could be:

The expectation of savings through efficiencies throughout a 3 year period with the aim for the new service to be fully self-financing within 5 years as new income is generated.

The new service would be expected to work within existing budgets. Homelessness is a statutory service which is demand led with financial risks through increased costs arising out of any increase in the use of bed and breakfast or other temporary accommodation. There could be a clear objective set for the new service that all revenue costs must be found within the budget set for the new service.

Income generating opportunities

Over a 5 year period the new service would be expected to develop income generating opportunities to help it become entirely self-sufficient. There are a number of realistic opportunities to generate income. These include generating income from savings the service can achieve through reducing the budget spend of other Council services and income generated through external sources. Although it is recognised that this has commenced in both Authorities and there is an on-going expectation that housing activities can and should support the wider priorities of the Council

The aim would be to start to generate income from day 1.

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Becoming the accommodation finding service to meet a range of statutory duties under Children Act and Adult Social Care legislation.

There is a clear business opportunity to provide an accommodation finding and management service to meet any statutory duties owed under Children Act, or Adult Social Care legislation.

For Children's Services this could be:

Providing accommodation and management services to meet any section 20 duties for 16/17 year olds or finding accommodation to meet any care or leaving care duty and running accommodation projects such as supported lodgings. Placements under section 20 of the Children Act can be upwards of £1000-£2000 a week and no housing benefit is recoverable on these placements. There may be opportunities for the new service to assist both Council's in relation to the use of high cost placements and providing a cost effective option.

The aim would be to source and procure accommodation placements at a far lower cost to the local authority which could be used to help offset the new service's core budget.

The same could apply to adult social care placements in small group homes or for individual placements for people with learning difficulties. Again it is recognised that this has already commenced within TCBC as a result of the integrated Social Care & Housing service.

The new service would receive a placement fee and the weekly rent with sufficient mark up to cover the cost of running these schemes. Each Council would be likely to see a large reduction in their 'looked after' costs.

The opportunity to bid for other mainstream housing contracts for homelessness, options and lettings services.

On-going financial restrictions on local authorities in Wales will require new structures and new approaches to providing Options, Homelessness and Social Letting Services. Services must be more efficient and achieve more with a substantially reduced budget over the next 4 years. Inevitably local authorities will need to look to new ways of delivering their Homeless, Options and Lettings functions and ways of reducing any financial risk.

The Welsh Government may also be forced, as a result of the financial reality faced in Wales, to encourage local authorities to open up public services to other providers. Models may range from contracting out and opening up the service to competition; models to combine service functions with neighbouring authorities; or voluntarily offering the homeless service to another authority or body to deliver their homelessness functions at a lower price.

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If the new service is set up by the spring of 2014 it would be in a strong position to bid for any Homelessness functions contracts tendered by local authorities. Tough decisions to tender out, or look at new ways of providing Homelessness Services, are likely to be required by late 2014. The new Monmouthshire/Torfaen Service would be in a prime position to win work. The service could offer to provide the whole Homeless Service or, if an authority preferred, operate certain functions for that authority under contract. Successfully delivering certain functions for a local authority may well lead to being offered, or successfully bidding for, the Homelessness Service as a whole.

Of all the Homelessness functions the business opportunity to deliver the private rented supply that a local authority needs is possibly one of the key opportunities. Many local authorities in Wales are experiencing difficulties in finding sufficient private rented accommodation to prevent homelessness through their traditional Bond and landlord incentive schemes. The result is more homelessness acceptances and placements in unsuitable, higher cost accommodation such as bed and breakfast.

The service would aim to deliver the number of private sector accommodation lettings a local authority may need allowing an authority to both prevent homelessness and meet the new 2015 ending homelessness duty through providing a suitable private rented sector let.

There may also be an income generating opportunity from offering a letting and management service to private sector landlords.

The offer to deliver Homelessness Services need not be confined to Wales. Given the geographical position of both authorities there are opportunities to provide services to a number of English local authorities that border South and Mid Wales.

The new service would be the first of its kind in Homelessness and would be likely to generate a lot of interest throughout local authorities in the UK. Showcase events will increase the reputation of the service and provide a small income generating opportunity.

Realistically the delivery of the new service model for other local authorities is likely to be only feasible where that authority is geographically close. There may however be an opportunity to 'franchise' the model but this will depend on a number of factors including any intellectual property rights. Regardless of this opportunity, providing consultancy support to local authorities looking to develop a similar combined service will again generate income.

Payment by results

The UK Government is promoting an approach where public sector bodies are paid by results and, given financial cuts to public sector budgets in Wales, this may be an approach that any future Welsh Government may be forced to consider. Payment by results could conceivably be applied to areas such as an authority's performance in preventing

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homelessness, eliminating bed and breakfast or reducing temporary accommodation. These all have an implication re higher costs if performance is poor. A new Housing Futures Service would be well placed to perform well in these areas and obtain any performance reward funding.

10: Risk factors if things go wrong or one of the authorities wishes to withdraw from the Combined Service.

If there were to be a decision that an authority or both authorities wished to revert to providing an individual service it would be a relatively quick and simple process. There would be no contractual issues to resolve or terms and conditions to be altered. Initially the joint service would be based on a memorandum of understanding between both authorities where either council with notice could opt out. Even if this were to be a Community Interest Company or similar this would be wholly owned by the local authorities who would have the power to disband it.

Given both services already share office accommodation and office costs there would be no need for either Council to seek alternative accommodation if a decision were to be made to revert to the previous service delivery model.

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Appendix one

Consideration of each of the functions that make up the Homelessness Service and whether there are any significant barriers that would prevent the establishment of a combined service

The fine detail for a combined service including structures, numbers, budgets and how a new service would be delivered on the ground would be part of the second stage of this project covering the development of a full Business Plan.

In brief, the appendix to this report looks at each of the functions that make up a Homelessness Service and whether there are any significant barriers that would prevent or delay the establishment of a combined service for Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

Function 1: Delivery of the Housing Application Assessment and Allocation of Social Housing Functions

This function covers the taking and assessing of applications for social housing under the Council's Allocation Policy and allocating vacancies that become available in the Social Housing stock. In Monmouthshire this is delivered by Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) under contract. In Torfaen there is a dedicated team, the Housing Homeseeker Team, who deliver this function. Either Torfaen could continue to deliver this function independently within the new combined service or Monmouthshire could decide to take this function back with the new service delivering this function for both authorities. This may possibly provide some cost savings although there would be likely to be TUPE implications for MHA staff who would need to transfer into the new service. The performance of MHA is considered to be good and there should be no assumption that all functions should have to be derived by the new Housing Futures Service. What works is important. It could be that following an options appraisal a decision is taken to continue to provide the housing register function for Monmouthshire through the current arrangements or to deliver this function for both authorities or sub regionally through another body.

The aim however, in the future would also be to consider whether there are advantages of delivering the housing register function in partnership or as at present independently, and continuing to identify opportunities for further efficiencies.

Function 2: The assessment of statutory homeless applications.

There are few anticipated problems in delivering this function as a combined service. It requires the application of legislation and guidance which are set nationally and not set by local policies.

By introducing a common homeless application form and common procedures and processes, this would ensure that decision making was efficient and consistent across both authority areas.

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Much of the statutory homeless assessment work is closely linked to the prevention of homelessness. Under a new combined service this would require a lot more outreach work with landlords issuing notice and parents requiring their adult children to leave. Currently the approach adopted by both authorities is common. The details of all new cases are referred into the Pontypool office where a decision is taken as to where and when an applicant will be seen. This process could easily be adapted to fit the needs of both authorities and would be likely to lead to a more efficient and cost effective service. A common application form, common processes, IT and decision letters would ensure a seamless service.

There may be a need for both authorities to formally alter their rules for delegating decisions so that any officer in the new service could make a decision on a homeless application regardless of which authority an officer worked for.

On assessing and tackling youth homelessness both services currently operate a similar approach and rely on the offer of upfront mediation through Llamau. It would be easy enough to combine this function for both authorities. Where a child in need assessment was required this should be carried out by a qualified social worker but there is nothing that requires that assessment to be carried out by a social worker employed by a specific authority.

Undertaking a statutory 202 review of any decision taken on homelessness could be easily combined and undertaken by one officer for both authorities.

There are economies of scale in providing a combined out of hours service and furniture storage service. Both of these functions are currently being delivered jointly as a first step to working together more closely.

There is also the opportunity to deliver together far more strategically relevant services for tackling homelessness provided by third sector bodies working in both authority areas. The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a fundamental review of its section 180 funding to third sector homelessness organisations. This is likely to result in local authorities having 'more say' in commissioning third sector services. A combined service could ensure that only strategically relevant services were commissioned and that any service had to be provided across both authorities leading to greater cost efficiencies, as well as better and more relevant services.

Function 3: Providing Temporary Accommodation and accessing the Private Rented Sector.

Here there are obvious advantages of closer working and combining resources would be a fairly east step to take. Both local authorities have a limited supply of emergency hostel accommodation, which is used mainly to meet any interim duty whilst a homeless application is being assessed. Both authorities use private sector leased units for households who are owed a full homeless duty. At the time of report drafting, Torfaen manage a suite of

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76 properties, which are leased from private sector landlords with an aim to reduce the number of units to 50. Monmouthshire have contracted a Housing Association to manage its private sector leasing stock which used to be managed in-house. It would be possible to have a mixed approach with some PSL units managed in house and some managed by an external Housing Association Partner.

Both authorities also have an underdeveloped approach to accessing the PRS for preventing homelessness and rely largely on the same third sector organisation to deliver this function. There is little point providing these functions independently and by combining the resources this will cut duplication and help build a stronger team to deliver cost effective accommodation to meet any homeless duty and to deliver far more accommodation units in the private rented sector to 1) prevent homelessness and 2) from 2015 with new legislation provide both authorities with the option to end any homeless duty.

The aim would be to jointly commission temporary accommodation where it was required and to create an accommodation pool which is available to either authority. This would reduce the risk of having to use costly bed and breakfast placements. The clear objective would be to produce a temporary accommodation portfolio which was entirely self-funding. There would sensibly be one temporary accommodation budget and any net costs could be recharged depending on each authority's use of the stock.

On opening up the private rented sector a decision has already been taken to set up a joint team. This will produce a much needed resource for both authorities whilst working within existing budgets. Formally combining services will strengthen the new team. The aim would be to offer a standard package for landlords to encourage them to let through the new service. This will bring down costs and avoid a different package being offered to landlords, who may work across both areas, by each authority.

Function 4: Delivering Supporting People Services

There are similar models for assessing and delivering supporting people services in both authorities. People in need of support are assessed through a 'gateway' model and support is allocated through one of many support providers if a person's support needs are assessed as requiring help. There are some practical issues here to be considered. There is a clear commissioner/contractor split. It would be possible to deliver a joint gateway for assessing support needs but initially that support may have to be provided to Monmouthshire and Torfaen residents by the provider that had been commissioned to undertake that role by that authority. There is nothing that prevents supporting people services in the future from being jointly commissioned however.

Function 5: Practical Administration

There are a number of areas of administration where closer working would improve efficiency. These include:

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- ✓ Combining forms, common processes and using standard letters and toolkits.
- ✓ Commissioning joint training
- ✓ The use of IT to support the service. Currently the IT system in Monmouthshire is not fit for purpose and a decision would be needed whether to retain the existing IT system for Torfaen or to commission a new joint system.
- ✓ Paying of invoices and general administration.

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Appendix two

Outline Project Plan

key milestones and dates to be agreed at the meeting on Monday 18[th] November to include the number of phases which could be Phase 1 Homelessness, Prevention and temporary Accommodation; Phase 2 – The approach to the Housing Register; Phase 3 – whether to include other services.

Andy Gale

Homelessness and Housing Options Consultant

Final draft November 2013

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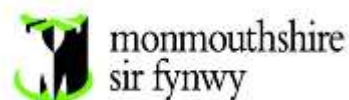
SUBJECT: EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE – GOVERNANCE CHANGES

DIRECTORATE: Children and Young People
MEETING: Cabinet
DATE: 15th October 2014
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Countywide

1.   PURPOSE:

1.1   Cabinet to endorse changes to the governance structure of the South East Wales Education Achievement Service.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1   Endorse a model of governance that captures the requirements of the Wales Government national model.

2.2   That, in addition to the requirement of the National Model, the current Joint Executive Group (terms of reference attached at Appendix 3) be retained and that an Audit Committee for the Company (terms of reference attached at Appendix 4) be established.

2.3   That a report will be brought to the next meeting of Council to:
1. agree two Council nominations to the Audit Committee (drawn from the Children and Young People Select Committee)
2. agree a replacement as a Council nominated Main Board Director given the intention of the Leader to stand down from this position.

3.   BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES:

3.1   A 'National Model' of regional working for school improvement was introduced by the Minister for Education and Skills in March 2014. The national model contains five key themes

1. Mission, values and principles of effective school improvement
2. The scope of regional consortia
3. Delivery of respective regional consortia and local authority functions
4. Governance and accountability
5. The organisation and operation of consortia

While the South East Wales Education Achievement Service reflects the majority of the 'National Model', it is recognised that the 'Governance' element requires some further consideration in order to comply with the statutory framework. This paper has been prepared for each of the five partner local authority's in order to agree a governance model which meets the requirements of the National Model.

After reflecting on the national model, it is proposed that the following governance structure is implemented in order to meet the national model. Some governance arrangements are already in place therefore this proposal includes a combination of current, revised and additional governance arrangements. Draft Terms of Reference for each of the governing groups are included in Appendix 1-4.

In summary the proposal includes:

1. **The continuance of a South East Wales EAS Board:**
2. **The addition of a South East Wales EAS Executive Board**
3. **The continuance of the JEG (Joint Executive Group)**
4. **The addition of an Audit Committee**

3.2   **The continuance of a South East Wales EAS Board:**

Board Membership Proposal:

Currently the EAS Board is made up of nominated Directors and Councillors from each of the five councils. Leaders from each Council have expressed a desire to see a consistent approach of nominated board members across the five Local Authorities. It is suggested that such board members should be:

- Senior Cabinet Members (who do not hold the portfolio for Education) but have the right skills and experience to make decisions.
- A Lead Chief Executive and
- the Managing Director of the EAS
- The Chair of the Executive Board

Role of Board Member:

Board members will have responsibility for approving the consortia budget (including remuneration), business planning and performance management of the regional consortia. Meetings will focus on monitoring progress against the Business Plan. The Board may delegate operational decision making to the Executive Board. The Board must demonstrate sustained control and should not act as a 'rubber stamping' body. The Board will appoint senior EAS staff and deal with H.R related issues.

3.3   The addition of a South East Wales EAS Executive Board:

Executive Board Membership Proposal:

Membership will include the Chairperson of the EAS Board, The Managing Director (acting as a paid official and not an Executive Board Member) a Lead Chief Executive and no more than 5 individuals appointed to the Executive Board. These individuals will include a Welsh Government representative and individuals with expertise in school improvement (one of whom must be a serving Head teacher drawn from a school within the consortium area). The Board will approve Executive Board members. The Lead Chief Executive should change on an annual basis. Paul Matthews, Chief Executive of Monmouthshire County Council has volunteered for this role in the first instance.

Role of Board Member:

The Executive Board acts as an advisory group and on instruction from the South East Wales EAS Board. The Executive Board is accountable to the South East Wales EAS Board, but will have delegated powers to consider and recommend an annual Business Plan in line with the set budget, monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes of the Business Plan. The Executive Board will recommend to the EAS Board appropriate levels of remuneration for the managing director and top team and appoint or remove the Managing Director.

3.4   The continuance of the JEG (Joint Executive Group)

JEG Membership Proposal:

Leaders have been clear that they wish to see the continuation of the JEG in order to ensure that the five Cabinet Members with the portfolio for Education and each Chief Education Officer from across the region engage in meaningful discussion linked to commissioning and validation.

The role of the JEG

The JEG challenges the delivery of the EAS Service and will determine if the EAS is meeting the standards required. It is the forum whereby each Consortium Member can be made aware of any issue which may affect another Consortium Member, which may in turn affect and risk the delivery of services to it.

The JEG is also a mechanism to ensure that they are satisfied that they are meeting their statutory functions are being delivered properly and if not to consider whether alternative arrangements need to be made (this enable's JEG members to report back to elected members).

*Please note that the continuance of a JEG group will be in 'addition' to the advice set out in the National Model. The EAS Board and Managing Directors will be aware of the JEG and will seek to work with it positively (although it will not sit within the company structure).

3.5   **The addition of an Audit Committee**

Scrutiny is a vital component of the governance model. With such large financial investment value for money needs to be evident. Individual local scrutiny arrangements have slight variances and have considered the need for a joint scrutiny panel linked to the EAS. A preference now is the establishment of an Audit Committee rather than a joint scrutiny committee.

Audit Committee Membership

This would be made up of two nominees form each of the five Councils. Theses nominees are likely to be (but not required to be) members of the local scrutiny committee with portfolio responsibility.

The Role of Audit Committee

The audit committee will scrutinise the financial reporting process, in relation to risk management systems and internal and external audit functions. Its role is to provide advice and recommendations to the EAS Board within the scope of their terms of reference. The Managing Director must ensure that the terms of reference for the Audit Committee are approved by the EAS Board.

4.   **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

   None.

5.   **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

   None.

6.   **CONSULTEES:**

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chief Executives of Newport, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire Local Authorities
- Leaders of Newport, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire Councils
- Consortium Directors of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Cabinet Members for Education across the five local authorities

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Welsh Government: A National Model for Regional Working in Wales February 17th 2014

8.   **AUTHOR:**
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9.   **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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Appendix 1:

Draft Terms of Reference of the South East Wales EAS Board

The work of South East Wales Education Achievement Service will be overseen by an EAS Board Local authorities should note that the EAS Board may make decisions which affect the delivery of and resources available for improving school performance. Therefore, local authorities should make sure that the governance arrangements put in place do not contradict local authority decision making and democratic accountability.

The EAS Board will have responsibility for approving the consortia budget (including remuneration), business planning and performance management of the regional consortia.

Consortia and local authorities should make sure that the members of EAS Board have the right skills, experience and seniority to make decisions; have a clear understanding of their collaborative regional responsibility; and are clear about their roles and responsibilities and how these dovetail with the democratic accountabilities

The membership of the EAS Board will include:

- Five Senior Cabinet Members representing the five Local Authorities (who do not hold the portfolio for Education)
- A Lead Chief Executive
- The Managing Director of the South East Wales EAS
- The Chair of the Executive Board

The EAS Board will:

- Nominate and agree a Chair
- Meet once a school term to oversee the work of the consortium.
- Hold an annual meeting to focus on considering and agreeing the draft business plan and the accompanying budget.
- Delegate the operational decision making of the consortium to an executive board whose role will be to oversee, support and challenge the work of the regional consortium.
- Monitor the progress and outcomes of the business plan.
- establish arrangements for appointments of senior staff and to deal with HR issues such as grievances

The Managing Director and the lead Chief Executive shall:

- After consultation with the Chair of the Board, agree the agenda and papers to be prepared for each EAS Board meeting.

*Normally meetings of the joint committee will be open to the public.

Appendix 2:

Draft Terms of Reference for the EAS Executive Board

The EAS Board will delegate the operational decision making of the consortium to an executive board whose role will be to oversee, support and challenge the work of the regional consortium.

The membership of the EAS Executive Board will be appointed by the EAS Board to include:

One representative Chief Executive;

A nominee of Welsh Government (observer status);

The lead Director of Education;

The Managing Director of the EAS; and

No more than [five] individuals who will be appointed, with the approval of the joint committee, for their expertise in education, leadership and corporate governance drawn from an approved pool of individuals assembled by the WLGA and Welsh Government. Those nominated shall include at least one serving head teacher drawn from a school within the consortium area.

Reporting regularly to the EAS Board, the Executive Board will have delegated responsibility for the implementation of:

- Strategy – executive board members will constructively challenge and contribute to the development of strategy to enable the organisation achieving its goals;
- Business planning – executive board members will consider and recommend an annual business plan to the EAS Board;

- Budget – executive board members will ensure that the business plan agreed is in line with the budget; performance – executive board members will monitor and review the performance of management in meeting assigned goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance;
- Self-evaluation and risk – executive board members will need to have arrangements in place to make sure that regional consortia financial controls and systems are robust where necessary this will be reported to individual local authorities; people – executive board members will recommend to the EAS Board appropriate levels of remuneration for the managing director and top team
- And have the prime role in appointing/removing the managing director.

The role of the Chair of the Executive Board will be to:

- Set the agenda for the executive board in conjunction with the managing director and ensure that the board operates effectively;
- Ensure the provision of accurate, timely and clear information for other executive board members;
- Ensure that the executive board operates effectively in all aspects of its role;
- Ensure the provision of accurate, timely and clear information for other executive board members;
- Support effective communication with constituent local authorities and Welsh Government;
- Facilitate effective contributions from all executive board members and ensure appropriate relationships between executive board members and between executive board members and officers.

The Managing Director and Chair of the Executive board shall attend meetings of the EAS Board.

Appendix 3

Draft Terms of Reference for the Joint Executive Group

The Joint Executive Group (JEG) has been established as a forum for Members and Senior Officers of the five participating authorities to discuss monitor and agree issues associated with the Education Achievement Service.

The Collaboration Agreement provides details of the purpose and responsibilities of the group and should be referred to as the definitive document.

Responsibility of Group

The following areas fall within the remit of the group:

- Approving the business plan for each financial year.

- Approving the annual budget for each financial year

- Approving the Company's objectives

- Approving the Company's priorities for each Financial Year

- Agreeing the Performance Review Proforma

- Agreeing the Commissioned Services to be provided to each Home Authority by the Company for each Academic Year

- Setting and monitoring the Company's performance against the objectives

Specific Tasks

The Joint Executive Group shall agree on or before the last week in September each year:

- each Home Authority's funding contribution for the first Financial Year as set out in the Schedule 2 (Funding);

- the charging model which determines each Home Authority's future obligation to provide funding to the Company set out in Schedule 2 (Funding);

- Objectives for the period from the Commencement Date to 1 September 2015 and set out in Schedule 6 (Objectives);

- the Commission Services standards as set out in Schedule 4 of the Commissioning Agreement; and

- agreeing the Commissioned Services to be provided to each Home Authority in the first Financial Year by the Company.

Membership of Group

Each Home Authority shall, (i) a Cabinet Member responsible for Education and (ii) the Director of Education to be members of the Joint Executive Group.

Any member of the Joint Executive Group may appoint an alternate to attend meetings in his or her place. Prior to the commencement of any Financial Year each Home Authority shall, by written notice to the secretariat nominated nominate it's alternate.

The members of the Joint Executive Group shall appoint one member to be the Chair of the Joint Executive Group for a period of 12 months from the date of appointment. The appointment of chair shall rotate in the following order:

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Torfaen County Borough Council

Monmouthshire County Council

Newport City County

<u>Administration</u>

The Home Authority of the person appointed as Chair pursuant shall also act as secretariat to the Joint Executive Group and shall deliver such Secretariat Services at no charge to the Home Authorities. If the Chair is absent or unable or unwilling to preside at a meeting of the Joint Executive Group, the members present may appoint another member to chair the meeting. The Joint Executive Group may regulate their proceedings on such terms as they think fit provided the Joint Executive Group meet at least four times in any Financial Year.

The quorum for meetings of the Joint Executive Group shall be four (4) Cabinet Members responsible for Education. No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Joint Executive Group unless a quorum is present. If no quorum is present within half an hour of the time for which the meeting was called, the meeting shall be cancelled. If a quorum ceases to be present at any time during the meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned. Each member of the Joint Executive Group (or his or her alternate) shall have one vote. Decisions at Joint Executive Group meetings shall only be carried where (1) there is a simple majority of votes in favour and (2) at least four Cabinet Members responsible for Education or their alternates vote in favour. Decisions in relation to the matters identified in the Responsibilities of the Group shall require the unanimous decision of the Joint Executive Group.

<u>Agenda / Minutes</u>

The Agenda for each meeting will be agreed by the nominated chair in liaison with the Lead Director of the EAS and the home authorities. Items for inclusion on the agenda, together with supporting papers, must be passed to the secretariat 10 working days prior to the meeting. Agenda to be issued to all members of JEG five working days prior to the meeting. Draft minutes from meetings to be issued within five working days of the meeting

Appendix 4

Draft Terms of Reference for the EAS Audit Committee

The functions of the Audit Committee are to;

- Reviewing and scrutinising the EAS affairs
- Make reports and recommendations in relation to the EAS financial affairs
- Reviewing and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the EAS
- Make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements
- Oversee the EAS internal and external audit arrangements and
- Review the financial statements prepared by the EAS

Terms of Reference

To exercise the following functions and take the following resolved decisions, under delegated powers:-

- To appoint the Chair of the Audit Committee
- To receive and approve the EAS Annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations

- To receive and approve the Annual Internal Audit Report
- To receive and approve the Annual Internal Audit Plan
- To review and approve the annual programme for internal audits, the audit priorities and effectiveness of the programme in providing adequate assurance in respect of the EAS's main business risks
- To review and monitor the effectiveness of the EAS system of internal control and the proper administration of its financial affairs, including corporate governance and risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements
- To engage with external auditors and inspection agencies and other relevant bodies to ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit.

To exercise the following functions and make recommendations, where appropriate

- To monitor and oversee the implementation and outcomes of the internal audit programme and, where necessary, review and make recommendations regarding unsatisfactory audit reports
- To review the adequacy of the EAS internal audit resources and to make recommendations, where necessary
- To seek assurances on the adequacy of EAS Board or management responses to internal audit advice, findings and recommendations and monitor implementation and compliance with agreed action plans
- To consider the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, make any recommendations to the Board and to monitor the Boards response to individual risks or areas of concern identified in the Letter
- To receive and consider inspection reports from external regulators and inspectors and to make recommendations and, where necessary, monitor implementation and compliance with agreed action plans
- To monitor and review decisions to waive Contracts Standing Orders and urgent executive decisions taken without consultation and to make recommendations where appropriate.
- To make recommendations to the Managing Director and the Chair of the EAS Board in relation to the Financial Procedures and Regulations set out in the EAS Constitution
- To recommend to EAS Board the appointment of further lay Board or Audit Committee members, where appropriate.

monmouthshire
sir fynwy
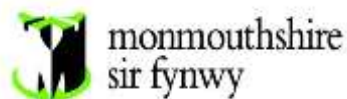
SUBJECT:	**SCHOOL LITERACY RESOURCE CENTRE**
DIRECTORATE:	**Children and Young People**
MEETING:	**Cabinet**
DATE:	**15th October 2014**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Countywide	

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider closing the School Literacy and Resource Centre Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To agree to close the School Literacy Resource Centre and end the loan service to schools in Monmouthshire and Torfaen to achieve the 2015/16 £20,000 saving in our base budget.

2.2 To agree to resource Monmouthshire's share of the costs, £194,786, associated with closing the service from reserve funding.

2.3 To agree to distribute Monmouthshire's portion of the resources including books, historical artefacts and religious resources to schools, museums, libraries and the Family Literacy Service in Monmouthshire. The sale or recycling of the book stock and shelving may generate a very small income to would be shared proportionally with Torfaen however, given the age of the stock this could not be guaranteed.

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The School Literacy & Resource Centre (SLRC) provides a loan and advisory service to Primary, Special and Welsh medium schools and nurseries in Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

3.2 The SLRC is a joint service with Torfaen. The service is based in premises in Torfaen.

Funding for the service has been shared proportionally between the two authorities based on pupil numbers.

3.2.1   The SLRC currently has a deficit reserve of £90,573 as 1st April 2014. The forecast for Monmouthshire's share of the running costs until the service closes is a further £98,058. The total cost to be funded by Monmouthshire is £188,631, including redundancy costs. Torfaen have been asked to support £90,866. The service will incur additional £6,155 to vacate the premises by the end of the lease period 3rd October 2014 or £8,000 to extend the lease for the minimum three-month period.

3.3   In April 2014, Monmouthshire agreed a staged withdrawal of funding for the SLRC from central resources over the next two financial years to realise efficiency savings in line with budget reductions for the financial year 2014/15. Torfaen's funding mechanism for the service remained unchanged.

3.4   In order to meet the shortfall in income from Monmouthshire, the SLRC staff re-designed and extended the service on offer to Monmouthshire schools and introduced a service level agreement (SLA). Charges in the SLA are based on the size of school and on the assumption that almost all schools would sign-up. Whilst it is recognised that this is an additional charge to schools, it is considered a cost effective way to maintain a stock of good quality library resources to schools to support the delivery of the curriculum and engage children and young people in reading for a range of purposes.

3.5   Only one school in Monmouthshire signed up to the SLA. Consequently, the service has been withdrawn with effect from 1st April 2014 from all Monmouthshire schools. Torfaen continued to centrally fund their proportion of the costs from 1st April 2014 so that the SLRC could continue to provide the service to their schools.

3.6   At the end of June 2014, Monmouthshire County Council received notification from Torfaen Borough Council that they would be withdrawing their contribution to the SLRC with effect from 31st August 2014.

4.   **REASONS:**

4.1   The withdrawal of Torfaen from the service and the lack of up-take for the SLA by Monmouthshire schools mean that service does not have access to sufficient funds to continue to operate. Monmouthshire's contribution to the service is £188,631 as identified above plus the removal costs of which we do not have the budget to cover.

4.2   This provision has been provided to schools free since its introduction. During the budget considerations for 2014-2015, this area was identified as being able to support the budget pressures going forward and the residual income has been included into the proposals.

5.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1   The closure of the savings will deliver a further £20,000.

5.2   There are the following additional expected costs should the closure go ahead:

- Total costs of service including redundancy costs
  up until the end of December 2014 and premises
  costs to reinstate the building   £188,924

- Deficit reserve falling to MCC as the service did not
  get authorisation to go into deficit   £90,573

- Total estimated final costs   £279,497

- Payable by MCC as calculated using the SLA.   **£188,631**

- Payable by TBC   £90,866

6.   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 1) are summarised   below for members' consideration:

7.   CONSULTEES:
School Budget Forum
Monmouthshire Schools
Torfaen Schools

Councillor Hacket-Pain
Monmouthshire Library Service
Education Achievement Service
SACRE
Staff
Trades Unions
Employment Services

8.   BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Mandate for School Library Service

9.   AUTHOR:
Sharon Randall-Smith

10.   CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 6444203
Mobile: 07816176930
E-mail: Sharonrandall-smith@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The "Equality Initial Challenge"

Name: Sharon Randall-Smith Service area: Achievement and Attainment Date completed: 15 September 2014		Please give a **brief description** of what you are aiming to do. Close the School Literacy and Resource Centre Service to Monmouthshire and Torfaen Schools.	
Protected characteristic	Potential **Negative** impact Please give details	Potential **Neutral** impact Please give details	Potential **Positive** Impact Please give details
Age		Involves all children and young people	
Disability		Involves all children and young people	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		N/A	
Pregnancy and maternity		N/A	
Race		Involves all children and young people	
Religion or Belief		Involves all children and young people	
Sex (was Gender)		Involves all children and young people	
Sexual Orientation		Involves all children and young people	
Transgender		Involves all children and young people	
Welsh Language		Involves all children and young people	

Please give details about any potential **negative Impacts.**	How do you propose to **MITIGATE** these **negative impacts**
➢ There may be slight negative impact for all groups due to the ceasing of the service	➢ Schools will mitigate against any slight negative impact by using the money that would have been allocated to the service SLA to purchase books.
➢	➢

Signed   S Randall-Smith   Designation   Head of Service CYP Standards
Dated   15th September 2014.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
Close the School Literacy and Resource Centre Service for Monmouthshire and Torfaen Schools	CYP
Policy author / service lead	**Name of assessor and date**
Sharon Randall-Smith	Sharon Randall-Smith

1. What are you proposing to do?

This is a service to schools provided by Monmouthshire across both Monmouthshire and Torfaen councils. The function of the service is to provide schools with additional books to support curriculum work and fiction loans to extend the range of age-appropriate reading material available within the school.

The LA consulted with schools about the kind of service they required and created an SLA based on this information to meet the costs of the service for Monmouthshire schools. Only two schools in Monmouthshire decided to accept the SLA agreement – all other schools took the decision to use the additional funds to increase their own stock of books. Torfaen decided to withdraw central funding for the service at the end of June 2014.

As a result, we are now proposing to close the service as there are insufficient funds to continue to maintain it given the decisions taken above.

2. Are your proposals going to impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way?   If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below. No.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

3. Please give details of the negative impact

There may be slight negative impact for all groups due to the ceasing of the service

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal?

Schools will mitigate against any slight negative impact by using the money that would have been allocated to the service SLA to purchase books.

Books will be distributed to schools across Monmouthshire and Torfaen to increase the stock of books within schools in all areas.

We will house the artefact collection in schools who agree to maintain a loan system to other schools.

Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

We have consulted with:
- o School Budget Forum
- o Monmouthshire Schools
- o Torfaen Schools
- o Councillor Hacket-Pain
- o Monmouthshire Library Service
- o EAS
- o SACRE
- o Staff
- o Trades Unions

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Monmouthshire and Torfaen School SLRC Survey carried out by MCC

Signed…S Randall-Smith

Designation Head of Service CYP Standards

Dated 7th October 2014

The "Sustainability Challenge"

Name of the Officer completing "the Sustainability challenge" Sharon Randall-Smith		Please give a **brief description** of the **aims** proposed policy or service reconfiguration SLRC closure	
Name of the Division or service area CYP		Date "Challenge" form completed 15th September 2014	
Aspect of sustainability impact oned	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		N/A	
Improve housing quality and provision		N/A	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		N/A	
Promote independence		NA	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		N/A	

Targets socially excluded		NA	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		N/A	
Improve access to education and training		N/A	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		N/A	
PLANET			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		N/A	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions			There will be a reduction in transporting library loans throughout the county therefore reducing emissions
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		N/A	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		N/A	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		N/A	
PROFIT			
Protect local shops and		N/A	

services			
Link local production with local consumption		N/A	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		N/A	
Increase employment for local people	Will result in a small reduction in employment for local people.		
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		N/A	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		N/A	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		N/A	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to **MITIGATE** the **negative impacts** (include any reasonable adjustments)
➢ Will result in a small reduction in employment for local people.	➢ Staff have been put at risk in both authorities as per ES processes.
➢	➢

➤	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

There will be a reduction in transporting library loans throughout the county.

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

- We will distribute the resources to schools across Monmouthshire to increase the stock of books in all areas across the county. - We will house the artefact collection in schools who agree to maintain a loan system to other schools so this would not be a change in access to these resources.

Signed   S Randall-Smith   Dated 7th October 2014.

REPORT

SUBJECT: INFORMING THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL SERVICES

MEETING: Cabinet
DATE: 15th October 2014
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

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1.   **PURPOSE:**

1.1   To propose the commissioning of a critical piece of work to inform options and opportunities for the future of Monmouthshire County Council's cultural assets and attractions.

2.   **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1   To approve the need for a detailed examination of the options and opportunities to inform the future of Monmouthshire County Council's core cultural services and attractions;

2.2   To agree Invest to Redesign funds of up to £30,000 in commissioning an independent examination of the options and the development of a business strategy with which to support the model of future service delivery; and,

2.3   To approve that the piece of work is commissioned and completed within a six month timeframe, with updates to Economy and Development Select Committee in order that the service can begin implementation of findings in 2015/16

3.   **KEY ISSUES:**

        Our Journey and Services

3.1   In 2006 a piece of work was undertaken by the former Cultural Services Manager entitled 'Appraisal of Alternative Service Delivery Options for Leisure and Cultural Services'. Whilst the scope of this report was clearly much wider than is now being considered, much of it is still resonant. The report identified a number of potential delivery options, with the prime objective of maintaining, improving and developing services in the context of creating opportunities for greater self-reliance, sustainability and resilience.

3.2   Notwithstanding the important discussions and service developments this piece of work led to, such as the creation of Friends' Groups, support for volunteers, the Borough Theatre Trust and the transfer of Usk Rural Life Museum building to a local community group – our new financial and economic reality is such that continued tweaks and incremental changes to cultural services will not suffice. The scale of the challenge, today and in the future is significant and as a Council that remains committed to celebrating its rich cultural heritage and enabling services that add enormous value to local 'sense of place' and economic and societal development, it is clear that new ends and means are required. As a non-statutory discretionary service, the level of financial contribution required of the service over the medium-term in order to meet the burgeoning budget gap, will almost certainly render it unviable. Doing nothing is thus, not an option.

3.3   In today's context our cultural services and attractions sit within the newly established Tourism, Leisure and Culture service area of the Enterprise directorate. Briefly, the council's cultural attractions comprise:
- Abergavenny Museum (located at Abergavenny Castle)
- The Nelson Museum and Local History Centre
- Caldicot Castle and Country Park
- Chepstow Museum
- Shire Hall, Monmouth
- Old Station, Tintern

These assets and attractions are celebrated and cherished locally and for the relatively small budgets which underpin their operation, in many cases they have achieved global profiles and reach. In 2013/14 it is estimated, using the AIM Economic Tool that the Museums Service alone contributed over £1.246m to the local economy. In addition, they provide valued year-round attractions that play a key role in our tourism offer.

Rationale for informing the future

3.4   In view of the ever worsening budget position - efforts have been made in recent times to begin laying the foundations for a new future for cultural services. A fundraising officer was engaged in 2013, leading to the development of the Monmouthshire Museums' Development Trust. This body has already made an impact in terms of identifying a number of significant individuals and thought leaders who wish to work with us, on a voluntary basis, to advance and evolve the service and ensure its adapts to changing conditions. In addition, the development trust has advised on the potential for fund-raising, crowd-sourcing support and expertise and securing new investment - which it believes to be significant. However, the caveat is, these opportunities can only be properly maximised if the service is liberated, able to flexible and adaptable and find its own future, away from the limitations, constraints and reductions imposed by continued Council ownership. Whilst it is likely that some element of support from MCC will always be necessary, the Development Trust in its current form cannot achieve the freedoms and flexibilities necessary to enable the service to thrive, since it was established to help with fundraising and not as an alternative operating model.

3.5   Whilst the need for revenue support at levels higher than the Council can reasonably provide is key, there is also the matter of requirement for capital investment. In the example of Caldicot Castle alone, current estimations suggest £3m as a conservative investment requirement. The accumulating maintenance deficit is a further key consideration and the traditional business model upon which cultural services has relied, is clearly not fit for future purpose. Moreover, the Council's vision for the service is not merely that it treads water or meets minimum standards. The potential for greater social and economic returns is high as well as the clear contribution to place-shaping. Development of new ventures however, requires new partners or plural funding streams – the vast majority of which tend not to be available to public sector bodies. Furthermore, in order to ensure the service operates optimally, it is clear that strategic re-organisation is required and the fiscal and philosophical benefits available to not for profit organisations, are identified and explored.

Some possible options

3.6   Hundreds of public sector organisations across the UK and beyond have grappled with this very same issue and as a result, a proliferation of trusts, social enterprises, charities, joint committees, Community Interest Companies and other hybrids have been developed to own, run and manage similar 'devolved' services. In the UK generally Scotland, the 'trust model' is highly favoured with the majority of cultural services now belonging to trusts and a track record in improving efficiency and effectiveness has resulted. As with any process however, there will strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats to consider. Some devolved ownership models are excellent – others have proven to be unworkable – and the quality across the UK has tended to be variable. Much of this is attributed to the process of planning, preparation and feasibility and as such, it is critical we get this right.

3.7 Whatever the outcome, the process must be informed by Monmouthshire's value base and must align with our core purpose to create sustainable and resilient communities. Our model must reflect our commitment to 'sense of place' and 'pride of place', enable new partnerships and connections, create new channels of support and commit to transparency and openness. There is no one 'right' approach and the best approach must be determined by local factors and context. Whilst it would not be appropriate to pre-judge the outcomes of the assessment, key outputs should provide for:

- A common business model
- Ability to be nimble and fleet of foot
- Clear decision making procedures
- Clear accountability
- A positive identity and brand
- No strategic disengagement from MCC which would assume an enabling, quality assurance and value optimisation role

3.8 In the process of preparing this report, many individuals have expressed concern that all cultural services could go 'lock and stock' into a single trust model, thus compromising the sense of service and place distinctiveness. However, that needn't be the case and the brief for the work will clearly outline our open-mindedness and willingness to consider opportunities for aggregation and disaggregation and bigger and smaller groupings according to the cumulative benefits for the services, towns, markets and counties they seek to serve.

4. REASONS

4.1 Informing the future of cultural services is critical because:

- The continuing turbulent economic climate means that the revenue funding available for the service will decline, rendering it unviable in a short period of time;
- The size of the backlog of capital investment, maintenance and repair is significant and will require external support and contributions;
- Many of the main capital and revenue funding opportunities available are not currently obtainable by public bodies such as Councils;
- New business models are required that require specialist approaches and knowledge of markets and not-for-profit entities;

- Customer and community expectations are shifting and improvements and developments are rightly expected. Customers care less about who runs services and more about what is delivered and the quality of outcomes;
- The scale of social, economic and environmental change over the next 5-10 years will be such that planning needs to begin now in order for us to foresee new challenges and develop appropriate solutions to them;
- Potential exists for new funding opportunities; to attract expert help, support and guidance and to secure new investment and growth options; and,
- A new business strategy is required, along with a new guiding philosophy and belief-set in order to achieve success.

5.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The major resource implication associated with this piece of work at this formative stage, is outlay of a maximum of £30,000 from the Invest to Redesign reserve to commission the independent appraisal and inform a new business strategy for cultural services. This figure is based upon costs for similar pieces of work in other local authorities and whilst it is less than that which is typically required, it is felt that a considerable amount of information and assessment exists already through the Development Trust and as such, the work can be undertaken within a £30k cost envelope. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, the cost allocation will be overseen by the Chief Officer and S151 Officer

5.2   The brief for the piece of work is currently in development and will be signed off by the Cabinet Member prior to release. The brief will specify that a business strategy emerges to include all aspects of financial planning, asset considerations, governance, structures and accountability along with a fully-costed business plan that is able to inform and shape medium-term delivery and apply itself to the stretching targets outlined in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. It is important that this piece of work is not undertaken by an employee of the Council since the need for impartiality and a fundamentally new and sustainable model of operational delivery, is the key outcome.

6.   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

This work will inform the ability of the service to contribute to an accessible, legitimate and viable service which can be enjoyed by all.

7.　　**CONSULTEES:**

　　　All Cabinet Members
　　　Leadership Team
　　　Monmouthshire Museums Development Trust
　　　Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture
　　　Cultural Services teams

　　　Results of Consultation

　　　Incorporated as read

8.　　**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

　　　None

9.　　**AUTHORS:**

　　　Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer Enterprise

10.　　**CONTACT DETAILS:**

　　　Tel:　01633 644041
　　　Email: kelliebeirne@monmouthshire.gov.uk

MCC Equality Impact Assessment process guidance document

1. When do you carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The Equality Act 2010 specifies in its **general duties** that when exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to:

- **eliminate** unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;

- **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;

- **foster** good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

It also requires public bodies to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA) if they propose to do any of the following:

- **developing** or reviewing policies strategies and services.
- **assessing** the impact of a new project or proposal.
- **procuring** products or services.
- **preparing** service delivery plans.
- **scoring** or assessing grant applications.
- **considering** making financial savings (annual financial savings proposal process).

2. The Protected Characteristics in Monmouthshire

The EQIA process enables organisations such as this Council to gather and consider data and other evidence to assess whether what is proposed could have a negative or positive impact on the people or groups of people from Monmouthshire from one or more of the protected characteristics (below). (The process should also look for opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations).

- Age – (50-64) **19,726**, (65-84) **16,602**, (85-89) **1,701**, (90+) **925**.

- Race – **3,541** from black minority ethnic backgrounds.

- Disability – **8,820** have considerable day to day activity limitations and **8,325** have some day to day activity limitations.

- Sex - Males **44,922** Females **46,401.**

- Religion and belief – **62.5%** Christian, **1.4%** other, No religion or belief **28.5%,** Not stated **7.6%.**

- Sexual orientation   - (No figures collected in the 2011 Census).

- Pregnancy and maternity – **812** births in 2012.

- Transgender status   - (No figures collected in the 2011 Census).

- Marriage and civil partnership - **450** marriages and **12** civil partnerships over the last 12 months.

- Welsh Language (covered under the Welsh Language Act 1993) – **8,780 or 9.9%** of population on the County are Welsh speakers according to the Census of 2011.

3. The EQIA process

All officers who are proposing to do any of the actions listed in section 1 above are required to complete the **Equality Challenge form** (appendices A and B) at the earliest possible stage and this will enable them to assess whether the proposal/s will have a potential negative or positive impact on one or more of the above protected characteristics. Carrying out this assessment at this point in the process will allow time for officers to gather data, and to consider possible mitigations or changes to be made to the proposals to try and lessen or remove any assessed negative impact.

If ultimately it is assessed that there is still going to be a **significant negative impact** on one or more of the protected characteristics then there is a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to carry out an **engagement exercise** with interested parties **(details in 4 below).**

It is important to remember that the EQIA process does not prevent organisations from making difficult decisions and indeed decisions can be made despite an assessment of negative impact. The EQIA process requires them to evidence and demonstrate that they are making these difficult decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way taking into consideration the different needs and requirements of their communities. It is recommended that any options or mitigations that have been considered in forming the proposal are recorded in detail.

4. Engagement for Equality Impact Assessments

Who do we need to engage with?

This very much depends on what outcomes you need and what issue you are engaging on. It can be a countywide initiative or something very local. Decide on what outcomes you want and then decide who your target audience needs to be. The community like to know that they can help influence decisions but you must always be honest with them and tell them whether you are engaging just to share information, give advice or to gain their views before making a decision. In terms of the equality impact assessment

process, you may already know certain groups of people or communities that are more likely to be affected by the proposed policy or decision and wish to engage in a more targeted way.

How do we engage?

There are many ways of engaging with our communities (communities include local citizens, tourist and partners) and it is vital that you are aware of your audience and ensure that the list of options below are all accessible.

The list below defines some of the ways and is not exhaustive but you can do many things as long as you can obtain the outcomes you want:

- Poster campaign
- Leaflet drop
- Displays in Council buildings
- Information stall
- Newsletter
- Radio
- Council Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- E mail
- Newspaper
- Booklet
- Programmed meetings
- Area forums
- Focus groups
- User panels
- Public meetings
- Workshops

For more information on **engagement** please contact Alan Burkitt at alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk for a copy of the MCC Engagement Toolkit.

When you are looking to Engage:

- **Don't think you are alone**; there are so many people out there with expertise in this field who are engaging on a day to day basis.

- The **Partnership and Engagement team** can help signpost you to engagements that have taken place before and departments to ask. There may already be a relevant engagement event arranged that you may be able to join in with. Using existing events is far cheaper and you already have a footfall of people going to the event. This works well for wider engagement issues. There is a health warning with using event. Make sure you know who the event is attracting. It needs to be the right audience or the information you require may be flawed. (Bridget Barnet 01633 644883 or Rhian Cook on 01633 644364).

- **Local knowledge** about the area, the diverse make up of our communities and an understanding of how local groups if they are to be used is essential. Local contacts will also be aware of any conflict which will help you prepare answers if needed for your engagement.

5. Presentation of proposal to Cabinet

Once an engagement has been carried out you should have gathered the information that will allow you to either justify going ahead as proposed, amend the original proposals, or develop mitigations to lessen or eradicate any negative impact. As a result of the completion of this process you should be in a very strong and informed position and will be able to take the proposal through the Cabinet process for formal approval thereby demonstrating fully that you have paid due regard.

When taking a policy or proposal to Cabinet an **EQIA form and Sustainable Development Checklist** (Appendix C) will need to be completed to accompany the Cabinet report that will detail the process so far, thus enabling Cabinet to make a decision informed with the aid of a very strong evidence base.

6. Conclusion

It is vitally important that officers adhere to the process laid down in this guidance note as case law has quite clearly shown that when EQIA's are either not done, or not done with enough rigor, organisations that do not demonstrate **"due regard"** are being challenged in the courts. As well as suffering financial penalties they also suffer reputational damage.

For examples of case law please click on the links below:

http://www.ecu.ac.uk/inclusive-practice/equality-impact-assessment

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/relevant-case-law/

http://www.thompsons.law.co.uk/ltext/127-case-law-public-sector-equality-duty.htm

http://publicsector.practicallaw.com/blog/publicsector/plc/?p=386

Appendix A   "Equality Challenge" – guidance notes

The following are a list of the challenges/thought processes that have been evident in producing equality challenges to date. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, just indicative of the approach:

Is there any form of Discrimination? Direct Indirect Association: Positive Action:	Discrimination directly related to the protected characteristic/s. Where an action has, for other reasons, an impact eg: actions involving increased costs to service users could affect those with disabilities more than others as they are 3 times more likely to live in a family where no one is employed. People, such as carers, who are associated with people with a protected characteristic have the right to be given the same due regard. Positive action can be an action that addresses a pre-existing disadvantage or can be action that adversely affects one characteristic for the benefit of others – ie a saving in one area that protects the interests/services of others
Where the proposal concerns one protected characteristic, does it unintentionally disadvantage any sub-groups?	For example, a proposal for a cross-authority partnership to address **Adult** Learning Disability service users might be seen to disadvantage **younger** people if similar arrangements were not put in place for them.
The 'significance' of impacts will need to be assessed. What constitutes 'significant'?	There are a number of elements – the number of service users affected; the degree of impact, the financial implications, health, access to key services, impact on employment, human rights etc.

Is the proposal creating a post code lottery within the County?	Do we as a result of certain proposals create a disadvantage for people from different regions of Monmouthshire.
Have positive impacts been optimized?	The Equality Act 2010 is as strong on ensuring that effort is put into maximising positive benefits as it does into mitigating negative impacts.
Have all reasonable steps been taken to mitigate negative impacts (including making reasonable adjustments)?	Note: some decisions (normally financial) have to be made even though they have obvious negative impacts – this is lawful. However, how the impacts can be minimised has to have been thought through very carefully and mitigations need to be considered.
Does the proposal evidence an understanding of the current (baseline) situation with respect to the protected characteristics?	You can't assess impact without knowing where you are starting from!

You need to know your service users – gathering relevant data! Where possible consider future changes and also future service users prevented from accessing services. If you lack data on specific on particular groups then you need to consider other ways of gathering information through **engagement** eg focus groups, face to face meetings etc. |
| **Is this proposal associated with any others – is there a cumulative impact to be assessed?** | Individual proposals can be appropriate and well considered, but when cumulative impacts are considered a protected characteristic can be affected disproportionately. |

Appendix B　　　　　　　　**The "Equality Challenge" (Screening document)**

Name of the Officer completing "the Equality challenge" **Kellie Beirne**	Please give a **brief description** of the **aims** proposed policy or service reconfiguration To seek approval to undertake a feasibility study to inform the future of cultural services
Name of the Division or service area Enterprise	**Date** "Challenge" form completed 1 October 2014

0Protected characteristic affected	**Negative impact** **Please give details**	Neutral impact **Please give details**	**Positive Impact** **Please give details**
Age		Will not impact specific groups at this formative stage.	Should more investment and resources be secured to underpin and make more accessible the service – the outcome should be a positive one on all characteristics
Disability		As above	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		As above	
Pregnancy and maternity		As above	
Race		As above	
Religion or Belief		As above	
Sex (was Gender)		As above	

		As above	
Sexual Orientation		As above	
Transgender		As above	
Welsh Language		As above	

What are the potential negative Impacts.	Ideas as to how we can look to **MITIGATE** the **negative impacts** (include any reasonable adjustments or engagement with affected parties).
➢ *If a new operating model is not achieved and cultural services cannot remain open, this denies people the opportunity for wellbeing benefits*	➢ Undertake feasibility work to develop a new model
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below:

Should a new operating model be developed, then there is potential for the service to grow and propser and become more visible and accessible to greater numbers of people. The wellbing impacts of cultural services are widely recognized and it is envisaged that should the service be strengthened – the key aim of this report – more people, especially within protected characteristic categories, should feel the benefits.

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed   **Kellie Beirne**   **Designation Chief Officer Enterprise**
Dated 1. 10. 2014

Appendix C

Equality Impact Assessment Form

and

Sustainable Development Checklist

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of policy or change to service (Proposal)	Directorate:	Department:
Regional Strategic Framework for South East Wales	Regeneration and Culture	Regeneration and Culture
Policy author / service lead	**Name of assessor**	**Date of assessment:**
Kellie Beirne	Kellie Beirne	20 November

1. Have you completed the Equality Challenge form?   **Yes / No.** If **No** please explain why

Yes

2. What is the **Aim/s** of the Policy or the proposed change to the policy or service (the proposal)

To set out a framework to underpin future policies and areas for development of economic prosperity and advancement.

3. From your findings from the "Equality Challenge" form did you identify any people or groups of people with protected characteristics that this proposal was likely to affect in a **negative** way?   Please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

4. Please give details of any consultation(s) or engagement carried out in the development /re-development of this proposal.

Not applicable

5. Please list the data that has been used for this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc.

Welsh Govt data

6. As a result did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below.

N/A

7. Final stage – What was decided?

- **No change made to proposal/s – please give details**

N/A

- **Slight changes made to proposal/s – please give details**

N/A

- **Major changes made to the proposal/s to mitigate any significant negative impact – please give details**

N/A

Signed………Kellie Beirne………………………………………**Designation…Chief Executive**…………………………………………………**Dated**……………20 November 2013…………….

Forthcoming document consideration

We always welcome any feedback or contributions anyone has to this document and our work towards equality. A database of completed equality impact assessments and the schedule of assessments by directorate and department will be available to review on our website.

If you would like to discuss the completion of this form or any issues arising out of its completion please contact:

Name: Alan Burkitt – Democracy and Performance. Tel: 01633 644010.

Contact Email: Equality@monmouthshire.gov.uk or alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Post: Democracy and Performance, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Y Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1XJ

![monmouthshire sir fynwy logo]

MCC Sustainability Challenge guidance document

7. When do you carry out a Sustainability Challenge?

The forthcoming Future Generations Bill will require all public bodies, including local authorities, to make sustainable development their central organizing principle. This means that we will have to demonstrate that every significant decision we make has taken sustainable development into account. One way that we can do this is to make sure that all decisions that go to committee, Cabinet, Council or Single Member decision have been through the Sustainability Challenge.

The Sustainability Challenge would also be useful when doing any of the following:

- **developing** or reviewing policies strategies and services
- **assessing** the impact of a new project or proposal
- **procuring** products or services
- **preparing** service delivery plans
- **scoring** or assessing grant applications
- **considering** making financial savings (annual financial savings proposal process)

The best time to use the Sustainable Development Checklist is at the development stage of a project, so that sustainability can be built in and considered from the very beginning. However, it can also be used once a project is underway.

8. What is Sustainability?

Sustainability or Sustainable development is about making sure that what we do today isn't at the expense of the world which we pass on to our children and grandchildren. Another way of describing this is the "triple context" or the 3 Ps where People, Planet and Profits are all in balance. This could look like this:

People

Sustainable Development

Planet

Profit
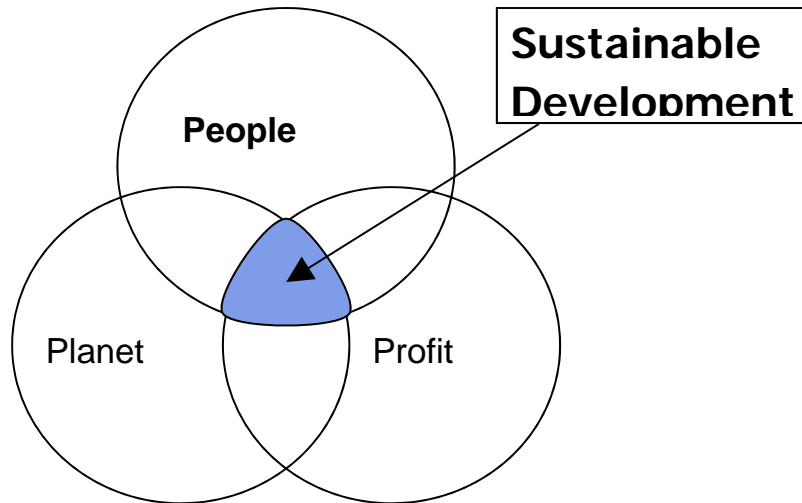
9. The Sustainability Challenge process

All officers who are proposing to do any of the actions listed in section 1 above are required to complete the **Sustainability Challenge Form** (appendix A) at the earliest possible stage and this will enable them to assess whether the proposal/s will have a potential negative or positive impact on one or more aspects of sustainability. Carrying out this assessment at this point in the process will allow time for officers to consider possible mitigations or changes to be made to the proposals to try and lessen or remove any assessed negative impact.

It is important to remember that the Sustainability Challenge process does not prevent organisations from making difficult decisions and indeed decisions can be made despite an assessment of negative impact. The Sustainability Challenge process requires them to evidence and demonstrate that they are making these decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way and will provide evidence that Sustainability has been considered as part of the decision making process.

Once the Sustainability Challenge has been completed, any mitigations or changes to the proposal that need to be carried out to reduce the negative impact should be documented on the form.

10.   Presentation of proposal to Cabinet, Council, Committee or Single Member Decision

Once the Sustainbility Challenge has been carried out you should have enough information that will allow you to either justify going ahead as proposed, amend the original proposals, or develop mitigations to lessen or eradicate any negative impact. As a result of the completion of this process you should be in a very strong and informed position and will be able to take the proposal through the Committee process for formal approval thereby demonstrating fully that you have paid due regard to sustainable development. When taking a policy or proposal to Cabinet an **EQIA form and Sustainable Development Checklist** will need to be completed to accompany the committee report that will detail the process so far, thus enabling Elected Members to make an informed decision.

The main positive and negative impacts will need to be summarized in the "Sustainability and Equalities Implications" paragraph on the report.

Appendix A   **The "Sustainability Challenge"**

Name of the Officer completing "the Sustainability challenge"		Please give a **brief description** of the **aims** proposed policy or service reconfiguration	
Kellie Beirne		Strategic framework for regional development in SEW	
Name of the Division or service area Regeneration and Culture		**Date** "Challenge" form completed 20 November 2013	
Aspect of sustainability affected	**Negative impact** **Please give details**	Neutral impact **Please give details**	**Positive Impact** **Please give details**
PEOPLE		Y	
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		Y	
Improve housing quality and provision		Y	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		Y	

Promote independence		Y	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		Y	
Targets socially excluded		Y	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		Y	
Improve access to education and training		Y	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		Y	
PLANET		Y	
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		Y	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		Y	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		Y	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		Y	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		Y	

PROFIT		Y	
Protect local shops and services		Y	
Link local production with local consumption		Y	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		Y	
Increase employment for local people		Y	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		Y	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		Y	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		Y	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to **MITIGATE** the **negative impacts** (include any reasonable adjustments)
➢	➢

➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed   **Kellie Beirne**   **Dated 20 November 2013**

If you would like to discuss the completion of this form or any issues arising out of its completion please contact:

Name: Hazel Clatworthy, Sustainability Community Officer, Tel: 01633 644843

Contact Email: hazelclatworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk

SUBJECT:	Written feedback report from Estyn Monitoring Visit (2) June 2014
DIRECTORATE:	Directorate for Children and Young People
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	15th October 2014
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. **PURPOSE**

    To provide Cabinet with information contained in the second regulatory report been received by the Authority since May 2013 and the arrangements to follow up on any recommendations made.

    This report details all of the regulatory feedback that has been received by the authority as a result of the second Estyn Monitoring Visit in June 2014.

    The regulatory report contains recommendations or proposals on areas of service delivery where the authority can make improvements.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

    That Cabinet takes note of the proposals included in this report and make plans to implement the findings

2.1 To monitor the progress of work towards the recommendations contained within the report through the scrutiny of continued self-evaluation in the CYP Directorate

3. **KEY ISSUES**

    Recommendations have been considered within the wider work of the Directorate in addressing the self-evaluation of all services against Estyn's Common Inspection Framework.

4.   **REASONS:**
        To enable standards to be raised further and faster within the CYP Directorate

5   **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**
        Estyn Monitoring Visit report – July 2014

6   **AUTHOR:**
        Sarah McGuinness
        Chief Officer - Directorate for Children and Young People
        CONTACT DETAILS:
        Tel: 01633 644487
        E-mail: sarahmcguinness@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Mr Paul Matthews
Momouthshire County Council
County Hall
Croesyceiliog
Torfaen
NP44 2XH

30 July 2014

Dear Mr Paul Matthews,

Estyn Monitoring Visit 23 – 25 June 2014

Following Estyn's inspection of education services for children and young people in November 2012, the authority was identified as requiring special measures. A monitoring plan was subsequently agreed with your Estyn link inspectors and the first of three scheduled monitoring visits took place in February 2014. The second monitoring visit took place from 23 – 25 June 2014. This letter records the outcomes of that visit.

In June 2014 Mark Campion HMI led a team of four inspectors to review the progress made by the authority against two of the six recommendations arising from the November 2012 inspection.

The team held discussions with the leader of the council, elected members, the chief executive, senior officers and other relevant officers. Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including evidence on the progress made on the two recommendations that were the focus for this visit.

At the end of the monitoring visit, the team reported their findings to you, as the chief executive, and to the leader of the council, the relevant cabinet member and senior officers. The interim chair of the Ministerial Recovery Board and a Welsh Government representative observed the feedback.

Outcome of the monitoring visit

Recommendation 4: Improve corporate planning to strengthen links between the local authority's priorities and service level targets

In 2012 Estyn judged that the corporate planning arrangements for the education and training of children and young people were not effective, and that the authority was not able to make sure that priority areas for improvement could be addressed in a

timely manner. This situation was compounded by a lack of strategic and operational leadership in the children and young people's directorate.   As a result of this, there were many areas of service provision which did not have appropriate plans and officers did not know how well their work contributed to the achievement of the authority's vision and objectives for education and training.

The authority has worked appropriately with a Ministerial Recovery Board and established an internal monitoring board, to monitor progress against the post-inspection action plan. The directorate has increased capacity for strategic and operational leadership and management, including the appointment of a permanent chief officer for children and young people in May 2013.

In February 2014, Estyn carried out its first visit to monitor the authority's progress against the post-inspection action plan. This visit focused on the recommendation to improve safeguarding arrangements. The outcome of the visit showed that although the authority had made some good initial progress in addressing the shortcomings around safeguarding, management information systems and reporting processes were still not effective enough to make sure that appropriate and evaluative management information was available for decision makers. The authority was not able to routinely identify how well actions taken impacted on identified issues or to prioritise and target actions for improvement well enough.

During this second monitoring visit, the authority demonstrated a significant change in its approach to addressing the shortcomings, and has focused better on delivering the improvements required. The leader has driven this progress well, and is monitoring closely the impact of this work together with the cabinet member, chief executive and senior leadership team.

The authority has identified the importance of education and training to support the achievement of the vision of the single integrated plan for sustainable and resilient communities. Improving education is a clearly stated objective of the 2014-2017 corporate improvement plan. This improvement plan details the authority's improvement framework, which has been used appropriately to develop the planning and reporting processes for education and training services.

A detailed planning and performance management framework was agreed by the Council at the end of 2013. This framework sets out a clear reporting cycle that covers service performance, target setting, the performance of specific groups of pupils and the directorate annual report and service plans.

The authority has developed suitable medium-term service improvement plans for each service within the children and young people's directorate. These plans follow a helpful, common template and bring greater consistency of approach across the directorate. They address appropriately the areas for improvement highlighted in the inspection in 2012. The plans are now in the early stages of implementation.

Overall, the introduction of a clear and consistent approach to improvement planning gives a much better foundation for the authority to provide relevant evidence for elected members and senior leaders to make informed decisions about education and training provision for children and young people in Monmouthshire. It is too early

to judge the effectiveness of the new approach, and we will monitor further progress in this area during our next monitoring visit.

Recommendation 5: Improve self-evaluation across all services and make better use of data to plan services strategically and target resources appropriately

Senior leaders were initially unwilling to accept the findings of the 2012 inspection. It took around a year for them to fully appreciate the gap between Estyn's judgements and the authority's own evaluation of its services. At the time of the inspection, elected members did not understand the performance of services and schools well enough, particularly when comparing these with similar services and schools across Wales, because officers did not provide them with accurate and relevant information.

Recently there has been a significant change in mind-set from both elected members and senior leaders to acknowledge fully and openly the reasons why the authority was failing to perform well enough, including unhelpful cultural ways of working rather than just weaknesses in service delivery. During this visit, officers and members engaged far more candidly regarding the progress they have made in responding to Estyn's recommendations and what they still need to do to improve.

This emerging shift in culture is reflected in recent documents where the authority evaluates its progress. For this visit the authority provided a self-evaluation report on progress with recommendations 4 and 5. This report is more honest and evaluative than previous reports provided for Estyn, including the report provided for the first monitoring visit. The report provides a reasonably balanced and transparent view of progress. The chief officer's annual report and the head of standard's recent performance report for scrutiny, both dated May 2014, offer open and fair appraisals of strengths and areas for development. While the evaluations in these documents could be more focused and help readers to understand which issues are the most important, they nevertheless demonstrate that the authority is being more honest with it-self and knows what it needs to do to improve.

The local authority has a better understanding of its schools than at the time of the inspection. It now challenges its schools more effectively and has, for the first time, used its powers to take action against schools causing concern. The authority has improved its oversight of the work of the regional school improvement service and is working with this service to address identified weaknesses in the quality of work by system leaders. The authority and the regional service recognise the need to improve their evaluation of the quality of leadership and management in schools.

The authority has made good progress in many areas where there was either a lack of data to inform evaluation or issues with the quality and consistency of data. The authority now has up-to-date information on all early years' settings and monitors them more rigorously. As a result, the authority has acted appropriately on concerns about the quality of provision where necessary. The authority is making better use of performance data on vulnerable learners to inform service planning and evaluation. Learners who participate in intervention programmes in schools, to support improvements in literacy for example, are now tracked beyond the end of the intervention so that the authority is able to evaluate whether or not these learners

continue to make good progress. This tracking information has been used to inform decisions about the future use of programmes. The authority recognises it still needs to improve the data it collects and analyses in order to evaluate fully the impact of youth support services.

The authority has various targets for improvements in standards in schools, at whole authority and at individual school level. However, the targets set are not always consistent across key documents. This presents a risk for the authority in that it will be difficult for officers and elected members to evaluate whether or not its actions are having the desired impact and progress in raising standards is quick enough.

Officers are beginning to improve the quality of reports for scrutiny by increasingly including more helpful analysis and evaluation rather than a description of activity or data with limited interpretation. However, the quality of reports is still inconsistent and they are not always presented to the scrutiny committee at the right time in order that members can influence the development of work. In February 2014 the scrutiny committee met, for the first time, with the headteachers of the four secondary schools in the authority to challenge them on the performance of their school and to discuss the work of the authority and the regional school improvement service. This is a helpful step forward in supporting evaluation within the authority. The scrutiny committee plans to visit each of the schools in autumn 2014 to discuss their latest performance data and increase the level of challenge in their questioning. The minutes of scrutiny meetings tend to repeat the content of officer reports with a limited record of the challenge from members, which means that there is a risk that issues will not be followed up by either officers or members in future.

The authority has a new corporate approach to self-evaluation that is being implemented this financial year. As part of the new self-evaluation cycle, the children and young people's directorate is currently self-evaluating all its services against Estyn's Common Inspection Framework, with a report due to be completed by September 2014. As this is work in progress it is not yet possible to judge the effectiveness of the new process or the quality of evaluation. The first quarterly review of progress against service improvement plans is due to take place soon after this monitoring visit, so it is too early to judge the impact of this process too.

Next steps

While this letter notes some improvements, it also highlights a number of shortcomings and acknowledges that aspects of the work are at an early stage. We will expect the authority to demonstrate further progress during the final visit.

The authority should continue to address all the recommendations from the 2012 inspection. The final visit will evaluate progress on all the recommendations.

Your link inspectors will continue their work with the authority. They will confirm arrangements for the final visit with you in due course.
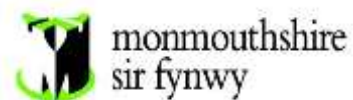
I am copying this letter to the Welsh Government and the Wales Audit Office for information.

Yours sincerely

Clive Phillips
Assistant Director

cc: Welsh Government
Wales Audit Office

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SUBJECT: PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DRAFT STRATEGY 2014-17

MEETING: CABINET
DATE: 15TH October 2014
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Countywide

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1.   **PURPOSE:**

1.1   To introduce the Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy 2014-17

2.   **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1   To approve the release of the draft People and Organisational Development Strategy to allow engagement and feedback from employees and communities, ahead of it being presented back to Cabinet for approval.

2.2   To endorse and promote the draft programme plan as a living document to be updated and refined as further evidence of need is established.

3.   **KEY ISSUES:**

3.1   Monmouthshire People is the latest version of our 'People Strategy', the last being published in 2012. It has, as its starting point, a different way of thinking about how 'we' – our staff teams and communities – can lead the changes needed if we are to respond meaningfully to severe cuts to public finance and shifts in public needs and expectations.

3.2   Our belief is that truly effective organisations don't drive people through change, they drive change through people. We want to connect our people to one another, to purpose and the resources available, in order to spur innovation and performance. This should mean that our investment in people development activity is in line with our core purpose as an organisation – to deliver sustainable and resilient communities - and delivers only those outcomes that matter to our county.

3.3   This strategy aims to bring the many facets of people and organisational development we run and promote into one composite piece. Some of these activities and programmes have achieved great outcomes already, whilst others are a work in progress and that's important because this is a learning process and an investment in continually improving performance. Our people must be enabled with the right tools to operate optimally in what is a permanent state of transition and this is no easily 'measurable' task. The aim is for this strategy to make a key contribution to ensuring people development initiatives support our core purpose and business approach in a systematic and sustained way. Where it is felt necessary consideration will be given to any amendment to staff terms and conditions that ultimately support the aims of this strategy.

3.4   Monmouthshire People is a story of our evolution – still clearly rooted in *Your County Your Way* – and describes our journey through the various necessary stages of growth and development. Whilst changes and tweaks have been made to programmes and initiatives along the way in order to focus them on the scale of today's challenges – nothing has been lost and we've adapted and advanced. Examples include RESULT coaching, the 'Check-in Check-out' staff appraisal system, whole place and community co-ordination planning and engagement and Monmouthshire Engages.

3.5   It is much harder to very clearly connect people development with a particular outcome especially when we are looking at the strategy as a whole. We've learned that there must be two parts to our process of evaluation. The first part is called 'creating the conditions' because it focuses on the softer outcomes we know matter to individuals such as building confidence, encouraging ideas, ensuring people feel valued and trusted and a sense of belonging. The second part builds upon these foundations and involves measuring the longer-term tangible outcomes that are important to people outside of our organisation like budgets, performance and Return on Investment. We call this, 'delivering impact'.

3.6   Monmouthshire People contains lots of measures that will capture this information and importantly, they are not all about number-driven targets. Increasingly we recognise we must tell rich stories that convey sentiment, happiness, improved wellbeing and change for the better.

3.7   The strategy is importantly built upon a number of key themes and priorities. These describe in greater detail, our journey to date, what works and what doesn't and how we plan to continue to deliver people and organisational development. These themes are:

1. Our Work Environment – ensuring the workforce are afforded the flexibility, agility and connectivity they need

2. Engaging our People – recognising the essential need for an engaged workforce which strengthens organisational performance; that community engagement at all levels allows us to meet people where they are

3. Building Careers – An aim to recruit, retain and develop great people who want the opportunity to make a difference

4. Training, Coaching and Developing our People – ingraining our approach to people development in a cultural process is critical if it is to truly endure.

5. Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing – we must ensure that the work we do reflects the make-up and diversity of our communities. Building an inclusive workplace is central to this and we know that when they feel well, they perform better.

6. Bringing it all together – people and organisational development is the 'means' to the 'end' – improved organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Bringing it all together means our people development is linked to, and supports, core purpose and business approach.

3.8   The strategy is intentionally draft at this stage. Approval and release of the draft strategy will result in a programme of communication and engagement being undertaken with staff and communities over coming weeks such as to seek feedback and ideas on all aspects of the strategy. A final strategy will be brought back to Cabinet for approval before the end of the calendar year.

3.9   A draft programme plan is provided at appendix 2 and provides an overview of targeted priorities and activity over the next 12 months.

3.10   Due to the nature of how the strategy will be implemented by the whole authority, ownership and delivery will be shared and naturally evolve over time based upon employee and community feedback and engagement.

4.   REASONS:

4.1   Our people are central to the success of our council and county. Against the backdrop of continued economic constraint, local government reform and a growing awareness of the areas in which to make sustained improvements – we must equip our people with the mind-sets and tools to meet the changing demands of our organisation and society.

4.2   Organisational culture impacts our ability to be innovative and forward thinking and we must create the conditions in which everyone is enabled to flourish.

4.3   Our workforce must be able to react and adapt as rapidly as the communities we serve. We want our people to be innovators and problem solvers, continually seeking and responding to challenges. One such challenge will be galvanising the talent that exists outside of our payroll. Our goal is to support talent development both within and outside of our organisation and to engage all the people with whom we can create value.

5.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1   There are no additional resource implications associated with this draft strategy at this stage, with all resource requirements in the interim being met from existing budgets. For any projects that cannot be subsequently be met from existing budget individual business cases will be developed.

6.   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1   There are no negative equality impacts identified in the equality impact assessment and the sustainability challenge identifies only positive impacts (Appendix 2).

6.2   The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every year and criteria for monitoring and review will include the monitoring of performance indicators through relevant service improvement plans.

7.   CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Senior Leadership Team
People Development Manager

8.   BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment & Sustainability Challenge

9.   AUTHOR:

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PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DRAFT STRATEGY // 2014-17

OPEN-NESS

FLEXIBILTY

TEAMWORK

Sustainable Resilient Communities

Single Integrated Plan

Service Improvement Plans

People & Organisational Development Strategy

FAIRNESS

Monmouthshire People:
Connecting People to Purpose

CABINET MEMBER FOREWORD:

Our people are central to the success of our council and county. Against the backdrop of continued economic constraint, local government reform and a growing awareness of the areas in which to make sustained improvements – we must equip our people with the mind-sets and tools to meet the changing demands of our organisation and society. Organisational culture impacts our ability to be innovative and forward thinking and we must create the conditions in which everyone is enabled to flourish.

Our values of **openness, fairness, flexibility and teamwork** are enshrined in our way of working and through our frameworks for performance assessment, engagement, coaching and training and access to global good practice; we are constantly seeking input on how we might do better. The Enterprise department leads development of this strategy because for us, 'enterprise' is a mind-set and means preparedness to challenge the status quo and a capability to develop solutions to problems.

Our workforce of just over 4,000 employees must be able to react and adapt as rapidly as the communities we serve. We want our people to be innovators and problem solvers, continually seeking and responding to challenges. One such challenge will be galvanising the talent that exists outside of our payroll. Monmouthshire has a rich social capital and communities that understand the importance of building their own resilience. Our goal is to support talent development both within and outside of our organisation and to engage all the people with whom we can create value.

We've been working hard to ensure employees and citizens share a clear sense of purpose. The core mission of Monmouthshire's Single Integrated Plan is to **create sustainable and resilient communities**. We have trained staff to develop the tools and techniques to deliver 21st century public services, implemented a performance assessment process based upon contribution to purpose, developed an engagement network focussed on opening up our organisation and sharing challenges with our communities and, created flexible work environments that bring us closer to community.

This strategy aims to bring the many facets of people and organisational development we run and promote into one composite piece. Some of these activities and programmes have achieved great outcomes already, whilst others are a work in progress and that's important because this is a learning process and an investment in continually improving performance. Our people must be enabled with the right tools to operate optimally in what is a permanent state of transition and this is no easily 'measurable' task. My aim is for this strategy to make a key contribution to ensuring our people-development initiatives support our core purpose and business approach in a systematic and sustained way.

This draft strategy provides an opportunity to open up conversations with staff and communities and to discuss the proposals that are contained within. We seek ideas and input on all aspects of this strategy. Beyond feedback we will be seeking through specific communications and engagement we ask you to record thoughts and comments at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/monmouthshirepeople
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Cllr Phil Murphy
Cabinet Member for Resources

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FOREWORD FROM THE 'FRONTLINE'

How Monmouthshire feels to me and how I see the People Strategy will help us on the frontline:-

I along will some of my colleagues were given an opportunity to look differently at our services. Previously it seemed like changes happened top-down but we were given the chance to solve our own problems and come up with solutions. The frontline always had a voice but I don't think we had the chance to change things, as a result we now think differently and approach things in a different way, our suggestions are heard, encouraged and supported.

It feels like the council is now starting to think of all its staff and I hope the People Strategy will help create things more equally, for example not all the workforce currently have access to IT hence this can lead to isolation and not everybody receiving the same message at the same time.

I initially thought this was the emperor's new clothes but I know what a difference the front line can contribute to helping with efficiencies and becoming more effective – it seems a win, win for everyone.

Paul Bevan
HIGHWAYS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introducing Monmouthshire People

Monmouthshire People is the latest version of our 'People Strategy', the last being published in 2012. It has, as its starting point, a different way of thinking about how 'we' – our staff teams and communities – can lead the changes needed if we are to respond meaningfully to severe cuts to public finance and shifts in public needs and expectations. Our belief is that truly effective organisations don't drive people through change, they drive change through people. We want to connect our people to one another, to purpose and the resources available, in order to spur innovation and performance. This should mean that our investment in people development activity is in line with our core purpose as an organisation – *to deliver sustainable and resilient communities* - and delivers only those outcomes that matter to our county. There are lots of approaches and activities in place already as a result of the first People Strategy and this version seeks to update, supplement and refresh these through understanding where we are today and preparing our people for the significant challenges and opportunities now upon us.

Our Journey

Monmouthshire People is a story of our evolution – still clearly rooted in Your County Your Way – and describes our journey through the various necessary stages of growth and development. Whilst changes and tweaks have been made to programmes and initiatives along the way in order to focus them on the scale of today's challenges – nothing has been lost and we've adapted and advanced. Some examples include:

- RESULT coaching being a mandatory requirement for all leaders managers and supervisors;
- The updated 'check-in, check-out' appraisal system rolled-out organisation-wide;
- Linking ideas development and service redesign to those areas and functions that can contribute to improved efficiency and effectiveness;
- Whole Place and Community Co-ordination planning and engagement recognising the distinctive needs of our places and unlocking people power to help deliver it;
- Monmouthshire Engages events, discussions and roadshows focussed on finding out what matters to our communities so that we know how to prioritise our resources; and,
- A new People and Organisational Development team charged with implementing and embedding Monmouthshire People

Does it work?

Some of the activity outlined above, makes it easier to assess progress in specific areas. However it is much harder to very clearly connect people development with a particular outcome especially when we are looking at the strategy as a whole. We've learned that there must be two parts to our process of evaluation. We call the first part of this 'creating the conditions' because it focuses on the softer outcomes we know matter to individuals such as building confidence, encouraging ideas, ensuring people feel valued and trusted and a sense of belonging. The second part builds upon these foundations and involves measuring

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the longer-term hard outcomes that are important to people outside of our organisation like budgets, performance and Return on Investment. We call this, 'delivering impact'.

Monmouthshire People contains lots of measures that will capture this information and importantly, they are not all about number-driven targets. Increasingly we recognise we must tell rich stories that convey sentiment, happiness, improved wellbeing and change for the better. Done right, it means:

- We are clear on purpose and the contribution as individuals, we make to it
- Outcomes that clearly focus on impact and results
- Failure is okay. It means we re-learn
- More feedback loops that lead to greater trust and engagement
- Leadership at all levels that empowers and inspires people to succeed
- Showing flexibility in the way we adapt to change

Our Themes and Priorities

Monmouthshire People is built upon a number of themes and priorities. These describe in greater detail, our journey to date, what works and what doesn't and how we plan to continue to deliver people and organisational development.

1. Our Work Environment – today's workplace needs greater flexibility and agility and we've torn down walls, provided modern but modest facilities and connected all our buildings and services in order to create open, accessible and shared spaces. Agile working remains a core commitment and we're increasingly recognising and responding to the rapid advancement of technology as people embrace virtual working styles, social media and more near to real-time reporting.

2. Engaging our People – an engaged workforce strengthens organisational performance and we strive to engage our people at all points. Within our organisation we continue to develop opportunities for staff volunteering, training and seeking feedback. Within the community, Monmouthshire Engages, Whole Place planning and Community Co-ordination are allowing us to meet people where they are at. The results we are seeing in terms of volunteering, participation in the Ambassador projects and the various trusts, Town Teams and friends' groups provide solid foundations on which to continue building relationships and alliances.

3. Building Careers – we believe that working within the public sector, is less about a job and more about hearing a vocational calling. We aim to recruit, retain and develop great people who want the opportunity to make a difference and this means offering opportunities for mentoring, broadening experience, employee volunteering and apprenticeships.

4. Training, Coaching and Developing – ingraining our approach to people development in a cultural process is critical if it is to truly endure. We know that if someone invests in an idea, they will own its success because it's easier to support something you've helped create. We aim to roll-out RESULT training to all those with responsibility for another,

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embed Check-in, Check-out and equip people with the capability to redesign and repurpose services in order to align learning with outcomes.

5. Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing – we must ensure that the work we do reflects the make-up and diversity of our communities. Building an inclusive workplace is central to this and we know that when they feel well, they perform better. Our action on equalities, employee welfare, managing attendance and introduction of the living wage as part of the 2013/14 budget setting, are all components of this and we prioritise difference and diversity and enabling people to be their authentic and unique selves.

6. Bringing it all together – people and organisational development is the 'means' to the 'end' – improved organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Bringing it all together means our people development is linked to, and supports, core purpose and business approach. We will continue to do this through connecting our people to all of the things that matter: one another, purpose and resources, in order to yield improved performance.

A plan for action

We have clear priorities for action over the course of the next three years. The priorities for year 1, as can be seen in the Practical Next Steps & Programme Plan (Draft People & Organisational Development Strategy, Appendix 1 & 2), include:

- Evaluation of agile working and future adaptation
- Production of a People Toolkit
- Carrying out Monmouthshire Engages 2.0 as a pre-cursor to our 15/16 budget setting
- Developing new additions and refinements to the current set of Policies and Procedures
- Implementing a Leadership Development Programme
- Improving the quality of data and information reporting
- Undertaking a comprehensive staff survey
- Continue the roll-out of Check-in, Check-out and RESULT

Summary of key messages

- Monmouthshire People brings together key activity strands and initiatives that relate to our people and organisational development
- The strategy is a living and breathing document that will adapt and change over time
- This helps to link our development of people, to our core purpose and business approach, in order to drive forward improvement
- We aim to be a light-footed social business that can adapt and this means ensuring our internal workforce has the right mind-set and skillset to meet the changing needs of our society and organisation
- We must forge stronger relationships with those people off our payroll so that we can unlock ideas, potential and new resource solutions
- We want to maximise 'people power' if we are to thrive in these turbulent social and economic times – and not just survive

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- Our programme of change will take time to deliver impact, however there will be markers and signs that will enable us to incrementally and frequently gauge success

INTRODUCTION

Culture has become the defining issue that will distinguish the most successful from the pack

Truly effective organisations don't drive people through change - they drive change through people. Monmouthshire People aims to set out the connection between people development and organisational effectiveness as a means of delivering improved performance. This means our people development is not only linked to, but underpins our purpose and business strategy. **Creating sustainable and resilient communities** has roots in Your County, Your Way – an approach to leading our organisation to focus on what matters to communities - that secured the backing of NESTA's Creative Councils programme.

Whilst financial cuts and drivers tend to dominate the headlines around local government, our appreciation of the challenges provides a different starting point. Local government has tended to travel the same path, whilst society has evolved. Communities want on-demand, 24-7, personalised services and solutions they can help shape and create. Our contention is that local government hasn't adapted at a pace to fulfil expectations. However, we also believe people join public service to make a difference; it's just that the overly-bureaucratic systems and behaviours we have created mean this isn't always the case. Our job is to transform lives and in so doing, we can address budget gaps and cuts because doing what matters benefits the bottom line. To be effective, we must ingrain the ability to adapt, be nimble and creative in a cultural process because culture is what we grow people in.

Approaches like 'Whole Place', Community Co-ordination and Monmouthshire Engages demonstrate the potential for people to shape their council and county on their terms. We don't just want to be responsive on the issues of importance today, but relevant to the things we can reasonably foresee as being important tomorrow. This means unleashing the intrinsic motivation of our people. Working to common goals means a focus on delivering better outcomes. We must connect our people to one another, to purpose and to the resources available in order to spur innovation and enhance performance. Whilst we have programmes, policies and services all working towards this aim, the job of this strategy is to provide one integrated framework for people and organisational development.

Connecting Our People to Purpose to Improve Performance

People — Purpose — Perform

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OUR JOURNEY

People Strategy 2012

Our last People Strategy was published in March 2012. Built upon three core themes of culture, capacity and behaviours, it was accompanied by an 'involvement exercise' that engaged over 350 members of staff with the expectation they disseminate information through teams and actions plans. In terms of activities and outcomes, the strategy provided a foundation and achieved:

- Revised and re-purposed set of Workforce Policies approved by the Joint Advisory Group and Cabinet Committee;
- Regular workforce reports and improvements in HR related data with the development of MyView system;
- Implementation of approaches that codify Core Behaviours and Attitudes and embed them within recruitment and development processes;
- Re-purposing of Induction package; and,
- Continuing the spread of creative thinking and 'whole systems' approaches throughout the organisation, linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In the ensuing period, much has changed in terms of the scale of financial cuts, the more fundamental pace of reform in local government, our awareness of areas for improvement and the fast changing needs of our communities. In addition, leaning-in to communities has provided greater clarity of purpose. Monmouthshire People is thus, the second iteration of the People Strategy, seeking to provide a faster-paced and systematic effort aimed at increasing the capacity of our people to achieve goals efficiently and effectively.

Our evolution

Monmouthshire secured the backing of NESTA and LGA in May 2012 under the Creative Council's programme. This enabled us to develop, test and begin scaling aspects of what we called Your County, Your Way – a programme aimed at equipping staff and engaging communities to develop solutions to our biggest problems. Our work mainly comprised:

- Agile and flexible working – breaking down physical and cultural walls
- 'Whole systems' – addressing what matters to customers and breaking down silos
- Intrapreneurship – developing the tools to deliver 21st Century public services
- Meaningful community engagement – co-creating and co-delivering
- Global best practice – seeking out experts with whom to grow high potential ideas

Whilst participation in the programme provided support to 'testbed' ideas, the real value was in making new connections, accessing global networks, engaging in peer learning and benefiting from best practice. However, the goal within the organisation remained to achieve a critical tipping point in terms of embedding this way of working throughout.

In July 2012, cabinet agreed the three year establishment of the 'Centre for Innovation'. The Centre was often mistaken as a physical space – but was a team of individuals charged with catalysing innovation. This involved delivery of service reviews, coaching and mentoring, support for agile working, assistance with Monmouthshire Engages and moving ideas into action. Notwithstanding the outcomes delivered in the first year, in particular, around assisting delivery of the budget strategy, the model naturally began to evolve in a fresh direction. With the need to meet ever challenging budget targets, the demand to develop the skills and capabilities to achieve them, alongside a restructure of the senior leadership team

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- a new opportunity arose. The new Enterprise directorate, with its focus on cultivating enterprise as a central organising principle, afforded an opportunity to bring together a range of complementary services like Employee Services, Training, IT, 'Innovation' and organisational design. This moved the emphasis from a centralised focus on innovation to a more dispersed, inclusive and devolved model of organisational development, in which all services must create the conditions for people to be the best they can be. It means a greater sense of shared responsibility and more infiltratory engagement. It allows greater synergies with the Single Integrated Plan, key budget strategies, such as iCounty, and individual Service Improvement Plans because when we do what matters most with communities, we know that better outcomes and an improved bottom line is the result.

In this process of adaptation, we have seen the evolution of intrapreneurship into the RESULT coaching model; agile working morph from a focus on physical space to virtual working, channel shift, and an improved web presence. We've seen the 'whole systems' approach become about wider-ranging service reviews that link with our places and the people who live in them. Engagement has also undergone transformation with ingrained processes emerging from Monmouthshire Engages, Whole Place, Community-led Plans and Community Co-ordination. In addition, our Employee Services section has adapted into People Services promoting a re-purposed performance appraisal system, new mentoring, volunteering and induction schemes that clearly link people to purpose and performance. Self-evaluation features highly in this because developing our awareness of the actual progress being made is key to gauging return on investment.

Barriers and issues

Our journey has shown that embedding people and organisational development approaches is hard yards. Success to date has been far too episodic and dependent upon a core group of individuals who instinctively understand the contribution required of them. Our experience has taught us that we need improved understandings of the different role of policy makers, leaders, professionals and citizens so that everyone can play a part. We must better gauge our sense of preparedness and develop a keener sense of self-awareness. One of our main challenges is that innovation requires a willingness to take risks and this needs a culture of trust. We have to expect a steady flow of failure and understand that failing is necessary because it means we're actually doing *something*. The problem with this is that tolerance for failure tends to decline in times of austerity because the pain of perceived waste is that much sharper. We have learned that when this happens, we have to stand firm because we can't impose bureaucratic regulations to try and prevent failure.

What people and organisational development means to us

Our journey has been built upon re-learning. Your County, Your Way was never intended to be a static or snapshot approach. We have learned that to achieve penetrative engagement with improvement and creative thinking we need a systematic programme that puts our people-productivity and performance front and centre. Done right, it means we are:

- Clear on purpose and our personal and collective contribution to it;
- Clearly understanding what matters and the needs from our customers perspective;
- Defining outcomes with a clear focus on results;
- Learning from failure by small scale testing;
- Minimising risk whilst maximising chance of success;
- Creating feedback loops for greater organisational improvement;
- Understanding how to empower employees and inspire people to succeed;
- Showing flexibility in adjusting nimbly to changing conditions; and,

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- Maintaining communication with stakeholders and becoming pragmatic enablers

A coherent approach to people and organisational development creates the conditions for closer engagement with innovation; identifies what outstanding levels of achievement look like; achieves consistency of direction and links goals to supportive strategies. It includes involving and developing our employees and promoting good practice. **It means we must expand our capacity to create the future.**

To hear more about the story so far, follow the links below:

Intro

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfNzx5cbsHU

Case Studies

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PaYNw3tbMQ&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnOsy0-Ii0k&feature=youtu.be

Going Forward

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OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

Measuring and isolating the impact of people and organisational development approaches is not a straightforward task. Drawing connecting lines between a particular type of people-development activity and a given outcome is problematic. We are striving towards continually developing new ways of measuring the impact that takes into account multiple complex variables. Further measures will develop and evolve as we continue to focus on 'what matters'. Whilst it is challenging, we know that getting to 'near-real time' assessment will be important if we are to effectively reflect the changing contexts of the way our services are delivered.

We believe there has to be two main parts to our framework for evaluation. Firstly, we have to measure the 'intrinsic' outcomes – the outcomes that matter to individuals and what they have told us is important – building confidence, feeling valued and trusted and a sense of belonging, self-esteem and clarity of purpose. This must be constantly informed with feedback and new insights so we know we're measuring the right things as we continue to build our foundation of motivated people who engage more deeply with outcomes. We call this 'Creating the Conditions'. The second step builds on this by measuring the extrinsic, longer-term outcomes – the stuff that's more important to the outside and demonstrates the impact of activity - budgets, performance and Return on Investment. We call this 'Delivering Impact'.

Organising our evaluation framework in this two-pronged way, will make it easier to gather evidence, provide a common language for evaluation and continue to iterate and develop our assessment processes as we learn more and receive feedback.

What will 'good' look like?

In terms of the first phase 'Creating the Conditions' – a staff communications survey from 2013, feedback from Intrapreneurship, evaluations of RESULT, an appraisal of Monmouthshire Engages and insight from Induction sessions tells us the following features matter most to our people:

- Communication – a sense of belonging and feeling 'part of it' through an understanding what happens at a whole authority level
- Clarity of purpose and their personal contribution to it
- Having opportunities, space and permission to generate ideas & solutions
- To be connected through networks across the organisation
- Access to leadership
- 21st Century leadership skills that enables and empowers Monmouthshire People
- Accept the risk of failure in the pursuit of better services
- Feeling trusted
- Clear understanding of expectations and consequences of non-delivery
- Right tools to do the job – good IT and fingertip information in particular
- Happiness, fun and wellbeing
- Opportunities to share learning and broaden development
- Flexibility in terms of working conditions
- Opportunities to work across boundaries to co-create solutions to problems

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The second phase of identifying good outcomes 'Delivering Impact' focuses on organisational impact through the performance management framework:

- Delivery of MTFP in accordance with planned and mandated projects, business plan and service developments
- Improvement plan delivery assessed as a minimum of 'good' in all 4 areas
- 75%+ National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators are in the top quartile
- 100% of Outcome Agreement is achieved
- Increased percentage of population says it feels able to influence council services
- Better outcomes for our citizens evidenced by feedback and case studies

How will we know we're getting there?

The sequence of Creating the Conditions, followed by Delivering Impact speaks more about a phased process of transitioning the gap that can be monitored and assessed at regular intervals, thus telling us if 'we're on the way':

- ➢ Quarterly monitoring of Improvement Plan tells us we are 'on course'
- ➢ Quarterly monitoring of MTFP tells us we are 'on course'
- ➢ Feedback (staff survey, evaluation of initiatives, customer insights) tells us that confidence, trust and participation is increasing and that happiness and wellbeing are highly rated
- ➢ Numbers of new ideas generated and being converted into actions and outcomes and learning from failures
- ➢ Closer integration of performance & culture as identified by regulators in thematic work
- ➢ Participation in Monmouthshire Engages increases
- ➢ Aim to increase job and location flexibility by matching skills to need
- ➢ Numbers of employee volunteers
- ➢ Numbers of community volunteers
- ➢ Access to leadership development programme
- ➢ Numbers through RESULT coaching every year
- ➢ Numbers having a Check-in Check-out Appraisal
- ➢ Connectivity between team outcomes and Service Improvement Plan that feeds into overarching strategies

OUR THEMES AND PRIORITIES

1.   Our Work Environment

'You don't have to be in work to be at work' – Paul Matthews, Chief Executive

Participation in contemporary work now requires greater flexibility and we have invested in creating vibrant work environments with modern facilities and; connectivity and enhancements going in to frontline spaces such as leisure centres, one stop shops and libraries enabling staff to be 'co-located' with customers. Our new County Hall, is a modest space with its compact sized compensated by the highest levels of sustainability which help make it a future-proofed, flexible and social space open and accessible to communities and customers. Providing work environments for our employees is one of our biggest financial overheads and our agile working policy recognises the need to support more nomadic, multi-locational group-based and remote working styles. The work environment however is about much more than physical space and recognises the prevalence of technology, virtual working styles; the right enabling policies and procedures, interaction in 'real-time' via social media and building the kind of networked structure in which people at all levels feel valued for the skills and knowledge they bring to their roles.

Tools to do the job

We rely on productive employees and must ensure roadblocks are not standing in people's way as they carry out their jobs. We are committed to providing the right resources to allow all our people to perform their roles successfully and constantly seeking feedback on the 'proper tools' that enable optimum efficiency. We have invested in tailored work environments that complement the special needs of specific services, provided a dedicated space for creative thinking, training and development and ensured all of our environments are open, accessible and adapted for optimum use. We've a programme established for cyclical investment in IT hardware, connected our frontline services with broadband and public wi-fi and opened access to internal and external social media outlets to all staff. Agile working has heralded a new way of thinking about work and whilst that means we are more present and visible in our communities, the need remains to provide 'office cover' and so we work ever harder at establishing credible virtual and physical presences. Fleet cars, our 'green car' scheme and an upcoming 'Cycle to Work' programme all support our focus on sustainability by reducing our footprint on the environment, whilst enabling our people to navigate our large county for necessary journeys, whilst video and tele conferencing facilities are providing a cost effective alternative to travel.

The Hub tree diagram below explains how the introduction of this internal technology platform can provide our employees with the majority of the tools to do the job. Increasingly, we want to move our interactions to a 'self-service' type model and using customised SharePoint features, we are:

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The tools to do your job

- Using web pages to create a whole-authority knowledge-base
- Targeting information to users allowing users to follow certain sites and documents
- Creating a self-service web based platform allowing individuals to access anything needed to do their job in one place
- User views which can be personalised to improve networking, connectivity and skills sharing
- Freedom to 'share' documents, sites and finds with people outside of teams
- Find out who is accessing information, what is useful to others and planning ahead
- Using FAST search to locate documents

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Case Study - 1 - Our Work Environment
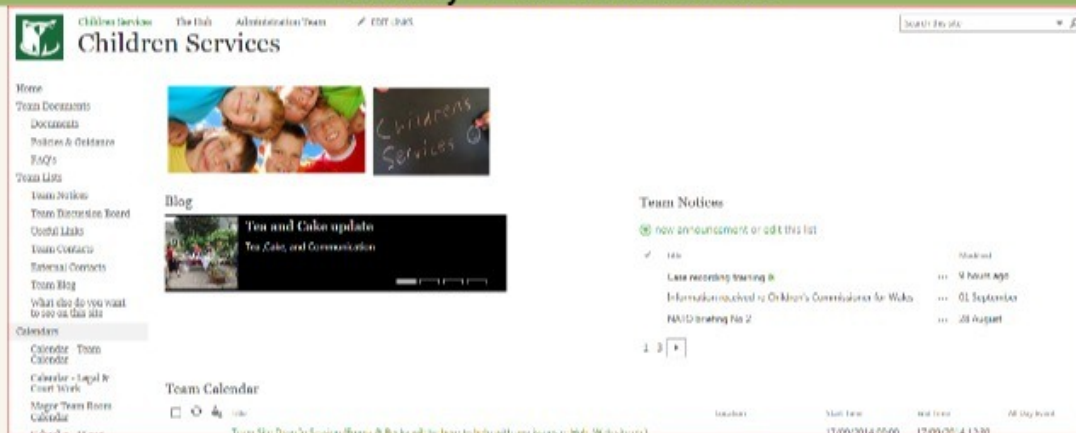
We are using the Hub to developing a self-service portal for Children's Services. The portal has been designed to give the team the ability to share documents, knowledge, and improve networking for a team that is in its nature very agile. It's becoming a one-stop-shop for all their information needs:

- FAQ's
  - o Team wiki to share those hints and tips that are usually held in someone's head
    - o IT wiki to share common IT FAQ's and instructions
- Blog, a space to share stories and experiences from within the team
- Notices, to give the team up-to-date information, not only on work related topics but also on the social side
- Team calendar, to give an overview of up and coming events and training opportunities
- A forum for discussing issues that are pertinent to the team, which all of the team can contribute to
- One place to go to for all their policies and guidance, ensuring right information, for the right purpose, available at the right time

Head of service Tracy Jelfs explains the benefits of the site for the service 'It was apparent that the service needed a focused resource that provided information specific to us in one place. The site covers a range of information in one hub for example, policies and procedures, which are specific and relevant to our service, diaries developed for specific tasks, links to useful external information. In addition a blog has been developed to enable staff to share good news stories confidentially, as the site is locked and can only be accessed by our staff group. All staff have author access to the site and are encouraged to add information, use the site and advise what else they would like to see and would find helpful to them in fulfiling their role with the Council.
This site reduces the time spent searching for information and has developed better communication and enabled staff to have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities'.

Agile working

Agile working was introduced to provide a modern, cost-effective, flexible working environment consisting of fully serviced workstations where employees can join colleagues at their team base or work remotely when necessary. Providing employees with access to agile workspace enables agility and flexibility, and means more time is spent out in the wider community than being tied to an office. It has also changed the focus of work which is now related to output and outcomes rather than measuring time spent in the office.

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Economic ROI - We've already seen an economic return on investment in the reduction in overall person to workstation ratio across all office bases in MCC to 2:1. As we continue to utilise mobile communication technology to enable people to access the information for them to do their jobs anytime, anyplace, anywhere, we anticipate this ratio moving towards 3:1, further reducing the need for expensive office space. We have open space, and don't subscribe to the barriers of personal offices and exclusive use workstations, opting instead for flexible workspace. People can work in the way that suits them best to get the job done, using a mix of quiet space outside of the office base or working with project teams and colleagues. Whilst we continue to support flexible work and provide 'flexi-time' benefits, we've removed formal core working hours and clocking in stations because we trust that our employees will work with their team colleagues to put the needs of the service first, and achieve the service outcomes within their contract hours. This removes the kind of futile pen-pushing that can occur in the pursuit of recording time and 'earning' time-off.

Cultural ROI - Agile Working has provided a launch pad for the sort of working culture that encourages a flexible mind set and maximises skill mobility. It enables people to have agile skills to bend and flex alongside the ever changing work and service provision of Monmouthshire. We also provide the flexibility for people to contribute to whole authority projects and secondments across the council, making the most of their personal skill sets.

The agile working policy was last reviewed in 2013 and the current agile working arrangements will be assessed in 2015 to inform an updated agile working policy.

Social networking

Social media plays an increasingly important role in engaging employees and ensuring they are understanding customer needs. Most office based employees use The Hub, Communicator and Yammer, for internal social networking, to stay connected and expand their networks. In addition we encourage staff to use external networks such as Twitter and Facebook in order to be able to converse, respond and interact with communities, businesses, partners and customers in 'real time'. More efficient work practices are frequently better enabled by technology, and the beauty of social media is that is also presents a very accessible and 'more human' dimension. We gained national recognition as one of 8 recommended websites in the UK as part of the 2014 SOCITM Better Connected Report, which is a clear testament of our dedication to being a connected and accessible Authority.
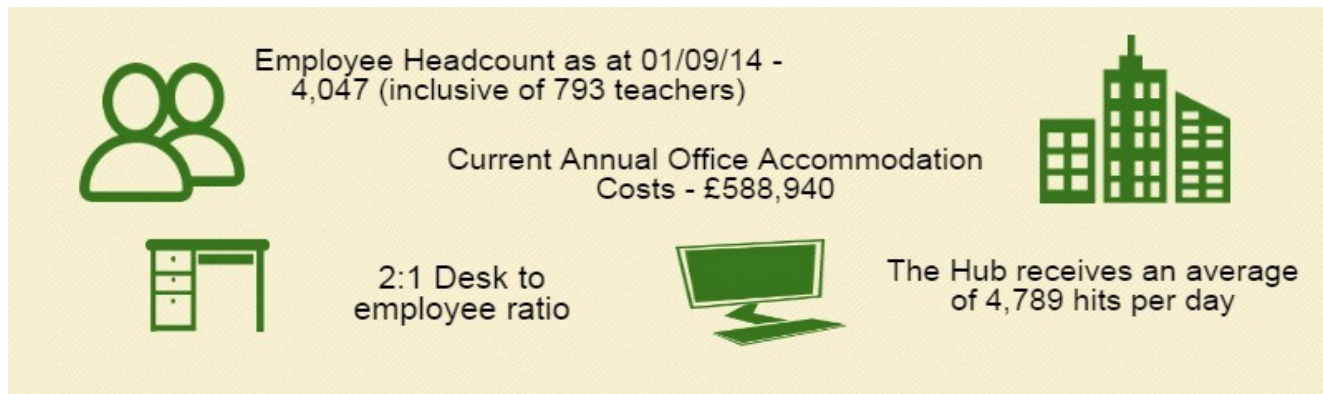We recognise relationships are the new currency and social media profiles are critical if we are to maintain our reputational value. 'Return on Relationships' is important as the value that accrues over time through loyalty, recommendations and sharing and using social networks to create authentic interaction and engagement.

Policies, procedures and data

Our current workforce policies and procedures reflect our commitment to treat all employees fairly and to promote a culture of integrity and ethical decision making. As we see an increasing blurring of the lines between those 'workers' on and off our payroll, our goal in the short-term is to add to our policy set, with whole-authority guidelines for volunteering, work experience, mentoring and engagement.

There are a number of people and organisational development datasets which underpin our performance evaluation and we are working towards improving to our systems, servers and data collection modules in order to ensure the veracity and accuracy of these datasets. In

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the medium-term, our desire is to move to near real-time data dashboards that provide instant high-level and detailed summaries of performance, presented in simple and accessible ways to ensure users do not require in-depth knowledge of technical HR-type statistics to use it.

Employee Headcount as at 01/09/14 - 4,047 (inclusive of 793 teachers)

Current Annual Office Accommodation Costs - £588,940

2:1 Desk to employee ratio

The Hub receives an average of 4,789 hits per day

2.   Engaging our people

'Our people are our best resource' Peter Fox, Leader of the Council

An engaged workforce strengthens organisational performance. Employees who are engaged contribute to our success and are more likely to be high performers, understand their purpose and ultimately, stay with us. Employee engagement is grounded in our values of openness and teamwork and we have taken down walls to provide open spaces that connect, enable networking and engagement with leadership. We strive to engage our people at all points, from the recruitment process with inventive advertising and making use of social media, to induction, staff volunteering, training, development and our new appraisal process (Check In Check Out). We are increasingly investing in building meaningful relationships with our communities, recognising the inherent local knowledge, skills and influence to co-create services fit for the future. Building relationships are the essential foundations upon which our organisation is built. We collaborate with people on and off our payroll to understand what matters, gain insights, seek solutions to problems and constantly improve the ways in which we work.

Forums and networks

We enable the operation of myriad groups, networks and partnerships, straddling our organisation, communities, partners and private sector agencies. Many of these take the forms of conventional thematic and administrative structures. Increasingly however, we are seeing the emergence of new types of groups such as Town Teams, community forums, civic societies, service-user networks, community interest companies and local trusts - all forming in order to articulate their views and organise action on issues of importance. Examples of great practice include Town Teams in Abergavenny and Caldicot – local people mobilising hundreds of local volunteers and 'doers'; the Youth Service-led 'Engage to Change' group which sees young people directly influencing their Council on 'what matters' and growing Community Co-ordination networks which provide local support for our most vulnerable. In addition to this, a range of informal networks exist arising from coaching and mentoring groups and peer networks. Our future goal is to ensure we are creating the space for networking to grow and develop – providing solid foundations on which to build relationships and expand social capital.

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Employee feedback

We gather insights from employees currently on both an informal and formal basis. Our relationship with the Trades Union plays a role in this and through the Join Action Group (JAG) we enjoy regular, direct and productive dialogue with a range of local and national representatives. We unlock staff ideas and innovations through coaching and training, connected projects, service reviews, open dialogue with leadership and the new Check-in, Check-out appraisal process. The 2013 response to the staff communications survey told us we needed to prioritise engagement with the 'frontline' and this set the Chief Executive and Leader on a course to meeting directly with over 1,000 of our employees. We've evaluated the success of our series of Inspirational Speakers; created wiki-spaces for feedback, input and ideas germination and the re-purposed induction process provides touch-points at which new employees are systematically re-engaged. Our next all-staff survey will be undertaken in autumn 2014 and the results will be used to provide an updated baseline of 'what matters' and inform a forward programme of focused activity.

Monmouthshire Engages

In a climate of financial austerity and changing community needs and expectations – we need local people to help us develop solutions to problems. What we may lack in terms of money and resources, we make up for in the way of assets, ideas, skills and high social capital. Our first round of Monmouthshire Engages in 2013 saw 1,697 people come forward to listen, pledge support in the way of contributions, time and ideas. Monmouthshire Engages is about ongoing and authentic engagement with our public. In its first year it spawned wider thematic engagement as people pledged support and interest in specific themes and topics such as Waste, Museums and Cultural Services, Town Teams, Leisure and Tourism. All sessions have been held outside of normal working hours in order to maximise involvement and have been staffed and facilitated by 120+ employees who give freely of their own time. We are benefitting from significant local support as people rally to crowd-source support for and crowd-fund services such as the Borough Theatre, Usk Rural Life Museum and Monmouthpedia. In recognising the wider ways in which our public wish to engage, Monmouthshire Made Open – a digital ideas and innovation engagement tool will also be launched for the commencement of Monmouthsire Engages 2.0 in September 2014.

Whilst Monmouthshire Engages provides a centre-piece for our public engagement work, the real 24-7, week-in week-out embodiment of community engagement is the interactions and alliances being built by the Town Teams, Community Co-ordination, our growing volunteer network, tourism and young ambassadors and our various trusts and friends' groups who all contribute many thousands of free hours.

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CASE STUDY 2 - Co-creating the Future - Tourism Ambassadors

The Monmouthshire Ambassador Training Programme was developed and is being delivered with funding secured through Monmouthshire's Rural Development Plan. 129 ambassadors have been trained to date and there is a target of 200 trained ambassadors by the end of the programme in December. 19 of the 129 trained ambassadors have also undertaken WorldHost training, which was the training underpinning the 2012 Olympic Games Maker training.

The aim of the programme is to develop a group of enthusiastic local experts who can help provide a warm welcome to visitors and encourage them to see and do more while they're here, so they stay longer and spend more money in the area. By enhancing the experience of visitors while they're in Monmouthshire, it's hoped that as well as increasing referrals to local businesses, the ambassadors will also encourage visitors to return and to recommend the area to family and friends. (These word of mouth recommendations are becoming increasingly powerful as people become less trusting of traditional advertising, and customer review sites grow in importance in influencing bookings).

As part of this programme we're delivering a bespoke training course aimed at retailers, market stallholders and event organisers in Abergavenny on October 8th and another aimed at local cycling enthusiasts on 1st October. In addition, as part of the development of our visitor information service, we're delivering a further course for trained ambassadors to prepare them for voluntary roles in Monmouthshire Tourist Information Centres. This training is due to take place on 18/19 November and is hopefully being delivered with some final funding from Capital Region Tourism.

Employee Volunteering

Over last 18 months, Monmouthshire employees volunteered thousands of hours of their time, skills and expertise to their communities, special projects and programmes and major events. We are increasingly seeing our working roles change as more engagement, meetings, discussion sessions, roadshows and workshops are held outside of normal office hours. Work with town and community councils, Town Teams, Trusts, festivals, special events like Cycling Road Race Championships and the Eisteddfod launch events bring hundreds of our staff together – all of whom give of their time freely to feel connected to purpose. In the Tourism, Leisure and Culture department alone, it is estimated that in the last twelve months, our employees have freely given over 400 hours of their time. To date, employee volunteering has been supported through goodwill and the discretion and support of line managers. However, it signifies changes to our future working patterns on a more fundamental level and requires a formal supportive policy to ensure it operates within clearly defined parameters.

>1,000 frontline staff engaged by CEO & Leader

212 community volunteers contributing 3,890 hours

62 inductees in 18 months participating in formal induction process

>50 employees contributing volunteer hours in excess of 475 hours

165 ideas contributed through public engagement

129 trained tourism 'ambassadors' volunteering 945 hours

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Case Study 2: Employee Volunteering: National Road Race Championships

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING

NATIONAL ROAD RACE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2014

As a Council we are committed to supporting and encouraging the involvement of volunteers to support the widespread interest of service into sustainable impact. We understand and value the benefits that volunteering can bring to helping our organisation achieve its goals and also to help nonprofit organisations accomplish long term social goals. The impact and benefits of volunteering are multifaceted for both the Authority and for the individuals volunteering which is why a holistic approach has to be taken to capturing the breadth of the impact so that we truly "connect the pounds invested to the passion".

Professional Benefits for Monmouthshire County Council

89% of volunteers who took part in the National Road Race Championships either fully agreed or partially agreed that they had a more positive view of the Authority after volunteering

Agree ■ Partially Agree ■ Do not agree

As well as a social value, an economic value can be attributed to the hours spent volunteering. Based on the most recent gross hourly pay for the UK, the National Cycling Championships generated an economic value of:

£11,838

Personal Benefits from Volunteering

Agree (47%) ■ Partially Agree (32%)
Do not agree (21%)

The majority of those who volunteered felt more a part of Monmouthshire County Council as a result of volunteering for the Championships

100%

Improved individual civic engagement

All those who volunteered for the National Road Race Championships would be interested in future volunteering opportunities with Monmouthshire County Council

Volunteer:
"Great opportunity as a cyclist to 'give something back' and get involved in a great, local promotion of the fantastic county we live in! Thanks for the opportunity!

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3.   Building Careers

'The only way to do great work is to love what you do' – Steve Jobs

We believe that working within the public sector is less about having a job and more about a vocational calling. Our objective remains to recruit, retain and develop what we term 'vocational public servants'. We do this because if we are unable to retain our existing personnel and hire new highly skilled personnel – there is a risk we will not deliver on our strategic objectives. Increasingly we recognise that this is not the job or role of 'HR' – but the responsibility of leaders because talent draws talent. In addition, our people tell us that job satisfaction isn't about the money – it's about working with great people, feeling part of something important and taking the opportunity to make a difference. We believe our clarity of purpose, team spirit and closeness to the people we serve, builds loyalty and reinforces passion, energy and commitment. We continually see that getting the best relies on providing opportunities for learning and growth. A recent pilot in Social Care Children's Services Team, aimed at a new more thoughtful style of recruitment, has seen more than 17 applications being received for social work and senior social work posts where previously there hadn't been any. This reinforces our view that great recruitment, retention and development does not happen by chance – it needs a sophisticated approach to keeping the best people and finding more to further accelerate growth.

Recruiting talent

Our approach to recruitment continues to evolve as we understand the shifting demographics impacting the recruitment market, the changing nature of work and jobs and more importantly, where people to look for them. We are increasingly using social media – Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn as recruitment tools and this is a symbolic move since our 24-7 social media presence is continually demonstrating what we're about and if someone is interested in coming to work with us, there's a strong chance they've already made an assessment of us. We've also experimented with Storify and Wordpress and developed our 'brand values' to further educate potential candidates, volunteers or simply people interested in working with us in some other capacity – about what we do and the value of joining the team. We used Facebook to recruit our first Town Team in Caldicot, and it simultaneously raised community awareness of our ideas and vision and cultivated a groundswell of support. The next stage is to consolidate the most successful activities whilst we continue to remain current by testing new ones. We aim to also build better links with universities in order to bring new talent and intellectual property into our council and county. Promoting from within also remains a priority and the systematic 'Check-in, Check-out' appraisal system affords opportunities for career path planning.

Mentoring and work experience

One of best professional development resources is peer learning and support. Whilst we have prioritised coaching and development for our employees – we recognise there's more to do around structured mentoring, work experience opportunities and targeted support for specific groups. Some of this happens currently, for example, we support schools with Enrichment Weeks; take on young volunteers to assist with specific projects aligned to their study programmes and recently established a corporate parenting mentorship scheme where MCC officers act as mentors and support to young people aged 16-25 to achieve their goals. There is scope to scale this and we are creating a scheme with Job Centre Plus to enable out of work individuals to join us for work experience and attainment of basic workplace qualifications. In addition, we will be improving our business mentorship

programme and building opportunities to connect more diverse groups such as young people in the workplace and Women in Leadership.
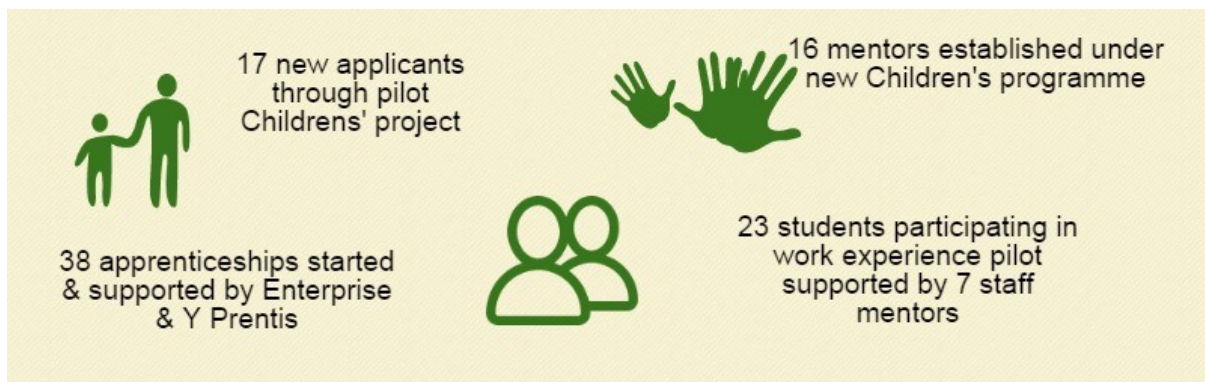
Apprenticeships

We have re-committed to providing apprenticeship opportunities through the creation of specific posts in particular, in our Operations division and through CMC2's successful Y-Prentis programme targeted at supporting growth in the construction skills sector. In addition with support for Melin's Intermediate Labour Market scheme, Monmouthshire Housing's 'Ways into Work' and our own development of Jobs Growth Wales – we have started to make in-roads. However, there is much more to do and our assessments tell us that in particular, Digital Apprenticeships and Hospitality Training are the two key priority areas.

Redeployment

Redeployment increases the ability of our workforce to adapt and helps employees when business decisions such as re-alignments impact their positions. Whilst in this climate of severe financial constraint, it is inevitability that workforce numbers will continue their pattern of reduction; our redeployment policy provides an opportunity for us to redistribute talent as a first opportunity allowing the alignment of skills and experience with job openings. For those employees in this position, we prioritise early engagement to help them with the transition into new areas or in their departure from the Council.

Broadening experience

One of our most valuable learning experiences has been 'freeing people up' to focus on stuff wider than the day job. This could be in the way of attachment to a different service, taking part in a new project or just developing ideas and suggestions that could 'add value'. Google term this, '20% time': one day a week to work on 'side projects'. Whilst we have tried this approach informally – in today's fast paced and ever-changing environment – time is significant and it would be difficult in logistic terms to allow 1/5th of employee time to do work that is not necessarily aligned with core objectives. What we need is a policy of greater working flexibility: moving people around to broaden experience, fill gaps and create learning and development opportunities. Innovation needs to be part of work routine and this means providing direction, sharing purpose and clearing the path for all those with great ideas so that we successfully move the entire organisation towards its goals.

17 new applicants through pilot Childrens' project

16 mentors established under new Children's programme

38 apprenticeships started & supported by Enterprise & Y Prentis

23 students participating in work experience pilot supported by 7 staff mentors

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4. <u>**Training, Coaching and Developing**</u>

'Anyone can be a game changer by using the power of their ideas' Nilofer Merchant

Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Strategy is time limited, whilst culture endures. People are central to our success equation, underpinning all parts of culture, talent and purpose. If someone invests in an idea, they will co-own its success because it's easier to support something you helped create. Ideas come from all layers in the organisation and it is the job of training, coaching, development and leadership to help nurture, grow and scale them. In ever more straitened economic times, it is *more* important to invest in organisational and personal learning and development because 'competent managers of stable services' no longer exist. We need to equip our people with the tools, training and techniques to deliver 21st Century public services that our people and communities actually want to receive. We need to create the conditions, shape the mindsets and hone the skillsets so that ideas can flourish and -good or bad – are highly valued. We need our people to understand that this is a progressive leadership challenge and we know that leaders exist at all levels within our organisation and are certainly not special, talented people who sit at the top. What we ask of our leaders is that they embrace 21st Century skills set and simply create more leaders. For this to happen effectively, training, coaching and development must align with and support our overall business strategy. In short, we must continually strive to align learning with results.

Coaching and training for purpose

Coaching and training allows us leverage people power to improve workforce effectiveness and organisational performance. Examples such as the team effort underpinning the National Road Race Championships in June 2014 show that a bunch of connected individuals can now achieve what once only large central organisations with budgets could. This was because they were connected by something much more powerful – shared purpose. People are not cogs in a machine – they must be valued and appreciated. This means celebrating ideas and innovations enabling economic power to be unlocked. This is not about innovation or creative thinking being something that everyone must do; but innovation and creative thinking being something anyone *can do*. If we are stay on top of our game, then we must understand how to create value in an ever-changing world. In Monmouthshire this means an increasing number of ideas coming in from outside the organisational walls with customers now becoming co-creators. This poses a key challenge for our training section in terms of techniques and learning packages that transcend our organisation's boundaries – and an opportunity also – because if this can be achieved, commercial potential undoubtedly exists.

RESULT Coaching

Coaching requires managers to shift from the traditional role of controlling and monitoring performance to a more open and consultative approach. Coaching develops partnership between leaders and employees creating a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved and how creating a more motivating experience, a closer match between expected and actual performance and feedback, support and clarity create the conditions for success. Our widely acclaimed in-house RESULT coaching model embodies these principles and built upon the best parts of Intrapreneurship, ILM, NLP and cutting edge thinking, so far has seen 103 participants progress through it. So great has been the feedback and stories telling us of the application of the learning, Leadership Team has made it mandatory for anyone with a management or supervisory responsibility. We believe the success of the model is that it is home grown and has been constantly iterated and improved through feedback. It is bespoke

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to us and our needs and priorities recognising the context, challenges and multiple demands placed upon us. Some external interest has been shown in our model and we are currently working up the plans that will enable us to potentially fill a gap our research demonstrates exist in both the public and private markets.

Qualifications

We currently offer a number of ILM qualifications at various levels. To date, this represents a value of c£230k worth of free high-order training into our organisation. We have also sourced free essentials skills training which will soon be rolled out to our first pilot area within the Highways division. In terms of more customised learning and development packages, we also provide bespoke learning and qualification opportunities around more diverse needs and aim to create Monmouthshire's own accredited Culture/21st Century Leadership qualifications. Given the changing way in which we are seeking to work and engage with our communities, real opportunities exist to offer training and support for communities in exchange for them offering something back – for example – volunteering time or pledging resources.

Check-in, Check-out

High performing people tend to be self-improvers. This principle has underpinned recent work to evolve our processes for employee appraisals into one whole-authority Employee Performance Assessment System that aligns performance with purpose. The simplicity of the system is echoed in its informal title - 'Check-in, Check-out' and its operation as a value-based performance assessment approach. It enables individuals and teams to outline the values and performance that is relevant in their role. In relation to the areas of the organisation where large teams exist, for example, the outside workforce and social care, it is intended for the team to self-assess against the values and measures that have been agreed. In view of their direct knowledge of 'what matters' most to communities, they will develop the values and measures that specifically relate to their role, rather than being told by the manager. The manager's role is to help demonstrate and exemplify the links between and across the values, aims and goals of the organisation and the contribution and role of the individual. In this way, the system is intended to be empowering and moves away from a more traditional "top down" approach.

Redesigning services

Our programme of service reviews is about making a positive difference to local people's lives through simply asking - 'what matters?' Doing the things people actually want is a key goal because that not only leads us down a path of critical efficiency and effectiveness benefits, but to really making a contribution to better outcomes. In absolute alignment with our Medium-Term Financial Plan and the Council's three core priorities - we are challenging the way services are currently designed and run, in order to re-purpose them into better, cheaper and different models. Radical changes to services are made possible through new technology, custom software development, eliminating waste and duplication, generating new income streams, developing new community ownership options and focussing on place-based needs and priorities. To date, promising results have been realised in services such as Waste with the introduction of the new refuse and recycling changes; the drive for increased income through marketing and special events in Leisure, a self-sustaining building control service, effectiveness gains in Childrens' Services and an emerging development trust for cultural services. Our programme of service redesign continues with areas targeted as a result of potential for savings and benefits *and* quality enhancements for the customer.

103 people progressing through RESULT training

2,497 taking part in other training, qualifications & courses

17 ideas incorporated into Service Mandates

100% of employees targeted to participate in Check-in, Check-out appraisal by December 2014

Case Study 3 - Redesigning Services – Building Control

Going into system re-design, we had a full and clear understanding of what mattered to our customers (we asked them) and had a clear purpose that was established from what mattered to them. Our measures were also established from this process.

We condensed what mattered into 4 value steps and took work and experimented with it through a new system with the value steps at the heart of the process. There was no set procedure other than applying the value and new operating principles, the operating principles were established from current management thinking/assumptions.

We carefully logged any causes of variation, failure demand and customer satisfaction and ensured this was fed back into the system, acted upon to make it work better. Our permanent measures told us how we was doing, it was clear that performance improved from the start of the process. Once we had a skeleton method of work, we carefully rolled in colleagues one at a time until each one was fully conversant with the process, they then refined the method to make the system better; we kept both systems running in parallel until everyone was rolled in.

The natural by-product of doing all this stuff was costs/capacity went down (approx. 25% less staff), revenue went up (approx. £50k per year - Our budget since 2010/11 has been reduced reduced from £167k to £26K), moral (75% of team are happy) and customer satisfaction went up (now 10 out of 10).

5.   Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing

'Diversity: the art of thinking independently, together' Malcolm Forbes

Diversity and inclusion are the key drivers of a creative culture and make a significant contribution to employee wellbeing. As an organisation, we have a number of connectors that bring people and community together – technology, services, groups and interests, and places. We want to ensure that what we do reflects the make-up and diversity of our communities and are committed to building an inclusive workplace where all employees can contribute and be successful. We know that when our employees feel well, they perform well. We're very fortunate in that our outside environment offers unrivalled opportunities for wellness and support for physical health and wellbeing. Our inside environment must thus, be geared up to recognising difference and diversity and enabling people to be their authentic and unique selves.

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Equalities

Our Equality and Diversity strategy and practices help promote a positive work environment. We expect every employee to treat others with dignity, respect and courtesy. We do not tolerate, under any circumstances, discrimination or harassment. We comply with diversity laws and often, our policies set a higher standard than is required. Our Strategic Equality Plan 2011-15 not only focuses on compliance with the Equality Act 2010, but our commitment to the principles of equality. All of our workforce policies have Equality Impact Assessments which are live and reviewed and updated as appropriate. We have introduced and adopted Job Evaluation as a process for ensuring a fair and grading system and enabling us to remain competitive in the market place. In wider terms, our modes of engagement also consider how we can enhance participation of service users, employees and citizens. At a time of fast increasing fiscal pressure – we will make sure equality considerations are not relegated to the back burner.

Employee welfare

We currently run a range of in-house courses that focus on positive psychology, mindfulness and personal resilience to promote wellness and employee wellbeing. We're finding that personal resilience in particular, is a priority for employees given the increasing level of challenge and challenges with which they are continually faced. This set of interventions goes beyond traditional and still important 'occupational health' because prevention is the focus rather than cure. Our Council also recently signed up to the Time to Change Wales pledge, signifying a commitment to tackling mental health stigma. This involves taking actions that are realistic and right for our organisation and will lead to a reduction in mental health discrimination in our council and county.

Managing attendance

Being more proactive and prevention focussed relates also to the ways in which we manage attendance. The number of days lost to the organisation as a result of sickness absence is a key measure for us, not just in relation to the financial and capacity loss to the organisation, but in terms of implications for individual wellbeing. We're making improvements to our processes for sickness reporting, including systems and server upgrades, training and specialist support to ensure the right inputs are reliably recorded. Whilst this will ensure the veracity and consistency of data, enabling us to better inform decision making and interventions, it is the amalgam of all the other activities and initiatives set out in this Strategy that will continue to have a real and sustained impact on attendance.

We proactively manage and monitor sickness absence and our expectation is focused on the shared understanding and responsibility of the manager and the employee upon our business drive and purpose. We recognise that our employees are our greatest resource and we strive to ensure that employees have easy access to robust policies and procedures. Our practice involves enabling managers to support employees through regular 121s, performance management appraisal meetings, managers and leaders undertaking return to work interviews following absence, occupational health advice & support, access to a workplace OH adviser, provision of an external confidential counselling service, and regular workplace intervention strategies such as well-being programmes.

Health and safety

We promote a practical and pre-emptive approach to Health and Safety. Whilst we have a Health, Safety and Welfare Policy in place to comply with legal duties, our pragmatism is also borne out of a moral and economic duty. Our whole-authority Health and Safety Group is supported by structures at departmental and service level and is thus, people development and management. Whilst key officers have specific responsibilities, we train and support all employees to have regard to regulations, risk assessment procedures and daily checks in all of our buildings, environments and assets.

Living wage

As part of the 2013/14 budget, Monmouthshire County Council signed up to the 'Living Wage'. The Living Wage is an hourly rate set independently and updated annually and is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. Research shows Living Wage is good for business, good for the individual and good for society with more than 80% of employers believing that the Living Wage had enhanced the quality of the work of their staff, while absenteeism had fallen by approximately 25%.Two thirds of employers also reported a significant impact on recruitment and retention within their organisation.
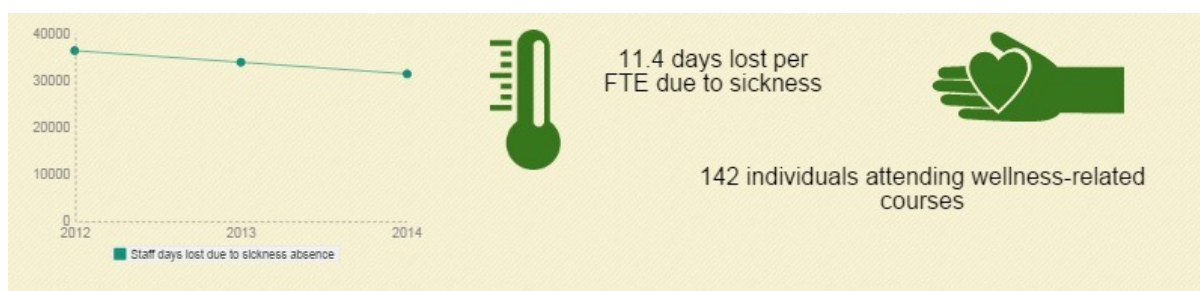
6.   Bringing it all Together – Driving Performance and Improvement

'Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction' John F Kennedy

Undertaking people and organisational development is the means through which we deliver the end - organisational efficiency and effectiveness through which to deliver improved performance. 'Bringing it all together' means our people development is linked to, and supports, core purpose & business approach. This is increasingly important to meet the changing needs and expectations of our organisation as we ourselves try to adapt to the changing needs and expectations of our communities and customers. In essence, it is vital now more than ever, we connect our people to what matters.

Connecting People to Purpose

Our organisational purpose - **to create sustainable and resilient communities** - expresses our reason for being. We've significantly enhanced our planning framework in order that our thematic and partnership strategies, annual Chief Officer reports and individual team service and business plans, are all aligned and directed to this end. These strategies and plans set out what we want to achieve – but our purpose explains why we exist in the first place. All of the forms of employee, community and stakeholder engagement set out above, the training, development and coaching approaches – are all anchored by common goals. An invigorating sense of direction takes people from simply paid, to purpose-driven and notwithstanding the problems inherent in linking purpose and sustained organisational performance - research

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has shown that the highest performing organisations are those with the strongest sense of purpose. Key features for us include:

- Coaching and development –
- Creating 'extra-curricular' opportunities
- Introducing a competency framework and key behaviours
- Enhancing the performance management system by way of 'Check-in, Check-out'
- Building line manager capacity
- Showing compelling leadership

To thrive in the new financial and social climate, we need to tap into every bit of talent and energy that people have to offer – not by demanding but cultivating it both inside and outside the organisation. Inside this means moving fully away from just the end points of talent management – acquisition and retention and focussing more on the bit in middle which really matters to employees – develop, connect, deploy. Outside this means driving more deeply our commitment to engagement and connecting to community through Whole Place and Community Co-ordination. Shared purpose is about our effectiveness as a county in coming together to develop solutions to challenges that affect us all.

Case Study 4 - Connecting to Purpose – Children's Services

Children's Services Pathway to Change

On taking up the post as Head of Children's Services in April 2014, it was apparent that a significant programme of change was needed to re-engage staff in the service to refocus on children, young people and good practice. A number of issues had caused staff to be dissatisfied in their role with the Authority and stemmed from them feeling that they had not been listened to by the Authority when concerns and issues were raised over a number of years. In addition the good work that was being undertaken was being 'drowned out' by a budget overspend.

As part of our service intervention, the service established what the barriers were to them providing a productive, efficient and effective service to children and young people, which was underpinned by good practice. Following this initial work the service quickly established ownership and progression of the changes to the service.

A number of issues emerged around, IT, lack of equipment, accommodation, lack of knowledge on where to find policies and procedures and due process in a range of statutory requirements. It was clear that some barriers were not within Children's Services and significant work was required to achieve the desired outcomes from support services across the Council. This took a considerable amount of time and almost stalled the whole process. Once these issues were proved to be on the way to being resolved staff began to re-engage and look at change positively.

This process is ongoing and continues to take significant input from the staff within the service, they are keen to make the changes and improve the outcomes for children and young people in the county and to change the perception of the service within the Council.

To date we have achieved the following, which has been driven at the request of staff within the service:

- Website specific to Children's Services from which staff can look at good news stories from the service, training opportunities, policies and procedures, relevant links to organisations, progress calendars for court work
- Relocation of Children's Services into one location, reducing emails, increasing communication, improved working environment
- Development groups of each worker area in the service e.g. social workers, administrators, support workers, leaders to develop what they want to see for children and young people in the county
- Training programme to address particular service needs
- Changes to working culture to enable staff to own changes and be responsible

- Staff Sabbatical which enabled the worker to focus on a review of policies and procedures that were then moved onto the new website

- Use of tablets, smart phones to enable better agile working

- Changes to team focus to experiment with better ways of working for the staff, but ultimately for the children and young people

- Briefing sessions every Monday - these update people with what has been happening, dealing with 'moans and groans' as soon as the emerge to reduce escalation, share good news stories or events that are happening

- Changes to recruitment process to enable candidates to have a better understanding of us and for us to have a better understanding of them, when deciding on new staff for the service

Case Study 5 - Engaging our People – Waste changes and Engage2Change

As part of a wider review of the recycling and waste service, Monmouthshire County Council were looking to understand what householders value about the service, how they would like it to be improved in future, and whether there was an interest among residents in terms of doing more for themselves.

Firstly, we carried out a short survey with householders. The surveyed was high level, looking at satisfaction rates of service and what residents would like to see improved. The survey also asked residents if they would like to be involved in further events focusing on service change and improvement. The aim of the survey was to get an overview of opinion from a wide range of householders, before holding more focused events. Staff surveyed householders in leisure centres, libraries, household waste recycling centres and One Stop Shops. Additionally, staff 'door knocked' houses around the county and the survey was made available online. 2173 responses were received.

Secondly, three engagement events were held. All those that expressed an interest in attending such events, either through the 'Monmouthshire Engages' events or through the recycling and waste survey, were invited, and the event was also advertised on the Council website. The events were facilitated by Andy Middleton from TYF. During the events, Andy and MCC officers gave an overview of the context of the groups, focusing on the challenges faced by the recycling and waste services, both environmentally and economically. Attendees were then asked to discuss the issues and come up with ideas of how they would like to see the service changes or improved in future. Three events were held in total, one being for members of local environment groups, such as Friends of the Earth and the Transition Town Groups, and the other two being for householders.

A great number of ideas were generated from the events, which were organised into themes. Themes included; improving reuse facilities, changing the way we carry out kerbside collections, rebranding and improving information provision, introducing incentives and enforcement, improving education links, and influencing manufacturing and production processes. We subsequently contacted the event attendees and those that had expressed an interest in attending and asked them to vote on which area they would like to focus work on in the first instance. 40% of respondents chose improving reuse facilities as their preferred area of focus.

The next steps will be to facilitate workshops, which will focus on the most popular theme(s), looking at how we could implement ideas and how householders can be involved. These workshops will be undertaken in the coming months. Additionally, we are in the process of setting up an online recycling and waste engagement platform, to facilitate discussion on improvements and changes in an open and collaborative manner.

Connecting People to People

People, communities, businesses, technology and virtual spaces – never before have so many people connected across professions, generations, cultures and oceans and our experience tells us that innovation and value emerge out of such connections. Through networks we learn to create, energise and open up channels to new opportunities. We recognise that as our organisation adapts to changing circumstances, it is becoming more complex and dispersed. We have ever growing networks and partnership alliances; we connect within and beyond organisational boundaries; and, we engage face to face, by phone, video and electronic communication and social media. The old adage of 'it's not what but who you know' is increasingly resonant.

We aspire to be the kind of place in which individuals gain authority not from a hierarchy but from recognition of the value they add through their mindset, knowledge and skill. This is an extremely difficult ambition – not just because we are a large and complex organisation, but because conventional wisdom states advance in our council has tended to mean upward. We must work hard to encourage a sense of mutual responsibility for actions as opposed to be directed or giving orders. We will need to form and disband teams as needed. We will need to rethink promotion as an incremental and upward to focus more on horizontally crossing occupational and organisational boundaries.

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Connecting People to Finances

We know that when we do what matters – the result is a healthier bottom line. Our approach to connecting people in and outside of the organisation to the significantly declining resources available has involved unleashing and developing ideas and encouraging co-creation and co-delivery. We've found that working with our communities helps us frame challenges in fresh ways, unlocking new resources and revenue raising potential. We've found that working with our employees, to create permissive environments in which people are free to have a go means deeper engagement with work and going the extra mile.

Ideas sessions, prototyping, widespread engagement, local service planning and community ownership models have all played their part in building the business cases and projects that have built and delivered our Medium-Term Financial Plan. Whilst we have enjoyed relative success to date – we must improve the alignment of processes, in particular in embedding what we term the 'budget process' as the day job. The proposals and projects that have emerged out of ideas and suggestions and community endorsement, cannot be regarded as 'additional duties' or bits of work on the side. If they are truly what matters and have the backing of community and customers, they should not only achieve a financial benefit, but an improved outcome too. To achieve this alignment, we have built performance monitoring into our quarterly budget reports and recognise that whilst doing what matters is a priority – we must simultaneously unburden ourselves of what doesn't matter.

Connecting Purpose, People and Finances to Performance

Connecting people to purpose, others and the finances available should spur innovation and enhance performance. This strategy is thus, about the same end – improved outcomes – but a radically different means. To date, we've seen some promising results. However, we recognise we must get better at making connections all the way through to performance; developing the alignments and configurations and consistently developing our sense of self-awareness and evaluative culture. Our planning frameworks have strengthened, our sense of purpose and direction is clear and we're making becoming more practised at judging the impact of our interventions on quality of life. Notwithstanding the links in the chain that must be fortified, we know that infusing purpose and meaning into people's jobs is critical because it feeds and fuels the process through the value chain to performance and productivity. For us, this is the key means of enabling our people to future-proof our council and county.

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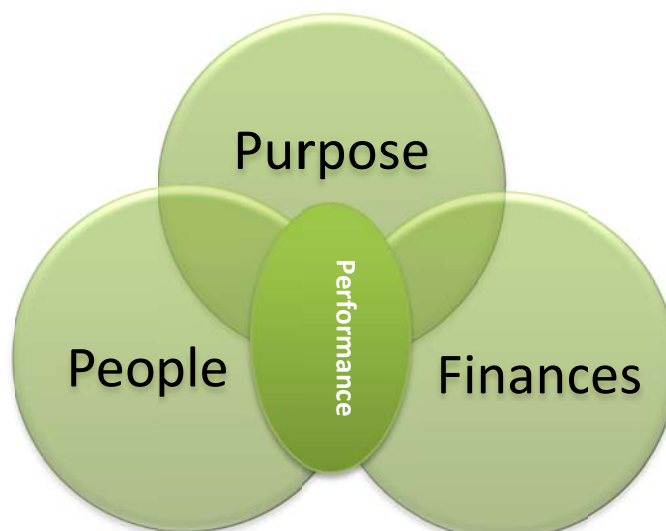
NEXT STEPS

'Monmouthshire People brings together the plethora of activity strands currently supported and underway, alongside our thinking for the future, into one composite piece that provides a coherent and more systematic approach to our people and organisational development. This is critical in ensuring that our development of people is linked to and supports, our core purpose and business approach. Our vision, to connect our people to purpose to improve our performance, is simple and straightforward – however, this simplicity belies what is, by its very nature, a significant challenge. We aim to be a light footed and nimble social business that can adapt to changing conditions and this means ensuring our internal workforce has the right skills to meet the changing demands of our organisation and society. Increasingly, it also means forging stronger relationships with those people off our payroll so that we can unlock new ideas, opportunities and resource solutions. In short, our vision will require stretch, dedication, doggedness and resilience – but equally it will invigorate, recharge and nourish because if we can maximise the power of people in this most turbulent financial climate and amidst rapidly increasing societal and demographic pressure - we believe we can lay claim to competitive advantage.

We are clear about our desired future state and that it has to be fundamentally supported by widespread understandings of organisational purpose and personal contributions to it. This however, is not easy to measure and gauge – especially since there is no quick turnaround – it is hard yards and outcomes will need to be conveyed in unconventional ways. Our approach to evaluation therefore, has to be about assessing our effectiveness in transitioning the gap. Every year of the strategy, we will formally review progress on the measures we have established, but more than this and in a much more formative and ongoing way, we will take more frequent opportunities to test the pulse of the organisation. This will mean embedding checks and markers into the budget process, incorporating more 'human' markers into our performance reporting frameworks and encouraging every framework, strategy and policy to think about how it puts people development at the core. For the 12 months beginning October 2014, we've devised a project plan which is shown in Appendix 2 and also forms the basis for an online Trello board. It captures our initial phase of priority actions, projects and activities that we see as the first essential stage in our journey to better outcomes.

High performing organisations demand that change programmes work quickly and measurably change behaviour – Monmouthshire People supports this desire but also recognises that like all seeds which are planted, it must be watered and fertilised many times before the first shoots show. The effect of our interventions on services, quality, innovation and productivity, will be cumulative.

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Appendix 1 – Practical Next Steps

Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy	Report to Cabinet 15/10/14	Report to Special Strong Communities Select Committe 16/10/14
Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy	Report to People Board inaugural meeting	Regular update reports to People Board
Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy	Create a working group made up of a cross section of the organisation/community	Create Programme of engagement with view of forming finalised verison of People and Organisational Development Strategy
Draft People and Organisational Development Strategy	Group to attend Senior Leadership 14/11/14	Group to attend Senior Management Team 25/11/14

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APPENDIX 2 - MONMOUTHSHIRE PEOPLE – PROGRAMME PLAN
(Performance to be monitored through measures embedded in individual relating Service Improvement Plans, with further measures to be developed as strategy progresses)

OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

Action	Expected impact of this action	Strategic Plan it aligns to (If directly applicable)	Relating Service Improvement Plan	Outcome it contributes to (If directly applicable)	Timescale	Officer responsible	Q1 Performance appraisal (narrative required)	Q2 Performance appraisal (narrative required)	Q3 Performance appraisal (narrative required)	Q4 Performance appraisal (narrative required)
Develop clear baseline of people and organisational data across all activities to enable effective leadership	Allows us to have a baseline to have a clear measure of progress & clear direction for future work that connects people to purpose to improve performance		People's Services		March 2015	Lisa Knight-Davies, People's Services in conjunction with Policy & Performance team				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Invest in systems, servers, infrastructures and intelligence to refine datasets, ensuring accuracy and veracity	To ensure that our existing systems and processes are streamlined, efficient and fit for purpose	iCounty	Organisational Development		2014/15 2015/16	Sian Hayward				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Agile Working Evaluation	Assessment of current agile working policy will form the basis for an updated agile working policy and arrangements		Organisational Development		March 2014	Sian Hayward				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Additions and updates to the policy suite – volunteering, capability procedure, mentoring and work experience	Timely & relevant policies that are whole-authority wide and reflect 'workers' on & off our payroll		People's Services		2014/15	Lisa Knight - Davies & People's Services				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress

Engaging Our People

Action	Expected impact of this action	Strategic Plan it aligns to	Relating Service Improvement Plan	Outcome it contributes to	Timescale	Officer responsible	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Run and evaluate Monmouthshire Engages 2.0	To put in place a new approach to regularly seek ideas from citizens to help people feel that they are able to share ideas and influence the direction of the local authority	Engagement Strategy	Partnership, Performance and Engagement		December 2014	Will Mclean & Engagement Team				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress

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Launch and operate Monmouthshire Made Open	Providing the platform for engagement, ideas sharing and for projects to progress through the power of communities.	Engagement Strategy	Partnership, Performance and Engagement		September 2014	Matthew Gatehouse				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Develop the Employee Handbook and People Toolkit	Consistent approach based on our key values and clear focus on what matters		People's Services		2014/15	Marilyn Maidment & People's Services				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Commission and undertake a comprehensive staff survey and react to it	To establish a baseline of 'what matters' and to evaluate current cultural climate within the Authority		People's Services		December 2014	Lisa Knight-Davies & People's Services				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Operate the CMI Women in Leadership Programme appointing a WIM Ambassador	To utilise Women In Management's (WIM) insight Into the key issues affection women managers and women's management to provide opportunities for further personal development.		People's Services		2014/15	Lisa Knight-Davies, Marilyn Maidment & Cath Fallon				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Invest in volunteer development and co-ordination	Creation of volunteer strategy that outlines a clear and consistent approach across the Authority.				2014/15	Lisa Knight-Davies				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Building Careers										
Introducing formal work experience and apprenticeship programmes	Creation of work experience scheme in conjunction with Job Centre Plus to provide work experience for out of work individuals, helping them to attain basic workplace qualifications. Further exploration of apprenticeship opportunities for young people.		People's Services	People have access to practical & flexible learning		John McConnachie, Dawn Sadler & Cath Fallon				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress

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Developing and implementing a policy framework for mentoring	Improving our business mentorship programme and building opportunities to connect more diverse groups		People's Services	People have access to practical & flexible learning	2014/15	John McConnachie, Dawn Sadler, Lisa Knight-Davies & Cath Fallon				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Evaluate effectiveness of Children's Service recruitment pilot and roll out more widely if succesful	Evaluate effectiveness of pilot to ensure that we're employing the right people for the right roles before further developing pilots for future recruitment processes.		People's Services		2014/15	Marilyn Maidment				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Coaching, training & developing										
Roll out RESULT training programme to all supervisors, managers and leaders and measure ROI	To provide coaching skills as part of the leadership toolkit		People's Services		2014/15	John McConnachie				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Develop new programmes around mindfulness, wellbeing and welfare	Providing the tools and skills needed to maintain a resilient and effective workforce.		People's Services		2014/15	Dawn Sadler				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Secure leadership development programme	Delivery of a series of practical training sessions for all leaders on how to solve people problems and personal effectiveness.		People's Services		2014/15	Lisa Knight Davies & Marilyn Maidment				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Roll-out Check-in, Check-out to 100% staff, iterate & develop the approach as needed and assess Return on Investment	All employees will understand how they fit into the overall objectives of the organisation and their contribution to it. In addition, they will be able to monitor their performance		People's Services			Lisa Knight-Davies, Marilyn Maidment				

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	against expectations and share experience.						Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Development of staff & community award scheme to recognise contribution and outstanding performance	Develop and implement a staff & community award scheme that recognises the contributions of staff and the community					Lisa Knight-Davies, Marilyn Maidment & Cath Fallon				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Diversity, inclusion and wellbeing										
Introduce new system, process and training to improve sickness and monitoring and management	Reduction in sickness absence due to more effective and efficient sickness monitoring and clear processes for managing absences		People's Services		2014/15	Marilyn Maidment				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Ensure all staff changes developed are rigorously tested by the EQIA process	All staff changes which are developed will include an EQIA and these EQIA's will be evaluated to ensure that they are fit for purpose.		Partnership, Performance and Engagement		2014/15	Alan Burkitt				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Continue programme of staff equalities training	To provide our workforce with the skills and knowledge to ensure a positive and fair work environment		Partnership, Performance and Engagement		2014/15	Alan Burkitt				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress
Implementation of Time to Change Wales pledge	Action plan to be developed that focuses on tackling the stigma surrounding mental health and discrimination and to make positive steps to supporting those with mental health problems.		People's Services		2014/15	Marilyn Maidment				
							Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress	Select Progress

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The "Equality Initial Challenge"

Name: Kellie Beirne	Please give a **brief description** of what you are aiming to do.
Service area: Enterprise	To introduce the People & Organisational Development Draft Strategy 2014-17
Date completed: 30th September 2014	

Protected characteristic	Potential **Negative** impact Please give details	Potential **Neutral** impact Please give details	Potential **Positive** Impact Please give details
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	
Religion or Belief		X	
Sex (was Gender)		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Welsh Language		X	

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Please give details about any potential **negative Impacts.**	How do you propose to **MITIGATE** these **negative impacts**
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢
➢	➢

Signed: Kellie Beirne   **Designation:** Chief Officer Enterprise   **Dated:** 30th September 2014

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
People & Organisational Development Draft Strategy	Enterprise
Policy author / service lead	**Name of assessor and date**
Kellie Beirne	

1. What are you proposing to do?

> Introduce a draft People & Organisational Development Strategy that will be further developed through engagement & feedback from employees and communities. As part of this process we will strive to engage with people in a format that is appropriate to them.

2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way?   If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age	N	Race	N
Disability	N	Religion or Belief	N
Gender reassignment	N	Sex	N
Marriage or civil partnership	N	Sexual Orientation	N
Pregnancy and maternity	N	Welsh Language	N

3. Please give details of the negative impact

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Local & National Performance Indicator data

Signed……Kellie Beirne…………………**Designation………**Chief Officer Enterprise**…………………Dated**…30th September 2014…....

The "Sustainability Challenge"

Name of the Officer completing "the Sustainability challenge" Kellie Beirne	Please give a **brief description** of the **aims** proposed policy or service reconfiguration To introduce the People & Organisational Development Draft Strategy 2014-17
Name of the Division or service area Enterprise	**Date** "Challenge" form completed 30th September

Aspect of sustainability affected	**Negative impact** **Please give details**	Neutral impact **Please give details**	**Positive Impact** **Please give details**
PEOPLE			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		Y	
Improve housing quality and provision		Y	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision			Y – Aiming to positively support staff and effectively manage sickness absence
Promote independence		Y	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work			Y – Monmouthshire Engages 2.0, development of Volunteer Strategy as part of Project Plan & community involvement through People

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			Strategy working group
Targets socially excluded		Y	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		Y	
Improve access to education and training			Y – Introduction of formal work experience and apprenticeship programmes
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		Y	
PLANET			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		Y	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		Y	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		Y	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		Y	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		Y	
PROFIT			

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Protect local shops and services		Y	
Link local production with local consumption		Y	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		Y	
Increase employment for local people			Y – Introduction of formal work experience and apprenticeship programmes
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		Y	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		Y	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		Y	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to **MITIGATE** the **negative impacts** (include any reasonable adjustments)
➢	➢
➢	➢

➢	➢
➢	➢

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

Through the project plan, formal work experience and apprenticeship programmes that will be introduced which will improve people's access to learning and training and also increase employment for local people. Through Monmouthshire Engages 2.0, the development of Volunteer Strategy as part of Project Plan and community involvement through People and Organisational Development Strategy Working Group we will actively encourage community participation/action and voluntary work. Aiming to positively support staff and effectively manage sickness absence with the aim reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision by ensuring that service leaders receive accurate and timely data and providing support to all through effective training opportunities.

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed   Kellie Beirne   **Dated**   30th September 2014

Version - March 2014

monmouthshire
sir fynwy
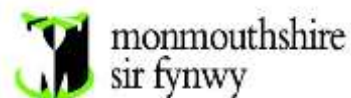
SUBJECT:	**VALE OF USK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**
MEETING:	**CABINET**
DATE:	**15th October 2014**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**All**

1.   PURPOSE:

1.1   To endorse and approve the draft Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy (LDS) for wider consultation with associated partners. The purpose of the LDS is to inform how the RDP funding for the 2014-2020 period will be spent.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1   To endorse and approve the draft Vale of Usk LDS for wider consultation with associated partners.

2.2   To provide in principle agreement to a 20% match funding contribution required to fund the RDP activities in the Monmouthshire wards, acknowledging that a level of budget provision already exists under the existing RDP.

2.3   To endorse the current Partnership with Newport City Council (NCC) and approve the extended partnership requirements requested by Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC), with MCC acting as Administrative Body.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1   As a predominantly rural county, the main source of European funding for Monmouthshire is the Rural Development Programme (RDP). The current round of funding (2007 – 2013) is now coming to an end and there is a need to submit a new bid to Welsh Government (WG) for the 2014-2020 funding period.

3.2   RDP LEADER funding is slightly different to most European funds in that the activity is governed by an independent local body, a Local Action Group (LAG) representing local people from the public, private and third sectors. Since 2001 the LEADER funding in Monmouthshire has

been governed by the Adventa LAG. However in this funding period, WG have stipulated that local authorities are required to brigade forces to reduce administrative costs.

3.3   As a result an approach was made by Newport City Council (NCC) and it has been agreed that for RDP funding purposes there will be a joint LAG with Newport, the Vale of Usk LAG. The Vale of Usk LAG was therefore established in January 2014 to oversee the governance, strategic direction and successful delivery of the Vale of Usk 2014-2020 LDS which is funded via the RDP and WG (80%) with 20% match funding support from project sponsors. The LAG territory covers the rural wards and service centres of Monmouthshire and Newport and succeeds the adventa LAG, established in 2001, which previously governed the rural wards of Monmouthshire only.

3.4   The total population covered by the Vale of Usk LAG area is 127,964**.** This is made up of the Monmouthshire rural wards population of 55,063 with an additional 32,772 located in the service centre areas plus the rural wards population of Newport of 26,009 with an additional 14,220 in the service centres.

3.5   Given the WG stipulation to brigade forces, Members also need to be aware that a further approach has been made by TCBC to join the Vale of Usk LAG which has recently been approved by TCBC Cabinet and their existing LAG. If this is approved then a further revised LDS will be required to reflect the needs of the wider territory and a new name for the Vale of Usk LAG will also have to be agreed. If Torfaen joined the partnership then a population of a further 38,157 would be added bringing the total population for the revised LAG territory to 166,121.

3.6   The development and design of the draft LDS recognises the need to undertake actions that will provide consensus within the new rural territory across Monmouthshire and Newport, to "*combine and integrate to achieve the maximum results*". Through a recent community engagement process which included community consultations, attendance at Monmouthshire and Usk show and an on-line survey, findings have been reviewed to ascertain how the LEADER approach can add value and avoid duplication. This has been met by:

- Understanding what has been achieved through Adventa to date and how to build on historical rural development investment whilst also recognising new and added value activity can take place in order to create sustainable impact;
- Reviewing emerging programmes and projects within the territory and assessing whether the RDP can complement or not;
- Hosting workshop based sessions to look at synergy and linkages between the two local authority areas and how common projects can be co-ordinated. Examples of this include:
  - Living Levels Partnership
  - Destination Management Plans
  - Strategic paths and trails
  - Community transport
- Assessing project ideas and proposals that have arisen through the on-line survey and through face to face engagement in terms of pulling together local support measures and looking at both spatial and sectoral linkages so that maximum benefits are achieved.

3.7   From the analysis and a prioritisation process undertaken by the LAG a number of suggestions have been made in relation to using the RDP funds to generate the right change for the area. This includes the development of a proposed vision:

"A connected territory, in a beautiful landscape, focussed on fostering thriving communities and building resilient local economies whilst embracing the natural and cultural assets of the area"

3.8   A complimentary hierarchy of objectives have been proposed which will underpin activity undertaken under the five key themes namely:

- Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources
- Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains
- Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services
- Renewable energy at Community level
- Exploitation of digital technology

3.9   It has also been proposed that funding is allocated according to the priority weighting that each of the themes were given as part of the consultation process. This means that activity will take place under all themes but particular emphasis will be placed on 'Exploitation of Digital Technology' and 'Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources' and so on. This can of course be adjusted throughout the delivery period.

3.10   The LAG will make a regular call for projects under all five themes and, following the completion of an initial expression of interest, communities of interest will be invited to apply for funds. Support to develop projects will come from the RDP delivery team, will be hosted by MCC as Administrative Body and will therefore be 100% funded through the RDP. The delivery team will be much smaller than the last funding period, reducing from fifteen to a core team of five, due to shift in emphasis between the two programmes and the new greater focus on up-skilling, enabling and other activities such as mobilising community resources and volunteering.

3.11   WG has also stipulated that there will be one lead partner or 'Administrative Body' in administrative and financial matters relating to the delivery of the LDS. MCC will be the Administrative Body for the Vale of Usk LAG and a Collaboration Agreement has been drafted determining the joint arrangements to discharge these functions. If TCBC also join the partnership than there will be one single LAG for the combined territory for which MCC will be the 'Administrative Body'.

3.12   The Local Development Strategy will be subject to consultation until the end of December, with the LAG agreeing to any subsequent amendments during this period. The current RDP programmes will be finalised early in 2015 and the LAG is intending to commence the 2014-20 RDP programme with effect from 1st April 2015. A final version of the LDS will be submitted to the Cabinets of the respective administrations in the New Year.

4. REASONS

4.1 To endorse and approve the draft Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy (LDS) for wider consultation with associated partners, with the LDS informing how RDP funding for the 2014-2020 period will be spent.

4.2 Investment in the new RDP programme has the potential to:

- Make the area more connected in terms of rural programme identity and linking common assets for mutual benefit;
- Provide more opportunity for communities to learn from each other with the opportunity for Monmouthshire as a mature rural development area to share lessons learnt as well as for Newport to trial new ideas and projects that Monmouthshire has never piloted;
- Consolidate the significant investment has taken place in Monmouthshire through previous rural development programmes and extend the reach in terms of physical and digital improvements and community led initiatives;
- Recognise the value of countryside and landscape and how this connects rural and semi-urban places. This will be key in making the Vale of Usk area coherent and understanding how the environment can play a part in access, heritage, identity, mobility, tourism, exploration and realising local economic development initiatives; this is about whole place and community;
- Place digital technology as a horizontal activity as a way to delivering smart, dynamic and enterprising communities and businesses whilst being underpinned by a training and mentoring culture.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The RDP provides the authority with the means, through a 20% match funding contribution, to access a significant revenue grant funding opportunity. The proposed vision outlined in 3.7 above is consistent with the Authority's vision to build sustainable and resilient communities and is wholly aligned with the Whole Place approach.

5.2 This is a significant programme with a predicated £2.7m RDP funding provision based on a 5% EU funding allocation to LEADER activities. If the EU funding allocation was to be increased to 6% then the total funding will be £3.24m. The Authority anticipates WG confirmation of the funding levels in the coming months. The costs for administering and managing delivery of the programme amount to £675,000 on a 5% EU funding allocation (£810,000 at 6%) and are 100% funded.

5.3 The total programme for implementation amounts to £2.53m on a 5% EU funding allocation (£3.04m at 6%), with the Authority and NCC's funding packages amounting to £2.10m and £430,000 respectively (£2.52m and £516,000 respectively at 6%). WG/EU funds 80% of these costs, with constituent authorities match funding the remaining 20%. This would require a £420,315 match funding to be underwritten by MCC based on Monmouthshire's eligible wards. The remaining £85,935 will be underwritten by NCC. If the EU funding allocation was to be increased to 6% then the match funding elements rise to £504,378 (MCC) and £103,112 (NCC).

5.4   The revenue match funding contribution for MCC would be payable over the 7 year life of the 2014-2020 RDP programme. An estimated profile has been established that indicates that greater levels of expenditure will be incurred in the latter stages of the programme. The match funding contribution therefore peaks in year 7 at £116,754 (5%) or £140,105 (6%), with lower levels of match funding contribution being required in earlier years of the programme. Given that the average match funding contribution per annum of £60,045 (£72,054) falls within the existing 2014/15 revenue budget that exists to support the current programme it is proposed that a designated earmarked reserve is used to carry forward funding that would be required to fund the later years of the programme.

5.3   If TCBC are to join the partnership then the funding 'pot' would be expanded by a further £995,000 (5%) or £1,194,000 (6%). TCBC would then be required to underwrite the match funding of £175,588 or £210,706 respectively.

5.4   As explained the LDS is yet to be finalised and so are the budgets. A final version of the LDS will be submitted to the Cabinets of the respective administrations in the New Year, seeking approval for the required match funding contributions.

6.   SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1   This report is presented to enable Cabinet to release the draft LDS for consulation and further development purposes. As a result there are no sustainability or equality impacts to be assessed at this stage. However, equality and sustainability impacts will be assessed during the consultation period, and subsequently reported alongside the finalised LDS that will be submitted to Cabinet in the New Year.

7.   CONSULTEES:
Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet Members
Head of Legal Services
Vale of Usk LAG
Wider Monmouthshire and Newport Communities

8.   BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Draft Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy

9.   AUTHORS:
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LEADER 2014-2020

VALE OF USK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
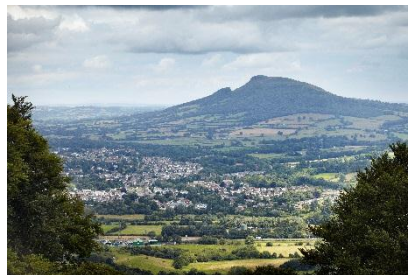
SEPTEMBER 2014

Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu
Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas

LEADER

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Contents

Preface

At the point of submitting this Local Development Strategy the Vale of Usk LAG is in the process of considering an opportunity to extend the Monmouthshire/Newport partnership to include the rural wards of Torfaen.

Given the geographical proximities of the three counties this extended joint approach would not only enable the development of a stronger partnership but would also present an enhanced opportunity for coherence with the increased benefits from the economies of scale. Should the formal alliance be agreed management and administrative structures will be shared to reduce administration and management costs. This will take the form of one extended single LAG for the three counties with Monmouthshire County Council taking on the role of the Administrative Body for the three areas.

Subject to the formal approval of this proposal by the three Local Authorities and the Vale of Usk LAG it is proposed that a revised LDS be produced and re-submitted to Welsh Government in November. It is also likely that the name of the LAG will be changed to reflect the extended geographical area.

In the interim however please accept this draft Local Development Strategy as the formal submission of the Vale of Usk LAG.

i.   NAME OF LAG AND CONTACT DETAILS

Name of Local Action Group	Vale of Usk

Administrative Body Primary Contact

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALES

Proposed Start Date (no earlier than 1 January 2015)	1st April 2015
End Date (no later than 31 December 2021)	31 December 2021

1. STRATEGIC FIT

1.1   Definition of the area and population covered by the strategy

1.1.1 Background

The Vale of Usk Local Action Group (LAG) was established in January 2014 to oversee the governance, strategic direction and successful delivery of the Vale of Usk 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy (LDS) which is funded via the Rural Development Programme (RDP) and Welsh Government (80%) with 20% match funding support from project sponsors. The Vale of Usk LAG territory covers the rural wards of Monmouthshire and Newport and succeeds the adventa LAG, established in 2001, which previously governed the rural wards of Monmouthshire only.

1.1.2 Key facts:

- The total population covered by the Vale of Usk LAG area is **127,964.** This is made up of the Monmouthshire rural wards population of 55,063 with an additional 32,772 located in the service centre areas plus the rural wards population of Newport of 26,009 with an additional 14,220 in the service centres;
- In June 2012, 79% of Monmouthshire's population (highest in Wales) and 77% of Newport's population were economically active of which 74% and 69.8% respectively were in employment;
- However, in 2011, average gross weekly full-time earnings in Monmouthshire stood at £494. (Weekly full-time earnings by workplace were £427.00 in 2013, NOMIS)This was the ninth lowest in Wales indicating that although those living in Monmouthshire are amongst the highest earners, those working in Monmouthshire have some of the lowest earnings suggesting a strong element of out-commuting;
- Approximately 2.1 million people visit Monmouthshire, and 2.37 million people visit Newport each year;
- Tourism contributes £163.5 million to Monmouthshire's local economy supporting 10.1% of employment; in Newport tourism contributes £207.11 M to the local economy supporting 2784 jobs; and
- In 2011, Monmouthshire had 663 active businesses per 10,000 of the population. This is the second highest level in Wales, however over 80% of these businesses are micro enterprises with few or no employees. 23% of all local VAT/ PAYE registered businesses are based within rural areas of Newport.

The headline objective for Monmouthshire and Newport Wards in terms of the new LEADER programme is to ensure that people in the locale benefit from an economy which is prosperous and supports enterprise and sustainable growth. This is based around a need to embrace the counties truly entrepreneurial spirit whilst adding true value to local communities.

Given the high level of micro enterprises and low earnings a wide range of employment and training opportunities are needed in the LAG area, not only for our young people who are starting out but also for our older people whose retirement age has been extended.

The largest employer in Monmouthshire and Newport is the Public Service sector where 34.7% (2013) and 30% respectively of people are employed however the reported budget cuts over the next four years are likely to see this percentage reduce significantly. There is therefore a need for more bespoke support for businesses to assist in the development of start-ups and support existing enterprises, providing local networking opportunities and actively encouraging job creation. This will help bridge the forthcoming gaps and reduce the need for increased out-commuting and migration which will also reduce the carbon impact in the counties whilst supporting the local economy.

The natural environment of the LAG area is its biggest asset but the associated terrain and restricted planning regulations present their own problems in terms of economic sustainability due to the understandably protectionist nature of planning policies. The Brecon Beacons National Park and the Wye Valley are two areas nationally recognised as places of natural beauty that create excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation and wildlife tourism. The area has extensive heritage sites and areas of historical significance with an estimated 26 castle sites.

However while tourism contributes significantly to the local economies, it has the potential to contribute much more. The proposed LEADER programme would aim to encourage local communities to take a more active role in maximising sustainable economic advantage and competitiveness from their cultural and natural assets by encouraging product development to encourage visitors in the off peak seasons. Monmouthshire and Newport already have strong Destination Marketing strategies so the aim of activities detailed in this strategy are to encourage communities to work closely with the LAG to identify opportunities for sustainable development that maximise the economic potential whilst reducing the environmental impact on the landscape.

While the take-up of broadband is high in the LAG area, coverage and performance in rural areas is poor which in part is due to the terrain. This can act as a barrier to encouraging new enterprise into the county, as well as exacerbating rural isolation in outlying communities. There is also a growing demand and need for ICT exploitation support and training activities which is particularly pertinent in the farming sector where farmers are being encouraged to submit claims, etc. 'on line'. This coupled with the Superfast Cymru Broadband rollout and other WG ICT exploitation schemes present real opportunities to digital inclusion and ICT exploitation for communities.

Agriculture also faces other challenges. Monmouthshire particularly is predominantly a rural county having a relatively low population density of 100 people per square kilometre compared to an average for Wales of 141 per square kilometre. In fact, over 60% of the population is concentrated in 20% of the county area i.e. the M4 corridor and Abergavenny district. A dependence upon traditional farming in Monmouthshire has led to a struggling rural economy with poor employment opportunities and as a result, depopulation. The decline in agricultural activities has also had a significant impact on the landscape as some traditional farm holdings have been sold off to 'hobby' farmers who have developed different uses for the land rather than agriculture.

It is also the LAG's intention to take steps to address poverty. The LAG area will experience a significant increase in its older population during the next 10 years and the gap in life expectancy between the least and most deprived areas is significant and must be closed. It

has also been found that between 35-40% of families in social housing accommodation in the LAG area will be negatively affected by the new welfare reforms with over 360 households making a homelessness application to the Councils in 2011/2012, with 65% of tenants in social housing in receipt of benefits. The LAG area also experiences fuel poverty in households in the most deprived wards which also needs to be addressed.

It is LAG's overall intention to work towards achieving 'The ten key characteristics of a Sustainable Rural Community'[1] – this will establish our communities as economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally sustainable;

- A population with a viable age structure i.e. a healthy mix of old and young;
- A diversified economic base beyond the primary agricultural and production sectors;
- A viable and sustainable primary sector which provides both fresh food and other needs;
- A rural population with the physical and mental health which is at least as good as it is elsewhere;
- Access to an attractive and clean environment;
- Pride in the local identity i.e. history, culture and environment;
- Widespread business ownership i.e. high rates of locally financed and initiated new small enterprises;
- Public agencies working together towards common goals and agreed values;
- Local communities working together to assess risks and prepare for change; and
- Healthy rural communities doing their own development and not having it done to them by others.

1.1.3 Population Analysis

As noted the total population of the LAG area is 127,964. The eligible areas to be covered can be viewed in the attached maps highlighting the relevant wards (Monmouthshire see *Appendix One*, Newport see *Appendix Two*). The population size and distribution is broken down as follows:

Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire is a rural county, geographically, the seventh largest in Wales. However, although its population has risen from 84,885 in the 2001 census to 91,323 in the 2011 census it remains one of the least densely populated counties in Wales. Half of the population live in the main towns of Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, Caldicot and Chepstow whilst the other half live in the rural areas. Tables One and Two following, detail the ward population in 2011 which has been split between rural wards and service centre wards for clarity.

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[1] 'Commission for Rural Communities' a think piece by Prof John Bryden and Amanda Bryan, based on the 'Dynamics for Rural Areas in Europe (DORA)' project

Table One: Monmouthshire's Rural Wards

Caerwent (1, 791)	Llanelly Hill (3,899)	Mill (2,482)	Shirenewton (2,201)
Crucorney (2,121)	Llanfoist Fawr (1,868)	Mitchel Troy (1,253)	The Elms (3,658)
Devauden (1,480)	Llangybi Fawr (1,861)	Overmonnow (2,388)	Trellech United (2,759)
Dixton with Osbaston (2,569)	Llanover (2,284)	Portskewett (2,133)	Usk (2,834)
Drybridge (3,432)	Llantillio Crossenny (1,755)	Raglan (1,928)	Wyesham (2,119)
Goetre Fawr (2,393)	Llanwenarth Ultra (1,447)	Rogiet (1,813)	
Llanbadoc (1,299)	Mardy (1,469)	St.Arvans (1,618)	

Table Two: Monmouthshire's Service Centre Wards

Caldicot Castle (1,919)	Dewstow (1,983)	Larkfield (2,014)	St.Mary's (1,847)
Cantref (2,036)	Green Lane (2,069)	Priory (2,196)	Severn (1,689)
Croesonen (2,437)	Grofield (1,853)	St.Christopher's (2,582)	Thornwell (2,749)
	Lansdown (2,196)	St.Kingsmark (3,158)	West End (1,944)

Newport

Conversely Newport is predominantly an urban county with 145,736 residents with 7.6 people per hectare compared to 1.1 in Monmouthshire. There are therefore only five eligible wards in Newport, two rural wards and three service centres as per the breakdown in tables three and four below.

Table Three: Newport's Rural Wards

		All usual residents		Area (hectares)		Density (number of persons per hectare)
Ward	Llanwern	2961	2.03%	3988	20.93%	0.7
Ward	Marshfield	6270	4.30%	3549	18.63%	1.8

Table Four: Newport's Service Centre Wards

Ward	Graig	6159	4.23%	1434	7.53%	4.3
Ward	Caerleon	8061	5.53%	1394	7.32%	5.8
Ward	Langstone	4425	3.04%	3034	15.92%	1.5

1.1.4 Cross Boundary working

The submission of this joint Local Development Strategy is clear evidence of the LAG's intention to work across administrative boundaries. The Vale of Usk LAG area incorporates both Monmouthshire and Newport wards and offers a sensible and tangible opportunity to form a partnership between two areas which already work closely together. This is not only because both counties share transport and infrastructure systems but also because they have already done so very successfully, especially in terms of tourism. This is exemplified through the long established Wye Valley and Vale of Usk tourism Destination Marketing area/brand.

However, the membership of the LAG also offers opportunities to extend cross boundary working further as exemplified by the appointment of a regional Officer of Natural Resources Wales.   The Wye Valley AONB and Brecon Beacons National Park have both been members of the previous adventa LAG since its inception in 2001 and as a result strong working relationships have been established. Although not named as proposed members of the Vale of Usk LAG it is the intention to appoint staff members of the organisations as advisors to the LAG working groups to ensure that this relationship is maintained.

The extent of these relationships has been exemplified particularly well in the current LEADER cooperation project which is managed by adventa, Walking with Offa. This is a strategic cross border project with has brought together rural development and tourism bodies along the Welsh-English border to promote walking, sustainable tourism and transport along either side of the Offa's Dyke National Trail, both the Wye Valley AONB and the BBNPA are partners. It is the intention of the LAG to submit a Phase II application for this RDP delivery period.

Other examples of cross geographical border working in the area include the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean tourism association who have participated fully in RDP activities during the last 2007 – 2013 funding period and will be invited to do so again. In addition Severn Wye Energy Agency has been a key partner in delivering current energy projects. It is the LAGs intention to continue working with these and many other cross border organisations during the next phase of delivery.

1.1.5 Extension of the current partnership

As explained in the preface, at the time of writing Monmouthshire County Council has been approached by Torfaen County Borough Council to extend the current partnership with Newport City Council to include their rural territories within this application. Although all partners are agreed in principle, given the short timescales associated with the submission of the LDS it has been agreed to proceed with the submission of two separate strategies at this point. Subject to formal approval by the LAG, Monmouthshire County Council and Newport City Council Cabinets it is the partners' intention to edit and merge the two strategies in the next few weeks with a view to submitting a revised joint LDS in November 2014.

1.2   Description of Integration

In order to attain maximum value for money and avoid any duplication of effort this strategy takes into account current local, national and regional programmes, to ensure complementarity at a strategic level.

1.2.1 LEADER - Complementarity, Coherence and Consistency

The development and design of this LDS has recognised the need to ensure its objectives and resulting actions provide consensus within the new rural territory across Monmouthshire and Newport, to "*combine and integrate to achieve the maximum results*".   Through the community involvement process and through strategic officer discussions findings have been reviewed to ascertain how the LEADER approach can add value and not result in duplication.   This has been undertaken in the following way:

- Understanding what has been achieved through adventa to date and how to build on historical rural development investment and where new and added value activity can take place and create sustainable impact;
- Reviewing emerging programmes and projects within the territory and assessing whether the RDP can complement or not;
- Hosting workshop based sessions to look at synergy and linkages between the two local authority areas and how common projects can be co-ordinated; Examples of this include;
  - Living Levels Partnership
  - Destination Management Plans
  - Strategic paths and trails
  - Community transport; and
- Assessing project ideas and proposals that have arisen through the on-line survey and through face to face engagement in terms of pulling together local support measures and looking at both spatial and sectoral linkages so that maximum benefits are achieved.

From the analysis and taking into account the need for coherence and consistency of approach to integration the following choices have been made in relation to generating the right change for the area. These include:

1. The need to make the area connected in terms of rural programme identity and association in terms of delivery as well as linking assets that are common to both or have a mutual benefit of partnering;
2. The need for communities across the territory to learn from each other, with the opportunity for Monmouthshire as a mature rural development area to share lessons learnt with Newport; there is also the opportunity for innovation and some trail-blazing for Newport to trial new ideas and projects that Monmouthshire has never piloted before;
3. Recognition that significant investment has taken place in Monmouthshire through previous rural development programmes and that new investment needs to now bring about consolidation and extend the reach in terms of physical and digital improvements and community led initiatives; this

approach is about whole place and community;

4. The value of countryside and landscape and how this connects rural and semi-urban places is key to making the Vale of Usk area coherent and understanding how the environment can play a part in access, heritage, identity, mobility, tourism, exploration and realising local economic development initiatives; and

5. The need to place digital technology as a horizontal activity as a way to delivering smart, dynamic and enterprising communities and businesses, supported by a training and mentoring culture.

1.2.2 Strategic Policy Fit
The following policies are key instruments and statements that will relate to the strategy in future development and delivery.

Welsh Government

Wales Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP)
The main strategy and framework that is directing this LDS is the Wales Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP), a seven year European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) programme funded by the European Union and Welsh Government.

The Wales RDP 2014-2020, submitted to the European Commission on 11 July 2014, can provide £953m of European and Welsh Government funding to rural Wales to help:
- increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of Welsh farming and forestry businesses, improving their competitiveness and resilience, reducing their reliance on subsidies;
- improve the Welsh environment, encouraging sustainable land management practices, the sustainable management of our natural resources and climate action in Wales; and
- promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth in Wales and encourage greater community-led local development.

There are 6 Rural Development Priorities which set the context for the EAFRD and any actions that form part of the RDP 2014-2020 will fit within this structure of priorities:
- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas;
- enhancing competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability;
- promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture;
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry;
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors; and
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

It can be noted further in this LDS that the LAG has chosen to select "*promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural area*" as our key focus which has been prioritised through LAG and the community involvement process.

Other Welsh Government Strategies

In Table Five below are detailed key strategies and policies that the LAG will consider and link to include:

Table Five: <u>Key Strategies</u>

• Partnership for Growth – The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism – 2013-2020 • Pollinator Action Plan – Welsh Government • Pollinator Implementation Plan – Welsh Government • Food and Drink Action Plan – Welsh Government • Local Sourcing Action Plan – Welsh Government • ICT Strategy for Wales – Welsh Government • ICT Infrastructure Policy – Welsh Government	• Digital Inclusion Stronger Communities – Wales Co-operative Centre • One Wales, One Planet – Welsh Government • Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition – Welsh Government • Sustainable Development Policy – Monmouthshire County Council • Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Strategy • Superfastcyrmu Wales broadband scheme • Town Centre Partnership Fund – Welsh Government • Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy – An Action Plan for Wales, 2010-2015

The following section relates to local corporate, economic development and rural development/tourism development policy.

Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire's Single Integrated Plan 2013

Monmouthshire's SIP centres on creating and maintaining the County's economic and environmental health, promoting social equity, and increasing citizen participation in planning and implementation. Health and well-being is central to quality of life, our economic success, interdependent with our success in improving education, training and employment outcomes. An individual's ability to achieve their educational, social and economic potential is greatly influenced by their own sense of well-being. Across Monmouthshire, 'The Five Ways to Wellbeing' is being introduced at individual, community and organisational level to enable our communities to be more capable and resilient. Working towards this vision they have

identified three themes which form part of a cohesive story about how the vision will be achieved.

- **Nobody is Left Behind**: we want to be a place of of cohesive communities where everybody is treated with dignity and respect and has the same opportunity to achieve what they wish.
- **People are Confident, Capable and Involved**: we want Monmouthshire to feel safe and people to be confident. We want to create a place where people want to be involved; they are confident in themselves and their abilities and what they contribute to their own community.
- **Our County Thrives**: we want our county to thrive which includes the economy that supports our communities and families to live a good life. It also means that our environment, its range of habitats and biodiversity thrives.

Draft Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy

Monmouthshire's new vision for its Enterprise Directorate is "*to develop and promote an enterprising culture, which builds business resilience and creates excellent outcomes for our communities*" with the mission to "*build the enterprise capacity and reinvent our future*".

The enterprise strategy is also supported by "iCounty" which is the County's digital centre piece and key means to ensuring technology contributes to the county-wide vision for building sustainable and resilient communities. The three strands to iCounty are:

- Enabling inclusive and connected communities
- Creating commercial products and assets
- Improving internal systems in order to continually reinvent the services that matter most to Monmouthshire's communities

The three strategic priorities of the draft Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy are:

1. Supporting business growth
2. Encouraging inward investment
3. Growing entrepreneurs

Cross cutting themes include the need to embrace and capitalise on digital technology opportunities and to raise skills levels, to meet the needs and aspirations of individuals and employers, with a view to creating high level employment opportunities and raise wage levels.

In working towards Tomorrow's Monmouthshire success is built upon a place where:

1. Ideas can flow
2. A workforce where the relevant skills exist
3. Capital investment can be raised
4. Relevant infrastructure is in place and
5. There are opportunities for networking

There are other supporting local economic development, tourism and community strategies which include:

- "iCounty" strategy
- Monmouthshire Destination Development Plan
- Abergavenny Visitor Experience Development Plan and Feasibility

This strategy underpins a wide range of issue and areas of focus for rural development within the Vale of Usk area with digital and physical connectivity seen as a key strand to its strategic direction.

Whole Place Plan Approach

Under the banner 'Your County, Your Way' Monmouthshire County Council has embarked on a journey of cultural and organisational change to enable it to respond creatively to the needs and aspirations of the communities of Monmouthshire.

As part of this process, the Council aims to create opportunities that empower local communities to shape and enhance their future prospects, supported by the council but with residents, community organisations and the business community taking the opportunity and responsibility to themselves realise their shared aspirations and ambitions for their area. Whole place plans have formed part of the delivery of this cultural change with plans developed for the following communities and areas, with complementary proposals that embrace rural communities Community engagement has taken place in these areas, plans adopted, with some of the project areas highlighted below:

- Seven for Severnside Plan
    o Wales coast path/Festival of the coast
    o Local heritage proposals
    o Targeted business support
    o Integrated marketing
    o Low carbon Severnside
    o Digital Severnside
    o Start-up Severnside

- Bryn y Cwm Plan
    o Area tourism development plan – completed
    o Area transport strategy
    o Waste minimisation
    o Local business and young people accessing work programme

There are also forward plans to deliver additional plans in Usk, **Chepstow and Monmouth across 2015-2021.**

Community Planning

The Whole Place Plan process has also been also augmented by community led plan work undertaken by adventa which includes community development activity in Llandogo, Llangybi, Raglan with other engagement taking place in The Narth. A range of issues and ideas have been raised by respective communities as part of this LDS and community involvement process.

Newport

One Newport: Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan (SIP)

One Newport Local Service Board (LSB) works with local communities and other groups to identify actions to improve the quality of life of the people of Newport. It recognises that no single organisation can meet the total needs of a community, acknowledging a requirement to plan and deliver services in collaboration with other public and private sector organisations.

Its Single Integrated Plan contains the LSB's vision for improving Newport, has been developed around a set of priority themes, some of which contribute to this LDS:

- Skills and Work – by seeking to use and develop the local labour force
- Health and Wellbeing - by developing new green space, the physical environment and the impact on health and wellbeing connected to addressing area based multiple deprivation
- Safe and Cohesive Communities – activities have potential to develop and support social and community cohesion and improve neighbourhood engagement, planning and integration of services to meet local needs
- Economic Opportunity - Take forward opportunities for funding to support the development of the rural economy in Newport with a future focus on business development, digital technology and renewable energy.
- Economic Opportunity/ Physical Activity in the Environment – potential initiatives to increase participation in the outside environment, and encourage greater use of alternatives transport i.e. walking, cycle routes.

Newport City Council Economic Development Strategy 2011-2015

Newport's future economic performance will depend on how Newport rises to the challenge of the critical global business drivers to unlock its' underlying potential. Consultation with local businesses, commercial agents, investors/ developers, community groups and officers within the City Council all endorsed the following priorities for focused and concerted attention going forward:

- Improving Newport's Identity & Image.
  - o Creating a Distinct Sense of Place.
- Building a Clear Vision for the Future through Strong Civic Leadership – backed up by Consistent Action for Delivery.

- Maximising Newport's Strategic Location through Improved Connectivity – embracing Sustainable Transport & ICT.

A ten point action plan identifies projects that will bring about a step change in Newport's economic performance. Below are those that link in to this LDS:

- Tackle Negative Business Perceptions
  - Implement Destination Marketing Plan & City Tourism Strategy: Ensure that the marketing of Newport is continued to attract new businesses and visitors to the area

- Engage Newport's Business Leaders in the Economic Vision
  - Business responsive education and training:
  - Respond to needs of local businesses

- Secure Sustainable Transport Town Status
  - Apply for Sustainable Travel Town Status
  - Improve public transport to Llanwern

- Continue to Invest in Local Business
  - Work with learning partners – skills match training and business needs
  - Tackle worklessness and improve economic activity rates
  - Develop stronger Business networks
  - Schools enterprise programme: Develop links between local businesses and schools
  - Social Enterprise Support: Support and foster social enterprise through grant assistance and sign-posting

- Establish Newport as a Green Business City
  - Re-balance land supply to accommodate "Good Industrial" occupiers: Ensure LDP delivers a broad range of sites to support the local economy
  - Encourage photo-voltaics where appropriate: Investigate opportunity for the creation of locally manufactured photovoltaic
  - Renewable energy strategy for the city: Establish Newport as a green city for potential investors
  - Green roofs initiative: Explore the scope for developing green roofs
  - Future proof city centre – Plugged in Places: Explore potential benefits of recharging points for electric cars
  - Waste to Energy Plan: Explore potential for utilising waste as an energy product
  - Enhance Local/Regional logistics – internet delivery growth: Continue to develop Newport's image as a digital city

1.2.3 LDS Integration

The range of RDP schemes and activities to which the LDS can make a contribution, is shown in the Table Six below:

Table Six: LDS Integration

Human and social Capital	LDS to signpost to activities such as: • Knowledge transfer and innovation • Advisory services • Co-operation • The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
Investment Measures	Where opportunities exist, the LDS will signpost activities to: • Investment in Physical Assets • Farm and Business Development • Quality Schemes • Risk Management • Restoration of Agricultural Production Potential • Restoration of Forestry Potential
Area Based Measures	• Agri-Environment Climate • Organic • Forestry • Natura 2000/Water Framework Directive

Funding

In relation to funding, the LAG is aware of other European and domestic funding streams that are operational within the Vale of Usk territory. These include:

- European Regional Development Fund
  - Next Generation Broadband
  - Exploitation of ICT
  - TEN-T road and rail improvements
  - Business support
  - Business mentoring
- Community Innovation Fund
- Lottery Funding
- Natural Resources Wales
- Respective charitable trusts

The LAG will ensure that emerging projects and activities are screened in terms of avoiding duplication and ensuring maximum leverage is obtained through direct programme activity as well as signposting people to other forms of funding support for non-eligible projects and funding.

2. FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE

2.1 Management and Administration

2.1.1 Constitution: Rules and Principles

The Vale of Usk Local Action Group is governed by the rules and principles set by the European Commission and Welsh Government. As defined the governing principles are as follows:

Membership

- As the LAG is inclusive it needs to evolve to meet the changing needs of the area and priorities of the strategy. The LAG is therefore made up of a group of natural persons who represent businesses, local organisations, public authorities and other representation of local civic society to include a representative from the Administrative Body. A proposed list of the LAG members is detailed in section 2.1.2 below.
- The Administrative Body for the LAG is Monmouthshire County Council who is the lead partner in administrative and financial matters (see section 2.1.4 below).
- The LAG aims to be gender balanced and have a fair representation of specific target groups addressed by the LDS e.g. young people, disadvantaged groups, vulnerable groups, etc.
- To avoid conflicts of interest neither public authorities nor any single interest group will have more than 49% of the voting rights at the decision-making level of the LAG.
- The LAG will ensure that at least 51% of votes in selection decisions are cast by members that are NOT public authorities and allow selection by written procedure. This is to ensure an inclusive and transparent process, diversity in the strategy and a reasonable spread of the projects across a range of different sectors.

Project Selection

- The LAG has designed a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of projects and activities which will be delivered using RDP funding this can be found in Section 2.1.7 below.
- The LAG will ensure that projects and activities demonstrate coherence with the LDS and are prioritised according to the weighting given to the theme and their subsequent contribution to meeting the objectives and targets of the strategy. Details of the themes can be found in section 2.1.3.
- The LAG will:
  - o prepare and publish regular calls for proposals for projects and activities including defining selection criteria;

Version: 1

- o Receive and assess applications for support;
- o Select projects and activities based on the priority weighting of the theme under which the project has been submitted, fix the amount of support and, where relevant, present the proposals to the Administrative Body for final verification of eligibility before approval; and
- o Ensure that written working procedures, rules and structures for decision-making are in place to guarantee the selection of projects is consistent with the objectives of the LDS whilst indicating how this in an instance of any conflict of interest;

- The LAG will monitor the implementation of the LDS and the projects that are supported and carry out specific evaluation activities linked to the LDS.

2.1.2 Proposed Vale of Usk LAG Members

In line with the LAG constitution and Terms of Reference the proposed Vale of Usk LAG members are detailed in Table Seven below:

Table Seven: Proposed LAG Members

Chairman: Alan Michie, Bryn y Cwm Forum (Third Sector)	
Alistair Robertson Babington Meadows Trust (Third sector)	*Gareth Baker* Monmouthshire Wye Valley Apiaries: (Private Sector) or alternative *Nicola Bradbear* Monmouthshire Bees for Development (Private Sector)
Cllr Bob Greenland Deputy Leader Monmouthshire County Council (Public Sector)	*Cllr John Richards* Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development (Public Sector)
Redwick Community Council *(name tbc – Voluntary Sector)*	Newport Local Access Forum *(name tbc – Voluntary Sector)*
Rachel Harding Natural Resources Wales (Public Sector)	*Chrissie Webber* University of South Wales (Public Sector)
Peter Cole Tourism Consultant (Private Sector)	

In discussing the Membership of the LAG it has been agreed that in order to have equal geographic, sectoral and natural representation there will be three representatives from each geographical area; three regional strategic representatives to encourage cross boundary working and the Chairman. Should it be agreed that Torfaen County Borough Council join the partnership then a further three representatives from their area will be asked to join the LAG. Torfaen will be asked to provide a representative from each of the public, private and third sectors.

2.1.3 Terms of Reference for the LAG

In order to fulfil its main purpose in being responsible for the successful delivery of the 2014-2020 LDS the LAG will:

- Develop a strategy which will address the needs and opportunities of the area in line with the following five themes:

  1. Adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources;
  2. Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains;
  3. Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services;
  4. Renewable energy at a community level; and
  5. Exploitation of digital technology.

- Build the capacity of local stakeholders to develop and implement projects and activities including fostering their project management skills;
- Promote, receive, assess and select projects and activities to be delivered that are not only in line with the objectives of the LDS but are also robust and offer good value for money;
- Assess projects against the weighting that has been allocated to each of the five themes following a prioritisation exercise which formed part of the LDS consultation process;
- Ensure that financial and monitoring targets for the LDS are set and met and reviewed regularly to include an annual re-assessment by Welsh Government;
- Assess the weighting of the five themes on an annual basis to ensure that the weighting is in line with community demand;
- Raise awareness of the programme, its aims and objectives in accordance with the Vale of Usk promotional plan for the 2014-2020 programme;

- Participate fully in Regional, National and European Network activities/ events wherever possible, in line with the requirements of the RDP; and

- Ensure that everyone is treated equally and that equality of opportunity is promoted in allocating resources, engaging local communities and in employing staff.

LAG Membership

- The maximum number of members on the LAG at any time will be 12 representing the public, private and third sectors;

- Only individuals with an area interest in the delivery of the programme will be eligible to apply for membership;

- Each Member is required to abide by the LAG member protocol;

- Partnership members who are unable to attend a particular meeting may arrange for a substitute from their group/ organisation to attend in his/her place;

- If a member of the LAG is absent for two consecutive meetings, the Chairman shall have the right (in default of an acceptable reason being given by such member) to declare a vacancy, whereupon the individual shall cease to be a member; and

- Individuals with particular skills may be co-opted on to the LAG as non-voting advisors and for a specified period.

Changes to the Membership

- Changes to the membership will not be permitted if they result in the 49/51% balance being unachievable;

- All new applications will be considered by the LAG at the next available meeting or through written procedures. Successful applicants will be invited to attend the next available meeting/ event. Unsuccessful applicants will be written to by the Chair, outlining the reasons why their application was rejected; and

- An up-to-date list of members will be held by the RDP Programme Team and made available upon request.

The Chair and Vice-Chair

- The LAG shall hold an annual review process for the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair. Where there is more than one candidate, voting should take place. As the Vale of Usk is a newly formed LAG is has been agreed that the adventa LAG Chairman be requested to stay for the first year of its operation. Mr Alan Michie has extensive experience and therefore can make a valuable contribution in assisting the new LAG in its formation process.

2.1.4 Administrative Body

The Vale of Usk LAG and Newport City Council have appointed MCC to act as the lead partner or **'Administrative Body'** in administrative and financial matters relating to the delivery of the Rural Development Programme EU funding entitlement for the period 2014 – 2020. A separate Collaboration Agreement exists determining the joint arrangements to discharge these functions.

Although the LAG is responsible for the overall delivery of the LDS the management of project activities will fall to the Administrative Body, however the Administrative Body may commission 3rd party or delivery organisations to deliver projects on their behalf where specific expertise is required.

2.1.5 **Operating Procedures**

The LAG will be guided by their Terms of Reference as detailed above however below is a list of operating procedures and principles that will guide the operation of

the Vale of Usk LAG:

- The LAG will meet at least four times a year with the Chair given discretion to call additional meetings as and when necessary;

- The Administrative Body will provide secretariat support to the LAG and its members;

- LAG meetings will be held at a venue within the programme area whenever possible, but may be located elsewhere to ensure full participation of members at all times;

- The Chair (in conjunction with the groups Secretariat) will have the right to invite representatives of other bodies to the Local Action Group to discuss particular issues where necessary;

- A LAG meeting will be postponed if less than 51% of non-public sector LAG members are present;

- An agenda will be circulated at least one week before each meeting. Members with significant items for discussion must notify the Programme Team of these in time for them to be included on the agenda;

- Minutes will be kept to record all decisions made by the LAG and to minimise the risk of any conflict of interest issues; and

- The LAG may establish Task and Finish working groups to undertake specific areas of work on its behalf, as and when required. Working Group members may include both LAG members and others co-opted for their specific skills.

Voting
- The LAG will seek to reach agreement on recommendations by discussion and consensus. On occasions when a formal vote is required each Member or substitute shall be entitled to one vote and decisions will be made on the basis of a simple majority. A formal vote will not take place unless there are at least 51% of non-public sector LAG members present;

- In the event of an equal split of votes, the Chair will have the casting vote;

- LAG members with any personal or financial interest in a matter being discussed, must declare that interest and will not be entitled to vote on that item. This written declaration will be included in the minutes of the meeting to demonstrate non-discrimination and transparency; and

- Advisors are not entitled to vote.

2.1.6 Compliance Procedures

As Administrative Body MCC will be responsible for all issues of compliance in relation to financial and administrative matters on behalf of the LAG, in terms of financial administration specifically MCC will follow the systems and procedures as detailed below:

- Claims will be submitted on behalf of the LAG by MCC to the Welsh Government quarterly in arrears (based on expenditure defrayed). Where 3rd party/delivery organisations are involved claims will be submitted to MCC and then aggregated before submission to Welsh Government;

- MCC will only claim eligible defrayed expenditure from Welsh Government that can be supported by evidence (i.e. an invoice) by the project;

- MCC will retain certified copies of the supporting evidence for inspection by Welsh Government during re-performance checks; and

- MCC will submit to Welsh Government a certified transaction schedule for each project in a format required.

As Figure One below details there is no individual with responsibility for more than one of the tasks of authorising, paying, or accounting for the funding. No officer within the Administrative Body will perform one of the tasks without their work being under the supervision of a second officer.

Figure One
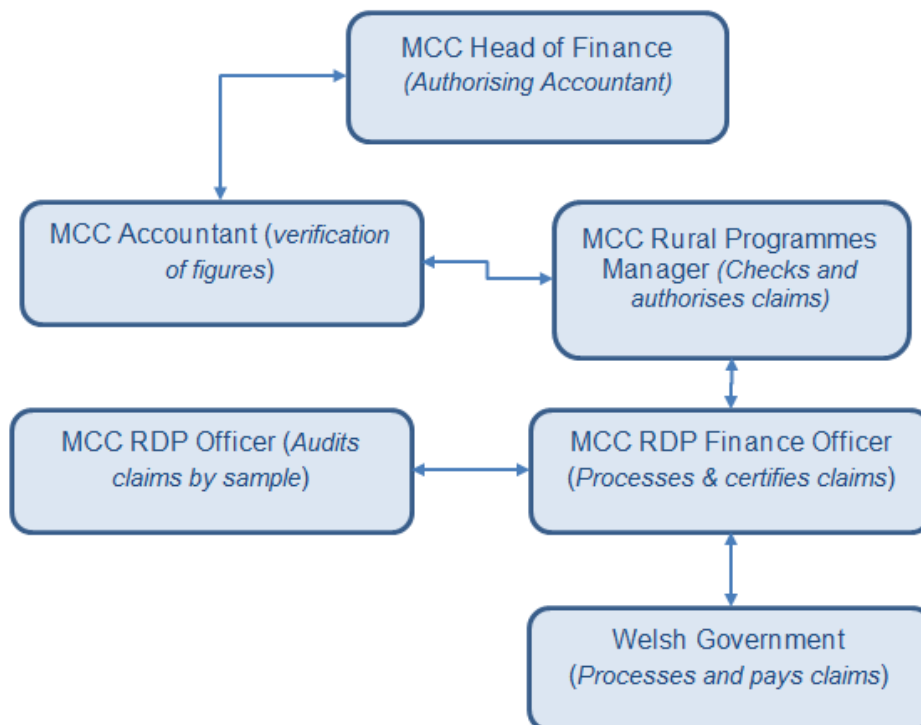
2.1.7 Project Selection, Appraisal and Approval Process

The LAG is fully aware of the need to be very clear in how they set out the application and selection procedures and criteria for the projects to be funded via the LDS. It is the LAG's intention to operate in a fair, open and transparent manner to ensure applicants have a clear and consistent understanding of how they can apply for funds and the mechanisms that will be used to assess their applications. Full details of the management process can be found in Section 4 – Management and Administration.

The assessment criteria has been clearly linked to the results of the community consultation and the subsequent analysis as detailed in sections 3.1 and the Intervention Logic Table detailed in Appendix Three.

2.1.7.1 Project Selection

It is envisaged that a call will be made at regular intervals throughout the programme period.

Beneficiaries will be invited to submit EOIs and RDP animation staff will work with project applicants to screen out ineligible activity. Projects will then be presented and discussed at Theme Working Groups who will not only consider the project eligibility but also its fit with the Intervention Logic Table. Once projects are considered to be suitably worked up they will be presented to the LAG for consideration. It is envisaged that the approved EOI's will guide the priorities of the future activities to give balance to the themes as the programme is being developed.

Selection Process

a) Filtering EOI's

The filtering process will be performed by the Theme Working group comprising of LAG members (with special interests or skills in the particular theme that is being considered) with assistance from project officers and specialist advisors as required. Consideration will be required by the group for the following:

- Eligibility criteria against RDP and LDS specific criteria such as;
  o prioritisation of themes;
  o target beneficiaries ;
  o collective projects benefiting the wider territory thus providing greater economy of scale and improved value for money;
- Level of support (exact figures yet to be determined by the LAG);
  o That the finance required is proportionate to the PI's being achieved against the theme however consideration will be given to;
    ▪ the risk of failure of larger projects;
    ▪ the number of rural wards and service centres supported by a project; and
    ▪ A maximum value for each project supported by theme.
  o That the target beneficiaries are proportionate to the value supported

o Budget availability versus demand for a particular theme being developed
- Whether the EOI covers more than one theme

   b) Selection of EOI's for submission to the LAG

The selection process will require the following criteria to be considered;
- Extent to which projects contributes to achievement of the LDS and complements other activities and initiatives;
- That the EOI is in line with the specific themes criteria;
- Extent to which the EOI responds to identified need and is supported by evidence of prospective demand;
- Inclusion of realistic and measurable milestones and targets associated with Performance Indicators ;
- The project selection will use the following techniques;
  - Use an averaging scoring process which is theme specific and weighted by the LDS and WG priorities which will;
    - robust and consistent in its use;
    - be approved by the LAG before use ;
    - be quantitative ; and
    - have a minimum project acceptance threshold score agreed
  - Have a methodology to rank EOI's where multiple EOI's for the same theme may be considered;
  - Have a mechanism for deferring EOI's even if the threshold score is achieved;
  - Have a mechanism for project approvals containing caveats;
  - Have a mechanism for rejection or recommendations for resubmission of EOI's; and
  - Have a mechanism for recording as evidence the decisions that have been reached

2.1.8 Declaration and Management of Conflict of Interest

In line with the LAG Terms of Reference the LAG will seek to reach agreement on recommendations by discussion and consensus. LAG members with any personal or financial interest in a matter being discussed, must declare that interest and will not be entitled to vote on that item. This written declaration will be included in the minutes of the meeting to demonstrate non-discrimination and transparency.

3. DELIVERY

3.1 Description of the Strategy and hierarchy of objectives

3.1.1 How can the LAG improve the area?

A **mild expansion of the economy** is taking place in the Vale of Usk area as population growth is causing growth in the labour force. However **planning policies are restrictive** as the **environment and landscape are important** and need protecting. The area is **comfortable but not rich**: unemployment and deprivation are low but wages and incomes are relatively low and there are small **pockets of**

relative deprivation. By developing and delivering this strategy the Vale of Usk LAG can improve and develop the area in the following ways:

- Encouraging competitive, high value-added industries, especially knowledge-based sectors to the area to create higher paid job opportunities;
- Targeting and supporting land based activities (agriculture and timber) as although important they are in decline;
- Investigating and supporting professional and business services, fashion, cultural/craft/TV/film industries and e-commerce opportunities to help them realise their potential;
- Growing the potential for Entrepreneurship and inward investment;
- Offering re-skilling opportunities to support a wider range of job opportunities to support the high qualifications and skill levels;
- Retaining and encouraging School-leavers to return after obtaining skills; and
- Encouraging the take up and exploitation of digital skills and technologies to take advantage of the Superfast Broadband rollout currently being undertaken in Wales.

3.1.2 **The Hierarchy of objectives**

3.1.2.1 Approach

The design and development of this strategy and hierarchy of objectives has been informed through a combination of LAG workshops through to a range of community involvement opportunities that have been provided in recent months. The timeline for the development of the objectives commenced in December 2013 and has recently culminated with the 2014 SWOT analysis enabling the team to check assumptions against real community need and prioritisation.

The initial messages on what the LDS should address was first discussed in December 2013, when the LAG and Rural Partnership met to discuss the evaluation of Axis 3 and 4 under Business Case 2 of the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan for Wales.

Table 8 - Process for Development of Hierarchy of Objectives

December 2013 - LAG/Rural Partnership Workshop

⬇

July LAG - 5 Themes Endorsement

⬇

August to September 2014 - Community Involvement

⬇

Mid September 2014 - LAG Meeting

This workshop also provided the opportunity to discuss findings that could shape the emerging LDS. Some of the key points included:

- The programme's success in supporting community facilities in becoming more energy efficient and comfortable places should now be used to encourage an increase in up-take and maximisation of their use, thereby

increasing the number of activities offered in rural communities, supporting social inclusion, and job creation (for facilitators, sports instructors, etc.;

- Research has demonstrated that even the smallest interventions can be very successful, when coupled with imagination and vision, integrating with other initiatives to enlarge the reach and impact of projects; and

- Whilst the BP2 delivery approach has worked well and built capacities in delivery agents, it has required a substantial amount of resources from the RDP support team.

The workshop also agreed that all five RDP themes should be selected in terms of testing through the community involvement process and in developing the draft 2014-2020 LDS document. This was further endorsed at the July 2014 LAG meeting, where members sought wider community engagement, feedback and validation of the initial LDS ideas.

To facilitate this, as later detailed in Section 7 of this strategy, the LAG has undertaken extensive engagement with local residents, community and stakeholder groups and relevant organisations across the two Authority areas. Activities have included an on-line survey and face to face engagement exercises, all of which have been aggregated into a SWOT analysis and issues and ideas have been clustered into thematic groupings.

3.1.2.2 Findings

Findings from the community involvement stage centred on the following overarching results which have helped shape the LDS objectives.

- Figure Two demonstrates the **rating of importance and prioritisation** for each of the five LDS themes. The overall weighting illustrates the themes have been prioritised in the following order:

Ranking		
1	i)	exploitation of digital technology and ii) adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources are equally weighted;
2	iii)	exploring new ways of providing non-statutory services is not far behind in terms of weighting;
3	iv)	renewable energy at a community level and v) facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains both have equal weighting and importance.

Second to this, responses from the on-line survey and those collated via face to face engagement have also identified a number of common issues and themes that relate to the following areas:

- Need to develop connected places through people, place and technology;
- Need to extend digital advances across the wider territory in terms of access, learning, buying/shop local, training and building local enterprise;

- Need to focus on hubs that are physically and digitally connected that ensure sustainability of local assets, community, social inclusion, enterprise and networking;
- Need to ensure more isolated communities are connected in terms of transport, ICT, services as well as having access to local hubs, villages and communities;
- Need to provide places and the environment for rural business to network, cluster and be aided through more targeted support and advice;
- Need to ensure the wider destination is integrated in terms of tourism and other activities so that the whole territory benefits; and
- Need to ensure the countryside, natural assets and rural environment is maximised in terms of access, activity and use of resources, where appropriate, for renewable energy use.

Figure Two - LDS Thematic Ratings
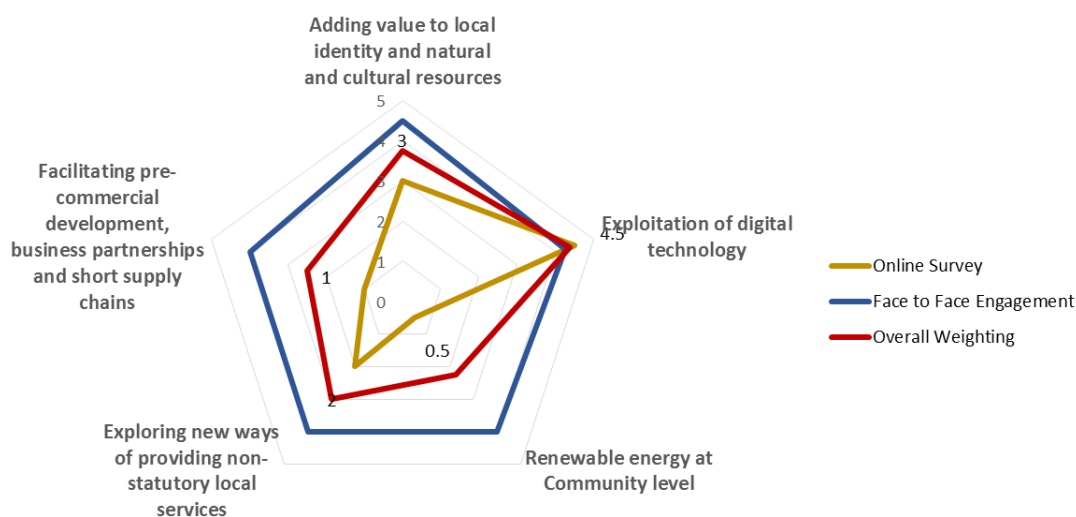
In terms of the SWOT analysis, it was clear that the main focus of conversation was based on:

- fostering local development in rural areas;
- enhancing accessibility to, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural area; and
- facilitating diversification through the creation of new small enterprises and jobs.

This wide range of focus leads the LAG to choose **RDP Focus Area Six** as the main area for attention, namely:

"*Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, with a focus on the following areas*".

The focus for the strategy is therefore a combination of the five LDS themes with some key drivers:

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- Focus on key areas of activity to mobilise and exploit digital advances to enable communities to network, exchange ideas, foster and sustain activities, and develop products and services with technology being a key focus and cross cutting theme;

- Outwardly facing in terms of tourism destination management and information in relation to local hubs, communities and places, with the role of people and ambassadors having great importance;

- Encourage community hubs to align non statutory services to their daily function, as well as being places to demonstrate innovation and best practice e.g. community renewables, digital technology;

- Community hubs to also act as orientation and navigational points in terms of the immediate countryside, local and strategic walking/cycling trails whilst supporting volunteering, guiding and other activity;

- Wrapped around this is also the need to ensure the natural and cultural assets are safeguarded and managed so that they generate local economic prosperity as well as protecting and growing local habitats and green assets e.g. meadows, growing space, etc.

In determining this hierarchy of objectives a number of other factors have also been considered namely i) the new Vale of Usk territory of Monmouthshire and Newport and ii) eligibility of funding actions.

The Vale of Usk LAG is conscious that due to the wider geographical reach there is a need to ensure that the strategy and its objectives allow for incremental change and relationship building between the two specific areas. In addition there is also a need to allow for flexibility of approach in terms of baseline LEADER activity in the Newport area and maturity in Monmouthshire. Some rural communities in Newport will be "new" to the approach and it will take time for communities to familiarise themselves. Monmouthshire can also help Newport in terms of its historical experiences and lessons learnt leading to a smarter and value for money led approach in terms of delivery.

There is also a need to consider that numerous spatial relationships will create natural convergence through natural and cultural assets e.g. Wales Coastal Path as well as transient activity such as community transport. Whilst not the primary determinant of need, eligibility issues will also need to be addressed through animation, capacity building and trialling of ideas with and actions being implemented as a result.

3.1.2.3 Vision and Objectives

As part of the longer term strategy for this new territory, a vision is needed to ensure coherence and focus for the LAG and its constituent communities. The word cloud in Figure Three shows the most frequent words used for where people see the rural territory by 2020. In adding to these words, "connectivity" and "connected" have

been used in terms of physical and spatial connectivity as well as digital and use of technology.

Figure 3 - Future Rural Vision

The LAG's proposed vision is:

"A connected territory, in a beautiful landscape, focussed on fostering thriving communities and building resilient local economies whilst embracing the natural and cultural assets of the area"

The hierarchical objectives for the Vale of Usk partnership complement the vision and in order to deliver these objectives, the Partnership will seek to use specific parts of the Programme as detailed in the Intervention Logic Table located in *Appendix Three*. The objectives that are displayed have been generated from the SWOT analysis detailed in Section 7 and weighted accordingly:

- To maximise the area's visitor potential through integrating experiences, products and networks focussing on out of season opportunities;
- To identify pre-commercial rural enterprises to engage through a rural mentoring network, business to business supply network, targeted towards sector specific beneficiaries;
- To work with rural communities to enable and facilitate a self-help rural coaching network, to identify and address future needs thereby providing an opportunity to explore new ways of providing non-statutory local services;
- To develop a connected territory that links rural hubs and places through digital technology, up-skilling communities for community and social benefit, whilst addressing exclusion and isolation;
- To identify community hubs that can demonstrate the use of renewable energy and capitalise on natural assets e.g. community woodland, biomass.

3.1.3 Earlier Influences

As detailed earlier, although Monmouthshire has significant experience in delivering RDP projects since the inception of adventa in 2001, this is the first outing for Newport. As a result Newport has looked to Monmouthshire for advice and support in terms of the influences from previous programmes and the potential to take the learning from these experiences to inform future activity.

Having been operational for over a decade there have been several examples of previous projects that adventa has delivered which have helped Newport realise their ideas for RDP activities. For example practical examples of previous programme successes include;

- **madeinmonmouthshire** - A very successful local procurement initiative involving Arts and Crafts businesses and food producers. Activity includes logo development, events promotions, interpretive flyers detailing product provenance, website http://madeinmonmouthshire.com/ tourism trails, etc. The initiative now operates as a stand-alone cooperative and has been considered a best practice example by others including 'A Taste of Powys'.
- adventa's Food Forums – a network of food producers meeting quarterly. This initiative was considered a good example and was replicated across the South East Wales region.

- **sense of Monmouthshire NAWS SIR FYNWY** - A training programme for tourism operators aimed at increasing local knowledge and encouraging local procurement with a view to adding value to visitor's experiences. This has now grown into a 'Tourism Ambassador' training programme with a network of local volunteers who are operating county wide.

- **THE ADVENTA FOOD ACADEMY** - a successful children's event piloted at the Abergavenny Food Festival and now mainstreamed by the Food Festival committee along with an annual Food Conference which is now being operated by a local consultancy.

- Walkers are Welcome is a nationwide initiative launched in 2007 to encourage towns and villages to be 'welcoming to walkers'. As a direct result of the Walking with Offa Cooperation Project the network has expanded rapidly and three towns have joined this innovative community-led scheme to benefit from Walkers are Welcome accreditation. In addition, at least 24 other towns have taken part in the exchange visits and networking events from the borderland area. With many receiving direct training in first aid, walk leader, interpretation, marketing, PR, how to lead walks for visually impaired, how to run a walking festival to name but a few. Plus in Monmouthshire four towns have become

Walkers are Welcome accredited and the National Conference is due to be held here this year.

All of these projects and activities have had a direct bearing on the development of this new LDS and have helped form and identify the hierarchy of objectives that feature above.

3.1.4 <u>Influence of earlier approaches on the development of this strategy</u>

More recently Monmouthshire has taken some lessons from the current RDP programme and the LAG has been considering the outcomes of a recent interim review of Business Plan two activities.

Key Findings from this report have indicated that:

- o The application process has been perceived as fair and transparent which therefore provides a sound basis for informing the project selection, appraisal and approval process of this strategy;
- o Project managers/animators have assisted RDP beneficiaries extensively. It is believed that this has actively built capacity, increased knowledge and led to new project ideas and know-how in project implementation. The retention of key project officers is vital to the success of this strategy as it will ensure that the team can 'hit the ground running' and as such start delivery quickly whilst using existing skills to inform activities in new areas. Further detail to be found in Section 4;
- o Systems set up by MCC for project monitoring and reporting were felt to work well and smoothly. Again this is a reason why Newport felt it important to appoint MCC as the Administrative Body so there would be no delay in having to reinvent new systems this again will add speed to the delivery process;
- o Most project managers felt that there had been a positive impact on the quality of life in Monmouthshire as a result of the RDP activities namely: - improved social engagement and participation in community life; improved well-being through healthier living (e.g. outdoor activity); improved environmental quality impacting positively through increased volunteering; and an increase in job opportunities through the use of local suppliers. These activities therefore feature in the project activities that are being suggested so momentum can be built further.

However the report also indicated some challenges that will need to be addressed by the new Vale of Usk LAG through this strategy:

- o Due to the economic climate some business capital grant projects found beneficiaries unwilling to invest. As there are no grants in the new scheme this will obviously not be a problem going forward however;
- o A number of delivery agents felt the co-creation process difficult and time consuming particularly the significant hand holding of beneficiaries in writing and designing projects making delivery unprofitable. As animation will be undertaken by the RDP programme team in this delivery period the trust

already built by existing staff members will be vital in starting projects early and delivering them more efficiently and effectively;

- o In the case of business development grants where grant conditions stipulated the creation of jobs for example, challenges were felt. It was felt that this worked against the LEADER objective to be innovative whilst also not reflecting the fact that jobs take time to evolve and create. With less emphasis on job creation and more emphasis of the potential for job creation along with facilitation and engagement it is hoped that businesses will get support which is more tailored to their needs; and

- o The support required by delivery agents from MCC administration staff was much more intensive and involved than anticipated. It is expected that as animation staff will be employed in-house, less time will be spent supporting delivery agents in this funding period.

3.2   Co-operation and Networking

3.2.1 Incorporation of Co-operation

During its thirteen year history adventa has managed a number of LEADER cooperation projects the most recent being Walking with Offa a strategic cross border project. This project brings together strategic rural development and tourism bodies along the Welsh-English border to promote walking, sustainable tourism and transport along either side of the Offa's Dyke National Trail.

Although the final Evaluation report is yet to be produced initial findings from the interim Monitoring and Evaluation report indicate that two years on from the project's formal launch, the project has generated some important results. At a strategic level, the increased strength of the partnership is a notable achievement for a project of this scope, both in terms of geographic and stakeholder coverage. During the period 2011-2013, the partnership environment is perceived to have led to some genuine relationship building with individual partners having a sense of what everyone is achieving and how it is contributing to specific activities.   A strong sense of project ownership and shared knowledge has also been widely acknowledged.

At an individual project level there are some key success stories including the business engagement activity and the public transport study. In relation to the former, feedback from beneficiaries has been very positive, and there is an expectation that benefits will continue to accrue. The latter has helped to get people to start thinking about integration of transport at a strategic level across the whole area.

3.2.2 Future and wider Cooperation

Given the success of Walking with Offa, now proclaimed as a best practice example for cross border cooperation, it is the intention of the Vale of Usk LAG to build on this success and take this project into Phase II of delivery. Initial discussions have concluded that Phase II will operate with the same partners but the focus for activity will move towards conservation, heritage and business development.   Preliminary consultation has highlighted the need to build on the sustainable tourism outputs

achieved under Phase One with a stronger emphasis being placed on heritage and wildlife themes along with volunteer engagement and health.

Suggested activities include:
- Heritage and wildlife conservation and promotion, focusing on the border themes of:

    o The **power and prestige of the Church** linking Tintern Abbey, Abbey Grace Dieu, Llanthony Priory and Abbey Crucis and other churches and sacred sites within the border;

    o **Engineering Marvel** linking Tintern Abbey, Llanthony Priory, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Montgomery and Llangollen canals and the railways. Could include comparisons between the Dyke's engineers and those of other impressive man-made structures;

    o **Conflict, control and commerce**; The Dyke, Chepstow Castle, White Castle, Montgomery Castle, Clun Castle, Ludlow Castle, Shrewsbury Castle, Powis Castle, Chirk Castle and Castell Dinas Bran. The industrial areas of the Lower Wye, the canals and industries of Shropshire and the Dee Valley and the quarries and mills of the Clwydian Hills; and

    o **Outstanding wildlife** of the borders.

- Volunteer support and training for Right Of Way maintenance and habitat management

- Business development opportunities around walking, wildlife and heritage assets

- Event organisation and promotion

- Further development of Walkers Are Welcome towns

- Walks leader and Sense of Place training for volunteers and businesses

- Integrated, cross border public transport information

- Promotion of the area under the 'Irresistible Offa' strap line, including links to the Wales Coastal Path

There is also the potential to take Phase II to the next level and widen the partnership to develop a Trans-National cooperation project with two Member States. This will be investigated by the LAG during the initial phases of the 2014 -2020 programme.

In addition another approach has been made to the LAG from the BBNP and Powys County Council to develop a Cooperation project across the National Park via an Inter-Territorial Cooperation project. It is likely that this project will focus on tourism,

transport, local food, local destination management, the development of local 'hub' communities and local regeneration however an action plan is yet to be determined.

It is the intention of the LAG to commit to at least one cooperation project that includes BBNP as a partner whether it be a National Park focussed Cooperation project or Phase II of the Walking with Offa project.

The Vale of Usk LAG takes cooperation seriously and under adventa, benefitted greatly from exchange experiences and best practice. The LAG's commitment to cooperation is further exemplified in the membership that Cath Fallon, Head of Economy and Enterprise (Monmouthshire County Council) holds on the Wales Rural Network. During the 2007 – 2010 delivery period Cath played a lead role in the development of the Rural Broadband Toolkit for LAGs which has recently been released. The LAG looks forward to full participation in the Rural Network activities during the next delivery period and will include Newport representatives to enable them to expand their experience.

3.3   Innovation

The LAG approach to innovation in the territory will be centred on a number of processes and techniques. As a result new and innovative ways of working, along with products and services may well emerge from the process.

First of all the need to develop a coherent and cohesive territory within rural Monmouthshire and Newport is an early objective in terms of communication, marketing and promotion and projecting a strong rural identity. The need to use innovative technology and systems that facilitate joint working will provide a smart and cost effective way of animating and delivering this strategy. This will involve:

- Website development and use of social media for engaging with the wider rural community, in addition to sector specific businesses and stakeholder groups;
- Development of virtual thematic networks and co-delivery mechanisms; and

However the use of more traditional methods will be used where needed in order to raise awareness of the digital opportunities that are available.

The LAG also recognises that a key benefit of developing a larger rural territory of rural Monmouthshire and Newport is that there are some proven approaches that Monmouthshire, through adventa, have tried and tested that can be applied to Newport circumstances. Knowledge transfer and understanding inter-rural relationships will add significantly to the impact of rural development working and return on investment.

In developing the strategy, objectives and thematic actions a number of new and innovative ways of working, products and services have been identified that may emerge from the process. These are outlined in Table Nine overleaf:

Table Nine: <u>**Innovation Opportunities**</u>

Theme	Example of Innovation
1. Adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources	− Development of multimedia digital products that are content management based through community training and development; − To provide a common ground for players and actors in the rural tourism sector to engage, share and integrate ideas and solutions, by up-skilling with innovation tools and techniques to convert ideas into action and outcomes; − To increase skills in digital, sector/activity specific area to assist local enterprise growth; − To align products and services in a holistic way that allows for shared functions for example activities in community facing hubs that also have a dual purpose in terms of benefiting the visitor economy.
2. Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains	− To provide advice to rural enterprises that facilitates the development of complementary business clusters, shared resources through digital technology and linkages to on-line marketplace type media that supports short supply chain development.
3. Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services	− To share knowledge and best practice between established and "new" rural development communities through toolkits, best practice exchanges, innovation days; − Assess and map physical and human assets and look at ways of mobilising and maximising their use; − To explore local aggregation of rural suppliers and how these can be distributed/collected in terms of on-line technology, linking to other Welsh Government initiatives such as Town Centre Partnerships funding.
4. Renewable energy at Community level; and	− To convert community energy plans into more detailed feasibility studies and trial innovative renewable energy schemes at a community level; − To explore low carbon fuel in terms of rural community facilities and vehicles.
5. Exploitation of digital technology	− To apply digital technology to remote and isolated communities that brings together a suite of products and local services that can be tapped into and can be scaled up in terms of wider territory co-operation and collective working.

Finally the approach that is planned is based on ensuring a multiplier impact, specifically in Monmouthshire, relating to historical investment in rural areas, with rural communities seen as places to trial new ideas and approaches as well as extending projects and services across the territory so that programme identity and impact is fully met.

This will involve collaboration across the territory and a bringing together of partners, agencies, organisations and community groups. Where appropriate, for example in the use of digital technology, links with learning and research institutions will be facilitated through organisations such as Coleg Gwent and the University of South Wales.

3.4 Action Plan

Please refer to *Appendix Three: Intervention Logic Table*

3.5 Promotional Activity

Following on from the recent LDS community consultation where initial awareness has been raised of this new RDP programme across the LAG territory a reservoir of interest has been established. Once the new programme funding has been approved there will be a need to reinvigorate this interest with a view to encouraging interested parties to engage with the new programme activities and funding opportunities.

This re-engagement is likely to take the form of an initial programme launch which will be widely publicised across the territory via local press releases and social media. In addition a direct mail campaign will take place to encourage and develop one to one relationships, by introducing target beneficiaries to the team. In the past programme launches have proved to be very successful in gaining initial interest and making connections.

To maintain interest following the initial launch, previous experience of operating RDP programmes has indicated that a strong website presence is critical not only in terms of promoting the programme but in disseminating information regarding the potential projects that can be funded via the programme as illustrated by the current Monmouthshire rdp website (www.monmouthshirerdp.org.uk). A new website will therefore form the background of the promotional activities and will be a key cornerstone in the promotional and awareness campaign as well as being a useful information repository for target beneficiaries.

As part of the community consultation exercise consultees/stakeholders were asked firstly, if they would like to be kept informed of developments and secondly how they would like to be kept informed. A straight 50/50 response confirmed that half would like to be kept informed via website updates and the other half via invitations to rural networks and community meetings.

Taking into account previous and forthcoming project activities the following promotional activities are proposed as detailed in Table Ten below. For purposes of clarity the target market has been segmented into target audiences all of whom have been defined either as local stakeholders and influencers or target beneficiaries. The different forms of promotional activity have then been split between traditional and digital activity (with further definitions included) along with networking events. The target audiences have then been married up with the promotional activity that is considered best suited to their liking and therefore more likely generate interest and impact. A communications and marketing strategy will be developed once the RDP team are in place.

Table Ten: <u>Promotional Plan</u>

Target Audience	Traditional Activity	Digital activity			Networking Events
	Press releases	**Website**	**Twitter/ Facebook**	**E-newsletter**	
Local stakeholders and influencers	√	√		√	√
Target beneficiaries • Young people • Older people • Farming Families • Community groups & organisations	√ √ √	√ √ √ √	√ √ √ √	 √ √ √	√ √ √ √

<u>Dissemination of Best Practice</u>

However promotional activity is only one element of the promotional campaign. Lessons learned from cooperation activities have indicated that the best way to disseminate best practice is either through the production of case studies which can be in the form of press releases or video case studies held on the programme website or by best practice visits. It is therefore proposed that a similar programme of activities be undertaken in this programme which will be factored into the resource requirements for respective projects.

<u>EU Information and Publicity Guidelines</u>

To ensure that full acknowledgement of RDP funding and that beneficiaries are clearly aware of the funding received from the EU, the management and animation team will work with them directly to ensure that Welsh Government's Information and Publicity Guidelines for the 2014-2020 RDP Programme are followed.   These guidelines will ensure that the programme management team are fully compliant with the publicity requirements at each and every opportunity e.g. use of logos on stationery, websites, leaflets, etc.

<u>Fly the EU Flag 9th May</u>

Although a clear programme of activities has yet to be developed for 'Fly the EU Flag' week it is likely that a number of themed activities will take place during that week over the life time of the strategy. This is likely to take the form of showcasing how RDP funding can build links and benefit people, businesses, communities and the environment.

<u>RDP Communications</u>

During delivery of the last RDP programme the management team demonstrated a keenness to work with the RDP Communications team and the Wales Rural Network on planned launches/press releases in relation to LEADER activities. As this is a relationship that worked well and to mutual benefit, the programme team intend to build on this throughout the delivery of activities associated with this strategy.

4. MANAGEMENT OF OPERATION

4.4 Management and Administration

4.1.1 <u>Collaboration</u>

The Vale of Usk LAG was initially established following an approach from Newport City Council who wished to participate in the Rural Development Plan Programme but had no previous experience. It was felt that the a joint approach with the two counties would not only enable Newport City Council to benefit from Monmouthshire County Council's significant experience in delivering whole county LEADER and RDP activities but would also benefit both counties by sharing management and administrative structures for the two areas thus reducing administration and management costs. There are also numerous cross border projects in existence for example the joint Destination Marketing tourism campaign The Wye Valley and Vale of Usk, the Gwent Levels project and the Wales Coastal Path promotional activities where the two counties already work together. This new joint LEADER venture will therefore present an opportunity for increased coherence and increased benefits from economies of scale.

4.1.2 <u>Management and monitoring arrangements of the Strategy</u>

Given their previous experience in managing LEADER and RDP programmes, the Vale of Usk LAG and Newport City Council have appointed MCC to act as the Administrative Body in administrative and financial matters relating to the delivery of the Rural Development Programme EU funding entitlement for the period 2014 – 2020. A separate Collaboration Agreement exists determining the joint arrangements to discharge these functions.

Although the LAG is responsible for the overall delivery of the LDS the responsibility for the management of project activities will fall to the Administrative Body as detailed in the flow diagram, figure four below:

Figure 4 – Programme Management
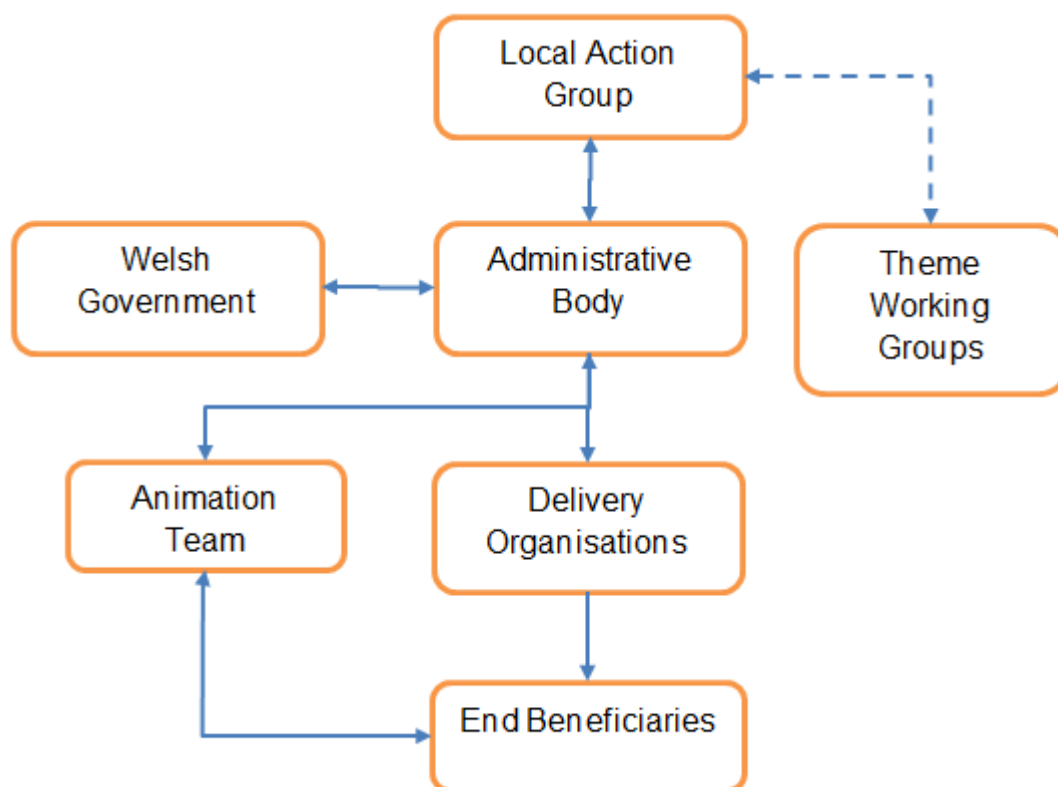
4.1.3 RDP Staffing Arrangements

In order to manage the programme effectively the Administrative Body will be responsible for:

- the recruitment and employment of the RDP staff engaged in the delivery of the Services;
- the training of staff to an appropriate level commensurate with the duties of the post;
- payment of remuneration; and
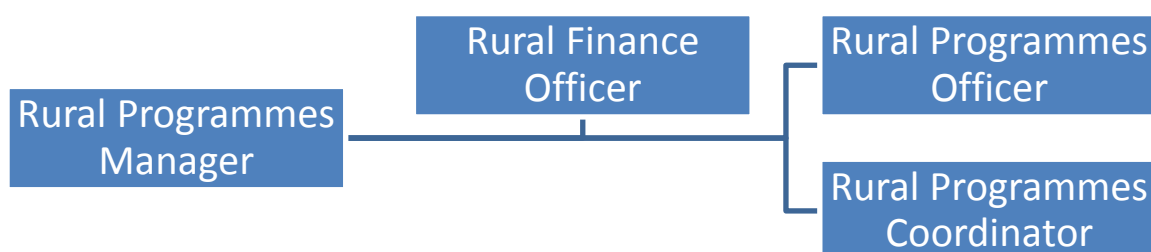- payment of other staff costs including accommodation and support services.

The Administrative Body shall have power to exercise all the rights of an employer in respect of the RDP staff and shall exercise all the usual establishment functions and overall control and supervision of such staff on behalf of the partners under the direction of the LAG.

The Administrative Body shall provide such accommodation, equipment and other moveable property required for the provision of the services by the RDP staff, together with such power, heat, telephone facilities and other services as are required. All staff costs incurred to be met from the running and animation costs equating to 25% of the LAG's financial allocation of RDP funding.

The Administrative Body may also commission 3rd party or delivery organisations to deliver projects on their behalf where specific expertise is required.

In terms of the Administrative Body staffing structure figure five below details a suggested organisational chart for which draft job descriptions have been developed. The draft job descriptions can be found in *Appendix Four*.

Figure 5 – Staffing Structure

```
┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ Rural Programmes │      │  Rural Finance   │──────│ Rural Programmes │
│     Manager      │──────│     Officer      │      │     Officer      │
└──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
                                                     ┌──────────────────┐
                                                     │ Rural Programmes │
                                                     │   Coordinator    │
                                                     └──────────────────┘
```

4.1.4 <u>RDP Staff Training Plan</u>

Although the need for a skills and training plan is recognised it is difficult to plan this out in the strategy as the team is not yet in place. However once the team has been appointed the following steps will be followed:

- Training needs analysis will be undertaken to identify the skills gaps or training needs in the team and prioritise them;
- Once identified the next step is to ask the team members what relevant skills they want to improve through training;
- Any training needed will need to be relevant and focused and guided by SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-limited) objectives;
- Learning preferences will also be taken into account as it is likely that each team member will prefer to learn differently. Different training options will be considered and training preferences acknowledged;

- A personal development plan will be formulated for each team member. This will help prioritise training needs to identify the best way to address them;
- Various options are likely to be considered e.g.:
  - 'Off the shelf' training for generic skills requirements e.g. marketing, capacity building, etc.
  - 'In house training' or 'on the job' training to enable team members to learn at pace and to apply new knowledge immediately.
  - 'Job Shadowing' to enable new employees to cover a lot of ground in a short space of time.
  - Mentoring to encourage team members to engage with others outside the team or MCC and consider different opportunities and solutions to problems.
  - Conferences, seminars, workshops and course so the RDP team members can engage with employees from other areas and benefit from cross border learning to discover how other RDP programmes are operating;
  - One line courses to enable team members to progress at their own pace and complete the course at work or home;
- A budget has been set aside within the running and animation costs to cover any external training required; and
- RDP team members will be asked to review their training experiences to ascertain if their training is relevant and appropriate and to discuss how their new skills can be implemented. This will be ascertained via regular one to ones or using MCC's 'Check in Check Out' appraisal process.

Taking into account all of the above it is the intention of MCC to use staff previously employed on the last RDP programme to deliver the 2014 2020 Programme, where the skills match is appropriate. These staff have significant experience of programme and project management having all been employed by MCC for in excess of two years in a similar capacity.

5. VALUE FOR MONEY

5.4 Financial Delivery Profiles

Please refer to attached Financial Delivery Profiles in *Appendix Five* which details the projected spend of the programme.

6. INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

6.1   Monitoring and Results

In *Appendix Five* a full list of performance indicators have been created of the results that are likely to be derived from the list of activities detailed in the Intervention Logic Table (*Appendix Three)* and the associated spend profile also detailed in *Appendix Five.*

Certain assumptions have been made in compiling these Indicators in terms of definitions. It has been assumed that 'Operations' is a project, rather than a **type of project activity** such as consultations, advice given, assistance given, awareness raising or dissemination etc. It has also been assumed that a community can relate to a geographical community, such as a village settlement or indeed a specialist geographical area such as an AONB, or indeed a cluster group. Finally, it has also been assumed that businesses can also include businesses within the social sector.

Higher level indicator figures have been given to those themes identified as priorities following wide community and business consultation as detailed in Section 3.1. Therefore it is expected that the strategy will focus primarily upon 'Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources' then 'Exploitation of digital technology' and so these are reflected in the higher performance indicator figures. It has also been assumed that activity on these themes will commence earlier in the programme.

It should be noted that performance indicator levels are very low in 2015. The preceding adventa LAG had over ten years' experience of delivering LEADER projects therefore members understand that it takes at least a year and sometimes longer for businesses and communities to build up a sufficiently strong relationship with the LAG before activity at any level commences, and then performance can be recorded. The indicators are therefore purposefully weighted towards the middle and end of the programme.

It should also be noted that the performance figures for 'Number of Jobs Created' throughout the programme, occurs at the end in 2020/2021. Again, this is purposeful and is based on a thorough working knowledge of delivering LEADER programmes of this nature. LEADER activity is 'bottom-up' and its very nature means that considerable facilitation and development needs to take place before jobs come to fruition.

In terms of Co-operation the adventa LAG currently delivers the 'Walking with Offa' project and the indicators given are based upon the knowledge gained through the delivery of this project. Again the weighting of the indicators is very much towards the middle and end of the programme period, as the LAG has learnt that when initially establishing a project, working across LAG areas, can take a significant period of time before benefits are felt 'on the ground' through the activity. In addition,

the 'number of LAG's involved in Co-operation' figure has been placed at a lower level due to the number of territories now combining LAG's and operating on a larger geographical scale.

6.2   Evaluation Plan

In line with the Welsh Government's 2014-2020 Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines, proposals for evaluating the progress of the strategy will focus on three key activities:

- Consolidation of baseline data;
- Regular Monitoring of performance data and indicators (formative evaluation); and
- Evaluation (Interim and Summative)

6.2.1 Consolidation of Baseline Data

As mentioned throughout this strategy the fact that the predecessor adventa LAG has been operational for over ten years means that there is a mountain of baseline data already in existence for Monmouthshire. Most recent is the Interim RDP 2007 – 2013 Business Plan evaluation which has formed the basis of LAG discussions for this new strategy. That said the situation in Newport is very different. Newport has not previously operated a LEADER programme therefore the first point in the LAG evaluation process will be to build on the key facts detailed in Section 1.1.2 and the community consultation (Section 7 below), identify gaps in information and then undertake a data capture exercise to address this.

6.2.2 Regular Monitoring of Performance Data

In assessing project and programme performance regular collection of information will be undertaken over the programme period using standardised collection methods. This will inform day to day management decisions of the team and allow staff and the LAG to identify where projects are failing to meet targets and provide insight into how the problem can be addressed. The information will also be sent to WG for inclusion in the Annual Implementation report and will also form the basis of the evaluation exercise.

The indicators detailed in *Appendix Four* are based on a number of assumptions that have been detailed in Section 6.1 above. Many assumptions have been based on past experience and judgement and all follow SMART principles. Currently only common RDP indicators have been included however the Administrative Body will work with the LAG and WG in future to identify and develop targeted and streamlined additional indicators that can be realistically and reliably collected to capture project specific outcomes.

<u>Monitoring Systems</u>

Systematic information and monitoring processes have already been established by the Administrative Body in the previous programme and are therefore robust. However when available, the Administrative Body shall use the electronic system developed by WG as per EC regulatory requirements, RDP staff will be trained accordingly. In addition, the Administrative Body will keep a record of the beneficiaries consent so that they can be contacted for future surveys and evaluation exercises.

6.2.3 <u>Evaluation</u>

The LAG recognise that the purpose of an evaluation is to make an overall assessment of the Vale of Usk programme however given previous experience on an Axis One project, the LAG would advocate a nationwide approach for evaluation. This has been previously discussed and agreed in principle by Local Authorities at all Wales LEADER events and would take the form of the appointment of one consultancy or consultancy partnership to undertake a Wales wide evaluation so that a consistent approach can be undertaken and results compared exactly. This will enable WG to produce a Wales wide evaluation that can support decision makers in making policy and strategy decision but will also allow WG to gain a fuller understanding of what's being delivered at a local level.

The LAG would therefore support the appointment of an all Wales Steering Group to oversee the evaluation on behalf of all LAGs as evidenced by the recent Task and Finish LEADER group that has been in place during the development of this RDP programme.

For it to be effective it is essential that all LAGs are engaged to identify requirements and ensure consistency. It is envisaged that resources can be pooled so that benefits of scale can be enjoyed by all and value for money obtained. It is envisaged that once the Steering Group has been established, a brief will be developed and agreed so that an independent consultancy or consultancy partnership can be employed and associated documents such as an evaluation plan, terms of reference, contracts etc. be produced.

It is envisaged that the following likely methods of evaluation will be employed:

- Analysis of baseline data
- Analysis of monitoring data
- Stakeholder interviews
- Focus groups
- Surveys and questionnaires

Once the evaluation documents have been produced it is anticipated that the reports will not only influence project implementation decisions on a local LAG territory level but also at an all Wales National level. It is envisaged that dissemination of results at a local level will be via website updates, networking events, seminars, etc. This

may also be replicated on a national scale by WG to ensure learning opportunities are maximised.

7. SUITABILITY OF INVESTMENT

7.1 Community Involvement

Figure Six below shows the approach and methodology the LAG adopted to ensure the various interests have been consulted in preparation of the strategy. The data has been taken from a Communications Plan, a copy of which can be made available on request.

Figure Six - Communication Approach and Methodology
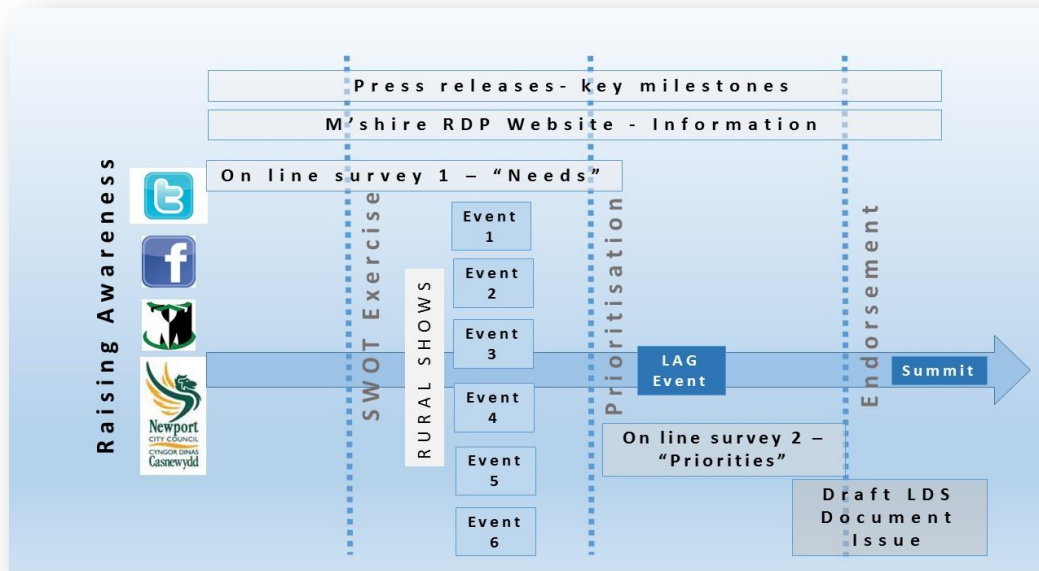
The process is based on four key steps:

1. Raising Awareness

2. SWOT Exercise

3. Prioritisation

4. Endorsement

Our specific target groups have been:

- Rural residents within Monmouthshire and Newport;

- Rural stakeholder groups and organisations;

- Formalised networks across the territory;

- Responsible officers within Monmouthshire County Council and Newport City Council that sit outside the Leader process, and other agencies and organisations.

7.1.1 Raising Awareness

To ensure stages 2 to 3 of the process were well attended and represented, there were a number of preparatory tasks that included i) liaison with respective communications teams at Monmouthshire and Newport Councils ii) Social media use and protocols iii) preparation of promotional flier and iv) Identification of existing networks and contacts across the rural area.

7.1.2 Social media and protocols

A number of Facebook and twitter accounts were used to inform people of ways to engage including community workshop dates, issuing the survey link and other updates. Protocols and agreement to content, frequency and handling of responses needs were agreed. Twitter account names used included: @adventamon, @monmouthshirecc, @newportcouncil, @chrisjonesregen.

7.1.3 Promotional Flier

To ensure everyone had the same information on how to engage with the LDS process, there was a need to develop a simple promotional flier electronically and printed. The fliers were distributed by email and in hard copy to groups, organisations, networks, elected members and the wider community.

Figure 7 - Promotional Flier

7.1.4 SWOT Exercise – Engagement

The SWOT Exercise was the main focus of engagement in relation to the LDS development stage, with the main opportunities based around:

- Completion of on-line survey – needs based;

- The 2 no. rural shows in Monmouth and Usk;

- The 6 no. community drop in sessions across the Vale of Usk as detailed on the promotional flier.

7.1.5 On-line Survey – Need

The on-line survey met a number of objectives:

- Raised awareness of the opportunity to get engaged in the Vale of Usk LDS process;

- Helped build a cross section of view from residents, businesses and community organisations;

- Obtained contact details for future development and delivery;

- Allowed people that cannot make face to face engagement opportunities to still engage.

The initial on-line survey was focussed on need and sought views from respondents on the strengths and weaknesses of the area and some rating questions on existing support and infrastructure. The on-line survey was promoted through social media, local press, email networks and through other publicity.

The initial survey ran parallel to the face to face engagement events, with it being available by tablets or through the survey postcard route. The survey closed on the 15th September 2014.

7.1.6 Rural Shows/Community Drop In Sessions

The Vale of Usk LAG attended two rural shows - i) Monmouthshire Show on the 28th August and ii) Usk Show on the 13th September. The format for the shows and the community drop in sessions involved

1. Introductory panels explaining the purpose and process;

2. Animation techniques to encourage people to talk about issues and opportunities, involving:

   a. Large map of the Vale of Usk area with issues and opportunities flags provided which members of the public filled in and pinned to the map;

   b. Simple spider charts for residents, business and community groups to weight and prioritise rural issues and themes;

   c. Large SWOT analysis;

   d. Provision of on-line survey through tablets and where Wi-Fi was not available, paper versions provided;

   e. Ideas post box.

7.2 Response and Evidence of Dialogue

Figure 8 - Evidence of Community Involvement and Dialogue
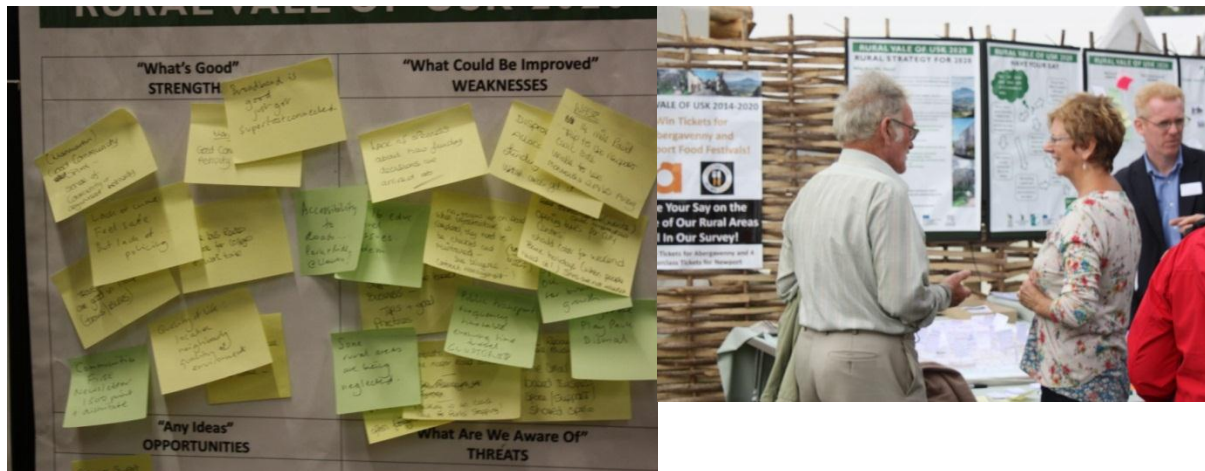
The community involvement process generated the following outputs:

- 8 no community drop in sessions/rural shows;
- 2 no press releases; and
- Over 50 specific social media uses with numerous retweets and mentions

In relation to engagement the following results were achieved:

- 317 people engaged with face to face through shows and community drop in sessions;
- 169 completed on-line survey over the period of one month; 25/75 split Newport/Monmouthshire; and
- 12 direct email correspondence on project ideas and general interest in the emerging programme

The following groups and organisations have been involved in the process, amongst others as detailed in Table Eleven below:

Table Eleven: Consultees

• Bee Friendly Monmouthshire	• Penallt Community Led Plan Steering Group
• Bridges Community Centre	• Raglan Community Led Plan Steering Group
• Graig Community Council	
• Llandogo Community Led Plan Steering Group	• Raglan Conservation Group
• Langstone Community Council	• Raglan Scouts
• Magor & Undy Community Council	• Raglan Village Hall & Recreation Association

• Marshfield Community Council	• RSPB Wales
• Mathern Village Hall Mathern Athletic Hall	• The Narth Community Led Plan Steering Group
• Mitchel Troy Village Hall	• The Narth Village Hall
• Monmouth Neighbourhood Police	• Trellech United Community Council
• Monmouth Off Street Project	• Usk Show Society
• Monmouth Town Council	• Vintage Vision
• Monmouthshire Meadows Group	• Severn Wye Energy Trust
• National Trust	• Wye Valley AONB
• Natural Resources Wales	

7.3 Prioritisation and LAG Meeting

On completion of the needs based phase of the LDS process, a synthesis of the community based SWOT weighting against LDS themes and project ideas was undertaken. This was presented to the LAG meeting on the 17th September where community/stakeholder organisations discussed the findings, emerging direction and action areas. Some of the charts and graphs shown in Figures 9 and 10 shows how we asked respondents to rate existing rural services, facilities, experiences and infrastructure with people also asked to visualise where they wish the territory to be in 2020 as well as looking at weighting of LDS themes.

Figures 9 & 10 - Evidence of Community Comment, Data, Analysis and Thematic Direction
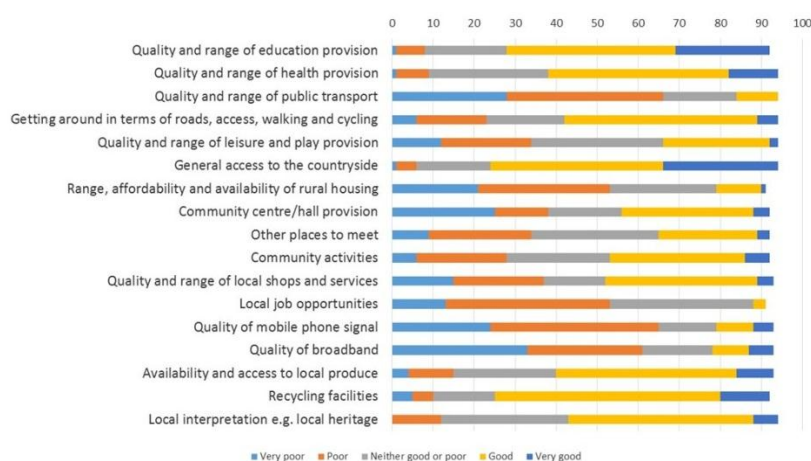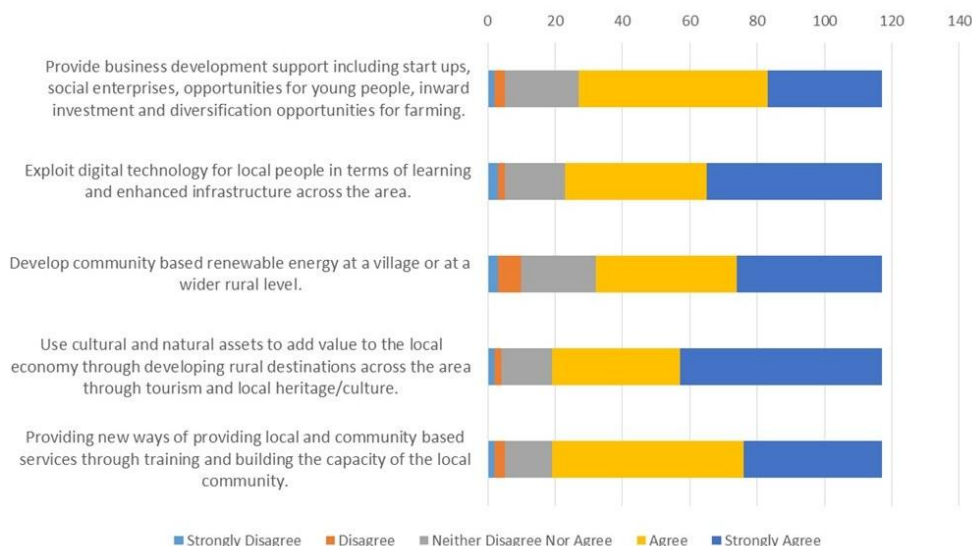
7.3.1 On-line Survey – Prioritisation

The LAG is committed to undertaking a second on-line survey to those people that completed the initial "needs" survey and to those that provided details at the rural shows and drop in sessions. This survey will ask people to sense-check the emerging priorities and activities for the LDS. Due to the tight timetable for LDS submission it is envisaged that this survey will be issued on the 6th October providing a short response period to rate and provide feedback on the priorities. The survey would be accompanied by a short executive summary of the LDS. The second on-line survey would assist us in terms of allowing feedback, maintaining longer term ownership as well as retaining interest in project delivery.

7.2 SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT has been created as part of the community and stakeholder involvement process. Responses have been aggregated from a combination of on-line survey, face to face engagement sessions and from LAG based workshops. Specific responses have been weighted in terms of frequency of response by showing a degree of frequency of 1 to 3, with 1 being mentioned at a normal level of frequency to 3 being emphasised or mentioned at a higher level of frequency by respondents. The full SWOT is detailed in Table Twelve below:

Table Twelve: SWOT

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
• Strong spatial location (3) • Communities are rural but still well connected (3) • Very active and strong sense of	• Location and connectivity across territory in terms of place, enterprise and residents/visitors (3) • Develop pilot hubs as a community focus, destination, integrated

community (3)

- Rural environment and landscape (3)
  - Beauty, unspoilt, high quality are key assets
  - Diverse – hills to river to coast
  - Living rural areas that are creative and produce
  - Specific designations and environmental assets such as SSIs, AONBs meadows, etc.
- Natural hubs or focal points cross the territory for community and visitors (3)
- Environment and lifestyle is a strong attraction for businesses and investment (3)
- Tourism experience is of the right quality and range due to investment to date (3)
- Unique identity – location (2)
- Strong social enterprise environment (2)
- Physical heritage/cultural assets (churches, castles, museums) (2)
- Good examples of community hubs and facilities (2)
- Enhanced walking and cycling provision but need for maintenance (2)
- Strong social capital (2)
- Recognition of need to change in terms of local service delivery (2)
- Local produce becoming more visible and known (2)
- Strong brands in food and cycling (2)
- High number of micro

transport, parking, collection, distribution, learning, advice, etc. (3)

- More superfast infrastructure (3)
- Demand for digital led hubs and on-line communities that sign you to physical places (3)
- Improve digital offer for visitors (3)
- Connect ICT with green energy activities (3)
- Better integrated tourism promotion across area (3)
- Need to improve rural infrastructure – signage, furniture, structures, etc. (3)
- Interest from groups and communities in digital infrastructure (3)
- Opportunities for developing/extending community transport (3)
- Use of underused land for pollination and local enterprise ideas (3)
- Sustainability of rural services, halls and buildings – local service delivery is key to viability (3)
- Greater use of social media and communications within communities (3)
- Develop local enterprise hubs – extension of village hall (3)
- Key strategic trails need to be supported through rural support e.g. Wales Coastal Path (3)
- Untapped leisure and tourism clusters e.g. St Pierre area, lakes, Wales Coastal Path, etc. (3)
- Support green vehicles and community transport (3)
- More promotion of good practice,

enterprises and businesses being run from home (2) • Diversity of business across territory (2) • Some digital experience e.g. Wikipedia, WIFI towns, community broadband (2) • Commitment from communities to renewables (2)	showcase and development studies on renewable projects (3) • Improve digital infrastructure and access for small businesses (3) • Extend farm/agri diversification and sustainability (3) • More mapping, community visioning support (3) • Bring back tradition e.g. orchards on levels (2) • Small renewable demonstration projects on village halls and community buildings (2) • More co-ordinated approach to supporting community energy schemes (2) • Additional rural housing to sustain communities, especially young people, that is in character and density (2) • Grow communities focussed on activity e.g. cycling community – local services, skills, guiding, etc. (2) • Woodland economy/management/community owned projects – small scale energy creation e.g. community bio-mass (2) • Opportunity for informal rural business support and networks (2) • Raise awareness of local creative, artisan, independent businesses and their products (2) • Making connections in terms of trails and links across the territory e.g. from Newport into Wentwood and into Usk Valley (2) • Integrated transport hubs e.g. realise Magor Railway Halt (2) • Develop new experience trails and products e.g. fashion and rural

WEAKNESSES	THREATS
industries (1) _(continued)_	

WEAKNESSES	THREATS
• Rural areas feel marginalised/neglected with urban centres having the focus (3)	• Aging population – impact on health and care (3)
• Poor broadband – speed coverage – restricting micro enterprises and home working; restricting other e-learning, on-line activity (3)	• Diminishing local services such as health and care, libraries (3)
• Mobile phone signal poor and limiting local growth and communication (3)	• Changes to school catchments is fragmenting communities (3)
• Fragmented and inconsistent community and public transport, resulting in isolation and lack of work opportunities and community cohesion (3)	• New housing is outstripping local infrastructure and services and damaging rural communities (3)
• Business support is too generic; we need more specialist advice (3)	• Loss of habitats – Monmouthshire Meadows (3)
• Digital isolation for specific communities that is impacting on access, poverty and skills gap (3)	• Use it or lose it – e.g. public transport (3)
• Lack of rail links/halts (3)	• Loss of staff and resources (2)
• Challenge of rurality for service delivery (3)	• Poorly located renewable energy schemes (2)
• Resilience – e.g. reliance on volunteers (2)	• Global economics (2)
• Poor infrastructure preventing business development (2)	
• Poor incentives for FIT and lack of loan finance for renewables (2)	
• Lack of awareness of community renewable opportunities (2)	
• Lack of green/"transition groups in rural areas"	
• Sustaining local initiatives e.g. Made in Monmouthshire –	

maintaining co-ordination is a challenge (2) • Absence of tourism promotion and infrastructure (2) • Tourism town focussed not across the territory (2) • Lack of business clusters (2) • Family tourism not seen to be that coherent (2) • People still don't like change (2) • Cycling networks fragmented in the levels (1) • Some town centres are under-performing which is having an impact on rural catchments (1) • Welsh language needs to be more visible in terms of physical identity and information, interpretation (1) • Rights of way access areas points have access points that are cut off that reduces attractiveness of area (1)	

8. CROSS CUTTING THEMES

8.1 <u>Cross-Cutting Themes</u>

All activity detailed within the strategy and the accompanying Intervention Logic Table (*Appendix Three)* is designed to give due regard to the RDP's cross-cutting themes.

The cross-cutting themes are defined as:

• Equal Opportunities
• Gender Mainstreaming
• Sustainable Development and
• Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

The LAG's commitment to all four of these themes is evidenced by their decision to include all five RDP themes within this strategy whilst also working to the RDP Focus Area: 'Promoting social inclusion poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

The reason for choosing this path is that it will enable the LAG to ensure that it operates in a transparent and fully inclusive manner providing maximum and equal opportunity for all.

In terms of the themes the following consideration will be given:

Equal Opportunities and Gender Balancing

All activities delivered through this programme will provide equal opportunities for all and recognise the needs of everyone. Steps will be taken to identify and remove barriers to participation by disadvantaged groups. Positive action will be taken to support and assist all groups to overcome barriers to their participation, including:

- Lack of role models and community support
- Lack of support for those with childcare and other caring needs
- Language deficiencies, particularly for those for whom English or Welsh is not a mother tongue
- Travel costs
- Lack of information about opportunities
- Access issues

The Administrative Body also adopts an equal opportunities policy framework, which is all embracing. This is fully reflected in the flexible working practices that will be adopted by the RDP staff. The LAG will also adopt positive action measures to engage with isolated individuals, for example, supporting disabled people, those with care responsibilities, and those experiencing rural isolation. Rural isolation is an issue in the LAG territory despite good transport links this can be particularly experienced by single parents, young people, disabled people and the elderly.

Gender balance is also something that the LAG takes seriously, in all project based work, on working groups and sub-groups as well as any appointments will also be a consideration. However the LAG accepts that equal opportunities are not restricted to the issue of gender. In terms of project delivery services targeted at supporting business development for women has already been recognised in the form of networking opportunities.

Environmental Sustainability

The LAG adopts the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development: 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The LAG's landscape is one of its key strengths and indeed opportunities. The LAG therefore views the RDP 2014 – 2020 as a further opportunity to capitalise sensitively on this most natural of assets. Activities will need to demonstrate how they support sustainable development and will have to consider their likely impact upon the environment.

Projects will be encouraged to link with the relevant Public Sector Sustainable Development Policies to help meet the challenge to provide more citizen based services such as for example, 'making the territory cleaner and greener'. This will

include activities such as supporting volunteer development to manage conservation areas, promoting green infrastructure to enhance the local environment, marketing and promoting local products, advice and support for community energy schemes, etc.

Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

As 'Promoting social inclusion poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas' is a key focus area for this strategy, advice and support for communities and individuals will be a key strand of project activity. This will take many forms but it is anticipated that examples will include opportunities to link with local business start-up schemes supporting individuals with specific needs; providing support and training to all sections of the territories communities on digital technology to combat digital exclusion and social isolation; investigation of time banking, resource sharing opportunities and support surgeries via the proposed 'community hub model' and generally enabling access to isolated individuals and groups that could benefit from enhanced support.

The Welsh Language

Following the community consultation and the impending National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny in 2016 the LAG are aware of the need to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh in this RDP programme.

The LAG is supportive of the Welsh Language Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015 and its aims to increase the use of the Welsh language to ensure that the Welsh Language should be treated no less favourably than the English language and that people in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so.

The use of Welsh in Project activities will therefore be encouraged with a view to broadening and strengthening the Welsh language and improving the experience of Welsh speakers. Examples include joint linguistic activities in digital development; promoting the welsh language in tourism literature and tourism ambassador programmes to further the 'sense of place' experience; and encouraging the private sector to embrace the Welsh language in their day to day activities.

8.2 Supporting the Uplands

As the LAG territory is bordered by Upland Areas it is envisaged that the following activities will take place:

- RDP staff will be encouraged to work with communities in the Uplands areas to bring forward projects that will assist target beneficiaries e.g. farming families, particularly in areas such as ICT exploitation given the move towards the online Basic Payment Scheme;
- Partnership and collaboration with other RDP schemes such as Agriscop, Farming Connect and organisation such as farming unions and Natural Resources Wales will also be encouraged to avoid duplication;

- Links will also be made with other bordering LAG territories for example Powys to identify opportunities for collaboration.

As discussed in the preface to the strategy there is the potential for the current LAG territory to grow if a wider partnership is to be formed with Torfaen. If this is the case then the Uplands Areas priorities will be considered as part of the prioritisation process.

9. LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

9.1 Mainstreaming Plan

As LEADER is an initiative which encourages innovation there is a need for the LAG to consider how the results of actions supported under LEADER can be disseminated. In addition the LAG also needs to consider how successful LEADER actions can be mainstreamed by other bodies to enable them to take them to the next stage of delivery.

Table Thirteen below details the five LEADER themes, the actions proposed under these themes (as detailed in the Intervention Logic Table in Appendix Three) and the potential bodies who have the potential to mainstream the activities.

Table Thirteen – <u>Mainstreaming Plan</u>

Theme One: Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources	
Type of Action to be Supported	**Action to be Mainstreamed to Whom**
1. To develop integrated media for rural tourism providers and links with destination management areas through training, mentoring and co-ordinating promotional material at a strategic and local level 2. To work with existing/emerging partnership projects that are developing natural and cultural asset led projects in terms of activity based tourism, heritage and cultural based tourism and look at ways of complementing local training, volunteering, guiding, environmental management 3. To develop local projects through groups such as social enterprises and through clustering activity	• Local Tourism Associations • Visit Wales • Local Authorities • WG e.g. ICT Exploitation Programme • Communities 2.0 • Protected Landscapes e.g. Wye Valley AONB, BBNP • Outdoor Education Operators • Private Sector cooperatives • Mentrau Iaith, Eisteddfod Cymru

tourism business so that a diverse range and quality of activity tourism is provided for a targeted segment of visitor

4. To support feasibility into new rural tourism products, facilities and attractions where support is given through feasibility, best practice exchange, etc.

5. To develop and manage natural assets that aids local economic prosperity and safeguards local biodiversity through volunteering support, training, marketing and promotion and networking with other groups across the territory

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Theme Two: Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains

Type of Action to be Supported	Action to be Mainstreamed to Whom
1. To develop rural business networks that provide specific sector support and forums for exchanging ideas and joint action 2. To develop a mentoring scheme for women in enterprise 3. To extend knowledge from Made in Monmouthshire and other food related initiatives into the wider territory that integrates experiences and develops unique offers in terms of food heritage and food linked to activity tourism 4. To develop social enterprises that meet gaps in rural basic services, local visitor offer and other gaps in the local market	• WG e.g. Business Wales, Agri Food • Visit Wales • Private sector cooperatives • Wales Cooperative • Mentrau Iaith,
5. To provide advice and support on digital technology in terms of on-line development, sales, linking to complementary businesses and developing local clusters 6. To explore the development of shared support facilities within	• WG e.g. Digital Wales (ICT Exploitation Programme), Housing and Regeneration • Communities 2.0 • Mentrau Iaith

local community hubs and enablement of WIFI and other measures to ensure reliable connectivity in rural places	
7. To develop an integrated on-line market place that connects hubs, places, producers, local businesses with urban centres and complements other WG initiatives in terms of TCP support	
8. To undertake research into local barriers to young people gaining employment in terms of mobility	• Local Authorities • WG Business Wales • Registered Social Landlords • Mentrau Iaith

Theme Three: Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services	
Type of Action to be Supported	Action to be Mainstreamed to Whom
1. To implement proposals from community led planning in Monmouthshire in terms of business case/feasibility planning development 2. To develop a shared toolkit scheme for rural communities in Newport, in addition to Monmouthshire in terms of rural community audits, mapping, action planning, etc. 3. To strongly align local services through community hubs and understand usage of local assets and how to maximise these in terms of value, patronage and loyalty 4. To share knowledge on developed initiatives in Monmouthshire such as community transport, local food, digital apps with new rural communities through network events and pilot projects 5. To showcase local products, services, knowledge and solutions through community hubs through physical engagement and through	• Local Authorities e.g. MCC Whole Place initiative • WG e.g. Tackling Poverty, Division, Digital Wales (ICT Exploitation) • Communities 2.0 • Community Transport initiatives e.g. MCC Grass Routes • Private sector cooperatives e.g. Made in Monmouthshire • Mentrau Iaith

virtual on-line sharing

6. To explore community hubs as a places to distribute and collect products that meet specific local gaps in services and ensure accessibility for all
7. To develop digitally led outreach projects that up skill rural communities in access, content management, social media integration, dynamic information, etc.

Theme Four: Renewable energy at Community level	
Type of Action to be Supported	**Action to be Mainstreamed to Whom**
1. To implement proposals from the respective Monmouthshire's Action Plans for Sustainability (MAPs) undertaken by Severn Wye energy 2. To develop demonstration projects associated with renewable energy with community hubs, transport, local facilities 3. To raise awareness of renewable energy initiatives and solutions amongst rural communities through local promotion 4. To establish networks with farmers and landowners to investigate likely supply and link to community led demand in terms of underused resources 5. To promote low energy approach to visitors to the area in terms of consumption and awareness of alternative energy generation being provided 6. Consideration of RHI 7 year capital grants available to communities and householders	• WG e.g. Farming Connect, Natural Resources Wales • Severn Wye Energy, Gwent Energy CIC, etc. • Carbon Trust, Ynni'r Fro, Renew Wales

Theme Five: Exploitation of digital technology	
Type of Action to be Supported	**Action to be Mainstreamed to Whom**
1. To provide training and support for rural communities in digital technology 2. To support farmers and land based producers with ICT support and diversification opportunities 3. To provide sector specific support in terms of short supply chain development, marketing, B2B and clustering local enterprises through digital mediums 4. To provide e-learning opportunities in digital technology through rural IT clubs linked to coffee mornings/ afternoon teas, etc. 5. To develop community based tourism interpretation initiatives that up skills communities in terms of content development and integration with visitor facing web resources 6. To trial new digital products through short leasing and market test ideas in terms of digital uptake, community learning, local economic development, amongst others **7.** To explore the feasibility of linking rural producers and businesses with town/urban based web portals in terms of buy local with links to loyalty and secondary benefits	• WG e.g. Tackling Poverty, Division, Digital Wales (ICT Exploitation), Farming Connect, Visit Wales • National Farming Union, Farmers Union of Wales • Communities 2.0 • Mentrau Iaith • Private sector cooperatives e.g. Made in Monmouthshire • Protected Landscapes e.g. Wye Valley AONB, BBNP • Local Authorities

SECTION 10 – DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

I am acting with the authority of the Local Action Group and certify to the best of my knowledge and belief the information provided in this Local Development Strategy application and supporting documentation are true and correct and the application for financial assistance is for the minimum required to enable the project to proceed.

I undertake to notify the Welsh Government in advance of carrying out any changes to the nature of this project.

I also confirm that I am not aware of any reason why the project may not proceed and that the commitments and activities can be achieved within the timescales indicated.

Local Action Group (LAG) Representative

Signed:	
Name:	
Chair/Deputy Chair LAG:	
Date:	

Administrative Body Representative

|	
Signed:	
Name:	
Position in Administrative Body:	
Date:	

A signed hard copy of the Local Development Strategy must be received at the address below no later than **30 September 2014**

Scheme Management Unit, Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. SY23 3UR

Please submit an electronic copy to: LEADER2014-2020@wales.gsi.gov.uk
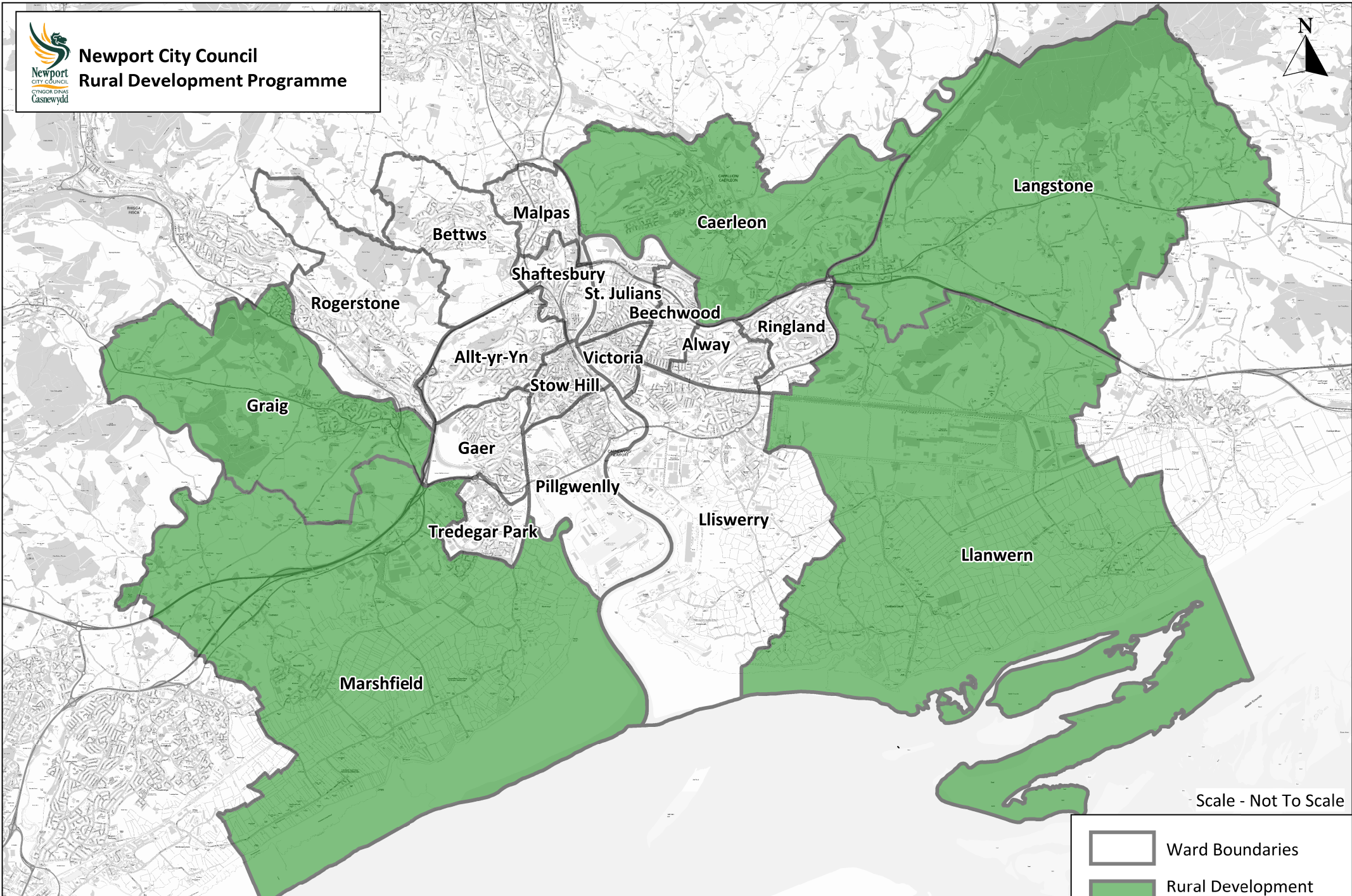
Monmouthshire Wards

KEY
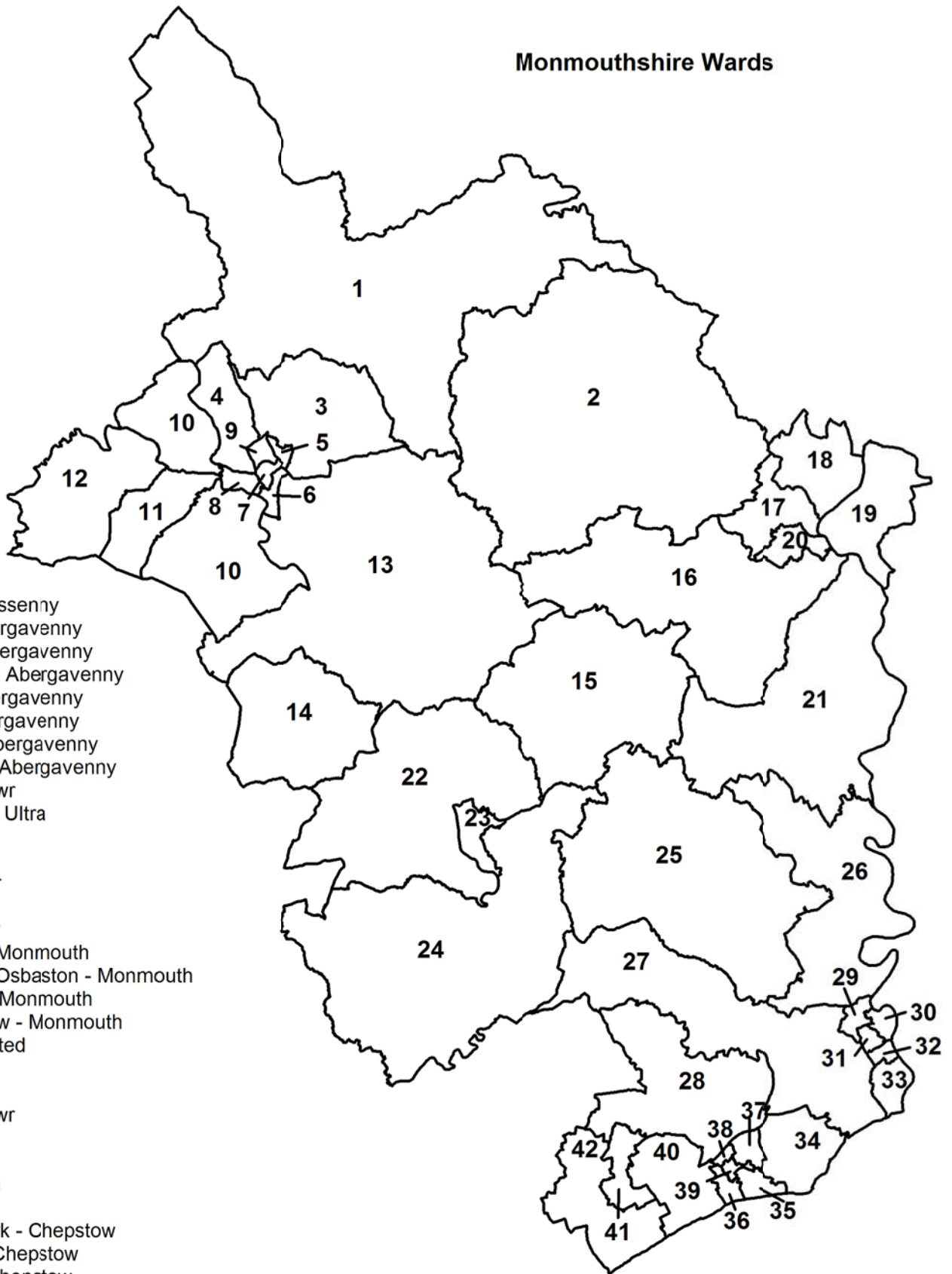
1. Crucorney
2. Llantilio Crossenny
3. Mardy - Abergavenny
4. Cantref - Abergavenny
5. Croesonen - Abergavenny
6. Castle - Abergavenny
7. Priory - Abergavenny
8. Grofield - Abergavenny
9. Lansdown - Abergavenny
10. Llanfoist Fawr
11. Llanwenarth Ultra
12. Llanelly Hill
13. Llanover
14. Goetre Fawr
15. Raglan
16. Mitchel Troy
17. Drybridge - Monmouth
18. Dixton with Osbaston - Monmouth
19. Wyesham - Monmouth
20. Overmonnow - Monmouth
21. Trellech United
22. Llanbadoc
23. Usk
24. Llangybi Fawr
25. Devauden
26. St Arvans
27. Shirenewton
28. Caerwent
29. St Kingsmark - Chepstow
30. St Mary's - Chepstow
31. Larkfield - Chepstow
32. St Christopher's - Chepstow
33. Thornwell - Chepstow
34. Portskewett
35. Severn - Caldicot
36. West End - Caldicot
37. Caldicot Castle - Caldicot
38. Dewstow - Caldicot
39. Green Lane - Caldicot
40. Rogiet
41. The Elms - Magor with Undy
42. Mill - Magor with Undy

Newport City Council
Rural Development Programme

N

Malpas
Bettws
Caerleon
Langstone
Shaftesbury
Rogerstone
St. Julians
Beechwood
Ringland
Allt-yr-Yn
Victoria
Alway
Graig
Stow Hill
Gaer
Pillgwenlly
Lliswerry
Llanwern
Tredegar Park
Marshfield

Scale - Not To Scale

Ward Boundaries

Rural Development Programme

Appendix Three

INTERVENTION LOGIC TABLE (linked to Section 3.1 of the LDS)

Name of LAG: Vale of Usk
Date Completed/Updated: September 2014

Development Needs / Opportunities	Specific Objective	Strategic Fit	Type of actions to be supported – SMART actions, state where co-operation action is envisaged	Outputs (from LDS Guidance Monitoring Framework section plus additional indicators/targets set by LAG)	Output Target	Contribution to cross-cutting themes	Who will be involved in the delivery	Timeline (start-finish)
Theme 1: Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources								
• Need for integration of rural tourism product in terms of information, interpretation, on-line resources; • Spatial opportunities in terms of key strategic trails such as Wales Coastal Path; • Opportunities to build and integrate activity based tourism such as walking, cycling, etc; • Specific needs in terms of developing new attractions and experiences, e.g. farm experiences, tree-houses, cycle guiding, etc; • Need to upskill rural tourism providers in terms of sense of place training and becoming local ambassadors • Need to safeguard and manage natural assets that forms part of visitor offer and relate these to village services in terms of integration and local enterprise e.g. meadows, areas of biodiversity	• To maximise the area's visitor potential through integrating experiences, products and networks focussing on out of season opportunities;	– Partnership for Growth – The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism – 2013-2020 – Abergavenny Visitor Experience Development Plan - Adventa – Monmouthshire Destination Management Plan – Monmouthshire County Council – Newport Destination Management Action Plan – Newport City Council – Caerleon Destination Management Plan – Newport City Council – Standing Up for Newport - Newport City Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017 – Living Levels Project – Pollinator Action Plan – Welsh Government – Pollinator Implementation Plan – Welsh Government	1. To develop integrated media for rural tourism providers and links with destination management areas through training, mentoring and co-ordinating promotional material at a strategic and local level 2. To work with existing/emerging partnership projects that are developing natural and cultural asset led projects in terms of activity based tourism, heritage and cultural based tourism and look at ways of complementing local training, volunteering, guiding, environmental management 3. To develop local projects through groups such as social enterprises and through clustering activity tourism business so that a diverse range and quality of activity tourism is provided for a targeted segment of visitor 4. To support feasibility into new rural tourism products, facilities and attractions where support is given through feasibility, best practice exchange, etc 5. To develop and manage natural assets that aids local economic prosperity and safeguards local biodiversity through volunteering support, training, marketing and promotion and networking with other groups across the territory	• Number of operations • Number of businesses assisted • Number of communities assisted • Number of jobs created	90 24 9 4	• Encourage EO & GM through intergenerational local involvement • Build capacity in local tourism organisations addressing particularly women • Production of bi-lingual information • Develop products that are sensitive and enhance the natural environment • Encourage involvement from isolated individual	RDP Animation Team and Sector Specific	January 2015 – December 2020

					s • Offer skills develome nt opportunit ies to enhance employm ent opportunit ies • Establish open platform web resources to encourag e local communi cation, offer training if required		

Theme 2: Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains								
Development Needs / Opportunities	**Specific Objective**	**Strategic Fit**	**Type of actions to be supported** – SMART actions, state where co-operation action is envisaged	**Outputs** (from LDS Guidance Monitoring Framework section plus additional indicators/targets set by LAG)	**Output Target**	**Contribution to cross-cutting themes**	**Who will be involved in the delivery**	**Timeline (start-finish)**
• Lack of informal rural business support • Need for more digital support in terms of advice, design and planning • Opportunities to explore new clusters and B2B working • Business support for women in enterprise through mentoring and coaching • Issues related to mobility in young people and how local transport can overcome these barriers • Support for producers and land based in relation to ICT support, diversification and signposting to process and marketing advice • Opportunity to link proposed broadband upgrades with opportunities for wifi hubs and rural enterprise centres linked to community hubs • Opportunities to develop local on-line sales of products and services that are virtual and physical in relation to hubs e.g. local click and collect	• *To identify pre-commercial rural enterprises to engage through a rural mentoring network, business to business supply network, targeted towards sector specific beneficiaries;*	– Food and Drink Action Plan – Welsh Government – Local Sourcing Action Plan – Welsh Government – ICT Strategy for Wales – Welsh Government – Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy – Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 – Monmouthshire County Council – Single Integrated Plan – Newport City Council – Newport Economic Development Plan 2011-2015 – Newport City Council – Digital Inclusion Stronger Communities – Wales Co-operative Centre	1. To develop rural business networks that provide specific sector support and forums for exchanging ideas and joint action 2. To provide advice and support on digital technology in terms of on-line development, sales, linking to complementary businesses and developing local clusters 3. To develop a mentoring scheme for women in enterprise 4. To undertake research into local barriers to young people gaining employment in terms of mobility 5. To extend knowledge from Made in Monmouthshire and other food related initiatives into the wider territory that integrates experiences and develops unique offers in terms of food heritage and food linked to activity tourism 6. To develop social enterprises that meet gaps in rural basic services, local visitor offer and other gaps in the local market 7. To explore the development of shared support facilities within local community hubs and enablement of WIFI and other measures to ensure reliable connectivity in rural places 8. To develop an integrated on-line market place that connects hubs, places, producers, local businesses with urban centres and complements other WG initiatives in terms of TCP support	• Number of operations • Number of farm holdings assisted • Number of businesses assisted • Number of communities assisted • Number of jobs created	74 5 85 5 2	• Supporting underrepresented groups with services e.g. business start ups • Opportunities to trail enterpreneurship and new products with young people, young farmers, etc. • Opportunities to add value to local products • Consider affordable transport options, care options, etc. when offering courses to isolated and vulnerable groups • Offer intergenerational mentorship opportunities	RDP Animation Team and Sector Specific	January 2015 – December 2020

Theme 3: Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services								
Development Needs / Opportunities	Specific Objective	Strategic Fit	Type of actions to be supported – SMART actions, state where co-operation action is envisaged	Outputs (from LDS Guidance Monitoring Framework section plus additional indicators/targets set by LAG)	Output Target	Contribution to cross-cutting themes	Who will be involved in the delivery	Timeline (start-finish)
• Sustainability of community facilities is a constant challenge • Rural isolation in new rural areas such as Newport as well as known rural communities • Recruitment and retention of active volunteers • Still demand for community transport linked to employment, heath, local services • Lack of digital infrastructure and knowledge within rural communities • Opportunities to integrate transport with local services and visitor offer • Opportunities to apply community led planning in terms of project specific activity • Rural villages and places can provide a focus for demonstration and best practice such as renewable • Need to address rural poverty issues such as advice surgeries, social drops in, digital exclusion, access to fresh produce, etc	• To work with rural communities to enable and facilitate a self-help rural coaching network, to identify and address future needs thereby providing an opportunity to explore new ways of providing non-statutory local services;	– Bryn-Y-Cwm Whole Place Plan – Monmouthshire County Council – Seven for Severnside Whole Place Plan - Monmouthshire County Council – ICT Strategy for Wales – Welsh Government – Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy – Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 – Monmouthshire County Council – Single Integrated Plan – Newport City Council – Standing Up for Newport - Newport City Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017 – Digital Inclusion Stronger Communities – Wales Co-operative Centre	1. To implement proposals from community led planning in Monmouthshire in terms of business case/feasibility planning development 2. To develop a shared toolkit scheme for rural communities in Newport, in addition to Monmouthshire in terms of rural community audits, mapping, action planning, etc 3. To strongly align local services through community hubs and understand usage of local assets and how to maximise these in terms of value, patronage and loyalty 4. To share knowledge on developed initiatives in Monmouthshire such as community transport, local food, digital apps with new rural communities through network events and pilot projects 5. To showcase local products, services, knowledge and solutions through community hubs through physical engagement and through virtual on-line sharing 6. To explore community hubs as a places to distribute and collect products that meet specific local gaps in services and ensure accessibility for all 7. To develop digitally led outreach projects that upskill rural communities in access, content management, social media integration, dynamic information, etc	• Number of operations • Number of businesses assisted • Number of communities assisted • Number of jobs created	25 4 11 1	• One stop advice support at community venues to address social exclusion and tackle poverty • Support for community transport schemes • Volunteering opportunities for local environment enhancements, time banking, outreach services, etc.	RDP Animation Team and Sector Specific	January 2015 – December 2020

Theme 4: Renewable energy at Community level								
Development Needs / Opportunities	**Specific Objective**	**Strategic Fit**	**Type of actions to be supported** – SMART actions, state where co-operation action is envisaged	**Outputs** (from LDS Guidance Monitoring Framework section plus additional indicators/targets set by LAG)	**Output Target**	**Contribution to cross-cutting themes**	**Who will be involved in the delivery**	**Timeline (start-finish)**

• Need for more awareness raising and education on renewable energy benefits
• Opportunities to build demand for biofuel and biomass
• Opportunities to build small scale community heating systems
• Need to increase the number of community hub ASHP,
• Opportunities for hydro, PV and wind at a community level
• Links from woodland management to biomass and local village hub facilities
• Lack of visibility of community level programmes
• Opportunities for co-operative buying
• Lack of local energy groups such as Transition Groups in rural communities
• Ideas around green vehicles and community transport
• Opportunities for demonstration and best practice
	To identify community hubs that can demonstrate the use of renewable energy and capitalising on natural assets e.g. community woodland, biomass.	– One Wales, One Planet – Welsh Government
		– Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition – Welsh Government
		– Sustainable Development Policy – Monmouthshire County Council
		– Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Strategy
		– RHI domestic and business initiatives
		– New Landlords legal requirements on EPC
		– Severn Wye Energy Agency initiatives
		– Coed Cymru woodland plans
		– Monmouthshire's Action Plans for Sustainability
		    o Llandogo
		    o Mardy
		    o Portskewett
		    o Raglan
		    o Skenfrith
		    o Wyesham
		– Standing Up for Newport - Newport City Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017
		– Newport Economic Development Strategy 2011-2015 – Newport City Council
			1. To implement proposals from the respective Monmouthshire's Action Plans for Sustainability (MAPs) undertaken by Severn Wye energy
			2. To develop demonstration projects associated with renewable energy with community hubs, transport, local facilities
			3. To raise awareness of renewable energy initiatives and solutions amongst rural communities through local promotion
			4. To establish networks with farmers and landowners to investigate likely supply and link to community led demand in terms of underused resources
			5. To promote low energy approach to visitors to the area in terms of consumption and awareness of alternative energy generation being provided
			6. Consideration of RHI 7 year capital grants available to communities and householders
				• Number of operations
				• Number of businesses assisted
				• Number of communities assisted
				• Number of jobs created
					40
					10
					
					5
					
					1
						• Dissemination of information which is accessible for all
						• Engagemen of young people, farming community, etc.
						• Opportunities to link ewith business programmes e.g. start-ups
						• Advice on tackling fuel poverty e.g. community renewable schemes
							RDP Animation Team and Sector Specific	January 2015 – December 2020

Theme 5: Exploitation of digital technology								
Development Needs / Opportunities	Specific Objective	Strategic Fit	Type of actions to be supported – SMART actions, state where co-operation action is envisaged	Outputs (from LDS Guidance Monitoring Framework section plus additional indicators/targets set by LAG)	Output Target	Contribution to cross-cutting themes	Who will be involved in the delivery	Timeline (start-finish)
• Need for better broadband and mobile phone coverage • Poor connectivity is limiting social and economic well-being in rural communities in terms of access to daily services, health, learning, communication, etc • Rural communities have limited access to digital facilities in terms of group based learning, remote access, digital printing, video conferencing, etc • Opportunities for rural communities to support the isolated and vulnerable • Rural enterprises see the opportunity for shared digital hubs in terms of networking, shared solutions and retaining knowledge and expenditure • Increasing needs of digitally aware visitors to destination management area • Co-relationship between wider rural and market towns and urban centres with the need to integrate in terms of buy local and short supply chain integration • Need for ICT support for farmers in terms of farm management and returns to WG and EC • Opportunities for farming cooperatives to	• To develop a connected territory that links rural hubs and places through digital technology, up-skilling communities for community and social benefit, whilst addressing exclusion and isolation;	– Bryn-Y-Cwm Whole Place Plan – Monmouthshire County Council – Seven for Severnside Whole Place Plan - Monmouthshire County Council – ICT Strategy for Wales – Welsh Government – Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy – Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 – Monmouthshire County Council – Single Integrated Plan – Newport City Council – Digital Inclusion Stronger Communities – Wales Co-operative Centre – Superfastcyrmu Wales broadband scheme – Town Centre Partnership Fund – Welsh Government – Newport Destination Management Action Plan – Newport City Council	1. To provide training and support for rural communities in digital technology 2. To support farmers and land based producers with ICT support and diversification opportunities 3. To provide sector specific support in terms of short supply chain development, marketing, B2B and clustering local enterprises through digital mediums 4. To provide e-learning opportunities in digital technology through rural IT clubs linked to coffee mornings/ afternoon teas, etc 5. To develop community based tourism interpretation initiatives that upskills communities in terms of content development and integration with visitor facing web resources 6. To trial new digital products through short leasing and market test ideas in terms of digital uptake, community learning, local economic development, amongst others 7. To explore the feasibility of linking rural producers and businesses with town/urban based web portals in terms of buy local with links to loyalty and secondary benefits	• Number of operations • Number of businesses assisted • Number of communities assisted • Number of jobs created	86 100 16 2	• Opportunities to address digital exclusion and social isolation issues via ICT training support • Opportunity to enable community ICT provision • Use of recycled and low energy ICT equipment to reduce environmental impact	RDP Animation Team and Sector Specific	January 2015 – December 2020

supply to on-line local markets • Opportunity for interpretation to be on-line and for communities to create content in terms of sense of place, local heritage and culture, storytelling and use of technology such as augmented reality							

Appendix Four: <u>RDP Staff Draft Job Descriptions</u>

Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	**Rural Programmes Manager**
GRADE:	**BAND I: SCP 37- 41 £31,160 - £34,894**
LOCATION:	**@Innovation House, Magor**
REPORTS TO:	**Head of Economy and Enterprise/Business and Enterprise Manager**

JOB PURPOSE: To manage the delivery of the Rural Development Programme within the LAG territory

ACCOUNTABLE

AIM

To manage all elements in delivering the Wales Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 on behalf of the Local Action Group. This includes any future community related rural development support schemes. The post will be on a full time basis (37 hours per week).

OBJECTIVES

1. To be responsible for the Administrative Body role for the Local Action Group (LAG) in respect of the delivery of all activities under the Wales Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP).

2. To ensure effective collaboration between Authorities and stakeholders within the LAG territory.

3. To represent the LAG in negotiations with The Welsh Government and other organisations in respect of operating procedures under the RDP.

4. To monitor other funding streams to ensure that the LAG territory benefits from other potential funding to support RDP activity and publish such information to potential partners advising them of specific funding relevant to their project development.

5. To prepare consultation responses in respect of RDP related European programmes for submission to Welsh Government, Wales Local Government Association, and European Commission.

6. To recruit, select, manage and support Project team to undertake delivery activities within the RDP ensuring compliance accordance with European, WG and MCC procurement rules.

7. To authorise financial claims and other relevant financial and performance documentation to ensure the smooth delivery of the programme.

8. To ensure that all accounting procedures are adhered to in the operation of the RDP programme.

9. To prepare and monitor budgets required for the operation of the RDP within the LAG territory.

10. To prepare and present reports and other documentation on the operation of the programme.

11. To promote best practice through awareness raising and highlighting exemplar projects.

12. To ensure the promotion and implementation of the principles of equal opportunities in relation to employment and service delivery issues.

Person Specification

Department: **Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise**

Post Title: **Rural Programmes Manager**

Post ID:

Grade: **BAND I: SCP 37- 41 £31,160 - £34,894**

Must be able to evidence and demonstrate the following:

1. To be educated to Degree or equivalent level in a related field or have significant relevant experience;

2. At least 3 years experience of dealing with Rural Development Programmes or similar European programmes;

3. Practical evidence and previous experience of how projects and tasks need to be managed within a dynamic environment;

4. Significant experience and understanding of financial management and financial regulations;

5. Effective and efficient written and verbal communication skills with experience of writing various correspondence, reports and other documentation. In addition, will possess effective and efficient presentation skills;

6. The ability to use and apply IT applications in their daily work, e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and have a sound knowledge of communication applications through internal and external email;

7. Experience of effectively managing a team, setting priorities and monitoring outcomes;

8. Effective and efficient inter-personal skills and working effectively within a team;

9. Experience of being able to use their initiative and be involved in a wide range of work;

10. Must be willing to work with local communities, businesses and stakeholders and have the necessary skills to guide, interpret and assist in the delivery of their ideas and projects;

11. An effective understanding of how local government works and how other agencies and organisations contribute to the delivery of economic development;

12. To be able to work to tight deadlines, challenge ways of working and strive for improvement in the delivery of economic improvements; and

13. Must be willing to abide by the principles and practice of quality of opportunity as laid down in the Authority's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Rural Programmes Finance Officer**

GRADE: **BAND G: SCP 29-33 £24,892 - £28,127**

LOCATION: **@Innovation House, Magor**

REPORTS TO: **Rural Programmes Manager**

JOB PURPOSE: To undertake the financial role for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 within the Local Action Group (LAG) areas covering Newport & Monmouthshire.

ACCOUNTABLE   The post-holder will be accountable to the Rural Programmes Manager

AIM

To manage the day to day delivery of the finances in relation to the LAG under the Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020 in an efficient and effective manner. The post holder will be expected to be full time employed (37 hours per week) in the management of the financial elements of the LAG's Rural Development Programme.

OBJECTIVES

1. To manage and maintain financial agreements with delivery organisations on behalf of the LAG

2. To manage the internal purchase order and goods receipt system and provide project staff with timely and accurate updates on their project profiles

3. To provide the Rural Programmes Manager with access to regular financial updates and profiles of project progress alongside project delivery staff

4. To be responsible for the financial processes of projects by evaluating, monitoring and recommending any necessary changes for the expenditure of approved projects.

5. To be innovative and creative with the financial systems whilst adhering to general guidelines.

6. To prepare reports and other documentation on the analysis and performance of the individual projects and the whole programme

7. To prepare all claims and financial monitoring reports for submission to Welsh Government within pre-set deadlines on behalf of the LAG

8. To maintain all financial records relating to the projects and programmes particularly in relation to both internal and external audits

9. To assist with the financial demands of the tendering and procurement requirements and processes

10. To be the main point of contact with the Welsh Government on financial matters relating to the programme

11. To organise relevant financial presentations and reports for the LAG

12. To provide advice on financial matters in particular where the content and outcomes are not well established by promoting best practice through detailed assessment and evaluation. Accuracy of advice given concerning financial reporting and monitoring must consider the effects on other individuals or organisations

13. To ensure the promotion and implementation of the principles of equal opportunities in relation to employment and service delivery issues

Person Specification

Department: **Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise**

Post Title: **Rural Programmes Finance Officer**

Post ID:

Grade: **BAND G: SCP 29-33 £24,892 - £28,127**

Must be able to evidence and demonstrate the following:

1. To be educated to Degree or equivalent level in financial accounting or a related field or have significant relevant experience

2. Effective and efficient inter-personal skills and working effectively within a team.

3. Effective and efficient written and verbal communication skills with experience of writing various correspondence, reports and other documentation. In addition, will possess effective and efficient presentation skills.

4. To have experience and understanding of financial management and financial regulations relating to domestic and EU funding.

5. The ability to use and apply to a high level ICT applications in their daily work, in particular MsExcel. To have a sound knowledge of other Microsoft products such as MsWord, and other communication applications through internal and external email.

6. Experience of being able to use their initiative and be involved in a wide range of work.

7. Practical evidence and previous experience of how projects and tasks need to be managed within a dynamic environment.

8. Must be willing to work with project delivery staff, delivery agents and local communities in the LAG territories and have the necessary skills to guide, interpret and assist in the finance aspects of their projects.

9. An effective understanding of how local government works and how other agencies and organisations contribute to the delivery of economic development.

10. To be able to work to tight deadlines, likes to challenge ways of working and strives to aim for improvement in the delivery of economic improvements to the LAG territories.

11. Must be willing to abide by the principles and practice of equality of opportunity as laid down in the Authority's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Monmouthshire Economy and Enterprise

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Rural Programmes Officer**

GRADE: **BAND G: SCP 29-33 £24,892 - £28,127**

LOCATION: **@Innovation House, Magor**

REPORTS TO: **Rural Programmes Manager**

JOB PURPOSE: To assist the LAG animation project (20%) and the Implementation project (80%) as part of the Rural Development Programme 2014 to 2020

ACCOUNTABLE   The post-holder will be accountable to the Rural Programmes Manager

AIM

To manage the day to day organisation of, and provide support to the Local Action Group, assisting in the promotion of the LAG programme. Assist in the delivery of RDP projects as dictated by the LAG, maintaining the monitoring data for the project delivery, whilst providing financial management data to the Rural Programmes Finance Officer (37 Hours per week to be split across animation (20%) and implementation (80%))

OBJECTIVES
LAG Animation

1. To organise, attend and service Local Action Group (LAG) Meetings

2. To draft clear and concise minutes and prepare reports as and when required

3. To establish effective working relationships with Welsh Government and other partners and stakeholders

4. Promote the LAG, collate case studies, update website, recruit new members and manage membership in line with RDP sectoral requirements

Project Delivery

1. To assess the viability of new projects, working with businesses, communities and stakeholders to develop ideas and present those ideas to the LAG

2. To foster and grow relationships with local communities, businesses and stakeholders in order to effectively deliver and manage the project in a 'bottom up' approach

3. Create and maintain contact databases to assist in the promotion and management of the Programme

4. To work jointly with project delivery team members and the Rural Programmes Manager to ensure cohesion across the Programmes' range of activities

5. To work closely with other members of the team in a flexible way across job boundaries and to support the development of team working

6. To undertake appropriate promotional activities to businesses and communities as part of a plan developed with the Rural Programmes Manager and other team members

7. To assist in the development and implementation of a communications strategy and the promotion of the programme as a whole. Assisting with marketing initiatives and publicity material as appropriate, including attendance at exhibitions

8. To manage and maintain project evaluation and monitoring data as defined by the Rural Programmes Manager

9. To maintain budgets and report on a regular basis to the Rural Programmes Manager and Rural Programmes Finance Officer on project finance to enable the accurate management of project finances and budgets

10. To ensure the promotion and implementation of the principles of equal opportunities in relation to employment and service delivery issues

Person Specification

Department: Monmouthshire Economy and Enterprise

Post Title: Rural Programmes Officer

Post ID:

Grade: BAND G: SCP 29-33 £24,892 - £28,127

Must be able to evidence and demonstrate the following:

1. Degree or equivalent and experience of project delivery preferably in a rural environment

2. Experience of developing and delivering innovative projects/events

3. Practical evidence and previous experience of how projects and tasks need to be managed within a dynamic environment.

4. Must be willing to work with project delivery team, delivery agents and local communities and businesses in the LAG territories and have the necessary skills to guide, interpret and assist in all aspects of their projects

5. Experience/knowledge of various marketing communication methods including social media

6. Experience of working as a facilitator of groups to deliver projects/events

7. Effective and efficient interpersonal and communication skills

8. Ability to be flexible and respond to changing circumstances

9. A commitment to putting equal opportunities policies into practice

10. Knowledge of and experience in practice of rural and community economic development issues

11. Experience of and commitment to multi-agency work

12. Experience of regular ICT working using word processing, email and the updating of websites.

13. Knowledge of spreadsheets and databases would be an advantage

14. Experience of monitoring and evaluation

15. To be able to work to tight deadlines, challenge ways of working and strive to aim for improvement in the delivery of economic improvements to the LAG territories.

16. Must be willing to abide by the principles and practice of equality of opportunity as laid down in the Authority's Equal Opportunities Policy.

17. Possess a current full driving license. The post-holder must have continuous access to a car

Monmouthshire Economy and Enterprise

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Rural Programmes Co-ordinator**

GRADE: **BAND F: SCP 25-29 £21,734-£24,892**

LOCATION: **@Innovation House, Magor**

REPORTS TO: **Rural Programmes Manager**

JOB PURPOSE: To assist in the delivery of the Rural Development Plan 2014-2020

ACCOUNTABLE   The post-holder will be accountable to the Rural Programmes Manager

AIM

Assist in the delivery of RDP projects as dictated by the LAG, maintaining the monitoring data for the project delivery, whilst providing financial management data to the Rural Programmes Finance Officer (37 Hours per week)

OBJECTIVES

Project Delivery

1. To assess the viability of new projects, working with businesses, communities and stakeholders to develop ideas and present those ideas to the LAG

2. To foster and grow relationships with local communities, businesses and stakeholders in order to effectively deliver and manage the project in a 'bottom up' approach

3. Create and maintain contact databases to assist in the promotion and management of the Programme

4. To work jointly with project delivery team members and the Rural Programmes Manager to ensure cohesion across the Programmes' range of activities

5. To work closely with other members of the team in a flexible way across job boundaries and to support the development of team working

6. To undertake appropriate promotional activities to businesses and communities as part of a plan developed with the Rural Programmes Manager and other team members

7. To assist in the development and implementation of a communications strategy and the promotion of the programme as a whole. Assisting with marketing initiatives and publicity material as appropriate, including attendance at exhibitions

8. To manage and maintain project evaluation and monitoring data as defined by the Rural Programmes Manager

9. To maintain budgets and report on a regular basis to the Rural Programmes Manager and Rural Programmes Finance Officer on project finance to enable the accurate management of project finances and budgets

10. To ensure the promotion and implementation of the principles of equal opportunities in relation to employment and service delivery issues

Person Specification

Department: **Monmouthshire Economy and Enterprise**

Post Title: **Rural Programmes Co-ordinator**

Post ID:

Grade: **BAND F: SCP 25-29 £21,734-£24,892**

Must be able to evidence and demonstrate the following:

1. Degree or equivalent and experience of project delivery preferably in a rural environment

2. Experience of developing and delivering innovative projects/events

3. Practical evidence and previous experience of how projects and tasks need to be managed within a dynamic environment.

4. Must be willing to work with project delivery team, delivery agents and local communities and businesses in the LAG territories and have the necessary skills to guide, interpret and assist in all aspects of their projects

5. Experience/knowledge of various marketing communication methods including social media

6. Experience of working as a facilitator of groups to deliver projects/events

7. Effective and efficient interpersonal and communication skills

8. Ability to be flexible and respond to changing circumstances

9. A commitment to putting equal opportunities policies into practice

10. Knowledge of and experience in practice of rural and community economic development issues

11. Experience of and commitment to multi-agency work

12. Experience of regular ICT working using word processing, email and the updating of websites.

13. Knowledge of spreadsheets and databases would be an advantage

14. Experience of monitoring and evaluation

15. To be able to work to tight deadlines, challenge ways of working and strive to aim for improvement in the delivery of economic improvements to the LAG territories.

16. Must be willing to abide by the principles and practice of equality of opportunity as laid down in the Authority's Equal Opportunities Policy.

17. Possess a current full driving license. The post-holder must have continuous access to a car.

LDS Indicative Allocation Financial Summary

LAG Name	Vale of Usk
Date Completed/Updated	26/09/2014

Please complete the table below   Actual %   Example LDS Financial Summary/Calculation

	£			£
Total RDP Indicative Allocation	2,700,000.00		Total RDP Indicative Allocation	2,000,000.00
Minus:			Minus:	
Preparatory Costs (100% RDP funded)			Preparatory Costs (100% RDP funded)	
Maximum allowable of £50,000	0.00		*Maximum allowable of £50,000*	50,000.00
	2,700,000.00			**1,950,000.00**
Minus:			Minus:	
Running Costs (100% RDP funded)			Running Costs (100% RDP funded)	
Maximum 10% allowable for running costs	270,000	10%	*Maximum 10% allowable for running costs*	195,000
Animation Costs (100% RDP funded)			Animation Costs (100% RDP funded)	
Maximum 25% allowable for animation and running costs combined	405,000	15%	*Maximum 25% allowable for animation and running costs combined*	292,500
Total RDP remaining for implementation	**2,025,000.00**		Total RDP remaining for implementation	**1,462,500.00**
(Implementation)			(Implementation)	
	2,531,250.00		*(1,462,500 divide by 4 then multiply by 5)*	**1,828,125.00**
Match Funding required (minimum 20%)	**506,250.00**	20%	Match Funding required (minimum 20%)	**365,625.00**

*On all tabs, please complete the white boxes only. This includes the amending of % (in column C above) if required.