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County Hall
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NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 17 November 2021

Notice of Meeting

Governance and Audit Committee

Thursday, 25th November, 2021 at 2.00 pm,
County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum	
4.	To note the Action List from the previous meeting.	1 - 2
5.	Governance and Audit Committee Review	To Follow
6.	Update on Unfavourable Internal Audit Opinions	3 - 8
7.	Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance for the audit of Monmouthshire County Council's assessment of performance 2020/21	9 - 12
8.	Review of Strategic Risk Register (6-monthly)	13 - 48
9.	Implementation of Agreed Internal Audit Recommendations	49 - 58
10.	Forward Work Planner	59 - 62
11.	To confirm minutes of the previous meeting	63 - 66
12.	To confirm the date of the next meeting as 13th January 2022	

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Philip White (Co-opted Member)

County Councillor Peter Clarke

County Councillor Tony Easson

County Councillor Mat Feakins

County Councillor Jim Higginson

County Councillor Bryan Jones

County Councillor Paul Jordan

County Councillor Malcolm Lane

County Councillor Phil Murphy

County Councillor Val Smith

County Councillor Brian Strong

County Councillor Jo Watkins

Llangybi

Fawr;

Dewstow;

Drybridge;

Severn;

Goytre

Fawr;

Cantref;

Mardy;

Caerwent;

Llanbadoc;

Usk;

Caldicot

Castle;

Welsh Conservative Party

Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Welsh Conservative Party

Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Welsh Conservative Party

Welsh Conservative Party

Welsh Conservative Party

Welsh Conservative Party

Independent Group

Welsh Conservative Party

Liberal Democrats

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Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with 5 days notice prior to the meeting should you wish to speak in Welsh so we can accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

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Agenda Item 4

Audit Committee Action List 3rd November 2021

Agenda Item:	Subject	Officer	Outcome
No actions			

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**SUBJECT: INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION
PROGRESS REPORT ON UNFAVOURABLE
AUDIT OPINONS**

DIRECTORATE: Resources
MEETING: Audit Committee
DATE: 25th November 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

To update Members on the progress of unfavourable (**Limited Assurance**) audit opinions issued since 2017/18 by the Internal Audit team, and identify in particular, where sufficient progress has not been made. This report is for the period ending 31st March 2021. The previous update was presented to the former Audit Committee in March 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the Audit Committee note the improvements made by service areas following the original **Limited** assurance audit opinions issued.
- 2.2 That if the Members of the Audit Committee are concerned about any of the audit opinions issued or lack of improvement made after the follow up audit review, consideration be given to calling in the operational manager and the Head of Service to provide justification for lack of progress and hold them to account for future improvements.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The number of unfavourable audit opinions issues by Internal Audit is not that significant compared to the total number of audit opinions issued in any one year, but nonetheless, they are issued where significant weaknesses in internal control have been identified.

- 3.2 The majority of the systems / establishments issued with an unfavourable audit opinion originally and which have since been followed up, have improved to some extent prior to the audit team undertaking a follow up review. The majority of reviews were given a more favourable opinion, which recognises that issues identified originally were subsequently addressed by management.
- 3.3 The audit opinions reflect the level of assurance that could be gained from the review of internal controls in operation. The audit opinions in use from April 2016 are Substantial, Considerable, Reasonable and Limited Assurance; the definitions of which are shown at Appendix 1.

4. REASONS

- 4.1 The opinion gives an indication of the adequacy of the internal control environment of the system or establishment under review. During the audit planning process the reviews are risk assessed as High, Medium or Low.
- 4.2 The previous report was presented to Audit Committee in November 2020; this information should be updated and presented to Audit Committee on a six monthly basis.
- 4.3 The following unfavourable audit opinions have been issued since 2017/18:

	Limited (Assurance)
2017/18	8
2018/19	6
2019/20	9
2020/21	0

- 4.4 Ideally, these audit reviews will be followed up by the audit team within 9 to 12 months of the final report being issued to ensure that action has been taken to address the weaknesses identified. All audit reports resulting in a consecutive **Limited** assurance opinion will be reported back to Governance and Audit Committee. Some delays may have arisen as a result of the operational manager deferring the follow up audit.

4.5 During 2017/18, 8 reports were issued with a **Limited** opinion. 6 out of 8 reports have been followed up and have been given an improved opinion. 1 review related to the Events audit *. Food Procurement was the other report; relevant managers have previously attended Audit Committee and given assurances that improvements will be made. This report is due to be followed up by the Audit team in Q4 of 2020/21.

	Audit	Risk H/M/L	Opinion	Revised Opinion / Status	Date Issued
2017/18	Events Follow-Up	High	Limited	*	Final November 2019
	Food Procurement	High	Limited	Limited To be followed up in Q4 2021/22	Final issued November 2020

* - previous report was based on large scale events held; to date no further large scale events held therefore unable to test majority of recommendations.

4.6 During 2018/19, 6 reports were issued with a **Limited** opinion. 2 have been followed up and received more favourable opinions which have been previously reported into Committee. The remaining 4 are as follows:

	Audit	Risk H/M/L	Opinion	Revised Opinion / Status	Date Issued
2018/19	Caldicot Castle	Medium	Limited	Limited Deferred follow up due to Covid	Final March 2020
	Agency Workers	Medium	Limited	To be followed up in Q4 of 2021/22 (Deferred due to new contract)	

	Attendance Management	Medium	Limited	Reasonable	Draft Issued March 2021
	Health & Safety of Authority's existing buildings	Medium	Limited	To be followed up in Q4 of 2021/22	

4.7 During 2019/20, 9 reports were issued with a **Limited** opinion. These were as follows:

	Assignment	Risk H/M/L	Opinion	Revised Opinion/ Status	Date Issued
2019/20	Llandogo Primary School	Low	Limited	2021/22	
	Castle Park Primary School	Low	Limited	2021/22	
	Shire Hall	Medium	Limited	2021/22	
	Tintern Old Station	Medium	Limited	2021/22	
	Caldicot Castle follow up	Medium	Limited	2021/22	
	PTU Vehicle Maintenance	High	Limited	2021/22	
	Procurement (Food) follow up	High	Limited	2021/22	
	Direct Payments	Medium	Limited	2021/22	

4.8 It should be noted that due to the impact of the Covid pandemic, Shire Hall, Tintern Old Station and Caldicot Castle have been closed for much of 2020 and 2021; they have therefore not had a follow up audit. School audits, PTU Vehicle Maintenance, Procurement (Food) and Direct Payments have also not been followed up due to Covid.

4.9 Of the 9 opinions issued in 2020/21, no **Limited** opinions were issued.

4.10 As part of all audit reviews, the issues identified at the previous audit are followed up to ensure that they have been adequately addressed, which should provide assurance on the effectiveness of the internal control environment for that particular service, system or establishment.

5. SERVICE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Heads of Service and service managers are responsible for addressing any weaknesses identified in internal systems and demonstrate this by including their management responses within the audit reports. When management agree the audit action plans they are accepting responsibility for addressing the issues identified within the agreed timescales.
- 5.2 Ultimately, managers within MCC are responsible for maintaining adequate internal controls within the systems they operate and for ensuring compliance with Council policies and procedures. All reports, once finalised, are sent to the respective Heads of Service for information and appropriate action where necessary. All Internal Audit opinions are also reported into the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) every six months. SLT's focus is, along with Chief Officers and DMTs, ensuring that satisfactory progress is being made to address control weaknesses highlighted in the audit reports, in particular Limited assurance reports.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

7. CONSULTEES

Chief Officer, Resources

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Audit management Information 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21.

9. AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS

Andrew Wathan, Chief Internal Auditor
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Email: andrewwathan@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Internal Audit Opinions

SUBSTANTIAL	<p>Substantial level of assurance.</p> <p>Well controlled although some minor risks may have been identified which require addressing.</p>
CONSIDERABLE	<p>Considerable level of assurance.</p> <p>Generally well controlled, although some risks identified which should be addressed.</p>
REASONABLE	<p>Reasonable level of assurance.</p> <p>Adequately controlled, although risks identified which could compromise the overall control environment. Improvements required.</p>
LIMITED	<p>Limited level of assurance.</p> <p>Poorly controlled, with unacceptable levels of risk. Fundamental improvements required immediately.</p>

The table below summarises the ratings used during the reviews:

RATING	RISK DESCRIPTION	IMPACT
1	Significant	<p>(Significant) – Major / unacceptable risk identified.</p> <p>Risk exist which could impact on the key business objectives. Immediate action required to address risks.</p>
2	Moderate	<p>(Important) – Risk identified that requires attention.</p> <p>Risk identified which are not business critical but which require management as soon as possible.</p>
3.	Minor	<p>(Minimal) - Low risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed</p> <p>Audit comments highlight a suggestion or idea that management may want to consider.</p>
4.	Strength	<p>(No risk) – Good operational practices confirmed.</p> <p>Well controlled processes delivering a sound internal control framework.</p>

Reference: 2703A2021-22

Date issued: November 2021

Audit of Monmouthshire County Council's assessment of 2020-21 performance

Certificate

I certify that I have audited Monmouthshire County Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance in 2020-21 in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to annually publish an assessment which describes its performance:

- in discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- in meeting the improvement objectives it has set itself;
- by reference to performance indicators specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance indicators; and
- in meeting any performance standards specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance standards.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its assessment before 31 October in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in publishing its assessment.

As the Council's auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit to determine whether the Council has discharged its duty to publish an assessment of performance, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

Scope of the audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information. My audit of the Council's assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publication to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the assessment complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing it.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

Adrian Crompton

Auditor General for Wales

CC: Rebecca Evans MS – Minister for Finance and Local Government

Gareth Lucey – Audit Manager

Charlotte Owen – Audit Lead

Cyfeirnod: 2703A2021-22

Dyddiad cyhoeddi: Tachwedd 2021

Archwiliad o berfformiad Cyngor Sir Fynwy o berfformiad 2020-21

Tystysgrif

Rwy'n ardystio fy mod wedi archwilio asesiad Cyngor Sir Fynwy (y Cyngor) o'i berfformiad yn 2020-21 yn unol ag adran 17 o Fesur Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) 2009 (y Mesur) a'm Cod Ymarfer Archwilio.

O ganlyniad i'm harchwiliad, credaf fod y Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswyddau o dan adrannau 15(2), (3), (8) a (9) o'r Mesur ac wedi gweithredu yn unol â chanllawiau Llywodraeth Cymru yn ddigonol i gyflawni ei ddyletswyddau.

Priod gyfrifoldebau'r Cyngor a'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol

O dan y Mesur, mae'n ofynnol i'r Cyngor gyhoeddi asesiad bob blwyddyn sy'n disgrifio ei berfformiad:

- wrth gyflawni ei ddyletswydd i wneud trefniadau i sicrhau gwelliant parhaus wrth arfer ei swyddogaethau;
- wrth gyflawni'r amcanion gwella y mae wedi'u gosod ei hun;
- drwy gyfeirio at ddangosyddion perfformiad a bennir gan Weinidogion Cymru, a dangosyddion perfformiad hunanosodedig; ac
- wrth fodloni unrhyw safonau perfformiad a bennir gan Weinidogion Cymru, a safonau perfformiad hunanosodedig.

Mae'r Mesur yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor gyhoeddi ei asesiad cyn 31 Hydref yn y flwyddyn ariannol yn dilyn yr un o dan sylw y mae'r wybodaeth yn ymwneud â hi, neu erbyn unrhyw ddyddiad arall y caiff Gweinidogion Cymru ei bennu drwy orchymyn.

Mae'r Mesur yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r Cyngor roi sylw i ganllawiau a gyhoeddir gan Weinidogion Cymru wrth gyhoeddi ei asesiad.

Fel archwilydd y Cyngor, mae'n ofynnol i mi o dan adrannau 17 a 19 o'r Mesur gynnal archwiliad i benderfynu a yw'r Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswydd i gyhoeddi asesiad o berfformiad, i ardystio fy mod wedi gwneud hynny, ac i adrodd a wyf yn credu bod y Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswyddau yn unol â'r gofynion statudol a nodir yn adran 15 a chanllawiau statudol.

Cwmpas yr archwiliad

At ddibenion fy ngwaith archwilio, byddaf yn derbyn, ar yr amod bod awdurdod yn bodloni ei ofynion statudol, y bydd hefyd wedi cydymffurfio â chanllawiau statudol Llywodraeth Cymru yn ddigonol i gyflawni ei ddyletswyddau.

Ar gyfer yr archwiliad hwn, nid yw'n ofynnol i mi lunio barn ar gyflawnrwydd na chywirdeb gwybodaeth. Roedd fy archwiliad o asesiad perfformiad y Cyngor, felly, yn cynnwys adolygiad o gyhoeddiad y Cyngor i ganfod a oedd yn cynnwys elfennau a ragnodir mewn deddfwriaeth. Asesais hefyd a oedd y trefniadau ar gyfer cyhoeddi'r asesiad yn cydymffurfio â gofynion y ddeddfwriaeth, a bod y Cyngor wedi rhoi sylw i ganllawiau statudol wrth ei baratoi a'i gyhoeddi.

Ni ellir dibynnu ar y gwaith yr wyf wedi'i wneud er mwyn adrodd a gwneud argymhellion yn unol ag adrannau 17 a 19 o'r Mesur er mwyn nodi'r holl wendidau neu gyfleoedd i wella.

Adrian Crompton

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru

COPI: Rebecca Evans AS – Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol

Gareth Lucey – Rheolwr Archwilio

Charlotte Owen – Archwilydd Arweiniol

SUBJECT:	Strategic Risk Assessment
MEETING:	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE:	25th November 2021
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.
- 1.2 To fulfil Audit Committee's role in providing assurance of the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework, as an important part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members use the risk assessment to consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements and the extent to which the strategic risks facing the authority are appropriately captured.
- 2.2 That members scrutinise, on an on-going basis, the risk assessment and responsibility holders to ensure that risk is being appropriately managed.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Audit Committee has a specific role in providing independent assurance of the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework. Audit Committee also have a role in assessing the authority's corporate governance arrangements, of which risk management is an important part. An integral part of the Council's risk management arrangements, which is reported to Audit Committee to inform this role, is the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register. The strategic risk assessment ensures that:

- Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority
- Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate
- Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority.

- 3.2 The assessment is one part of the Council's risk management arrangements. Risk is managed through a variety of processes, for example, through teams' service plans, through Emergency Management Plans and business continuity arrangements, specific project and programme management arrangements, health and safety procedures and insurance arrangements.

Whole authority Strategic Risk Assessment

- 3.3 The Strategic Risk Assessment, in appendix 1, has continued to be updated based on the latest evidence. This is in line with the Council's strategic risk management policy; a summary of this is provided in Appendix 2. This helps ensure strategic risks are identified and assessed robustly, risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate, and risks are supported by effective activity to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management.
- 3.4 Due to its purpose, the strategic risk assessment is a detailed document. There have been several amendments to ensure it accurately manages the current strategic risks facing the Council, including the removal of two risks. The more significant changes, since the register was last presented to Governance and Audit committee, are:

- Adjustments to the workforce risk, to provide greater focus on the issue of recruitment and retention, and workforce planning considerations.
- Updates on the pressure in Adult's Social Services due to the recruitment difficulties being reflected nationally, and the exponential growth in demand and complexity of cases.
- The ongoing risk of Coronavirus, associated with vaccine efficacy and variants of concern
- The impact of changes to the socio-economic environment, as a result of various factors, on those experiencing poverty and financial hardship in the county
- Removal of the risk of Political, legislative, and financial uncertainty for council services and local businesses as a result of the UK leaving the European Union, and the inclusion of any remaining residual risks incorporated into associated strategic risks for continued monitoring
- Removal of the risk that the coronavirus pandemic will have a considerable economic impact resulting in business closures and job losses, and the inclusion of any remaining residual risks incorporated into associated strategic risks for continued monitoring

3.5 Information regarding those risks removed from the register can be seen at the end of appendix 1. Updates have been made, where required, to the existing risks, including to the reason why the risk has been identified, the assessed risk level, mitigating actions being undertaken and the progress on these.

3.6 The risk assessment only covers high and medium level strategic risks. Lower level or operational risks are not registered unless they are projected to escalate within the three years covered. These are managed and monitored through other arrangements, particularly those identified in points 3.2. The strategic risk assessment should continue to focus on medium term risks to service delivery.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

3.7 The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to how the council continues to provide a range of vital services. The Council has continued to rise to the challenge by adapting, innovating and establishing ways of delivering services that support residents and businesses, assists community activity and supports staff well-being. The Council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and has controls in place to manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks to service delivery and the well-being of our staff and residents.

3.8 The council has continued to clearly set its purpose and strategic aims that guide its work through the coronavirus pandemic as the Council continues to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances. The latest iteration, the 'Re-Emergence' summer strategy was published in June 2021, and focuses on promoting Monmouthshire as an ambitious place, full of hope and enterprise, which is fair and sustainable, where people can feel safe. A new iteration is being presented to Cabinet in December and focuses on the next six months. Delivery continues to be monitored and will need to be flexible in timescale and content as circumstances and guidance changes. The activity being undertaken to deliver these strategic aims will further identify action that is being undertaken to manage and mitigate, as far as possible, related risks.

3.9 Much of the emergency response seen at the start of the pandemic has been stood down, including the organisation's Emergency Response Team, the COVID-19 Coordinating Group and the wider Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating group (SCG). Monitoring of risks associated with the pandemic has been integrated into the existing Strategic Risk Register, and wider performance management processes identified in point 3.2. Should circumstances, evidence

and guidance change, emergency response arrangements can be re-implemented at any time, if required.

- 3.10 Arrangements are continually under review to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances, the latest evidence, learning gathered and changes to legislation and guidance. The risks are regularly reviewed as part of these arrangements and updated based on the latest evidence available.
- 3.11 As the risk assessment is a live document, it will evolve as new information comes to light. Therefore, Audit Committee should take into account that this is the latest position up to the point the agenda was circulated. The council continues to operate in an uncertain and fast changing environment; the strategic risk register will regularly evolve and adapt to identify, assess, manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks to council service delivery and the well-being of our staff and residents. The up-to-date register is accessible on the Council's intranet so members are able to utilise it at any point in the year to re-prioritise their work plan as appropriate.
- 3.12 In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, identification and mitigation of longer-term risks that will impact on future generations at community level but will have a lesser impact on the medium-term delivery of council services, is an area for continued development. Through working with the Public Service Board, we are developing our understanding of future risks and opportunities and how we respond to them in Monmouthshire. This will inform the strategic risk register as relevant.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 To provide timely, relevant information on strategic risks as part of the performance management framework for ensuring the authority is well run and able to contribute to achieving the Council's purpose.

5. AUTHORS:

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Appendix 1: Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment – November 2021

Ref	Potential Risk	Risk Level – Pre mitigation	Risk Level – Post mitigation
1	The authority does not remain relevant and viable for future generations due to not having a sustainable delivery model	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium
2	The Council may not deliver its objectives due to a lack of appropriate and effective governance infrastructure	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Low 2022/23 – Low 2023/24 – Low
3	The council does not make sufficient progress in improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area due to a lack of progression with new regional and collaborative structures	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Low 2023/24 – Low
4a	Some services may become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium
4b	The authority is unable to deliver its political priorities or maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium
5	Relatively high age profile, a global skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High
6	Significant harm to vulnerable children or adults due to a failure of safeguarding arrangements or factors outside the Council's control	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium
7	The robust delivery of the Council's corporate parenting responsibility and services related to vulnerable children as a result of an increase in demand and complexity in cases	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium
8	The well-being of some of our most vulnerable residents due to an increase in demand, complexity in cases, and recruitment and retention issues affecting the robust delivery of the council's Adult Services	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High
9	Failing to meet the needs of learners, including-vulnerable learners, and failing to promote pupil well-being within Monmouthshire's schools, which may result in children and young people not achieving their full potential. Failing to adapt to changes in the new curriculum and examination requirements	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium
10	Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2032/24 – Medium
11a	Delays to the adoption of the local development plan because of external factors such as phosphate levels, the pandemic and the national development framework will impact our ability to deliver policy objectives including affordable housing and sustainable economic growth	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High
11b	Insufficient broadband infrastructure and a lack of digital skills in the county have the potential to lead to social and economic disadvantages	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Medium 2023/24 – Medium	2021/22 – Medium 2022/23 – Low 2023/24 – Low
12	The scale and complexity of the challenge could result in the authority failing to deliver on its policy commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero resulting in social, economic and environmental harm to current and future Monmouthshire residents and businesses	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High
13	The spread of Coronavirus accelerates as vaccine immunity wanes and new variants emerge that will impact on staff and residents' health and cause delays or reductions in the council's service delivery	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – Medium
14	Changes in socio-economic conditions could impact on individuals and families, resulting in increased poverty and inequality in the county	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – High	2021/22 – High 2022/23 – High 2023/24 – Medium

Ref & Status	1	Risk	Potential Risk that: The authority does not remain relevant and viable for future generations due to not having a sustainable delivery model				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		Paul Matthews & Cllr Richard John	Select Committee	All	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified							
<p>The introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations Act requires us to plan on a decadal and generational basis. The authority has a medium-term Corporate Plan and other strategic documents such as the LDP and Climate Emergency Strategy, however it still operates within a context of longer-term uncertainty and short-term budget settlements, which make planning for the longer term difficult. The first Corporate Plan was established in 2017, spanning a five-year period, and this is set to conclude in 2022. It sets out a clear purpose and numerous aims, with many areas focused on the longer-term future of the county and which addresses many complex challenges. As we approach the end of the current plan and reflect on potential changes associated with a new incoming administration in 2022, it is important to consider the work undertaken so far, and the considerable changes we have seen since the publication of the first plan. The Coronavirus pandemic has changed the world considerably since 2020, and we must also consider the longer-term impact on future generations, and plan for these accordingly. The council's key strategies to enable the delivery of our Corporate Plan have been revised, but in light of changes over recent years, these must be updated to reflect new and emerging priorities.</p> <p>The authority will face significant budget pressures as the UK Government begins to repay the debt accrued to meet the costs of the pandemic. Alongside this, it is expected that the NHS will continue to consume an increasing proportion of public sector expenditure. Both adult and children's social care are facing acute pressures with escalating demand, increasing complexity and workforce shortages all contributing. While there is pressure to free-up hospital beds, the care system does not have the capacity to accommodate this, meaning that more resources will be drawn into the acute settings.</p> <p>These issues are compounded by workforce shortages and low levels of pay compared to other sectors. In Monmouthshire, high property prices make it difficult for staff to remain in or relocate to the area.</p> <p>Housing shortages are contributing to increasing levels of homelessness with limited affordable accommodation to meet the 2,300 households on the current waiting list. This is compounded by the National Development Framework, which will limit the development of housing that is affordable for the key workers of the future. Limited housing growth will also limit future Council tax receipts, which the county is dependent on as it receives the lowest settlement of any local authority in Wales meaning that more must come from council tax or commercial income streams.</p> <p>The funding formula does not take account of the relative higher costs of providing services in rural areas where public services cannot be easily centralised to generate economies of scale.</p> <p>An additional challenge that poses a threat to the long-term viability is climate change with increasing frequency of adverse weather events. The county of Monmouthshire has one of the highest carbon footprints in Wales with an older housing stock, which will be costly to decarbonise. The geography also means that decarbonising council operations will be more challenging than in urban areas.</p> <p>In addition, the costs of social care are rising, and the financial cost of the pandemic is ongoing. This challenge sits alongside our ambitious commitments on social justice, tackling climate change and Cabinet's long-standing priorities of education and support for vulnerable children and adults.</p>							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium	2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium
2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress			
Update the Corporate Plan to reflect a new financial reality and the response needed to changing issues of well-being in the county.		Strategic Leadership Team	Ongoing	<p>The Corporate Plan Annual Report was published in October 2021.</p> <p>To provide clarity and ensure accountability through our response to the coronavirus pandemic, a set of strategic aims were set by Cabinet in May 2020. These were updated in July, December and again, in June. We have lessened our focus on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan to re-direct capacity towards dealing with COVID-19.</p> <p>The current strategic aims contained within the 'Summer Re-Emergence Strategy' set out the council's priorities until November 2021. After this, the aims will be reviewed based on the latest circumstances, evidence and guidance to set the direction for council services through the next phase. This will be presented to Cabinet in December 2021.</p> <p>A revised Corporate Plan will be developed in line with the aspirations of the incoming administration in 2022 and will have a focus on the difficult financial situation all local authorities will inevitably find themselves in following the pandemic.</p>			

<p>Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and adapt to reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on public finances.</p>	<p>Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources</p>	<p>March 2022</p>	<p>The Council's medium-term financial planning had been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Council's finances. Cabinet will receive a report on the MTFP at its meeting in December and that will pave the way for the draft budget proposals that are due to be released on consultation by Cabinet in January 2022. The MTFP report will outline the assumptions being used in the construction of the budget for 2022/23 and across the MTFP.</p> <p>Whilst Welsh Government has provided a significant level of funding through its COVID Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic, the Fund is coming to an end at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. It is hoped that Welsh Government recognise the ongoing cost pressures and income losses that Councils are having to bear when announcing the provisional settlement in December.</p> <p>The medium-term prognosis is however still of real concern. It is hoped that the UK Government's Spending Review announcement will now enable Welsh Government to provide greater certainty and sufficiency of funding on future year funding settlements for local government. However, the prognosis based on commentary from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Wales Fiscal Analysis team is that funding will be constrained from 2023/24.</p> <p>There is still a need to think differently about the even greater challenges of the medium term; this work and associated engagement will continue. Ongoing financial challenges remain dynamic; further work will be undertaken to develop the MTFP, which will include an ongoing assessment of pressures, risks and modelling assumptions.</p> <p>As part of its MTFP budget strategy, the Council is continuing to make use of Welsh Government guidance which allows local authorities in Wales to fund one-off revenue costs associated with service reform from useable capital receipts held. The Council proposed to draw £1.7m from capital receipts as part of the budget proposals for 2021/22 and has modelled a similar level of contribution for 2022/23. Whilst the Council will have sufficient capital receipts to maintain this short-term, the Council will need to move towards a more sustainable budget strategy over the medium term and once the current unprecedented circumstances have passed.</p> <p>The update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the development of the budget proposals for 2022/23 and the medium term are expected to be significantly challenging.</p> <p>The Council will also need to consider the wider and longer lasting indirect impact on Council services, particularly in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional learning needs. There remains significant latent demand in these areas as a result of the ongoing societal impacts of the Covid-19 response and restrictions, and some of these impacts will take a significant period of time to unwind. The Council therefore needs to engage in careful discussions with Welsh Government around the management of this in the medium term.</p>
<p>Apply and update learning from work on future trends and plan for how they might impact at a local level in Monmouthshire and explore relationships with partners who can assist in the delivery of the council's objectives.</p>	<p>Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Work continues with public sector partners to understand future trends. Welsh Government are due to be publishing a Future Trends report in December 2021, which will further inform learning and strategic planning.</p> <p>Cabinet recently announced investment into a new data capacity and capability roadmap to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity. This includes further developing the open data offer to build on existing information that is already published on the council website, such as spend data and existing data dashboards.</p>
<p>Review and update enabling strategies following the adoption of a new Corporate Plan and learning from the pandemic to ensure effective alignment of resources with the organisations policy priorities.</p>	<p>Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources</p>	<p>Timescales as per strategies</p>	<p>There will be a review of enabling strategies to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the revised Corporate Plan.</p>

Ref & Status	2	Risk	Potential Risk that: The Council may not deliver its objectives due to a lack of appropriate and effective governance infrastructure				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Matthew Gatehouse, Matthew Phillips & Cllr Richard John		Select Committee	Audit Committee	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified							
<p>Good governance is a fundamental part of local authority working; arrangements are multifaceted and need to be subject to continuing review to ensure they are effective. The Well-being of Future Generations Act sets longer-term goals that we need to work towards, and the ways of working we need to adopt. In addition to this, the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act was passed in November 2020. The Act includes provision related to democracy, regional working, structures, governance and performance. Work is needed to implement the new Act, including a focus on self-assessment and panel assessments, which will inform areas of strength to build on, and areas for improvement that need to be considered and built into forward work plans.</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement provides a high degree of assurance that arrangements are effective. This statement will dovetail with the self-evaluation required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. New arrangements for Governance and Audit Committee are being introduced, including the appointment of lay-members, which will provide additional rigour to the role of this committee in ensuring that effective governance arrangements are in place.</p> <p>The latest Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2020 includes, 'The Auditor General certified that the Council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting, and believes that it is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 during 2020-21.' There remain proposals for improvement from Audit Wales relating to the Councils' governance and scrutiny arrangements that are still being addressed.</p>							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Possible	Substantial	Medium	2021/22	Unlikely	Substantial	Low
2022/23	Possible	Substantial	Medium	2022/23	Unlikely	Substantial	Low
2023/24	Possible	Substantial	Medium	2023/24	Unlikely	Substantial	Low
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress			
Update the Councils' constitution to ensure it reflects recent changes in legislation and governance.		Monitoring Officer	March 2022	A thorough review of the constitution has been undertaken to ensure it reflects the latest legislation and council's governance structures. This received full Council approval in March 2021.			
Implement the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act requirements		Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny	March 2022	<p>Work is underway to implement the requirements of the Act, including the Corporate Joint Committee Regulations and performance and governance guidance. The Governance and Audit Committee has been established and work is underway to refine the purpose and responsibilities of the committee, in line with the new Act.</p> <p>The formal establishment of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal as the SE CJC is due to formally transition in February 2022. The regulations are in place and papers were presented to the regional Cabinet in September 2021 setting out the preferred governance and delivery models.</p> <p>The financial cost of changes to the council chamber to reflect the impact of boundary changes and updates to equipment to sustain live streaming have been recognised in the capital budget. There have been delays in starting the upgrade to the council chambers due to material shortages needed in the building of computer hardware.</p>			
Manage our actions in response to any Estyn, CIW and Audit Wales recommendations via existing mechanisms		Strategic Leadership Team	Timetable as per action plans	The Council has arrangements in place to respond to regulatory reports and where necessary, these are reported to the relevant committees. A review is underway, in line with the implementation of the Local Government and Elections Act, on the process for reporting all regulation and inspection reports to Governance and Audit Committee.			
Ensure robust application of pre-decision scrutiny to minimise the risk of legal challenge on decisions made by the authority.		Chief Officer, People and Governance	May 2022	Local and national developments continue to be monitored. Robust arrangements are in place to quality assure integrated impact assessments by officers, which includes consideration of the Future Generations Act, Welsh Language, equality and the Socio-Economic duty; these are then subject to scrutiny by select committees ahead of decision. Amendments have been made to the Welsh language section of the process to ensure Welsh language is a feature of all policy consultations.			

			A self-evaluation of the scrutiny function was undertaken during 2019, which highlighted areas for improvement and suggested a review of select committees' working arrangements be undertaken. Duties to increase public participation in local democracy need to be accommodated within any arrangements proposed and a new Policy and Scrutiny Officer was appointed to assist in creating capacity to implement new working arrangements. These are currently being developed with committee chairs and subject to agreement be implemented following the May 2022 election.
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Ref & Status	3	Risk	Potential Risk that: The council does not make sufficient progress in improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area due to a lack of progression with new regional and collaborative structures
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Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Matthew Gatehouse, Cllr Richard John	Select Committee	Audit Committee Public Services Select Committee	Strategic objective	All
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Reason why Identified

The Future Generations Act puts a well-being duty on specified public bodies to act jointly via Public Service Boards (PSB) to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area. The Monmouthshire PSB well-being plan has been established; the activity that will contribute to the delivery of the plan has been allocated to lead organisations. Progress is overseen by Programme Board and scrutinised by the Public Services Select Committee. A Gwent-wide PSB was established in September 2021 focusing on shared objectives. There are associated risks, including a loss of local accountability and reduced focus on projects, which are Monmouthshire specific that need to be mitigated.

The Coronavirus pandemic is likely to impact on economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the County. There is a need to continue to work with partners to understand the impact and adapt/develop partnership working accordingly.

The Council is already part of regional and partnership-working arrangements in a variety of services; some of these require further development, for example, improving the effectiveness of joint scrutiny of the Cardiff Capital Region. New Corporate Joint Committees arrangements are being implemented as part of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Possible	Substantial	Medium	2021/22	Possible	Substantial	Medium
2022/23	Possible	Substantial	Medium	2022/23	Unlikely	Substantial	Low
2023/24	Possible	Substantial	Medium	2023/24	Unlikely	Substantial	Low

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
To deliver the Public Service Board Well-being Plan, implement a delivery framework and ensure scrutiny via the Public Services Select Committee. Work with partners to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and adapt/develop partnership working accordingly.	Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny and Community & Partnership Development Manager	April 2023	The Public Service Board has published its annual report for 2020/21, outlining the progress made so far to deliver the objectives set out in the well-being plan. To ensure that well-being plan continues to focus on the issues that matter most to well-being in Monmouthshire, a review of priority steps, which are areas for particular focus, has been undertaken. Following a workshop informed by the latest evidence and thinking from partners, including through the coronavirus pandemic, the PSB agreed some areas partners would particularly prioritise collaborative work over the remaining two years of the existing well-being plan, these are: Climate and decarbonisation, mental health, the economy and in particular the extent to which the pandemic may have exacerbated inequality. These will be developed into a focused programme of activity over the next two years, with partnerships structures to support delivery. An integral part of the development of a Gwent-wide PSB has been ensuring there remains a focus on delivery of projects which are local area specific and maintaining local accountability. The developed Programme Board in Monmouthshire will lead Monmouthshire's role in local delivery of regional actions as well as delivering activity specific to Monmouthshire, ensuring the well-being needs of Monmouthshire are prioritised locally and integrated in regional delivery as appropriate. The Programme Board will also deliver against the current local Monmouthshire Wellbeing Plan until 2023, when the next phase of the Wellbeing Plan will be developed. The Council has worked closely with partner organisations as part of the Gwent COVID-19 Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) to take a strategic overview of, and give direction to, recovery work in line with agreed

			priorities and timescales. The RCG is now in abeyance but can be stood up where required. The council also continues to work with partners to understand the impact of the pandemic and adapt/develop existing partnership working accordingly.
To develop and embed arrangements for the Gwent-wide Public Service Board.	Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny	March 2022	<p>The development of proposals for a Gwent-wide PSB has involved each of the existing boards across the region and representatives from public bodies. A range of areas have been considered as part of the developments including reviewing legislative requirements, regional and local delivery options, scrutiny, alignment of regional boards and performance management arrangements, along with the well-being assessment and plan. There are associated risks, including a loss of local accountability and a reduced focus on projects that are Monmouthshire specific. To mitigate this a review and refresh of local partnerships arrangements is being developed.</p> <p>Public Services Select Committee and Cabinet were provided with an overview of proposals to create a single Public Service Board for Gwent, and the related development of delivery arrangements in Monmouthshire which will ensure that partners do not lose focus on the issues that matter most to the people and communities of Monmouthshire. Following collective agreement, the five Public Services Boards in Gwent have been merged into one Gwent-wide PSB. The first meeting of the Gwent-wide PSB took place in October 2021.</p> <p>A number of elements of the delivery and governance arrangements of the Public Service Board are being further developed to ensure it maximises the opportunities identified, mitigates as far as possible potential risks and meets its statutory duties and requirements under well-being of Future Generations Act. The related development of delivery arrangements in Monmouthshire are being implemented.</p>
Work with Welsh Government and the Cardiff Capital Region on the transition arrangements for services that will form part of the Corporate Joint Committee.	Chief Officer, People and Governance	December 2021	<p>In December 2020, Council agreed a response to be submitted to the Welsh Government Corporate Joint Committee Regulations consultation. An officer group has been formed to ensure transition arrangements are in place for services that will form part of the CJC and those that will be operated concurrently in line with the Establishment Regulations. Liaison between affected Directorates such as Enterprise is taking place with CCR and other regional bodies/departments and Officers such as S151 Officer and MO are engaged with professional groups to develop governance and finance arrangements.</p> <p>The formal establishment of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal as the SE CJC is due to formally transition in February 2022. The regulations are in place and papers were presented to the regional Cabinet in September 2021 setting out the preferred governance and delivery models.</p>

Ref & Status	4a	Risk	Potential Risk that: Some services may become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Peter Davies and Cllr Phil Murphy	Select Committee	All	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified						
<p>After several years of taking significant resource out of the budget, the means of achieving further savings is increasingly more challenging. Pressures on the budget remain and continue to increase in terms of demographic growth, demand on services and expectations, and pay and pension increases. Specific areas with pressures include additional learning needs, social care generally and children's services specifically, passenger transport, waste, car parking and Monlife activities.</p> <p>The council achieved a balanced net revenue budget position at outturn for 2020/21, after accounting for transfers to earmarked reserves. This was primarily as a result of £5.29m of Welsh Government COVID-19 Hardship Funding since month 9 to support the increased costs of service delivery and loss of income as a direct result of the pandemic. The council's medium-term financial planning has been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on council finances. The authority presented a balanced budget for 2021/22 to Cabinet and Council in March 2021, which incorporated service pressures of some £10.3m alongside savings proposals of £4.73m. Welsh Government had provided a significant level of funding through its COVID-19 Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic. Late but welcomed further grant awards from Welsh Government allowed the Council to be able increase its earmarked reserve balances by £4m, to add to the £1.8m of headroom created in the Council's General Fund balance, and that provides some one-off limited cover against the pressures to be faced over the medium term.</p> <p>Over the past two years, the Council has faced significant and unprecedented challenges, notably the flood response and recovery in February 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions implemented since March 2020, with uncertainty continuing. These have accentuated the financial challenge facing the council and financial forecasts continued to prepared on assumptions that are uncertain. However, the Council has benefitted from late and in-year grant awards from Welsh Government and full funding of its COVID pressures and income losses from the COVID Hardship Fund, such that the Council is, at the very least, in a slightly improved position to face the challenges and funding uncertainties over the medium term. However, the lasting impact of the pandemic and the increased demands on services, as well as the cessation of WG's COVID Hardship Fund on 31st March 2022, introduces further sustained pressure and risk to the Council's finances.</p>						

The medium-term prognosis is still of concern. It is hoped that the UK Government's Spending Review announcement in late October will enable Welsh Government to provide greater certainty on future year funding settlements for local government. However, the prognosis based on commentary from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Wales Fiscal Analysis team is that funding will be constrained from 2023/24.

Along with the rest of the organisation, schools were facing a challenging financial settlement. 17 schools had started 2020/21 financial year in deficit. The situation has improved significantly as a result of additional and late grant awards from Welsh Government. Schools will now need to look to focus on restoring delivery of education to pupils and the investment that comes with this, with an equal focus on putting themselves back on a sustainable financial footing.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Likely	Major	High	2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium
2022/23	Likely	Major	High	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress			
Ensure that services deliver within budget, deliver savings targets and continue to identify, review and challenge pressures.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources		March 2022	<p>The net revenue forecast non-COVID overspend at month 2 for 2021/22 is £2.538m, with significant service pressures forecast across adult and children's social care, children with additional learning needs and the passenger transport unit. An evolving budget recovery plan is looking to contain and arrest the in-year pressures whilst recognising the risk that targeted and planned cost reductions will be challenging in the current operating environment and given that the Council will as always look to minimise impact on service delivery.</p> <p>The Council has also benefitted from additional specific grant funding from Welsh Government, in particular to support acknowledged pressures across social care. These funding allocations have been announced subsequent to the month 2 forecast and will be reflected in the month 6 forecast due to be presented to Cabinet in December.</p> <p>Beyond the non-COVID overspend at month 2, there is a COVID related overspend of £6.482m, representing cost pressures and income losses directly arising from the pandemic, and it is anticipated that Welsh Government's COVID Hardship Fund will meet the projected shortfall. The Council has a high level of confidence around claims already submitted for the period to the end of September.</p>			
Produce a proposed set of budget proposals for 2022/23	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources		March 2022	<p>Cabinet received a report in July 2021 identifying an overall net revenue forecast deficit at month 2 of £9.02m, which can be attributed to a forecast deficit of £6.48m that is directly associated with the extraordinary financial pressures attached to COVID-19. A further £2.53m deficit, relating to the pressures on core service delivery is being managed through an immediate budget recovery plan, recognising the risk that targeted and planned cost reductions will be challenging in the current operating environment and given that the Council will as always look to minimise impact on service delivery.</p> <p>Further to these in-year pressures being managed, Cabinet will receive a report on the MTFP at its meeting in December and that will pave the way for the 2022/23 draft budget proposals that are due to be released for consultation by Cabinet in January 2022. Cabinet received a report on the MTFP and budget process at their meeting of 21st October 2020. The MTFP report outlined the assumptions that were being used in the construction of the budget for 2022/23 and across the MTFP.</p> <p>Whilst Welsh Government has provided a significant level of funding through its COVID Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic, the Fund is coming to an end at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. It is hoped that Welsh Government recognise the ongoing cost pressures and income losses that Councils are having to bear when announcing the provisional settlement in December.</p>			
Implement the process for reclaiming coronavirus costs via agreed avenues and identify alternative grant funding offers available via Welsh Government.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources		Ongoing	<p>The council is grateful for the funding commitments made to date by Welsh Government through the COVID-19 Hardship fund. Welsh Government has confirmed that the Hardship Fund will come to an end at the end of the 2021/22 financial year and has recently issued revised guidance to cover the last six months of the 2021/22 financial year. It is felt that Welsh Government have sufficient funds to meet all claims from local authorities</p>			

			<p>based on most recent forecasts and projections, however a residual risk remains as the funding is tapered down.</p> <p>The council prudently set aside reserve funding at the end of 2019/20 and 2020/21 to cover eventualities where funding commitments from Welsh Government fall short of meeting the additional expenditure and income losses incurred, resulting directly from COVID or through wider demand pressures. Given the Councils comparatively low level of reserve cover, and the financial challenges over the medium term and beyond, recourse to this funding should be seen as an absolute last resort after exhausting all other alternative possibilities.</p> <p>A greater risk exists for the Council around continued funding to meet those COVID-19 related cost pressures and income losses that continue into 2022/23. It is hoped that clarification is provided on a timely basis by Welsh Government alongside the provisional settlement announcement to assist financial planning. To the extent that further core or specific grant funding is not forthcoming, this will add further to the financial challenges and pressures that the Council will need to manage as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process and MTFP.</p>
<p>Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-term financial plan and adapt to reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.</p>	<p>Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources</p>	<p>March 2022</p>	<p>The Council's medium-term financial planning had been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Council's finances. Cabinet will receive a report on the MTFP at its meeting in December and that will pave the way for the draft budget proposals that are due to be released on consultation by Cabinet in January 2022. The MTFP report will outline the assumptions being used in the construction of the budget for 2022/23 and across the MTFP.</p> <p>Whilst Welsh Government has provided a significant level of funding through its COVID Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic, the Fund is coming to an end at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. It is hoped that Welsh Government recognise the ongoing cost pressures and income losses that Councils are having to bear when announcing the provisional settlement in December.</p> <p>The medium-term prognosis is however still of real concern. It is hoped that the UK Government's Spending Review announcement will now enable Welsh Government to provide greater certainty and sufficiency of funding on future year funding settlements for local government. However, the prognosis based on commentary from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Wales Fiscal Analysis team is that funding will be constrained from 2023/24.</p> <p>There is still a need to think differently about the even greater challenges of the medium term; this work and associated engagement will continue. Ongoing financial challenges remain dynamic; further work will be undertaken to develop the MTFP, which will include an ongoing assessment of pressures, risks and modelling assumptions.</p> <p>As part of its MTFP budget strategy, the Council is continuing to make use of Welsh Government guidance which allows local authorities in Wales to fund one-off revenue costs associated with service reform from useable capital receipts held. The Council proposed to draw £1.7m from capital receipts as part of the budget proposals for 2021/22 and has modelled a similar level of contribution for 2022/23. Whilst the Council will have sufficient capital receipts to maintain this short-term, the Council will need to move towards a more sustainable budget strategy over the medium term and once the current unprecedented circumstances have passed.</p> <p>The update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the development of the budget proposals for 2022/23 and the medium term are expected to be significantly challenging.</p> <p>The Council will also need to consider the wider and longer lasting indirect impact on Council services, particularly in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional</p>

			learning needs. There remains significant latent demand in these areas as a result of the ongoing societal impacts of the Covid-19 response and restrictions, and some of these impacts will take a significant period of time to unwind. The Council therefore needs to engage in careful discussions with Welsh Government around the management of this in the medium term.
Develop and implement a commercial strategy aligned to the Corporate Plan	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Timescales as per strategy	<p>As part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan, a Commercial Strategy has been developed, which seeks to enhance income generation, develop an approach to commercialising assets and create a commercial culture and ethos. The strategy has a short-, medium- and long-term view and aims to provide a framework, with defined objectives, for new commercial projects and for the delivery of future commercial activity.</p> <p>In 2020/21, the investment properties at Newport Leisure Park and Castlegate Business Park generated a combined profit of £159,018, which has been transferred to reserves, as detailed in the Council's Investment Strategy. In common with the leisure and retail sector, commercial investments have been badly affected by the impacts of COVID-19 but continue to be supported by the Welsh Government's COVID Hardship fund. Whilst the position may improve in light of changes to the legal requirements on social distancing, this is as yet unproven as it will depend on consumers' behaviour and their appetite to return to leisure venues without restrictions in place. As with all investments, this is being actively monitored with discussions are ongoing with tenants.</p> <p>The council has continually assessed its commercial risk appetite and exposure, and the updates are issued to the Investment Committee on investment performance and mitigating action being taken. The commercial risk appetite has been adjusted in light of the current pandemic and uncertainties in the investment and property markets at this time.</p>
Progress the Delegation Agreement with Cardiff Council, for the discharge and provision of council strategic and operational procurement services	Head of Enterprise and Community Animation	Timescales as per strategy	An updated Procurement strategy was approved in July 2018 and, in order to deliver the aspirations set out within the strategy, an external review of the Strategic Procurement Service has been undertaken. The review confirmed the council's own recognition that it had limited capacity to influence behaviours relating to its £100m third party annual spend. In April 2021, the Cabinet Member for Resources agreed on a mutually beneficial collaboration with Cardiff Council. The collaboration is initially for three years, and assuming it is successful, will move to a rolling contract whereby the councils collaborate in the discharge and provision of their procurement services, delivered by Cardiff Council on behalf of both councils. This will enable Monmouthshire Council to benefit from a bigger team, increasing from two to five, to include three new full-time starters, managed by the award winning and highly respected Cardiff Council procurement service.
Continue to work closely with schools to ensure their financial plans are as robust as possible to minimise any impact, whilst continuing to improve standards for our young people.	Finance Manager – Children & Young People	Ongoing	<p>From a financial perspective, 2020/21 was an unprecedented year for schools, who received several significant Welsh Government grants to support them and their pupils during a period of significant disruption to learning. They were also subjected to sustained periods of enforced closure during the financial year, which resulted in spending on core budgets being significantly curtailed and most schools brought forward significant surplus balances into the 2021/22 financial year.</p> <p>The Authority required schools carrying significant surplus balances that were above levels guided by Welsh Government (£50k for a Primary, £100k for a Secondary) to provide investment plans setting out how they intended to spend the significant balances being held. These plans have subsequently been completed and assessed and have informed the budget monitoring process for month 2, with schools forecasting to draw on £1.782m of balances during the year.</p>

Ref & Status	4b	Risk	Potential Risk that: The authority is unable to deliver its political priorities or maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Deb Hill- Howells, Peter Davies & Cllr Phil Murphy	Select Committee	Economy and Development & Strong Communities	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified						
Underlying the Capital Strategy is the recognition that the financial resources available to meet council priorities are constrained by the level of one-off reserves and capital receipts that the Council holds and the level of capital grant funding from Welsh Government and other funding bodies. The core capital programme has been impacted in recent years in order to enable the Band A new schools programme to be funded, which has now successfully concluded. The business case is now being developed for a 3-19 school in Abergavenny under the Welsh Government Band B programme.						
There remain a considerable number of pressures that sit outside any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP, and this has significant risk associated with it. These include property and highways infrastructure, DDA work, and public rights of way. In addition to this, there are various schemes/proposals (e.g. Monlife, tranche C Future schools, climate emergency response, any enhanced DFG spending etc.) that could also have a capital consequence, but in						

advance of quantifying those or having Member consideration of these items, they are also excluded from current capital MTFP. In the event of emergency pressures, resources will have to be diverted. Projects, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, also require significant capital investment to realise the outcomes.

The timing of capital receipts always remains uncertain due to market conditions. Future investment in capital schemes is in part dependent on future success of achieving capital receipts and there are risks attached to some receipts materialising. There is a risk associated with relying on the need to utilise capital receipts in the same year that they come into the council and the potential for this to have significant revenue pressures should receipts be delayed and temporary borrowing be required. The Council finalised its draft accounts for 2020/21 with useable capital receipts of £9.2m, a Council Fund balance of £8.9m (excluding school balances) and useable earmarked reserves of £9.3m (excluding ring-fenced service and trading reserves).

Since entering 2020, the council has faced significant and unprecedented challenges, notably the flood response and recovery resulting from Storms Ciara and Dennis in February 2020, and the subsequent Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the lockdown restrictions that were put into effect on 23rd March 2020. Concerns around the longer-term impact of the pandemic are being investigated, such as price inflation on building materials and digital hardware, and delays due to increased demand. This could have an impact on the scope of planned maintenance work, should the price increases continue, and this is being monitored by officers in partnership with other agencies.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Likely	Major	High	2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium
2022/23	Likely	Major	High	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Regularly review assumptions as part of the capital MTFP taking account of any new information that is relevant and the consequential impact on the revenue MTFP.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	ongoing	<p>An updated capital budget strategy was approved by Council, alongside the treasury strategy, in March 2021. In preparing the draft capital budget proposals for 2021/22, and the subsequent three years of the capital MTFP, regard was given to the underlying principles of the previous strategy that remained fit for purpose.</p> <p>A report was presented to Cabinet in January 2021 to set out draft capital budget proposals for financial year 2021/22, and the indicative capital budgets for the three years 2022/23 to 2024/25. Final proposals, along with proposed changes following consultation, were presented to Cabinet in March 2021. Draft capital budget proposals are currently being prepared for 2022/23 and indicative capital budgets for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26. And these will be informed by an updated capital budget strategy that will be approved by Council next March.</p> <p>There will still remain a considerable number of pressures that sit outside of any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP, and this has significant risk associated with it. These pressures are undergoing further review and risks are being assessed to determine whether there needs to be any further capital budget provision afforded to mitigate any significant risks requiring more immediate action. The results of this review will inform the capital MTFP and will identify pressures that will need to be accommodated and funded in future financial years.</p> <p>Using Welsh Government guidance on the flexible use of capital receipts, Cabinet approved the use of £1.7m of capital receipts to fund revenue costs associated with service reform, and to support the draft revenue budget proposals for 2021/22.</p>
Continue to monitor the capital Budget	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Ongoing	The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to the progress of budgeted capital schemes, with capital slippage for 2020/21 totalling £49.92m. The Covid-19 impact is affecting both internally and externally managed projects, with disruption to external supply chains, increased contract risk and inflationary cost pressures sitting alongside internal resourcing pressures. Building materials have seen a considerable price inflation, as well as those required for digital hardware. Demand is also resulting in problems associated with production capacity for digital equipment, causing delays of up to six months on standard laptops, mobile devices and computer consumable. Welsh Government are investigating this to determine the longer-term implications, and council Finance Officers are working with the Capital and Asset Management Working Group to understand the implications such that the effects and associated risks are reflected in in-year capital budget monitoring and in the draft capital budgets proposals and MTFP

			Forecasted capital receipts balances held at the end of 2020/21 are lower than forecasted in the 2020/24 MTFP. Ignoring timing differences in the realisation of capital receipts, this is largely attributable to the use of unbudgeted receipts under the capitalisation direction in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and budgeted use for 2021/22 and 2022/23. If this trend of utilisation is maintained in the medium term, this will result in reduced balances being available to support further capital investment.
Further refinement of priority assessments in the property and infrastructure budgets to ensure all pressures have been considered and ranked.	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services & Head of Placemaking, Housing, Highways and Flood	Ongoing	<p>A programme of property condition surveys are currently being undertaken by external consultants; these will be used to inform prioritisation of capital maintenance spend. A programme of Health and safety surveys is currently being commissioned. Independent condition assessments of key highways infrastructure are completed as required depending on condition. These inform prioritisation of available capital budget.</p> <p>A review of the pressures and associated risks is being undertaken to inform the capital budget process. A previous review in 20/21 had concluded that further feasibility studies and technical assessments needed to be undertaken on specific infrastructure assets, funded from existing highways infrastructure capital budgets. The results of these studies and assessments will inform the capital MTFP and pressures that will need to be accommodated and funded therein in future financial years. The Capital and Asset Management Working Group will review this feed into the budget process for next year and across the MTFP. In tandem with this, the Capital and Asset Management working group will investigate the impact of significant construction price inflation on materials such as steel, wood, plaster, etc.</p>
Deliver the Asset Management Plan to manage the Council's land and property portfolio	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	Timescales as per plan	The Asset Management strategy is being implemented and actions from the plan have been integrated into the relevant business plans for ongoing monitoring and progress reporting. It is intended for the strategy to be updated in 22/23 and which will provide a good opportunity to review progress and the strategic focus and priorities going forward.
Help sustain Council Services and enhance the asset base by investing in commercial property assets in order to increase the net rental income stream for the Council in line with the asset investment policy	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	Ongoing – see Asset Management strategy	<p>As part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan, a Commercial Strategy has been developed, which seeks to enhance income generation, develop an approach to commercialising assets and create a commercial culture and ethos. The strategy has a short-, medium- and long-term view and aims to provide a framework, with defined objectives, for new commercial projects and for the delivery of future commercial activity.</p> <p>The council has acquired two commercial investments to generate income to support Council services. Any further investments will be considered by the Investment Committee. In 2020/21, the investment properties at Newport Leisure Park and Castlegate Business Park generated a combined profit of £159,018, which has been transferred to reserves, as detailed in the Council's Investment Strategy. In common with the leisure and retail sector, commercial investments have been badly affected by the impacts of COVID-19 but continue to be supported by the Welsh Government's COVID Hardship fund. Whilst the position may improve in light of changes to the legal requirements on social distancing, this is as yet unproven as it will depend on consumers' behaviour and their appetite to return to leisure venues without restrictions in place. As with all investments, this is being actively monitored with discussions are ongoing with tenants.</p> <p>The council has continually assessed its commercial risk appetite and exposure, and the updates are issued to the Investment Committee on investment performance and mitigating action being taken. The commercial risk appetite has been adjusted in light of the current pandemic and uncertainties in the investment and property markets at this time.</p>

Ref & Status	5	Risk	Potential Risk that: Relatively high age profile, a global skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Matt Phillips & Cllr Phil Murphy	Select Committee	Strong Communities	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified						
There is a global skills shortage, and the impact is being felt in several sectors that Monmouthshire County Council is either a part of or competes with for talent. Some services have identified challenges with recruitment; Social Care, Operations and Facilities are all facing difficulties, which is affecting service provision. Driver shortages are affecting waste collections and school transport, with some contractors withdrawing from home to school contracts. In addition to this, the mean age in the council is 48 and modal age is 55. Staff turnover increased slightly during 2020/21, from 9.43% to 10.02%. Sickness levels were an average of 11.00 days per FTE employee for 2020/21.						
The council's response to the pandemic, alongside emergencies such as widespread flooding, risks putting unprecedented pressure on staff, and there is a risk of burnout. Since the relaxation of lockdown restrictions, demand in various areas of the organisation has increased considerably. Calls to the council's contact centre have increased by 42% compared to the previous year, and as a result, average wait times have increased from 2 to 7 minutes and missed calls have						

also increased. New systems such as tip booking have had huge benefits in terms of outcomes but can cause bottlenecks when lots of people are trying to book slots over the phone. Social care services have seen unprecedented increases in demand. Staff in some areas face considerably increased workloads to meet this demand, and there is a risk that this could impact on their well-being. In conjunction with the ongoing pandemic, altered home lives, and potential financial strains, the situation will need continuous monitoring to determine implications and to ensure staff are supported.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Almost certain	Major	High	2021/22	Likely	Major	High
2022/23	Almost certain	Major	High	2022/23	Likely	Major	High
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	2023/24	Likely	Major	High

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Recruit and retain staff more effectively	Chief Officer, People and Governance	Ongoing	<p>Recruitment issues are being reflected nationally within some sectors, and the council is not exempt from this. Positions within Social Care, Operations and Facilities, for example, are seeing a dramatic reduction in applicants, and this is impacting on service provision. The longer-term impacts of the pandemic are yet to be understood, so how long the recruitment problems will continue is also unknown.</p> <p>Solutions for the national recruitment issues do not sit solely with local authorities, and some factors affecting the availability of staff sit with government. However, HR and managers within the council are working together to try to reduce the recruitment problem and determine ways of lessening its impact on services. The Media and Communications Team are promoting positions in a variety of ways to reach a broader audience, using drives such as 'Job of the Week'. The weekly Leaders Q&A sessions are encouraging discussion between service areas to promote networking and sharing ideas. Considerable activity is underway within the graduate, apprenticeship and work experience space to try and develop people into their roles, and source new and developing talent that can be grown in-house.</p> <p>We are actively seeking an e-recruitment system to turn recruitment from an obstacle course into genuine talent acquisition process. This will benefit recruiting managers who want speed, simplicity and agility.</p> <p>There is recognition in some service areas that the recruitment process is not a 'one size fits all' and the normal recruitment protocol is being flexed to work more in line with potential applicants, whilst still maintaining safeguarding and safety requirements.</p> <p>HR staff sit on various local government groups and are collaborating with partner organisations to identify commonalities and information sharing. This is being fed into Welsh Government to inform their decision-making and to influence their response to the issue.</p> <p>An analysis of the impact of the loss of EU funding on teams within Enterprise, who are directly funded via EU funding streams is being undertaken and mitigation measures are being considered.</p>
Develop the support mechanisms in the short to medium term to address the potential impacts on staff wellbeing as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.	Head of HR	September 2021	<p>The weekly Digital 'Cwtch' continues, along with a weekly People Leaders Q&A session. HR has developed a People Leaders Support Site which enables 'live' discussion/news feed, enabling direct support and a shared learning platform for managers and head-teachers. The SUPPORTALL HUB portal allows colleagues to access information directly from any device on a range of subjects and includes an extensive range of FAQ documents on all people management related topics.</p> <p>Staff well-being fluctuates based on work-based pressures, as well as societal changes; financial impacts and personal circumstances are all factors that can affect well-being. The pandemic has introduced some improvement opportunities to well-being, such as improved work-life balance obtained through working from home, for example. However, the longer-term impact of the pandemic is yet to be fully understood, so providing services and mechanisms to safeguard the well-being of staff will be an ongoing and iterative developmental process as more is revealed about the pandemic and its repercussions. Pressures within some departments are evident, such as staff shortages in social care and as workloads continue to increase, this pressure will be transferred to our staff.</p>

			Work is starting in this area to try and identify and forecast the longer-term impact of the pandemic on our staff - factors such as the energy crisis and the approaching Christmas period are all potential pinch points that may cause concern.
Embed workforce planning into team management processes to ensure the right skills, expertise and knowledge are available for future changes	Chief Officer, People and Governance	Ongoing	Work is underway to analyse data regarding the current workforce and potential future needs. A lead officer will shortly be appointed to progress this workstream with heads of service and managers.
Adopt a qualitative approach to ensuring professional development, wellbeing and information flow is taking place for those that want or need it	HR Manager	Ongoing	Following the Culture and Ethics audit report, SLT have decided to move beyond the quantitative approach to tracking this and into a more qualitative approach. The check and balance will be the introduction of the Peoples Q&A that will have a key 'listen' function to ensure that issues and blockers are raised and identified directly to SLT and DMTs. This work has commenced and has proven to be hugely beneficial so far.

Ref & Status	6	Risk	Potential Risk that: Significant harm to vulnerable children or adults may occur due to a failure of safeguarding arrangements or factors outside the council's control				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean & Jane Rodgers Cllr Penny Jones & Cllr Paul Pavia	Select Committee	Committees: CYP & Adults	Strategic objective	The best possible start in life Lifelong well-being		
Reason why Identified							
Safeguarding vulnerable people can only be achieved and sustained when people and organisations work together to design and deliver more integrated safeguarding services around people's needs. While there are many steps the council and partners can take to mitigate the risk, significant harm can also occur due to factors that are outside our control, meaning that there will always be a level of risk. The upward trend in demand within both children's and adult's services puts services under pressure.							
The COVID-19 pandemic has put families under increased strain and increases risks to vulnerable individuals, at the same time as decreasing the visibility of children and adults at risk because universal support services are harder to access. A number of potential risks have been identified due to the Coronavirus pandemic that will need to be managed and monitored as far as possible. The long-term impact of the pandemic is not yet fully understood so we will analyse and monitor to determine the impact on families and communities and ensure that services are in place to respond to increased risk and vulnerability.							
There is a national shortage of capacity in the social care workforce, which could impact on the council's ability to conduct safeguarding inquires and protect children and adults who are at risk.							
In February 2020, an Audit Wales follow up review on Whole Authority children's safeguarding concluded "The Council has responded positively to our [2018] report and recognises the progress it has made against the proposals for improvement and what more it needs to do to fully address them."							
Care Inspectorate Wales also conducted an assurance check in February 2021 and reported broadly positive findings under the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: People – Voice and Control, Prevention, Well-being, Partnerships and Integration. Their report confirmed that we have made clear our strategic intent in relation to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are looking at the horizon ahead. Our Senior leaders have commenced work on scoping the future needs of the community and are continuing to work collaboratively with partners to build and support community resilience.							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium	2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium
2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Continually monitor and evaluate safeguarding processes and practice and ensure good accountability for safeguarding. Ensure that where actions are identified from self-evaluation processes that these are implemented.	Safeguarding & quality assurance service manager	Ongoing	Progress against the council's safeguarding priorities is evaluated annually and the priorities reflect the cornerstones for keeping people safe in Monmouthshire, as set out in the Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council on 4 th November and is based on activity and information from April 2020 to March 2021. This evaluation report forms an integral part of the improvement of safeguarding practice across the Council and drives the work of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group. A safeguarding 'self-assessment' is undertaken on a two-year rolling programme, on a directorate basis via the Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation (SAFE). The key development has seen directorates				

			sharing the outcomes of their SAFEs through a work-shop approach, using real case studies from their service areas to demonstrate safeguarding in action. There was some interruption to the previous cycle of assessment due to COVID-19, but these are now back on track and underway.
Drive the strategic agenda and the associated programme of activities for safeguarding through the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG).	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	<p>The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG) meets 6-weekly, chaired by the Statutory Director (Chief Officer). Every directorate has a representative on the group, and minutes are retained for each meeting. The WASG continues to provide leadership, direction, oversight, support and challenge to strengthen safeguarding activity in the Council. WASG has met virtually during the pandemic and their key functions have continued, including the safeguarding response and risk assessments.</p> <p>The Chair of WASG, the Chief Officer for Social Care and Health, retired in September and a newly appointed Chief Officer has recently taken up position.</p>
Ensure that robust systems are in place within the authority to respond to any concerns regarding child protection and protection of adults at risk.	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	<p>The continued upward trend in demand within both children's and adult's services puts services under immense pressure. Children's services remain committed to promoting good practice around children protection and safeguarding through the development programme 'Building Best Practice' (2019 – 2022). Family support services across all tiers of need and vulnerability have been significantly increased and there is a good level of stability within the workforce and leadership.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in adult safeguarding concerns being referred to the Adult safeguarding team, which has impacted the timescales in which the safeguarding process can be completed. CIW carried out an assurance check in February 2021, and the report specifically identified positive working practices within the safeguarding arena, stating, "The newly implemented safeguarding hub and the strengthening of the adult safeguarding team are positive developments in promoting and protecting people's well-being and safety." Furthermore, "The safeguarding interventions reviewed in children's services evidenced child-centred work promptly undertaken to develop an understanding of what life was like for the child. We saw effective panel arrangements supporting decision-making and oversight."</p> <p>They did, however, identify some areas for improvement, specifically in relation to the number of adult safeguarding enquiries completed within seven days, and improved management oversight in the adult safeguarding records viewed. Whilst adult services are under such immense pressure, formulating a plan to address this is delayed, but it this will continue to be actively reviewed.</p> <p>In January 2021, the All Age Integrated Safeguarding hub was implemented to support multi-agency working in responding to safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>Through the Coronavirus pandemic, safeguarding has remained an essential part of our delivery supporting adults and children. The process for receiving and responding to referrals has not changed. Arrangements have been adjusted, and where required, different solutions have been identified to deal with situations.</p>
<p>As a statutory partner of the regional safeguarding boards, continue to work with other statutory partners to ensure that there are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and that they are working well.</p> <p>Share learning and development in safeguarding.</p> <p>Implement the recommendations and learning from any Domestic Homicide review, adult practice review or child practice review that is undertaken under the safeguarding board.</p>	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	<p>There continues to be full representation at all levels of the work of the regional safeguarding board and VAWDSV board. There is strong engagement in regional approaches to Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE) Child Sex Exploitation (CSE), Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) and Contest (PREVENT anti radicalisation).</p> <p>Last year saw the Development of the Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG), with representation from the Safeguarding Unit, Public Protection, Partnerships, Police, Gwent Missing Children's Team, Education and community-based teams. This group has overseen the development of a Monmouthshire Protocol for responding to Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation. It has been on hold through the pandemic, and there are plans in place now for a re-launch.</p>
Regularly assess the impacts of coronavirus across adult services and children's services.	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	Through the Coronavirus pandemic, safeguarding has remained an essential part of our delivery supporting adults and children in Monmouthshire. The process for receiving and responding to referrals has not changed. Front-door for children's and adult's safeguarding services remain fully operational and referrals continue to be made and responded to.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Referrals are seeing a continued upward trend in referrals - Safeguarding is integrated into community hubs - The Wales Safeguarding Procedures App has been loaded onto desktops across the workforce <p>The Corporate Safeguarding Policy is undergoing a review to integrate the ongoing coronavirus considerations and updates to service provision. A virtual method of delivering Safeguarding Level 1 has been implemented.</p> <p>The COVID pandemic has been a particularly challenging period for provider services and the Local Authority is working collaboratively to provide ongoing support to service providers and commissioned services, including domiciliary care, residential and nursing homes. This challenge has been further compounded by the ongoing recruitment issues being seen nationally, alongside staff absence and loss of staff due to the impact of COVID19, which continues to be monitored.</p> <p>The impact of COVID-19 on protecting vulnerable families and individuals cannot be underestimated, and further analysis of risks related to the impact of COVID-19 continues.</p>
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Ref & Status	7	Risk	Potential Risk to: The robust delivery of the Council's corporate parenting responsibility and services related to vulnerable children as a result of an increase in demand and complexity in cases				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers & Cllr Penny Jones	Select Committee	Children & Young people	Strategic objective	The best possible start in life		
Reason why Identified							
<p>The number of looked after children has increased significantly in recent years, from 173 at the end of 2018/19, to 219 at the end of March 2020. Despite a slight decrease in the number of looked after children in March 2021 to 213, we are seeing an ongoing upward trend. The number of children on the child protection register is seeing considerable fluctuations but the overall trend is also a steady increase. As a result, significant demand on Children Services remains.</p> <p>The 2021/20 net budget for Children Services is £16.5m, over half of which relates to children who are looked after, in particular, placements for children who are looked after. Despite an increase in budget for 2021/22 Children's Services are still forecasting a £1.34M overspend, with demand on children who are looked after services still high. With the increased demand comes added pressures on other services such as legal and transport provision, contact and staffing, and extended reliance on agency staffing as a consequence.</p> <p>Current critical risks, which are being managed and monitored as far as possible, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational changes in the way that services are delivered as a result of COVID-19, with a reduction in 'direct' (physical) contact - Increase in referrals because of the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable families - Increase in some spend areas to support certain areas of risk where demand has increased, particularly within 'front-door' services - Reduced capacity and absence of staff due to staff sickness, welfare and recruitment difficulties - Increase in complexity within family need and vulnerability - There is a critical shortage of specialist fostering and residential placements for children with complex needs, meaning that some children cannot be placed 							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium	2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium
2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress			
Continue to review and evaluate performance of Early Help and Family Support services in order to reduce the pressure on statutory services as much as possible	Head of Children's services		Ongoing	There has been a real focus in Children's Services to implement a co-ordinated approach to early intervention and prevention. The service has continued to respond to the demand pressure, expanding and developing services, particularly through the family support offer, so that the right help is provided at the right level of intensity. Early evaluation and feedback of our family support services indicates clear and positive outcomes for families.			
Continue to implement the fostering strategy on the recruitment, retention and skills development of in house fostering.	Head of Children's Services		Ongoing	Monmouthshire is aiming to attract more foster carers to offer placements to look after children. Active campaigns are being run to increase the rates of in-house foster carers, now under the auspices of FOSTER WALES. The increasing number of looked after children means that demand remains high and therefore recruitment campaigns are continuing.			

Continue to review and embed MyST, a Multi-disciplinary Intensive Therapeutic Fostering Service and assess impact on placement activity with children with complex needs.		September 2022	We have collaborated with Blaenau Gwent and implemented the MYST service, a Multi-disciplinary Intensive Therapeutic Fostering Service for Looked After Children and Young People, which will help to support children who are looked after and who have complex needs. We are now moving to the second stage of implementation which is to create a stand-alone service for MyST with the aim of stabilising and reducing our ongoing reliance on residential placements.
Implement the next phase of children's services development programme focused on achieving the best outcomes for children and families through building best practice	Head of Children's services	September 2022	Children's Services have completed a 3-year improvement programme (2016-2019), which concentrated on securing stability in the workforce, and developing a delivery model of practice, commissioning and service critical issues. The service is now moving onto a further 2-year programme (2019-2021), now extending to 2022. The focus is on practice development and will shape the way we work with families over the next number of years. The importance of relationships and how we work with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good enough outcomes will be key indicators of success.
Regularly assess the impacts as coronavirus restrictions change and social distancing continues across children's services.	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding & Head of Children's Services	Ongoing	<p>Child services are priority services and remained fully operational throughout the pandemic. The process for receiving and responding to safeguarding referrals did not change and there remains an upward trend in referrals.</p> <p>The service is operationally back to full service delivery with the challenge now of many practitioners delivering services from a home base, and many activities adopting a 'hybrid' digital / direct in person service. The impact of these arrangements (the legacy from COVID-19) needs to be further considered within the longer-term plans and linked to any wider corporate approach.</p> <p>Staff absence and loss of staff due to the impact of COVID19 is a risk that has been and continues to be monitored, with a focus on staff welfare and protection through things like access to PPE and testing.</p> <p>The impact of the lock-down has meant that some harmful behaviours, abuse and neglect may have remained hidden. The potential risk that Child welfare concerns were not recognised or referred in early enough to Children Services continues to be a contributory factor in increased complexity. Further analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on families and communities is needed to ensure that services are in place to respond to increased risk and vulnerability.</p>
Review and monitor the Children Looked after population in line with Welsh Government expectations around reduction	Head of Children's services	As per plan provided to WG	<p>The number of looked after children increased significantly from 173 at the end of 2018/19 to 219 at the end of March 2020 with a slight dip to 213 at the end of March 2021. The underlying trend in recent years remains upward. This is still significantly more children looked after than in recent years and pressure remains on services.</p> <p>Whilst we develop interventions to address early identification and manage appropriately pre- and post-statutory intervention with families, the growing numbers mean that services are under pressure. Work is underway to maximise the opportunities to reduce the current trends. Welsh Government recently carried out a Looked after Children's review across Wales. As part of this, we have submitted plans aimed at reducing the numbers of children being looked after. This relies heavily on all parts of the system being geared to support the plans for reduction.</p> <p>Over the next year, as well as continuing to embed preventative services, the family support offer has been expanded to ensure that children are equally supported to leave care safely.</p>

Ref & Status	8	Risk	Potential Risk that: The well-being of some of our most vulnerable residents will be affected due to an increase in demand, complexity in cases, and recruitment and retention issues affecting the robust delivery of the council's Adult Services			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers & Cllr Penny Jones	Select Committee	Adults Select	Strategic objective	Lifelong wellbeing	
Reason why Identified						

Referrals to Adult's Services have increased exponentially over recent years, and services are facing unprecedented pressure as a result. The care at home/domiciliary care sector is under immense pressure; Monmouthshire has specific challenges due to rurality and demographics. Demand following lockdown, and the complexity of need, is significantly higher than seen before and services are under immense pressure as a result, which is causing delays in service provision. A number of providers have left the market, which has created some critical pressure points.

The fragility of the social care sector and the availability of care staff remains a key risk. Difficulties in recruiting to care posts has exacerbated the pressure, and this is being impacted by, and impacting upon, hospital discharge protocols. Some of the long-term impact of the pandemic is not yet fully understood, and Adult's Services will need to monitor closely emerging issues, as they become clearer.

Evidence has shown that older age and certain underlying health conditions, as well as other factors, are associated with greater risk and impact of COVID-19. Care homes have particularly been affected, with many homes suffering outbreaks. Patients being discharged from hospital and new residents admitted from the community could increase the risk of the virus entering the home. The care home sector is under strain and working hard to minimise transmission in order to keep residents safe, whilst some are experiencing financial challenges threatening longer term sustainability.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Almost certain	Major	High	2021/22	Likely	Major	High
2022/23	Almost certain	Major	High	2022/23	Likely	Major	High
2023/24	Almost certain+	Major	High	2022/23	Likely	Major	High

Mitigating Actions			
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Work with Welsh Government to recruit and retain care staff	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	<p>Recruitment and retention of care staff has been a considerable concern for some time, despite an ongoing recruitment programme across Wales. In recent months however, the issue has become significantly worse. The 'We Care' campaign, a national recruitment campaign initiated in 2020, has been granted further funding by Welsh Government, however, Local Authorities and independent providers are struggling to retain and recruit carers.</p> <p>We are running a 24/7 recruitment campaign to encourage as many applications as possible, and we have created a fast-track recruitment process. This aims to streamline the application process, whilst maintaining all safe recruitment protocols, to provide a more user-friendly platform for potential employees to use. We are also adopting different mechanisms to advertise posts than the conventional MCC website, such as a social media campaign. Funding has been obtained from the Welsh Government Recovery Fund to employ two part time posts dedicated to recruitment.</p> <p>A campaign is about to launch to advertise positions for people who only want to work weekends, with a view to attracting students or parents with child-care commitments during the week.</p>
Work to address the difficulties in the health and social care system through the Gwent-wide Tactical Coordination Group	Chief Executive, Chief Officer, Social Care and Health	Ongoing	A Tactical Coordination Group was established in September 2021, chaired by the Chief Executive, to generate ideas/interventions that will have a rapid impact on the health and social care system. The group includes representatives from the Fire Service, WAST, the Local Authority, Police and the Local Health Board to identify actions to create capacity and also create a more seamless, proactive approach, rather than firefighting.
Monitor requests for Domiciliary Care to ensure demand is being met and delays are minimised	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	<p>All referrals are triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Despite the availability of short-term funding streams e.g. Winter monies, Discharge to Recover – there has not been available workforce (Social Work / Therapies) through agency or any other means to manage the capacity gaps.</p> <p>We are undertaking case load reviews and a replacement exercise with other services to see if they can assist with providing services to users. We are working with families to determine if there is help available to support a loved one. We are also working extensively with other care providers to coordinate runs better to be as efficient and effective as possible.</p> <p>A Recovery Fund application has been made to appoint commissioned care coordinators in each area to work closely with care givers and service users to maximise our capacity. However, this is a short-term solution due to short term funding.</p>
Implement the 'Turning the world upside down' approach to create sustainability in care at home services	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	A key risk that remains is the fragility of the social care sector and the availability of care; COVID-19 has added a further risk to what was already a difficult area and we did not foresee the impact of lockdown on residents

			and on the care sector itself. Recruitment is a huge problem at the moment as we are losing staff to other sectors, and the price of living in Monmouthshire is a prohibitive factor when trying to recruit. The Council remains committed to developing a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. The 'Turning the world upside down' approach is being revisited in line with place-based working, where possible. Progress was paused as a consequence of the pandemic, and to also assist in the in-year budget recovery plan.
Continue to support testing arrangements and tracking systems to help mitigate the risk of an outbreak of COVID-19 in care home	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	A robust procedure is in place to help protect care homes from COVID-19 outbreaks, and the Environmental Health team are working closely with the local health board to administer this. Protecting residents from infection is paramount, but consideration is also given to their well-being when considering placing a home in incident and restricting visitor access. The Environmental Health Team work closely with care home staff to determine the source of the infection and, in conjunction with the MDT team, determine the best course of action. A Standard Operating Procedure is in place and sets clear intervals of testing within the home, based on the potential transmission period and incubation periods. For those homes in incident, testing is monitored to determine safe and appropriate timings to lift restrictions, to ensure staff and resident safety. Vaccine roll-out has been high, and the process for administering booster jabs has begun amongst the most vulnerable in the community.
Ensure that stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) continue to be available to providers as needed, and that the system of distribution remains in a manner that is proportionate to that need.	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	Schools are arranging their own PPE deliveries, and Social Care staff have adequate access to supplies. Going forward, PPE will still be provided by WG, but the Hardship Fund, which is used to deliver supplies throughout the county, is ceasing. An application has been made to the Recovery Fund to continue paying for distribution costs.
Ensure the long-term sustainability of social care providers	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health & Head of Public Protection	Ongoing	It is vital that social care providers are able to provide care and support during and after the period of the pandemic and as such the council has a role in ensuring their financial sustainability and that they have access to sufficient resources, e.g. staffing. There is a national recruitment problem within the care sector, and this is impacting both public and private services. We are working with private care providers to align routes and services as much as possible to make the system as effective and efficient as possible. From the outset of the pandemic, a message of support that the Council would assist if they were experiencing any financial difficulty was given. The Welsh Government made a Hardship Fund available and enabled social care providers to make claims via the Council for any additional costs as a result of COVID-19. The Hardship Fund is ending so financial resources will become more limited. Our commissioners are meeting providers to determine their contingency plans, etc, and what needs to happen to get them back on track financially.

Ref & Status	9	Risk	Potential Risk that: Failing to meet the needs of learners, including-vulnerable learners, and failing to promote pupil well-being within Monmouthshire's schools, which may result in children and young people not achieving their full potential. Failing to adapt to changes in the new curriculum and examination requirements			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean & Cllr Paul Pavia	Select Committee	CYP	Strategic objective	The best possible start in life	
Reason why Identified						
Meeting the needs of vulnerable learners remains a priority and the gap in attainment between those not eligible and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) remains a concern. There is variation in FSM learner progress and outcomes across schools. Leadership, management, capacity and performance has been identified as in need of improvement in some schools. There is an increasing demand for support for children with additional learning needs. The Monmouthshire PSB well-being plan recognises the importance of greater support for the well-being of children and young people, and there are areas where students' well-being can be further supported. There are also challenges in meeting the demand for Welsh Medium education provision in the future. A number of potential risks have been identified due to the Coronavirus pandemic that will need to be managed and mitigated as far as possible. These include the high levels of positive COVID-19 cases amongst young people, the disruption to learning due to absence, and the return to examinations in 2022 and the potential impact on students' results due to ongoing high absence rates.						

Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire County Council was published in April 2020. The report concluded that the authority's education service does not give cause for significant concern. There are four recommendations for development:

- Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals
- Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards
- Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision
- Strengthen the use of information gathered through self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning

The new curriculum is due to be implemented in 2022 and preparations are ongoing. The disruption from the past 18 months may impact on the ability of some schools to fully and effectively implement the curriculum and this will need to be monitored throughout the remainder of the academic year.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Likely	Major	High	2021/22	Likely	Major	High
2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Ensure the commissioned arrangements with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) continue to challenge and support schools	EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People	Ongoing	<p>Working with the local authority, EAS continue to provide ongoing challenge, monitoring and evaluation work in schools with a continued focus on vulnerable learners. All schools will continue to be provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances and to allow for changes in light of the pandemic.</p> <p>Monmouthshire's strategic priorities for 2020/21 aligned well with the recommendations from the Estyn inspection in April 2020. The year that followed saw unprecedented disruption and in managing our response to the global pandemic, previous improvement priorities had to take a step back to allow focus on the operational and tactical steps required to safely operate schools and provide blended learning. Whilst some uncertainty remains, work continues to progress addressing our Estyn recommendations, and prioritising emerging need.</p> <p>Schools are prioritising the wellbeing of all pupils as a pre-requisite for effective learning. This includes the development of a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, suitable for use in a range of contexts, and additional support to close the gap, to recover and to raise standards for priority groups. EPS and Healthy schools are providing advice and support to practitioners to support the well-being of children and young people impacted by COVID-19.</p>
Prepare for the implementation of the new school curriculum	EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People	September 2022	<p>The new curriculum is to be implemented in September 2022, which is a significant challenge. The pandemic is ongoing, and this brings additional pressures for schools, such as the sparsity of supply teachers and high levels of staff absence. The requirement to release staff for training on the new curriculum creates an additional pressure, which needs to be managed. The position of schools in implementing the new curriculum is varied; some are in a strong position as they had undertaken significant work prior to the pandemic; others less so and will require additional support and time to bring them up to speed.</p> <p>The pandemic itself has left schools in significantly different places, with some schools experiencing a greater impact than others. This is also the case for the positive outcomes arising from the pandemic, such as the development of virtual learning capabilities. For those schools that have been unable to move forward at pace, there is bespoke support available, and a framework around them to continue the move forward at their own pace. Schools will have support from their school improvement partner or their school-to-school link. School development planning guidance has been provided to help with strategic planning over the next year, and there is a national professional learning programme for senior leaders, headteachers and middle leaders, that is available live and asynchronously. Professional learning support is also available for HLTAs and Tas. A secondary curriculum design network is available to support deputy heads, and area learning and subject</p>

			<p>networks that are looking at planning within and across areas of learning. Moreover, if schools require bespoke support, this will be provided.</p> <p>MCC and EAS continue to work with schools in ensuring that they are preparing for the new curriculum and meeting the needs of students. EAS and MCC continue to monitor the progress schools are making towards the implementation of the curriculum and identify those who may need additional support.</p>
Monitor the situation with examinations in 2022 in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on examination year pupils	EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People	August 2022	Although it is likely that the examination process will return in 2022, there are concerns around the parity of learning across the examination age groups due to pupil absence as a result of COVID-19. Some schools are seeing high levels of pupil absence in examination years due to a positive test result, and the loss of learning for these pupils may impact on their examination results. It has been acknowledged that, although restrictions have eased in schools, this is not a return to normal, and Education Officers are working closely with Head Teachers to guide them through the coming months.
Continue to improve the quality of self-evaluation in the CYP directorate.	Chief Officer Children & Young People	Ongoing	The Chief Officer Report for Children and Young People was presented to Council in June 2021. The report informed Council of the progress that the education system made in the previous twelve months since the last report. This is an ongoing annual report. The other focus of the report is the potential context for the coming year. This year, the report identifies the potential impact of the pandemic on the most disadvantaged children and the emergence of further disadvantaged children as a result of the pandemic, the mental health of our children and young people, and the impact on their academic achievements. The report also identifies a range of further challenges; implementing the new Curriculum and the ALN Reform Act, which will require commitment and energy but will allow each school to form their curriculum based on high quality teaching, sound pedagogy and with well-being at its very heart.
Develop and implement plans to address the recommendations in Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services	EAS & MCC	Ongoing	<p>Monmouthshire County Council underwent an Estyn inspection in February 2020 and ordinarily, would focus on meeting the report's recommendations. 2020/21 was a significantly different year, but colleagues have continued to work in the background to further those recommendations. The themes from the inspection include pursuing excellence, creating an holistic vision and strategy for learners with additional learning needs, securing better outcomes for our learners eligible for free school meals (FSM) and improving the way we use data in our evaluations. Draft ALN and FSM strategies have been taken to CYP Select and continue to be developed in response to the impact of COVID-19. We also continue to develop leadership across our schools and create better learning environments for all our learners.</p> <p>Estyn provided a letter early in 2021, which captured the actions that the Education Team, schools, and EAS colleagues have taken to ensure the transition through the previous months had been as effective as possible. Some things identified in the letter include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in terms of Leadership and Collaboration, their recognition of our communication and clear expectations for schools • members have been kept up to date with events as they have unfolded. The quality of questions and level of challenge from members has been good • the good work undertaken by colleagues in education and social services to ensure that the needs of the more vulnerable learners were met
Deliver the Welsh Education Strategic Plan in collaboration with neighbouring authorities	Head of Achievement and Attainment	Timescales as per WESP	The draft WESP is a long-term planning tool, which sets our direction for the next 10 years. The draft is currently out for consultation, and this closes on 6 December. A review will then take place of all comments received and, where possible, they will be incorporated into the final WESP document. It is an ambitious plan and interfaces clearly and closely with the local authority five-year Welsh language strategy, which is currently being reviewed.
Ensure that the Additional Learning Needs review delivers sustainable, adequate and appropriate support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs	Head of Achievement and Attainment	September 2020	The new ALN Strategy identifies four distinct and ambitious work streams, all of which aim to build sustainable and resilient provision and are now embedded in the business plans of the ALN and Educational Psychology Services. Whilst lockdowns have had an impact on some actions, progress has been made in other areas. The Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) cross-directorate initiative has been developed as part a whole school, whole authority approach to promoting attendance and well-being in Monmouthshire schools. The Education Psychology Service's training platform has continued to be developed, which provides information on support for well-being, as well as other key issues.

			<p>The ALN team have been a key part of the regional preparations and developments for the new ALN and Tribunal Act legislation, which was implemented on 1st September 2021. In preparation for the implementation of the Act, all Monmouthshire ALN Coordinators have been provided with an extensive range of training through the regional ALN transformation initiative, and Headteachers have been kept up to date with developments associated with ALN implementation through head teacher meetings and targeted communications.</p> <p>Over the last academic year, all Specialist Resource Bases (SRB) have upgraded their sensory resources and provision, and outdoor play equipment, and one SRB has been significantly remodelled to provide an improved learning and play environment. In addition, SRB staff have participated in Attention Autism training, which will form the core intervention for children with ASD, and an SRB Outreach Service pilot was rolled out in the Spring term 2021, which will be evaluated and further developed over the autumn and spring terms.</p>
Work with PSB partners, through the Children & Young People Strategic Partnership, to deliver the steps in the PSB well-being plan related to focusing on children and young people's well-being and supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing.	Chief Officer Children & Young People	Timescales as in developing PSB delivery plan	<p>The Monmouthshire Public Service Board has prioritised the step in its well-being plan. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is being developed to bring key partners together to lead on the delivery plan.</p> <p>Work on the well-being plan step on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has good support regionally and should continue to be progressed through the new Gwent PSB. The response to this involves an understanding of the impact of ACEs within our communities, and coordination with a range of partners, to develop a long-term approach to prevention, taking account of the complexity of issues involved. ABUHB have also developed the Melo Cymru resource to provide a range of resources to support mental health and well-being</p>
Continue to support schools through the ongoing and evolving demands of the pandemic	EAS & MCC	Ongoing	<p>Considerable changes have taken place since schools returned in September 2021; much of the restrictions seen before the summer holidays have been removed, such as the wearing of mask and pupil bubbles. Pupils aged 12 – 15 are now eligible to receive one vaccination, and this has started at the mass vaccination centres in Cwmbran and Newport.</p> <p>Cases of positive COVID-19 are increasing in secondary schools and are currently higher than in primary schools. Education Officers are working closely with TTP and EH colleagues to monitor this, and a range of information has been shared with parents. COVID-19 remains a significant challenge in the running of schools and staff have met with all Head Teachers recently to ensure they are supported and are aware of the ongoing response. It is becoming increasingly difficult to employ supply teachers, at a time when teacher absence is particularly high, especially at primary school level. Although the absence rate is lower in secondary schools, there is an issue around supply teachers having to oversee examination classes.</p> <p>Attendance is still an issue in schools and Education Welfare Officers are working with vulnerable pupils to bring them back into the educational setting, where possible. There are varying reasons for pupil absence, so a different approach is being adopted for different cohorts, and the Education team are working with multiple agencies to ensure these children and young people return to school.</p>

Ref & Status	10	Risk	Potential Risk that: Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Sian Hayward and Cllr Phil Murphy	Select Committee	Economy and Development	Strategic objective	All		
Reason why Identified							
<p>There have been a number of high-profile cases across both public and private organisations where cyber-attacks and data breaches have compromised service delivery and financial loss. This can also affect safeguarding of our vulnerable people in communities. Aside from physical security, there is evidence that cyber security risks are introduced via a workforce that is unaware of information management, information governance and cyber security through their personal actions. There is also a risk of cyber security being compromised through a lack of structured governance arrangements and planning.</p> <p>There is evidence that incomplete, inaccurate and unstructured digital data will inhibit accurate data analysis, compromise decision making and ultimately compromise service delivery, service efficiency and budget management.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic has increased the reliance on and use of digital technology and communication. Infrastructure has been set up and practice changed rapidly. This will need to be closely monitored to ensure robust systems are in place to protect data and to ensure all staff and systems are equipped to manage this.</p>							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level

2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium	2021/22	Possible	Major	Medium
2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium	2022/23	Possible	Major	Medium
2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Undertake a structured and comprehensive training programme for all staff on cyber security, information management and GDPR. Incorporate specific cyber-crime training into the Data Protection Training	Cyber security service	Ongoing	The Digital Programme Office has appointed a Digital Trainer to produce focussed e-learning modules and targeted team training. Cyber security training sessions are being delivered via video call, as well as e-learning sessions. Cyber security training is delivered as part of the Corporate Induction, and continuous training is provided through the existing workforce. Training is targeted specifically to high-risk areas where confidential data is held and shared. The network of Digital Champions are skilled in cyber threat awareness and are updated through regular Digital champion's workshops and meetings. Training attendance and events are monitored by the Information Governance Group.				
Continuous monitoring of cyber threat and mitigation by the security team and the DPO to identify technical solutions to potential risk areas	Digital Projects Team	Ongoing	A cyber security service shared between Gwent Police, TCBC and MCC has been commissioned, which acts as an audit function of our technical arrangements, as well as providing training and advice on data security issues. This service also deals with MCC's PSN and the SRS ISO accreditation, all of which are current and certified. Significant investments in ICT infrastructure and software has been undertaken, which will mitigate against the likelihood of a cyber-attack. In the event of a successful attack coming through, we have invested in insurance cover to cover the costs and resources of remediation. An operational risk register is maintained by the Info Security Team, the SRS Security Team and MCC. This register is continuously monitored and updated, and reported to the Information Governance Group				
Implement the Information Strategy to safeguard the integrity and security of our data while taking-steps towards becoming a data-led organisation.	Information Governance Group	Ongoing	In June 2021, a restructure was agreed and three sections have been created dealing with Digital Design, Information Security & Technology, and Data Capacity and Capability, working together to create safe and secure information governance arrangements to enable us to protect our critical data.				
Introduce a comprehensive digital EDRMS into the authority, ensuring data is categorised, tagged, and stored with appropriate retention guidelines applied.	Head of Digital	Project in progress with completion aimed for Summer 2022.	Implementation started in January 2020 with a programme to transfer all data and information off network drives onto a managed and structured EDRMS that is available 24/7 to authorised personnel. The structured rollout plan has been agreed by SLT and is being rolled out in conjunction with Teams and Teams Telephony functionality.				
Develop a rigorous approach to data governance policies, ensuring that our data is structured and clean in order to aid BI, RPI and AI.	Head of Digital	Ongoing	Detailed guidance on systems administrators' roles and responsibilities has been issued, including information regarding the need for business continuity plans and a requirement to develop and upgrade systems as soon as notified.				
Make use of the security features within O365 licencing to protect mobile devices and information sharing	Head of Digital	Ongoing	New licencing has been introduced, which incorporates a seamless mobile device management solution. Licencing will also bring in enhanced security for file sharing and working with new secure communications technology via 'Teams'				

Ref & Status	11a	Risk	Potential Risk that: Delays to the adoption of the local development plan because of external factors such as phosphate levels, the pandemic and the national development framework will impact our ability to deliver policy objectives including affordable housing and sustainable economic growth				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Mark Hand and Cllr Bob Greenland	Select Committee	Economy and Development	Strategic objective	Thriving and well-connected county		
Reason why Identified							
The delivery of affordable housing continues to be a concern. While all strategic sites are being progressed, targets for new dwelling completions and affordable dwelling completions are not being achieved. 2440 households were in Bands 1-4 of the Council's housing waiting list while there are only 900 affordable homes that could be developed within the current LDP which is reaching the end of its ten-year plan period. Welsh Government have challenged the level of development in the preferred strategy on the basis that it is not consistent with the National Development for Wales which identifies that new housing development should be in Newport, Cardiff and the Valleys.							

High levels of phosphates in the river Wye have resulted in Natural Resources Wales placing restrictions on development that can take place within the catchment area

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a delay in the progress of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), both internally and where external factors impact upon it. In addition to this, the Welsh Government published the corrected 2018-based population and household projections in August 2020. This new data resulted in the need to revisit the Growth and Spatial Options and Preferred Strategy stages of the RLDP process in 2021.

There is a recognised lack of suitable employment land in the northern part of the County (Abergavenny and Monmouth in particular). Delays to the RLDP mean that new allocations to attract investors or retain growing businesses will not be available. There may be some scope for employment sites to come forward adjacent to settlement boundaries outside of the current LDP allocations.

The RLDP will identify areas with potential for renewable energy. A delay to the RLDP will have limited impact in this regard because renewable energy schemes such as solar farms can come forward for consideration via the existing LDP and under national planning policy.

There is a need to consider the Council's future vision and the extent to which the current LDP and RLDP aligns with that, and the impact on wider infrastructure planning, such as transport, which could affect future economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Likely	Major	High	2021/22	Likely	Major	High
2022/23	Likely	Major	High	2022/23	Likely	Major	High
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	2023/24	Likely	Major	High

Mitigating Actions			
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Prepare an RLDP to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.	Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning	Ongoing	<p>The RLDP is being prepared in accordance with the revised Delivery Agreement (second revision, October 2020), to reflect the delays incurred to the RLDP process as a consequence of the pandemic and publication of the updated/corrected WG population and household projections.</p> <p>A review of the RLDP issues, vision and objectives, in light of COVID-19, was undertaken and endorsed by Cabinet in June 2020, and demonstrated that the Plan's strategic direction of travel remained relevant. In accordance with Ministerial advice, the Council undertook a further assessment of the RLDP's Issues, Vision, Objectives and evidence base, and identified a number of key messages that will require ongoing consideration as the RLDP progresses through the plan preparation process during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Non-statutory consultation on the revisited Growth and Spatial Options Paper took place in January – February 2021. The Candidate Site Advice Service also recommenced in January 2021.</p> <p>The revised Preferred Strategy was subject to statutory public consultation and engagement for 8 weeks during July – August 2021. The Second Call for Candidate Sites commenced alongside the Preferred Strategy consultation.</p> <p>Approximately 450 responses have been received to the Preferred Strategy consultation. Approximately 150 candidate sites proposed for development have also been submitted, together with 8 candidate sites for protection. The Planning Policy Team is in the process of analysing the representations and candidate site submissions.</p> <p>NRW's recent announcement of water quality (phosphate) issues in Riverine Special Areas of Conservation, including the River Wye and River Usk, could have significant implications for the progression and implementation of the RLDP. The preferred growth and spatial strategy option directs future growth to key sustainable settlements (including Abergavenny and Monmouth) within these affected catchment areas over the plan period (2018-2033). The council is proactively liaising/working with various organisations, including NRW, Welsh Water and WG, and local authorities and the development industry, to seek solutions/a way forward with this issue.</p>

			The current LDP runs until 31st December 2021; in legislative provision, this is referred to as the 'drop dead date'. The risks associated with the LDP expiry date legislation for the Adopted LDP have dissipated following the publication of a letter from the Minister (24th September 2020) which clarified that the provisions in the Planning (Wales) Act 2014 relating to LDP expiry dates do not apply to LDPs adopted prior to that Act coming into force. This means that our current LDP, adopted in February 2014, remains an extant development plan for decision-making purposes until the RLDP is adopted. This clarification does not, however, change the urgent need for the Council to make timely progress on its RLDP and to get the RLDP adopted as soon as realistically possible in order to address our key issues and challenges and to meet the future needs of the county.
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Ref & Status	11b	Risk	Potential Risk that: Insufficient broadband infrastructure and a lack of digital skills in the county have the potential to lead to social and economic disadvantages			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		Cath Fallon & Cllr Sara Jones	Select Committee	Economy and Development	Strategic objective	Thriving and well-connected county

Reason why Identified

Although many premises now have access to superfast broadband, there are pockets of digital deprivation, with around 12.5% of premises still without sufficient broadband provision (access to broadband with download speeds of 30 Mbps or higher). Residents have high demand for broadband services; however, a significant skills issue exists in the county with approximately 20% of adults not using the internet. The pandemic has seen a wide scale increase in the use of digital technology. In areas where broadband infrastructure is insufficient or for people who do not have digital skills, this may amplify the potential social and economic impact of the pandemic. The pandemic has further amplified the need for good quality digital infrastructure and connectivity, including for the Council with many services moving to an on-line digital platform.

Monmouthshire still has around 8,000 premises with poor broadband. Welsh Government are currently conducting an Open Market Review of broadband provision in Wales, and this will provide updated figures for Monmouthshire to indicate if progress has been made in reducing the rate for the county. This information will be available in January 2022 when the findings are formally published following a consultation period.

The global chip shortage has led to reduced laptop supply and limited capacity in SRS have led to problems delivering digital skills training and providing public access PCs in community hubs which limit the ability of digitally excluded people to get online to access support and training.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Likely	Substantial	Medium	2021/22	Likely	Substantial	Medium
2022/23	Likely	Substantial	Medium	2022/23	Possible	Moderate	Low
2023/24	Likely	Substantial	Medium	2023/24	Possible	Moderate	Low

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Enable the rollout and exploitation of high-speed broadband across the county for both businesses and communities.	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	The Council has continued to work with Welsh Government and Openreach to support the delivery of the Superfast Cymru successor programme. It participates in Welsh Government's Superfast Cymru Group, which is a forum to receive information on the progress of the roll-out and to provide feedback, and Welsh Government's Broadband Engagement Officers Group. As of June 2021 (last available data), 2,075 premises in Monmouthshire were included on the list of contracted premises and therefore should (but are not guaranteed to) be provided with a gigabit-capable connection (fibre to the premises) through the programme by the time of its completion in June 2022. For premises not included in the Welsh Government-funded fibre rollout, Council officers provide information on other options and signpost them to Welsh Government's Access Broadband Cymru scheme and/or UK Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme as appropriate.
Work with Broadway Partners Ltd to enhance broadband availability within the county	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	As of September 2021, Broadway Partners Ltd.'s network covered around 8,000 white premises in the county and the Internet Service Provider had around 600 active wireless and fibre customers. The company recently announced inward investment of £145 million from Downing LLP to extend their full fibre rollouts in Wales and Scotland. The investment made by the council has been preserved to maintain our working relationship.

Identify funding opportunities available via the Local Broadband Fund (Welsh Government)	Rural Programmes Manager	Ongoing	<p>Welsh Government’s Local Broadband Fund (running until 2023) supports local authorities and social enterprises to deliver broadband projects locally. The Council submitted two applications to its first tranche and was successful with both.</p> <p>The first grant awarded to MCC is enabling the delivery of a scheme to build and maintain a high-speed broadband network in the Llanthony Valley. The project commenced in May 2021, a public procurement exercise was undertaken that resulted in Broadway Partners Ltd being appointed the supplier, and the scheme is now currently scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2022.</p> <p>The second grant awarded to MCC is enabling the strengthening of Monmouthshire Broadband Ltd/Broadway Partners Ltd.’s county-wide hybrid wireless/fibre network to make it ‘carrier grade’. In future, this will give Mobile Network Operators the opportunity to use this network to improve mobile connectivity.</p>
Benefit from the learning associated with the programme to trial the use of 5G technology.	Rural Programmes Manager	Ongoing	<p>The Council is an active partner in the CoCoRE/5G Wales Unlocked project, which aims to demonstrate the commercial value of improved connectivity in rural Wales.</p> <p>Two of the project’s four use cases are hosted in the county:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism: Scalable AR Experience for a Sensitive Site and Preservation & Safety specifically at Raglan Castle • Diverse Rural Economy: Farms Security & Safety and Farmer Mental Wellbeing & Isolation <p>As a result of the project, the area in/around Raglan will also be provided with wide coverage (700 MHz band) 5G coverage through partner BT/EE.</p>
Implement the digital infrastructure action plan.	Head of Enterprise & Community Development	Timescales as per action plan	In September 2019, Cabinet approved the Digital Infrastructure Action Plan, which identifies opportunities to address the issue of 12.5% of premises not having access to Next Generation Access broadband (our Digital Deprivation Rate). The Plan will be refreshed by the end of the year and will be further updated to include the revised deprivation data when published by Welsh Government in early 2022.
Work with the Digital Inclusion Group to develop a plan to address digital exclusion in the county	Rural Programmes Manager	Ongoing	Under the umbrella of the Social Justice strategy, a Digital Inclusion working group has been established to plan how to address digital exclusion in the county. This may include developing a Digital Inclusion Playbook or set of Digital Inclusion Principles that the Council and others can sign up to and publicise.

Ref & Status	12	Risk	Potential Risk that: The scale and complexity of the challenge could result in the authority failing to deliver on its policy commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero resulting in social, economic and environmental harm to current and future Monmouthshire residents and businesses				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Strategic Leadership Team & Cllr Jane Pratt		Select Committee	Strong Communities	Strategic objective	Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment	
Reason why Identified							
Tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy is one of the biggest challenges facing our society. Rising temperatures bring increased risks to our communities and are causing long-term and potentially irreversible damage to our planet’s eco-systems, with significant local impacts such as flooding and loss of species. If we are to stand a chance of slowing the rise in the Earth’s temperature, we need to act now. In 2019, councillors were unanimous in declaring a climate emergency. The council will strive to reduce its own emissions and work with communities and local businesses to help them reduce their emissions. This will require engagement, community involvement and commitments from third parties.							
When considering climate change, it is important to consider both how Monmouthshire is contributing to climate change, but also how resilient the county is to the likely impacts of climate change. Flooding, along with other extreme weather, can impact significantly on infrastructure, homes and businesses, along with disruption to community life and public services, particularly critical public services people rely on such as care services.							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Almost certain	Major	High	2021/22	Almost certain	Major	High
2022/23	Almost certain	Major	High	2022/23	Almost certain	Major	High
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress			

<p>Deliver the Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Strategy</p>	<p>Head of Policy and Governance</p>	<p>Timescales as per strategy</p>	<p>Feedback has been gathered on progress made to date for each of the actions contained within the strategy action plan. As of June 2021, out of the 66 actions in the plan, 30 are progressing as planned (green), 31 are showing some progress (yellow) and 5 are not progressing as planned (red). Compared with the last report to Council in July 2020, there are more green and yellow progress ratings, and fewer reds. There is good progress being made on almost half of the actions, with some that had not started last year because of Covid 19 now underway. The reason for the slower progress with some of the actions is mainly because of delays due to the pandemic, caused by competing pressures, closure of venues or services, postponed consultation or engagement or delayed decisions on external funding.</p> <p>Although good progress is being made against the actions in the plan, there is not enough detailed information available about our baseline emissions and what the precise carbon savings of the measures we are taking are likely to be. We are sourcing additional expertise and capacity to help establish a more robust baseline for our carbon emissions, in line with the Carbon Disclosure Project being organised by the Cardiff Capital Region, and to develop trajectories and pathways to the 2030 net zero carbon target. This will enable us to establish where we should best be focusing our resources to generate the maximum carbon savings.</p> <p>We are also updating the action plan as it has been two years since the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan were adopted, and it is important to check that the actions are still correct and relevant. To inform the updated action plan, an extensive engagement campaign has been undertaken. We carried out an Officer workshop and a community climate champions workshop, attended community engagement events, including Usk Show and Monmouth Climate Futures festival, held a drop in event in Abergavenny, hosted an online questionnaire and held young people's engagement sessions at the Monmouthshire Games and the Bronze Young Ambassadors conference.</p> <p>There is also a growing recognition nationally and internationally of the need to build climate change into a green recovery. Work has started on establishing a new strategic Environment Partnership Board, comprising of multi-agency partners who have a role to play in addressing issues in relation to biodiversity, climate change and other environmental matters.</p> <p>Work to reduce carbon emissions at a regional level continues through the work of Climate Ready Gwent, for example, on electric vehicle charging, hydrogen feasibility and Carbon Literacy training. This work is likely to be strengthened through the development of a Gwent PSB, Wellbeing Assessment and Wellbeing Plan.</p>
<p>Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change.</p>	<p>Strategic Leadership Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>In recent years, council services have considered what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start thinking about how to adapt to these risks. These Climate Change Risk Assessments are in the process of being updated to allow service areas to better understand their necessary adaptation requirements.</p> <p>The Replacement Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Changes to national planning policy on flooding are still awaited, but officers intend to take a precautionary approach, avoiding all built development on greenfield sites at known flood risk. WG has produced The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, and in response, Monmouthshire will be producing an updated Local Flood Management Plan during 2021/22.</p> <p>Much of the work to coordinate emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We will continue to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.</p> <p>The Climate Emergency Action Plan has recently undergone a review to ensure it accurately reflects the county's priorities. As part of this review, and subsequent update, a section has been included on climate adaptation, which includes preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change. Some of the actions within this include developing the management of green infrastructure to improve climate resilience;</p>

			increasing urban tree canopy, including new street trees and in car parks to provide a cooling effect; and continuing to promote and support council services with business continuity and emergency response strategies.
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Ref & Status	13	Risk	Potential Risk that: The spread of Coronavirus accelerates as vaccine immunity wanes and new variants emerge that will impact on staff and residents' health and cause delays or reductions in the council's service delivery				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		Strategic Leadership Team & Cabinet	Select Committee	Adult Select	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified							
The world has been living with Coronavirus for over 18 months and, although processes for limiting the spread are deeply embedded, alongside the mass vaccination rollout, its impact is still a real concern. Numbers are increasing once again as we head into the winter, and there is the added concern of seasonal flu impacting on the health of residents. Variants are also an ongoing concern, as their emergence is unknown, and their impact is therefore not easy to manage or mitigate.							
We are seeing signs that immunity amongst the vaccinated may be waning, which could result in increased hospitalisations and more pressure on adult social care to deal with the resulting discharges. There are also concerns that the pace of the roll-out amongst children may be too slow to prevent a spike in young people causing disruption to education during the winter months.							
The potential for an increase in staff absence due to illness or self-isolation is high. This could result in a lack of capacity to respond to other major incidents, should they occur, and also cause a shortage in capacity to respond to agreed priority services. The delivery of social care services is essential and achieved through a dedicated service model, which could be impacted by the reduction in staff numbers. The Test, Trace and Protect protocol continues to operate, and presents a potential risk if large numbers of staff are required to self-isolate. Its impact will continue to be monitored. Booster jabs are being administered, currently focussed on high-risk categories and older people.							
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	
2021/22	Almost certain	Major	High	2021/22	Almost Certain	Substantial	
2022/23	Almost certain	Major	High	2022/23	Almost Certain	Substantial	
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	2023/24	Likely	Substantial	
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress			
Step up an Emergency Response Team if and when required to manage any escalation in cases which leads to significant disruption to service delivery or emergency response within the Civil Contingencies Framework		Strategic Leadership Team	ongoing	The main element of the council's response, the Emergency Response Team (ERT), was formally stood down in May 2020, and the multi-agency Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and relevant Tactical Subgroups have also since been stood down. The ERT Covid risk register has formally been 'closed', with risks now being managed through the Strategic Risk Register and business plans for ongoing updates. All are available to be stood up if the situation requires it and are able to draw on previous experience to act quickly and efficiently.			
Implement, and continue to refine, the Council business continuity plans and strategies		Strategic Leadership Team	ongoing	Heads of Service are updating plans to prioritise service delivery. There has been considerable focus on the Business Continuity strategies and alternative methods of service delivery since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Limited work has been undertaken to update business continuity plans and, in areas where these were deemed to be lacking, strategies and dynamic changes to service delivery have been implemented as a matter of urgency.			
Monitoring measures that need to be put in place to keep priority service areas functioning in the county, in particular: i. Emergency response ii. Social care particularly in adult services and iii. Operational capacity to maintain essential services.		Strategic Leadership Team	ongoing	Staff absence rates are being closely monitored for the impact on priority services. As business as usual in service delivery returns, the ability to redeploy to other service areas has diminished. Workforce issues are of particular concern within the Social Care and Health sector. Following the stand-down of the COVID-19 SCG, an emergency response lens has now been put across the delivery of the end-to-end social care system, with a Gwent-wide Tactical Coordinating Group established to look at initiatives over the winter period to keep health care services delivering and meeting demand. National Recruitment campaigns are being linked to local campaigns to address workforce issues across the Adult Care Sector. Testing for the virus is now available for all staff and their family members who are symptomatic. We are continuing to implement the robust protocol for testing to facilitate staff to return to work. Test, Trace and Protect protocol has been established and is being monitored closely to determine the impacts on staffing levels, should a large number of staff be identified as requiring 10 days self-isolation. Business			

			Continuity strategies continue to be updated to ensure services can continue if staffing levels are significantly affected.
Deliver with partner agencies an effective Test Track and Protect system to identify virus outbreaks quickly and contain them	Head of Public Protection	ongoing	<p>Alongside Gwent partners, the council is contributing to the operation of the COVID-19 Test, Trace and Protect scheme. This aims to trace and contact residents who have been in contact with the virus to provide advice and to request they self-isolate, if they have not received the vaccine, to try and minimise the spread of the virus.</p> <p>Monmouthshire has partnered with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Public Health Wales and neighbouring local authorities to collaborate on a Gwent-wide approach. This 'mutual support' model has been key in swiftly dealing with cases anywhere within the Gwent area, with staff deployed from neighbouring areas to assist those in greatest need. Posts are made up of dedicated TTP staff specifically recruited to carry out the role together with EHOs. Funding for the TTP scheme has been secured until June 2022. The service is subject to constant review and changes in approach in terms of WG advice and TTP strategy, based on dynamic and changing patterns of transmission.</p>
Work with partners on measures aimed at maintaining a reduced level of transmission and respond rapidly to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases identified via Test, Trace and Protect. Use data supplied by PHW to monitor and respond appropriately to indicators that indicate an increase in community transmission.	Strategic Leadership team	Ongoing	The Council continues to be an active partner in the Test Trace Protect approach across Gwent in accordance with the Wales TTP Strategy. Environmental Health Officers play a leading role. The service is particularly active in identifying clusters in school settings and identifying close contacts to spread onwards transmission. The Strategic Coordinating Group is not presently active, all arrangements are in place and data is analysed regularly to identify patterns and potential outbreaks. The group can be stood up if the evidence suggests emergency response arrangements are required. Additional Mobile Testing Units have also been established in Monmouth to encourage uptake in covid testing from residents and facilitate a quicker turn around in identifying positive cases and stopping transmission.
Work with the NHS to roll-out a COVID vaccination programme	Strategic Leadership team	March 2022	<p>The council continues to work with ABUHB, where required, to support the roll out of the UK/WG vaccination strategy. Booster vaccinations are now being made available for at risk groups and older individuals, and we will continue to support, where required.</p> <p>Over 1,001,000 vaccinations have been delivered in our health board area. In Monmouthshire, 92.2% (73,109) of residents aged 18 years and older had received one dose of the vaccination, 90.1% (71,467) had received two doses, and 25.2% (19,966) had received the booster jab.</p>
Continue to monitor the ongoing emergence of mutations to COVID-19 and adopt local and national protocol as it develops to mitigate the risks associated with the new variations.	Strategic Leadership team	ongoing	Arrangements are in place to manage increased surge community testing and arrangements have also been developed for Mass Community testing. The monitoring of Variants of Concern continues.

Ref & Status	14	Risk	Potential Risk that: Changes in socio-economic conditions could impact on individuals and families, resulting in increased poverty and inequality in the county			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Frances O'Brien & Cllr Lisa Dymock	Select Committee	All	Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified						
<p>Monmouthshire is a beautiful county, blessed with strong communities and a competitive local economy. However, the county's relative affluence compared to much of Wales, when viewed through the lens of aggregated data, masks the day-to-day reality and lived experience of those citizens who are experiencing poverty, financial hardship and who do so in the context of the considerable financial inequality that exists within the county. In many ways, living in an area of relative affluence and wealth whilst struggling to make ends meet can make that experience even harder and more isolating. This is Monmouthshire's particular challenge and one that we are determined to understand and address.</p> <p>There is evidence that the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic disproportionately affects low-income households, including those working in lower-paid sectors, which can exacerbate issues of poverty and inequality. The impact of the pandemic on families could result in financial hardship, and related issues such as food poverty and homelessness. Those on lower incomes could be at higher risk of unemployment due to business closures and potential redundancy. There is a possibility that there is a latent homeless need (e.g. rent arrears, landlord wishing to sell) in Monmouthshire that could emerge as temporary private sector non-eviction rules and the Furlough/job support measures end. Those on lower incomes are also less likely to have access to technology and outdoor spaces.</p> <p>Rising energy prices, which will be exacerbated by a further increase of the price cap in March/April, risk adding additional financial pressure on those already impacted by the pandemic. Issues around food supply and security as a result of the UK leaving the EU could cause shortages in some supplies, which could drive up prices. For families on lower incomes, this could cause significant pressures and an increase in the need for additional support.</p> <p>Welsh Government homeless policy changes through the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Support, whilst positive, has created challenges. These relate to the availability of temporary and permanent accommodation, the type and quality of accommodation and the range of housing support available necessary to meet current and emerging homeless need, alongside delays in the construction of new homes due to labour and supply chain problems and phosphates issues in the north of the county.</p>						

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)				Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level
2021/22	Likely	Major	High	2021/22	Likely	Major	High
2022/23	Likely	Major	High	2022/23	Likely	Major	High
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	2023/24	Possible	Substantial	Medium
Mitigating Actions							
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress			
Undertake data modelling to identify communities at greatest risk and use this to target pro-active responses such as commissioning of services		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation and Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny	As per action plan	<p>A Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan has been developed and approved by Cabinet in March 2021. Data modelling has informed the production of the action Plan. The action plan provides details of the proposed activities for the next two years and the targets by which success will be measured</p> <p>Close working with partners is being undertaken to track data in real time to help understand the emerging situation and act accordingly (e.g. the number of food bank parcels issued, referrals for housing support, nature or queries to Citizens Advice, use of RSL hardship funds).</p> <p>Cabinet recently announced investment into a new data capacity and capability roadmap to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity. This includes further developing the use of geo-spatial data within the organisation to improve data analysis.</p>			
As part of the Council's continued commitment to Social Justice, review evidence and plan activity related to poverty in Monmouthshire.		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per strategy	<p>The third iteration of the social justice strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2021. The strategy has been developed in consideration of the impact, changes and learning from the pandemic, and sets out a new direction for strategy and the council's service areas, in particular the Community Network (which forms part of the Communities and Social Justice Team's activities). The strategy also demonstrates the continued commitment to work in partnership, at national, regional and local community level, to implement the policy interventions, approaches, support and methods to improve outcomes for people and communities.</p> <p>Whilst the aim of the strategy will remain the same, rather than a broad programme of work, this third phase of the Strategy will provide policy coherence for several targeted individual action plans. These have been produced following consideration of the rapidly changing situation as a consequence of the pandemic and will continue to help promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire. The action plans include Tackling Poverty and Inequality, Food Development and Homeless Transition.</p>			
Implement systems to meet the requirements of the new Phase 2 Homeless Transition Plan		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	<p>During the pandemic, the level of demand for homelessness accommodation increased as Welsh Government mandated all councils to ensure nobody sleeps rough or is at risk of sleeping rough. Welsh Government released the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support, which sets out their future homeless policy intentions. The core of the policy is rapid rehousing and to provide long-term accommodation with support if needed. The necessity to provide temporary accommodation continues to increase, and many applicants need specialist accommodation and housing support, which largely is not available in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>The Council's Phase 2 Homeless Transition Plan, as part of the wider Social Justice strategy, seeks to address the identified issues listed above, and help to transform homeless services in Monmouthshire. Some progress has been made against improving the quantity and quality of housing, with particular attention on specialist provision. Self-contained flats with disabled facilities and specialist young person's accommodation has been secured and will be available for use shortly. Family accommodation and single person housing has also been sourced, although this must be balanced against some landlords giving notice on their properties. We will shortly enter into a Gwent-wide agreement for a prison release support service, and an action plan will be presented to select committee in November to tackle empty properties and ways to back them into use to house people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.</p>			
Work in partnership with community fridges to identify individuals and families in need of further support.		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	<p>Community Fridges are citizen-led projects which seek to prevent food waste and to stop fresh food going to landfill. The food in them is accessible to the whole community with no means-testing. Whilst their ethos is primarily environmental, their presence in a community does have the ability to reduce the amount of money spent on essential outgoings for poorer families.</p>			

			<p>Community fridges are currently operating in Monmouth, Abergavenny, Caldicot and Goytre with another fridge scheduled to open in Chepstow during December. We have secured funding for consultancy support to help the community fridge volunteers and to look at sustainable funding options, common policies, practices and developing new fridges.</p> <p>There is a risk that community fridges 'prop up' residents who otherwise would have reached the foodbanks, which require a referral process and can trigger more extensive support. We are working alongside the community fridges to sensitively support frequent users to connect with appropriate support, particularly through the Housing Gateway.</p>
To try and limit the impact of business closures and resultant job losses, work with Welsh Government and partner organisations in the development of new grant funding schemes to assist businesses following lockdown restrictions	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	There have been several grant schemes during the pandemic, to support businesses during lockdowns and restrictions, and these have been administered by the Council. Emergency COVID-19 grants have now ceased, and the team are working with Welsh Government to create a Local Authority Grant Fund for Business Development, which will continue to support businesses through their growth and emergence from the pandemic.

Risks removed from the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register

Risk	Mitigating Action Update	Reason for Removal
<p>Potential Risk that: Political, legislative and financial uncertainty for council services and local businesses as a result of the UK leaving the European Union</p>	<p>Many of the negotiations on Britain leaving the EU have been outside of the council's control. A working group continues to meet, led by the Chief Officer for Enterprise, and a specific risk register has been established for the group to continue to monitor any impacts.</p> <p>An EU Transition webpage providing information for residents and businesses has been established and information has also been shared on social media. Service level planning has continued and business continuity mitigation strategies for services to consider/implement developed. Close working with and support from the WLGA has continued.</p> <p>The Council has established working relationships with key partners, such as the Welsh Government, the WLGA and treasury advisers to work on understanding and planning for any potential risk to Council services. We are engaged with partners on the Gwent Local Resilience Forum Risk Group.</p> <p>£45k was awarded to local authorities in 2021/22 to assist in undertaking the necessary planning, co-ordination and preparation for ongoing EU transition and negotiations. A Welsh Government funded Community Cohesion grant has also been used to appoint a Community Cohesion Officer to identify and support EU citizens living and working in Monmouthshire and to help them through the transition.</p>	<p>This risk was identified prior to the UK leaving the EU to identify potential areas of concern and factors that could arise upon exiting the EU. Some of the finer details were still to be finalised and legislation was yet to be enacted, including import and export requirements, animal health requirements and Trade agreements.</p> <p>Almost 12 months on from the UK's withdrawal from the EU on 31 December 2020, many of the unknowns have been formalised into legislation and arrangements are in place. Those areas that are still potential risks, such as food supplies, the impact on recruitment, and the financial implications on budgets due to, for example, increased costs in relation to supply chains, have now been captured within other strategic risks within the register. These will continue to be monitored and mitigating actions identified to ensure their impact is reduced.</p>
<p>Potential Risk that: The coronavirus pandemic will have a long-term impact on businesses as financial support packages cease, resulting in business closures and job losses</p>	<p>There have been several grant schemes during the pandemic, to support businesses during lockdowns and restrictions, and these have been administered by the council. Emergency COVID-19 grants have now ceased, and work is underway to create development business grants to continue to support businesses through growth and emergence from the pandemic. We are working with Welsh Government on this new scheme, although the process is currently on hold pending the recent surge in cases to determine if any further restrictions will be necessary to stop the spread.</p> <p>Considerable adjustments were made to town centres after lockdown to allow them to reopen safely, and many of these were made under temporary trial re-opening towns measures. Cabinet has recently agreed that many of the temporary trial re-opening towns measures remain in place for up to a further 18 months while long-term options are designed and consulted upon (albeit that the trial measures will continue to be adjusted in response to Member and stakeholder feedback).</p> <p>Looking to the longer-term development of town centres, Cabinet has also agreed to a series of regeneration activities to take place throughout the county following a Placemaking Grant submission</p>	<p>This risk was identified during the pandemic, when many businesses were forced to close due to lockdown restrictions. Considerable funding was available to support businesses through this time, but it was not clear how long the situation would continue, and what the consequences would be for local businesses.</p> <p>Although the cases of Coronavirus are high across the country, and the financial safeguards such as the furlough scheme and the availability of grants have ceased, our town centres, and the businesses with them, have reopened to the public. Existing sectors are re-emerging, and many businesses have developed their identities and we are seeing new sectors emerging.</p> <p>There are some potential risks that will continue to be monitored within existing risks within the register. The pandemic is not yet over, so there may be businesses still at risk of financial difficulty, which could result in staff</p>

	<p>for 2021/22 of £791,429 made under the Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding. Cabinet also endorsed the indicative programme for 2022/23, noting that the projects and funding balance may change due to prioritisation and deliverability.</p> <p>We have secured Welsh Government funding to deliver a Shop Local at Christmas campaign, which will encourage people to shop locally at independent retailers on Monmouthshire's high streets.</p>	<p>redundancies. The socio-economic impact of the pandemic is yet to be fully understood, and actions are in place to help mitigate some of the impacts that may emerge.</p>
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Appendix 2: Strategic Risk Management Policy – Summary

This sets out the Council’s policy and approach to strategic risk management. A copy of the full policy and guidance is available to staff and members on the council’s intranet the Hub (Finance & Performance Management section – risk assessment)

Risk Management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of controlling them or responding to them. Strategic risks are those which affect the Council as a whole. Typically these will be key risks which could significantly jeopardise the Council’s ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned.

The Council is committed to the effective management of risk. As a large public sector organisation, it is exposed to a wide range of risks and threats in delivering key services to communities. Within the Council the purpose of risk management is to:

- preserve and protect the Council’s assets, reputation and staff
- promote corporate governance and aid good management in controlling and managing risks
- support successful delivery of strategic aims, objectives and outcomes
- improve business performance and better anticipate calculated risks where these are likely in delivering improvements
- avoid unnecessary liabilities, costs and failures

The Council seeks to ensure that risk management is effective from strategic to individual services and employees. Therefore, all employees and councillors are responsible for ensuring there are good levels of internal control and risk management throughout the Council in order that the Council’s specified outcomes are achieved.

The Council uses a ‘traffic light’ system of Red/Amber/Green associated with High/Medium/Low to categorise risk levels. This is determined using the risk matrix below

Impact/Severity	major	Low	Medium	High	High
	substantial	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	moderate	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	minor	Low	Low	Low	Low
		Unlikely	possible	Likely	Almost certain
		Likelihood			

High risk	The risk is highly likely to occur and the impact will be major. Management action/control evaluation and improvement is required coupled with continued pro-active monitoring
Medium risk	The risk is unlikely to result in a major issue, however, if it did the impact would be significant or serious . This risk is relatively less significant than a High risk however it needs to be closely monitored within timely management action/controls to ensure it does not escalate.
Low risk	The risk is very unlikely to occur and the impact will be minor or moderate at worst. Risk will be managed by seeking control improvements where practical and / or monitoring and reviewing at regular intervals



SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS – 2019/20

DIRECTORATE: Resources

MEETING: Audit Committee

DATE: 25th November 2021

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

To receive and consider the progress operational managers have made against implementing Internal Audit Recommendations made in reports issued up to and including 2019/20. Reported previously to the former Audit Committee in July 2019. Implementation of Internal Audit recommendations strengthens good governance.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Governance & Audit Committee consider this report, identify any concerns of non-implementation of audit recommendations and where appropriate consider calling-in any managers for further explanation as to why the implementation of actions has not been as productive as expected.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 The Chief Internal Auditor has to give an overall opinion on the adequacy of the internal control environment operated within the systems and establishments of Monmouthshire County Council. This is based on the opinions given on individual audit jobs undertaken as per the agreed annual audit plan.

3.2 Each audit opinion is based on the strengths and weaknesses identified during the course of each audit; definitions of which are shown at Appendix 1. Where weaknesses in control have been identified an audit recommendation is made in order to improve the internal control environment which should lead to an overall improvement of service provision or the financial stewardship of the area audited. The recommendation is categorised as a level of risk.

- 3.3 Generally operational management agree with the audit recommendations made and agree to implement the action required to make the improvements; on average 98% of Internal Audit recommendations are agreed by operational managers.
- 3.4 In order to verify that improvements have been made in the financial stewardship within services that have been audited, the Internal Audit team has to check that the agreed actions have actually been implemented by service / operational managers. The Team therefore undertake follow up audit reviews to ensure this is done within 6 to 12 months after the final audit report has been issued.
- 3.5 Where a Limited Assurance opinion has been given a full follow up audit is undertaken and these are reported into Governance an Audit Committee separately. This report provides data on recommendations made in audit reports with more favourable audit opinions.
- 3.6 Due to limited resources within the Internal Audit Team not all audit recommendations can be physically followed up, so this is undertaken on a sample basis. Although some audits were followed up by the Internal Audit team and evidence tested to ensure that agreed actions had been implemented, for the majority there was significant reliance on the operational managers' honesty in providing an update on the progress of the implementation of agreed actions back to the Internal Audit Team.
- 3.7 As at 31-3-21, 375 recommendations were due to be followed up, (excludes recommendations made within Limited Assurance opinion audits). These recommendations were made in 2019/20 or previous years and have not previously been signed off as implemented. Work on these had been restricted during the year due to members of the Audit Team being involved in activities related to the Authority's Covid-19 response.
- 3.8 In summary:

Measure	Performance
Number of recommendations accepted by manager	98%
% Tested	29%
Of which % Implemented	36%
% of significant recommendations Implemented	25%

- 3.9 As well as the effects of the pandemic on the resources of the Audit Team, this also significantly affected services across the Authority and limited the time available to participate in our follow-up work. In some

circumstances services have been closed or resources have had to be diverted. In many cases servicing the demands upon services has had to take more immediate priority with managers assessing the risk therefore of outstanding recommendations not being implemented.

- 3.10 As a result, 107 recommendations had been followed up during the year (29% of the population). The further analysis below focuses on the 107 recommendations that were followed up during 2020/21.
- 3.11 For the 107 recommendations followed up in 2020/21, 36% of audit recommendations had been implemented, a further 19% partially implemented, 36% had not been implemented, with 5% ongoing. 4% were considered no longer relevant and for the remaining 1%, managers had now accepted the risk of not implementing the recommendation.
- 3.12 The overall percentage of audit recommendations implemented within services has decreased from 68% in 2017/18 to 36% in 2020/21, as shown at Appendix 2.
- 3.13 A total of 12 /107 recommendations made were 'significant'; Internal Audit was able to ascertain that 25% of these had been fully implemented and a further 8% partially implemented (see Appendix 3 – Significant Recommendations per Directorate). This indicates that implementation of the highest risk recommendations was, in fact, less than for the population of all recommendations as a whole. Clearly we would expect to see management prioritise these 'significant' recommendations and so this outcome is of concern.
- 3.14 Of the 268 recommendations not followed up, 47 (18%) were categorised as 'significant'.
- 3.15 An analysis of the implementation of recommendations across Council Directorates can be found at Appendix 3 (Recommendation per Directorate) below. As can be seen from the data in the Appendix, there are outstanding recommendations across all Directorates within the Authority where the status of the recommendation had been checked. (SCH was not included within the audit sample checked).
- 3.16 Details of the individual audit jobs followed up and the status of the 107 recommendations made as at 31-3-21 are shown at Appendix 4.
- 3.17 The percentage of recommendations implemented is significantly lower than we would have expected given that the action plans are agreed with management prior to the audit reports being finalised. Furthermore, the data identified a decrease in the number audit recommendations implemented or partially implemented over the past four years. This is concerning from an internal control / governance point of view.

3.18 This data on the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations has been reported into SLT along with the details of the individual audit reports in which the recommendations were made. SLT have acknowledged the reduction in the number of recommendations not completed and also the context and the period of the pandemic through which service managers have had to prioritise. Notwithstanding this SLT and Chief Officers individually have committed to working through their DMTs to ensure that targeted progress is being made and that this is reported back to Internal Audit on a timely basis. Furthermore it was accepted as entirely reasonable that a further report come back to Governance & Audit Committee in six months' time to report back on progress made.

4. REASONS

4.1 Part of Internal Audit's responsibility is to provide assurances to senior management that there are sound processes in place across all service areas to ensure effective, efficient and economic use of public money and to safeguard the assets of the Council. Audit reviews are undertaken to check what controls are actually in place to ensure this against what are expected to be in place.

4.2 The Internal Audit Team's work helps to ensure appropriate internal controls, governance arrangements and risk management processes are in place.

4.3 Where weaknesses in process or procedure are identified an audit recommendation is made in order to improve the financial stewardship of public money or governance arrangements to enable the Council to better meet its objectives and service delivery.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

6. CONSULTEES

Deputy Chief Executive / Chief Officer Resources / Head of Finance

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Outturn 2019/20
Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards
Internal Audit Management Information System

8. AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS

Andrew Wathan, Chief Internal Auditor
Telephone: x.4243
Email: andrewwathan@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Internal Audit Opinions

Each report contains an opinion which is an overall assessment of the control environment reviewed.

SUBSTANTIAL	Substantial level of assurance. Very well controlled, with numerous strengths identified and any risks being less significant in nature.
CONSIDERABLE	Considerable level of assurance Generally well controlled, although some risks identified which should be addressed.
REASONABLE	Reasonable level of assurance. Adequately controlled, although risks identified which could compromise the overall control environment. Improvements required.
LIMITED	Limited level of assurance. Poorly controlled, with unacceptable levels of risk. Fundamental improvements required urgently.

The table below summarises the finding ratings used during our audits:

RATING	RISK DESCRIPTION	IMPACT
1	Significant	(Significant) – Major / unacceptable risk identified. Risks exist which could impact on the key business objectives. Immediate action required to address risks.
2	Moderate	(Important) – Risk identified that requires attention. Risks identified which are not business critical but which require management attention as soon as possible.
3	Minor	(Minimal) – Low risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed. Audit comments highlight a suggestion or idea that management may want to consider.
4	Strength	(No risk) – Good operational practices confirmed. Well controlled processes delivering a sound internal control framework.

For grant claim audits:

Unqualified opinion - the terms and conditions of the grant were generally complied with;

Qualified opinion - the terms and conditions of the grant were not fully complied with; the identified breaches of terms and conditions will be reported to the grantor and internally to relevant Head of Service/Chief Officer.

Status of Internal Audit Recommendations

Status	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Implemented	87	68	183	56	94	45	38	36
Partially Implemented	7	6	50	15	43	20	20	19
Not implemented	25	20	67	21	49	23	39	36
Ongoing	2	2	0	0	2	1	5	5
No Longer Relevant	6	5	16	6	14	7	4	4
Risk Accepted	0	0	8	2	8	4	1	1
Total	127		324		210		107	

Recommendations per Directorate as at 31-03-21

Directorate	Implemented	No Longer Relevant	Not Due	Not Implemented	Partially Implemented	Risk Accepted (Evidence Received)	Grand Total	Percentage fully implemented
Children & Young People	21	0	1	10	8	0	40	52%
Enterprise	3	0	3	7	1	0	14	21%
Governance & People	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0%
Resources	11	2	1	10	8	1	33	33%
Corporate	3	1	0	12	2	0	18	17%
Total	38	4	5	39	20	1	107	36%

Significant Recommendations per Directorate

Directorate	Implemented	No Longer Relevant	Not Due	Not Implemented	Partially Implemented	Risk Accepted (Evidence Received)	Grand Total	Percentage fully implemented
Children & Young People	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	100%
Corporate	1	0	0	3	0	0	4	25%
Resources	1	1	1	3	1	0	7	14%
Total	3	1	1	6	1	0	12	25%

Status of Agreed Audit Recommendations per Audit Job as at 31-3-21

Audit Job Title	Implemented	No Longer Relevant	Not Due	Not Implemented	Partially Implemented	Risk Accepted (Evidence Received)	Grand Total
Abergavenny Markets Follow Up	4			1	4		9
Chepstow School	1						1
Control, Suspense & Holding	1						1
Corporate Sundry Debtors	6			1	1		8
Gilwern Primary School	3			2			5
HR Policies		1			1		2
IT Procurement	1			2			3
Kymin View	8		1	2	4		15
Leisure Centre Payroll				4			4
Magor Primary	4			1	2		7
Mobile Phones		1		6	3		10
Overmonnow Primary School	3			5	2		10
Payroll		1					1
S106 Agreements				3			3
Shirenewton Primary	2						2
Strategic Risk Management	1	1		1			3
Treasury Management			1			1	2
Volunteering				10			10
Wellbeing of Future Generations Act	1			1	2		4
Youth Service	3		3		1		7
Grand Total	38	4	5	39	20	1	107

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GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
FORWARD WORK PLANNER 2021/22

25TH NOV 2021			
25.11.21	Governance & Audit Committee Review		Peter Davies
25.11.21	Update on unfavourable Internal Audit Opinions		Andrew Wathan
25.11.21	Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of Monmouthshire County Councils Assessment of performance for 2020/1		Performance Manager/Audit Wales
25.11.21	Review of the Strategic Risk Register-6 monthly		Emma Davies
25.11.21	Implementation of Internal Audit agreed recommendations		Andrew Wathan
13TH JAN 2022			
13.01.22	Treasury Policy and Strategy report 2022-3	This suite of documents includes the Treasury Policy, The Treasury Management Strategy, the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy & the Investment and Borrowing strategies for 2023/4. If approved the targets and limits included will be used to guide and control the management of the Authority's treasury activities for the year and also non treasury Investment activity.	Jon Davies
13.01.21	Audited Trust fund Accounts (Welsh Church Fund/Mon Farms)	Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended the 31 March 2021	Dave Jarrett/Nikki Wellington
13.01.21	ISA 260 or equivalent for Trust Funds		Audit Wales

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
FORWARD WORK PLANNER 2021/22

13.01.22	Overview of Performance Management arrangements	To present an update on the current effectiveness of the Authority's performance management arrangements	Performance Manager
13.01.22	Anti bribery risk assessment		Peter Davies
13.01.22	Recovery Planning - Assurance & Risk Assessment Feedback Letter		Audit Wales
17TH FEB 2022			
17.02.22	WAO Annual Audit Summary		Audit Wales/Emma Davies
17.02.22	Whole Authority annual complaints report		Annette Evans
17.02.22	Assessment of the Robustness of the budget process and adequacy of reserves		Jon Davies
17.02.22	Internal Audit Progress report - quarter 3	This is a regular quarterly report which identified the performance of the IA team along with how well it is progressing against the agreed plan and the level of assurance it gives by way of opinions issued to service areas.	Andrew Wathan
31ST MAR 2022			
31.03.22	Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment	To provide Audit Committee with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority in the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment.	Richard Jones
31.03.22	Annual Performance Review of Investment Committee		Deb Hill-Howells

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
FORWARD WORK PLANNER 2021/22

31.03.22	6 month update on unfavourable opinions - Internal Audit	At the conclusion of Internal Audit jobs an opinion on the adequacy of the internal control environment, governance and risk management processes is given. This report provides Audit Committee with an update of how services are progressing in order to demonstrate improvements	Andrew Wathan
31.03.22	Annual Audit 22-23		Audit Wales
May-22			
	Annual Grants report		Audit Wales
	annual governance statement review 2020-1		Andrew Wathan

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 11

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held
at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Wednesday, 3rd November, 2021 at 12.00
pm

PRESENT: County Councillor P White (Chairman)
County Councillor J. Higginson (Vice Chairman)

County Councillor: A. Easson, M. Feakins, P. Murphy, V. Smith,
B. Strong and J. Watkins

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrew Wathan	Chief Internal Auditor
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Gareth Lucey	Audit Wales Officer
Emma Davies	Performance Officer
Richard Jones	Performance Manager
Jonathan Davies	Acting Assistant Head of Finance
Rachel Freitag	Audit Wales Officer
Daniel Francis	Accountant

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors M. Lane

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. To note the Action List from the previous meeting

There were no actions from the previous meeting.

4. Audited Statement of Accounts

The Audited Statement of Accounts and the ISA260 Response to the Accounts (Items 4 and 5) were considered together.

The Audit Wales Officer introduced the Audited Statement of Accounts report 2020/21. It was confirmed that the work is complete and the intention is to award an unqualified opinion. Thanks were given to all MCC and Audit Wales staff involved. If County Council approves the Audited Statement of Accounts, the Auditor General will issue his certificate.

Members' attention was drawn to the amendments to the accounts; corrections made are listed in Appendix 3. Two misstatements listed in the report have not been corrected, in respect of an

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Wednesday, 3rd November, 2021 at 12.00 pm

overstatement of creditors and an overstating of income. Both above the trivial threshold but fall below the materiality threshold and do not affect the overall opinion.

A recommendation has been written in the report regarding recognition of capital expenditure in Children and Young People's Directorate. This has been accepted by management and will be followed up in next year.

The Acting Assistant Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) responded on behalf of the authority. The positive outcome was welcomed. There was a statutory deadline of 31st July to hand over the accounts, and also for them to be audited. The deadline was not met due to staffing pressures and additional processes due to Covid 19. Audit Wales' flexible approach was appreciated. The focus will be to return to a more sustainable and robust position in this financial year.

Members were invited to ask questions

Chief Officer, Resources thanked the Assistant Head of Finance and the Finance Team for their work in this difficult time. The Chair and Members echoed these sentiments.

As per the recommendation the final audited Monmouthshire County Council statement of accounts for 2020/21 (Appendix 1), was reviewed in conjunction with the Audit Wales ISA260 Audit of Accounts report, and was endorsed to full Council for final sign off.

5. Treasury Outturn Report 2020/2021

The Acting Assistant Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) presented the Treasury Report. Members attention was drawn to an error in para 3.8 of the report which should read "These funds generated an average total return 15.72%, comprising a 4.59% income return which is used to support services in year, and 11.13% of unrealised capital gain ~~loss~~." Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to comment and ask questions.

A Member asked if consideration was being given to increasing the amount held in pooled investments or would it be kept at £3m. It was responded that an increase may be considered. The authority must retain £10m in investments in the longer term under the MIFID 2 regulations and therefore consideration could be made to increasing pooled fund holdings from the existing £3m level. The income returns on the pooled funds have held at 4% despite the pandemic which compares favourably to other investments that return close to zero. The authority will be engaging with its treasury advisers to make certain it invests in the most appropriate pooled funds. The Member commented that it may be necessary to leave funds invested for a specified period or risk penalties on withdrawal.

Following the report recommendation, the Governance & Audit Committee noted the results of treasury management activities and the performance achieved in 2020/21 as part of their delegated responsibility to provide scrutiny of treasury policy, strategy and activity on behalf of the Council.

6. Mid-Year Treasury Report

The Acting Assistant Head of Finance presented the Mid-Year Treasury Report. Following the report, Members were invited to comment and ask questions.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Wednesday, 3rd November, 2021 at 12.00 pm

There being no questions it was agreed that the Governance & Audit Committee had reviewed the treasury management activities in the first half of 2021/22 using this report and discussed with officers any changes to the process that should be considered for incorporation into the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy Statement which will be considered at the January Governance and Audit Committee meeting

7. 2021/22 Internal Audit Progress versus Plan - Quarter 2

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the Quarter 2 Internal Audit Report detailing Progress versus Plan. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

A Member asked for more information on the National Fraud Initiative enquiring if there was a link to Covid 19. It was confirmed that the initiative is not related to Covid 19 and is a national exercise undertaken every two years, managed by the Cabinet Office and involving approximately 1200 organisations. Pre-defined data is submitted by the authority which is then matched with the other contributors and reports are produced of potential fraudulent matches. The authority investigates on a high, medium and low risk basis to identify if there is actual fraud. The example of blue badges was provided where the holder may have passed away during the two year period.

In line with the report recommendations the Committee noted the audit opinions issued. Secondly, the Committee noted the progress made by the Section towards meeting the 2021/22 Operational Audit Plan and the Section's performance indicators at the 6-month stage of the financial year.

8. Audit Wales Waste Procurement Review and Management Response

The Audit Wales Officer introduced the report in relation to the waste procurement review. The Performance Officer provided a response and passed on thanks on behalf of the Head of Neighbourhood Services to Audit Wales for their perspective during the process. Members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

A Member asked, and it was confirmed, that Audit Wales plans to follow up the recommendations made during the process.

The Chair thanked Audit Wales for the report.

9. Forward Work Planner

The Forward Work Plan was noted. The Internal Audit progress report – Quarter 2 was removed from the plan for 25th November 2021 as it had been presented at this meeting instead. The report will be replaced with a report on the progress of the implementation of internal audit recommendations.

The audited trust fund accounts and the ISA 260 reports were moved to the meeting on 13th January 2022.

10. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Wednesday, 3rd November, 2021 at 12.00 pm

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

11. **To note the date of the next meeting as Thursday 25th November 2021 at 2.00pm**
12. **ISA260 Response to Accounts**

This item considered with previous item.

Meeting ended at 1.06 pm