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Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

Dydd Llun, 4 Ionawr 2021

Hysbysiad o gyfarfod

Pwyllgor Craffu Cymunedau Cryf

Dydd Mawrth, 12fed Ionawr, 2021 at 2.00 pm,
Remote Meeting

Nodwch y cynhelir rhag-gyfarfod 30 munud cyn dechrau'r cyfarfod ar gyfer aelodau'r pwyllgor

AGENDA

Rhif yr Eitem	Eitem	Tudalennau
RHAN A: MATERION CRAFFU A THROSEDD AC ANHREFN		
Dim materion l'w trafod.		
RHAN B – PWLLGOR DETHOL CYMUNEDAU CRYF		
1.	Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb	
2.	Datganiadau o Fuddiant	
3.	Fforwm Cyhoeddus Agored	
4.	Strategaeth Ddiwygiedig ar Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol	1 - 124

Paul Matthews

Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

MAE CYFANSODDIAD Y PWYLLGOR FEL A GANLYN:

Y Cynghorwyr Sirol:

L.Dymock
D. Batrouni
P. Clarke
D. Dovey
A. Easson
L. Guppy
V. Smith
J.Treharne
A. Webb
S. Jones

Gwybodaeth I'r Cyhoedd

Mynediad i gopiâu papur o agendâu ac adroddiadau

Gellir darparu copi o'r agenda hwn ac adroddiadau perthnasol i aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n mynychu cyfarfod drwy ofyn am gopi gan Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 01633 644219. Dylid nodi fod yn rhaid i ni dderbyn 24 awr o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod er mwyn darparu copi caled o'r agenda hwn i chi.

Edrych ar y cyfarfod ar-lein

Gellir gweld y cyfarfod ar-lein yn fyw neu'n dilyn y cyfarfod drwy fynd i www.monmouthshire.gov.uk neu drwy ymweld â'n tudalen Youtube drwy chwilio am MonmouthshireCC. Drwy fynd i mewn i'r ystafell gyfarfod, fel aelod o'r cyhoedd neu i gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod, rydych yn caniatáu i gael eich ffilmio ac i ddefnydd posibl y delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gan y Cyngor.

Y Gymraeg Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn gyda dyledus barch i chi roi 5 diwrnod o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod os dymunwch siarad yn Gymraeg fel y gallwn ddarparu ar gyfer eich anghenion.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

Cymunedau Cynaliadwy a Chryf

Canlyniadau y gweithiwn i'w cyflawni

Neb yn cael ei adael ar ôl

- Gall pobl hŷn fyw bywyd da
- Pobl â mynediad i dai addas a fforddiadwy
- Pobl â mynediad a symudedd da

Pobl yn hyderus, galluog ac yn cymryd rhan

- Camddefnyddio alcohol a chyffuriau ddim yn effeithio ar fywydau pobl
- Teuluoedd yn cael eu cefnogi
- Pobl yn teimlo'n ddiogel

Ein sir yn ffynnu

- Busnes a menter
- Pobl â mynediad i ddysgu ymarferol a hyblyg
- Pobl yn diogelu ac yn cyfoethogi'r amgylchedd

Ein blaenoriaethau

- Ysgolion
- Diogelu pobl agored i niwed
- Cefnogi busnes a chreu swyddi
- Cynnal gwasanaethau sy'n hygyrch yn lleol

Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.

Canllawiau Pwyllgorau Craffu Sir Fynwy

Rôl y Rhag-gyfarfod

1. Pam mae'r Pwyllgor yn craffu ar hyn? (cefndir, materion allweddol)
2. Beth yw rôl y Pwyllgor a pha ganlyniad y mae Aelodau am eu cyflawni?
3. A oes digon o wybodaeth i gyflawni hyn? Os na, pwy allai ddarparu hyn?
 - Cytuno ar y drefn holi a pha Aelodau fydd yn arwain
 - Cytuno ar gwestiynau i swyddogion a chwestiynau i'r Aelod Cabinet

Cwestiynau ar gyfer y Cyfarfod

Craffu ar Berfformiad

1. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â blynyddoedd blaenorol? A yw'n well neu'n waeth? Pam?
2. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â pherfformiad cynghorau eraill/darparwyr gwasanaethau eraill? A yw'n well neu'n waeth? Pam?
3. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â thargedau penodol? A yw'n well neu'n waeth? Pam?
4. Sut y pennwyd targedau perfformiad? Ydyn nhw'n ddigon heriol/realistig?
5. Sut mae defnyddwyr gwasanaeth/y cyhoedd/partneriaid yn gweld perfformiad y gwasanaeth?
6. A fu unrhyw archwiliadau ac arolygiadau diweddar? Beth oedd y canfyddiadau?
7. Sut mae'r gwasanaeth yn cyfrannu at gyflawni amcanion corfforaethol?
8. A yw'r gwelliant/dirywiad o ran perfformiad yn gysylltiedig â chynnydd/gostyngiad mewn adnoddau? Pa gapasiti sydd i wella?

Craffu ar Bolisiau

1. Ar bwy mae'r polisi'n effeithio ~ yn uniongyrchol ac yn anuniongyrchol? Pwy fydd yn elwa fwyaf/lleiaf?
2. Beth yw barn defnyddwyr gwasanaeth/rhanddeiliaid? A ydynt yn credu y bydd yn cyflawni'r canlyniad a ddymunir?
3. Beth yw barn y gymuned gyfan - safbwynt y 'trethdalwr'?
4. Pa ddulliau a ddefnyddiwyd i ymgynghori â rhanddeiliaid? A wnaeth y broses alluogi pawb sydd â buddiant i ddweud eu dweud?
5. Pa arferion a dewisiadau a ystyriwyd wrth ddatblygu/adolygu'r polisi hwn? Pa dystiolaeth sydd ar gael i lywio'r hyn sy'n gweithio?
6. A yw'r polisi hwn yn cyd-fynd â'n hamcanion corfforaethol, fel y'u diffinnir yn ein cynllun corfforaethol?
7. A ystyriwyd yr holl oblygiadau datblygu cynaliadwy, cydraddoldeb a diogelu perthnasol? Er enghraifft, beth yw'r *gweithdrefnau y mae angen eu rhoi ar waith i amddiffyn plant*?
8. Faint fydd y gost hon i'w gweithredu a pha ffynhonnell ariannu sydd wedi'i nodi?
9. Sut bydd perfformiad y polisi'n cael ei fesur a'r effaith yn cael ei gwerthuso.

Cwestiynau i'r Pwyllgor, i orffen ...

A oes gennym y wybodaeth angenrheidiol i ffurfio casgliadau/gwneud argymhellion i'r weithrediaeth, y Cyngor, partneriaid eraill? Os nac oes, a oes angen i ni:

- (i) Ymchwilio i'r mater yn fanylach?
- (ii) Cael rhagor o wybodaeth oddi wrth dystion eraill – Aelod Gweithredol, arbenigwr annibynnol, aelodau o'r gymuned leol, defnyddwyr gwasanaethau, cyrff rheoleiddio ...
- (iii) Cytuno ar gamau pellach i'w cymryd o fewn amserlen/adroddiad monitro yn y dyfodol...

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SUBJECT:	SOCIAL JUSTICE STRATEGY (REVISION)
MEETING:	STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
DATE:	12TH JANUARY 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 Further to the approval of the second phase of the Social Justice Strategy by Cabinet in [July 2019](#), Committee Members are asked to consider the third phase revision of the Social Justice Strategy which now takes a more targeted approach and includes the insertion of the following individual targeted Action Plans namely:
- Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan;
 - Food Development Action Plan; and
 - Homeless Transition Plan

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 Committee to approve the revised Social Justice Strategy and associated Action Plans (Appendix A) subject to any proposed amendments and recommendations, in preparation for final approval by Cabinet in February 2021.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In May 2018, the Social Justice Strategy was produced to demonstrate the Council's commitment to addressing inequalities in our county in order to make our society function better. Using the Community and Partnership Development Team as an enabling body, it provided an approach to help turn lives around, by removing barriers and facilitating practical support and solutions to enable all our citizens to realise their full potential.
- 3.2 The aim of the Social Justice Strategy has always been 'To put Social Justice at the heart of what we do' and over the past two years the Strategy has set out a broad programme of work to help to make a real difference to the lives of local people by working in partnership.
- 3.3 The Commitments made in the Strategy have therefore focused and continue to focus on the following:
- Enabling connected and caring communities supporting people to live independently;
 - Delivering on social justice, better prosperity and reducing inequality; and
 - Enabling better local services through supporting volunteers and social action
- 3.4 All of this has aligned with the Public Service Board priorities and aspirations:
- To reduce inequalities between communities and within communities;
 - To support and protect vulnerable people; and
 - To consider our impact on the environment.
- 3.5 However, this has always been an evolving strategy and in this third phase, the Strategy details our response to what has been without doubt, the most demanding year for community support, when the UK went into lockdown in March 2020 as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. As a result, the Council had to pivot its Community Service delivery model and in light of the service changes required for 2020, this revised Social Justice Strategy

sets out how the Strategy has evolved and the new direction for the Strategy and the Council's Service areas in particular the Community Support Network (formerly the Community and Partnership Development Team). The Strategy also demonstrates our continuing commitment to work as a Council, and in partnership at national, regional and community level, to implement the policy interventions, approaches, support and methods to improve outcomes for people and communities.

- 3.6 Whilst the Aim of the Strategy will remain the same i.e. 'To put Social Justice at the heart of what we do' rather than a broad programme of work, this third phase of the Strategy will provide policy coherence for a number of targeted individual Action Plans. The Action Plans have been produced following consideration of the recently changing societal picture as a direct result of the Covid 19 pandemic, and will continue to help promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire.
- 3.7 The Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the Homeless Transition Plan and the Food Development Action Plan provide the detailed activities for the next two years and the targets by which we will measure our success to assist us in achieving our goal – putting social justice at the heart of what we do in Monmouthshire.
- 3.8 It is also the ambition to develop two additional Action Plans in 2021 namely the Mental Health/Well-being/Social Isolation Action Plan and the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The assessment of Equality and Future Generations Evaluation (Appendix B) is summarised below for Members' consideration:

This Strategy provides the strategic context to ensure that we keep the community at the heart of what we do by taking a 'place based approach', working with communities to identify their own strengths and areas for development and well-being. The Strategy advocates the bringing together of public services, community leaders, business, schools and all residents to address the issues that matter to that community. By working together around a place, the Strategy can provide the context to ensure that we achieve so much more than individual partners and community groups working in isolation. Bringing together support networks, aligning resources and assets, funding, development opportunities and people with a common sense of purpose, will really help to build sustainable and resilient communities. By working collaboratively with the people who live and work locally, we will seek to highlight the strengths, capacity and knowledge of those involved for the greater good.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The Strategy continues to demonstrate the Council's commitment to align evidence based policy, programmes of work and resources with the aim of putting social justice at the heart of what we do i.e. the Council's renewed ambitions and policy making decisions; the Council's resource allocation decisions and how the Council supports Monmouthshire's communities and people in their place based activities. The Strategy provides the strategic context to enable a programme of targeted activities that will deliver on a promise to develop strategies with the aim of supporting people and communities to fulfil their potential and live the lives they want to live.
- 5.2 This is Phase Three of an evolving Strategy and given its importance, a Social Justice Advisory Group meets regularly to oversee and direct its implementation. Amongst the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group is an evaluation of progress which will be

reported back to Strong Communities, which in turn will make recommendations of any proposed changes to Cabinet.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 This revised Phase Three of the Social Justice Strategy, sets out our purpose, intentions and activities for the next two years and the targets by which we will measure our success. Whilst the Aim of the Strategy will remain the same i.e. 'To put Social Justice at the heart of what we do' this third phase of the Strategy provides policy coherence for targeted individual action plans namely the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the Homeless Transition Plan and the Food Development Action Plan. These plans have been produced following consideration of the recently changing societal picture as a direct result of the Covid 19 pandemic and will continue to help promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 As an evolving Strategy no additional resourcing needs have been identified at this stage. Instead the Strategy will be used as a tool to provide policy coherence and to inform and align business practice within existing resources, whilst also seeking to identify additional resourcing e.g. grant where a need is identified.

8. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team;
Cabinet;
Social Justice Advisory Group;
Strong Communities Select

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Updated Social Justice Action Plan (Appendix A)
Future Generations Evaluation (Appendix B)
Tackling Food and Inequality Action Plan (Appendix C)
Food Development Action Plan (Appendix D)
Homeless Transition Plan (Appendix E)

10. AUTHORS:

Cath Fallon (Head of Enterprise and Community Animation)
Jude Langdon (Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager)

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk/ Tel: 07557 190969
Email: judithlangdon@monmouthshire.gov.uk/ Tel: 07970 151970

Future Generations Evaluation

(includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact)

Name of the Officer Cath Fallon Phone no: 07557 190969 E-mail: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Social Justice Strategy Phase Three Update
Name of Service: Enterprise and Community Animation	Date: Future Generations Evaluation 30 th December 2020

NB. Key strategies and documents that may help you identify your contribution to the wellbeing goals and sustainable development principles include: Single Integrated Plan, Continuance Agreement, Improvement Plan, Local Development Plan, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan, Green Infrastructure SPG, Welsh Language Standards, etc.

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1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group.	The purpose of this Strategy is to be inclusive to all therefore no negative impacts are anticipated in relation to this particular group.	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Disability	Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,	As above	As above
Gender reassignment	Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,	As above	As above




Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Marriage or civil partnership	Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	<i>Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,</i>	As above	As above
Race	<i>Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,</i>	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	<i>Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,</i>	As above	As above
Sex	<i>Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,</i>	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	<i>Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,</i>	As above	As above
Welsh Language	<i>Each new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group,</i>	As above	As above
Poverty	<i>The Strategy provides the policy context for the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan detailed as an appendix to this Strategy.</i>	As per Age Line above	As per Age Line Above



2. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>This draft Strategy advocates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to attract high skill, high wage jobs; Providing learning, training and employability opportunities for 11 to 24 year olds to reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training and providing access to the labour market for people with disabilities and care leavers Developing, and acting upon, options to improve access to job opportunities in the county to include providing work placements, traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities. 	<p>Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>This Strategy advocates taking a place based approach, working with the community to ensure local biodiversity and ecosystems are enhanced and maintained.</p>	<p>Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>This Strategy advocates developing a collaborative approach to wellbeing to ensure direction setting and oversight of wellbeing in Monmouthshire is informed by those closest to delivery.</p>	<p>Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>The Strategy sets the scene for provision to be community based with the flexibility to respond to local need.</p>	<p>Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
		through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The Strategy sets the scene to ensure high standards are met and maintained that do not conflict with the global drivers.	Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Equality and diversity is the key to this Strategy and as such will be integral to all aspects of the delivery programme.	Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Equality and diversity is key to this Strategy and as such will be integral to all aspects of the delivery programme.	Where the Social Justice Strategy requires MCC decision, more specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will come through subsequent evaluations of the Strategy as specific actions are developed under the objectives.

3. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>This Strategy is defined by the outcome of the well-being assessment which identifies the priority areas we need to progress in delivering social justice in Monmouthshire. The exact priorities will differ in different communities, but across the County there is a commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best possible start in life; • Thriving and well-connected community; • Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment; • Lifelong well-being; • Future-focused Council <p>Activities associated with all of the above will focus on enabling the best future for all.</p>	<p>Individual proposals in this document are indicative at this stage. New programmes will be expected to produce a Future Generations Evaluation when they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>This Strategy seeks to address complex problems which cannot be solved by one organisation alone. Public services must work collaboratively. Public, third and private sector must work together. And, most importantly, we must support people and communities in developing their own solutions that are sustainable and which can deliver both immediate and long-term benefits.</p>	<p>New programmes will be expected to produce a Future Generations Evaluation when they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The provision will be place based and as such will be able to engage with communities at a local level and respond to localised need.</p>	<p>New programmes will be expected to produce a Future Generations Evaluation when they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>This Strategy advocates working as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to attract high skill, high wage jobs to ensure that people have the opportunity to raise their household income. It also looks to identify options to improve access to job opportunities in the county and other areas to include providing work placements, traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities whilst taking positive action as a Council to encourage other public partners and businesses to do so.</p>	<p>New programmes will be expected to produce a Future Generations Evaluation when they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>The opportunity to develop a new way of delivering the place based offer and sustaining long term activity will provide the opportunity to better connect wellbeing outcomes internally and to other partners and bodies.</p>	<p>New programmes will be expected to produce a Future Generations Evaluation when they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.</p>

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Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Social Justice	<p><i>This Strategy sets out the policy position and strategic context for Social Justice activities within the Council.</i></p>	<p>The purpose of this Strategy is to be inclusive to all therefore no negative impacts are anticipated.</p>	<p>Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.</p>
Safeguarding	<p><i>During the delivery of the programme of activities associated with the Strategy, safeguarding will be at the forefront to ensure that any future service delivery promotes the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.</i></p>	<p>The purpose of this Strategy is to be inclusive to all therefore no negative impacts are anticipated in relation to this particular activity.</p>	<p>Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.</p>
Corporate Parenting	<p><i>During the delivery of this policy the needs of any 'looked after' children will be considered to ensure any future service delivery protects their welfare.</i></p>	As above	As above

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

This policy is founded upon the following:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act;
- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act;
- Prosperity for All;
- The Well-being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment;
- Equality Act 2010;
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s “Is Wales Fairer 2018” report; and
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

This Strategy provides the strategic context to ensure that we keep the community at the heart of what we do by taking a ‘place based approach’, working with communities to identify their own strengths and areas for development and well-being. The strategy advocates the bringing together of public services, community leaders, business, schools and all residents to address the issues that matter to that community. By working together around a place, this strategy can ensure that we achieve so much more than individual partners and community groups working in isolation. Bringing together support networks, aligning resources and assets, funding, development opportunities and people with a common sense of purpose, will really help to build sustainable and resilient communities. By working collaboratively with the people who live and work locally, we will seek to highlight the strengths, capacity and knowledge of those involved for the greater good.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
Adopting changes as a result of the scrutiny process and amending the policy accordingly.	January 2018	Cath Fallon	
Approval of the Policy	May 2018	Claire Marchant/Cath Fallon	
Twelve month appraisal by Social Justice Advisory Group	February 2019	Frances O’Brien/Cath Fallon	

Consideration of the phase 3 update by Strong Communities Select	January 2021	Cath Fallon/Jude Langdon	
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8. MONITORING: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	February 2022.
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9. VERSION CONTROL: The Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
Page 11	Scrutiny	11 th January 2018 29 th March 2018	<i>This will demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development throughout the evolution of a proposal.</i>
	Cabinet	2 nd May 2018	Approved
	Cabinet	11 th July 2019	Approved
	4	Scrutiny	12 th January 2021

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People, Place Prosperity
A Strategy for Social Justice
2017 – 2022 (Phase 3 January 2021)

Version Control

Title	People, Place, Prosperity: A Strategy for Social Justice
Purpose	To demonstrate the Council's continuing commitment to address inequalities in the county in order to make our society function better. Providing an approach that will help turn lives around by removing barriers and facilitating practical support and solutions to enable citizens to realise their full potential.
Owner	Chief Officer Enterprise
Approved by	Cabinet 2018, Update and approved July 2019.
Date	4 th January 2021
Version Number	0.6
Status	Update
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	January 2021
Consultation	PSB Partnerships; Strong Communities Select; All Members Seminars; Area Committees; Area Clusters; Access for All; Community Groups; Website; General Public Consultation

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Putting Social Justice.....at the **heart** of what we do in Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to building sustainable and resilient communities. Central to this are the principles of social justice. A socially just society is one in which everyone's rights and dignity are equally respected, where all citizens are able to participate fully, and where nobody's life chances are held back for reasons that are beyond their personal control.

The current Administration have demonstrated their commitment to Social Justice through their appointment of a Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development and this Social Justice Strategy, first produced in 2018, demonstrates how the Council will address inequalities in our county in order to make our society function better. It offers an approach that will help turn lives around by removing systemic barriers and facilitating practical support and solutions to enable our citizens to realise their full potential.

2. The Story So Far and our Next Steps

The Aim of this Social Justice Strategy has always been '**To put Social Justice at the heart of what we do**' and over the past two years the Strategy has set out a broad programme of work to help to make a real difference to the lives of local people by working in partnership.

The **Commitments** made in the Strategy have therefore focussed and continue to focus on the following:

- Enabling connected and caring communities supporting people to live independently;
- Delivering on social justice, better prosperity and reducing inequality; and
- Enabling better local services through supporting volunteers and social action

All of this has aligned with the Public Service Board priorities and aspirations:

- To reduce inequalities between communities and within communities;
- To support and protect vulnerable people; and
- To consider our impact on the environment.

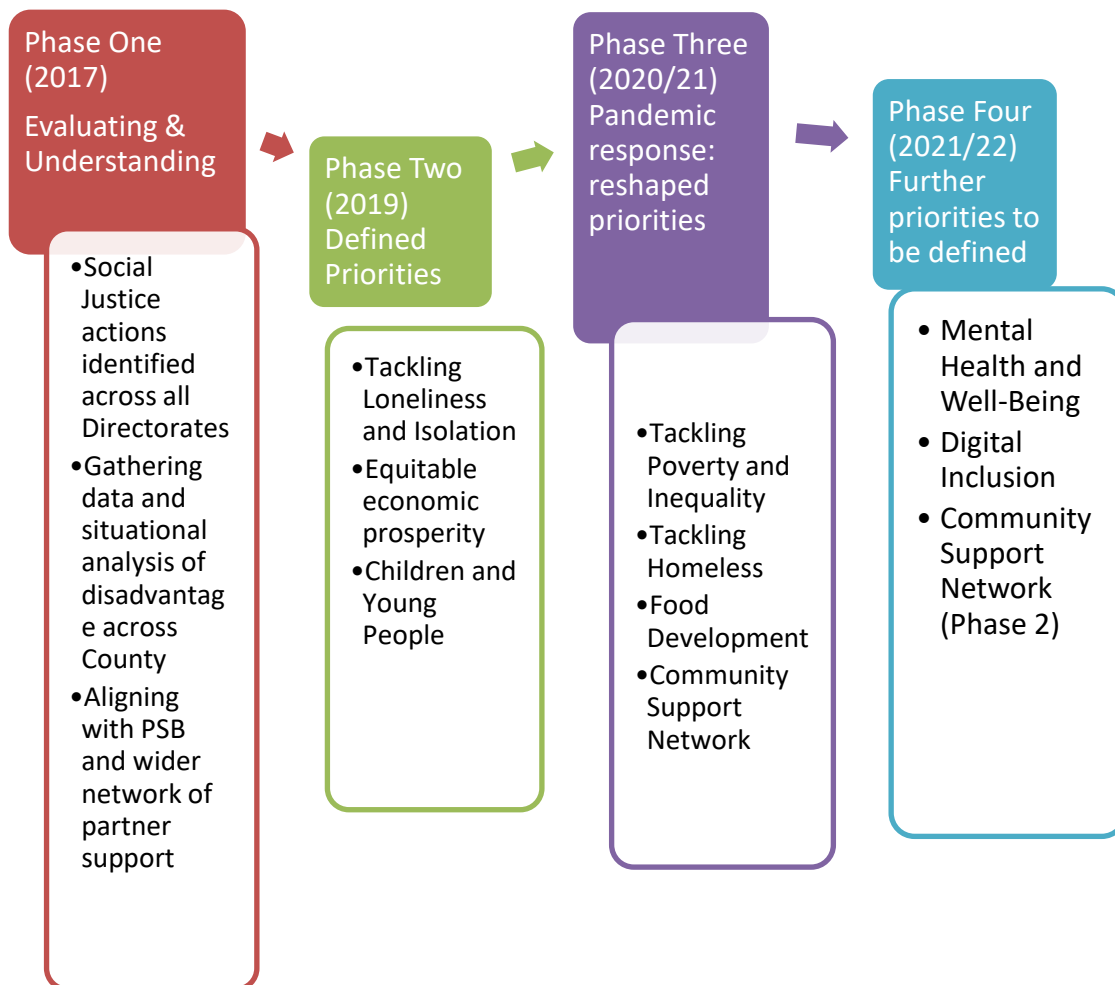
The Community Partnership and Development Team have also been the 'Engine Room' for the Social Justice movement in Monmouthshire 'the Bridge between

community needs and aspirations and the wider strategic priorities of the Council and its PSB partners’.

However, this has always been an evolving strategy and in this third phase, the Strategy details our response to what has been without doubt, the most demanding year for community support, when the UK went into lockdown in March 2020 as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. As a result, the Council had to pivot its Community Service delivery model and in light of the service changes required for 2020, this Social Justice Strategy sets out how the Strategy has evolved and the new direction for the Strategy and the Council’s Service areas in particular the Community Support Network (formerly the Community Partnership and Development Network). However, the Strategy also demonstrates our continuing commitment to work as a Council, and in partnership at national, regional and community level, to implement the policy interventions, approaches, support and methods to improve outcomes for people and communities.

Diagram One below details the history of the Social Justice Strategy to date and how the Strategy will evolve as we move forward:

Diagram One – The evolution of the Social Justice Strategy



3. Case Studies

Below are some case studies which provide some examples of some of the activities that have been undertaken to date as a result of taking a coordinated approach to Social Justice delivery:

Community Focused Schools: Sharing Social Capital

The Community Focused Schools pilot worked across the Chepstow cluster of schools to support schools to reach out into their communities, creating opportunities for children and young people to engage in local projects and also for members of the local community to share their skill, knowledge and passions across the cluster. The focus of the pilot was upon creating more equitable access to the social capital that some children are already fortunate enough to be exposed to.

Over sixty volunteers from the local community came forward offering to share their knowledge and professional networks. Examples of successful projects included a dance/theatre producer who worked with sixth form students to develop professional-level production skills, a local food producer who has come forward to share a programme of cookery skills with children and families, collaboration with partners to establish a new youth provision in Thornwell focused on supporting transition from primary to secondary school, and a successful funding bid to enable children to enjoy camping with their families within school grounds.

Following the successful pilot the approach is being offered across the county, integrated into the council's approach to tackling poverty and inequality.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation: Owls and Acorns

Owls & Acorns started as a pilot scheme two years ago in Raglan Primary to bring together older people and children from foundation phase classes to enjoy arts, crafts and exercises for one and a half hours. This shared activity benefits both parties and the scheme has since expanded to include Usk Primary as well as Kymin View Primary and Osbaston Primary in Monmouth. Last year, the scheme was nominated for an Aneurin Bevan University Health Board staff recognition award and has been recognised in local and national media.

Instigated by occupational therapists and physiotherapists at Monmouthshire's integrated health and social care team based in Monmouth's Monnow Vale, the Owls and Acorns project benefitted from an additional £12,000 of funding from the National Lottery and Monmouthshire Housing Association in 2020.

When coronavirus lockdown measures are relaxed the Owls & Acorns team will return to work in Raglan, Usk and Monmouth, and in addition the cash boost will allow them to establish new projects in Monmouthshire where intergenerational opportunities are limited, either in line with existing schemes or in a manner that best fits new locations.

Tackling Poverty and Inequality: Supporting families through the summer holidays

Prior to Covid, free school meal provision did not normally extend through the school holidays and the problem of 'holiday hunger' had been highlighted by a number of charitable campaigning organisations. Several organisations within Monmouthshire had responded to this issue, offering their own bespoke programmes (including the MCC delivered School Holiday Enrichment Programme – or 'SHEP' – social landlord run community picnics, and projects run by local community groups).

Whilst each of these projects was valuable on its own terms, the Financial, Economic and Digital Inclusion Partnership (FEDIP) identified that there was considerable duplication in some areas, whilst other parts of the county were less well served. As a result of this, several partners collaborated for the first time to jointly provide expanded programmes which were able to provide breakfast clubs as well as family picnics whilst also connecting families with a range of additional support, such as employment and benefits advice.

4. Phase Three

Whilst the Aim of the Strategy will remain the same i.e. 'To put Social Justice at the heart of what we do' rather than a broad programme of work, this third phase of the Strategy will provide policy coherence for targeted individual action plans. The Action Plans have been produced following consideration of the recently changing societal picture as a direct result of the Covid 19 pandemic, however they will continue to help promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire.

The Strategy also demonstrates integration with the recently approved Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 and also follows a number of social justice guiding principles (possibly forming the basis of a pledge or charter in the future):

- Co-production /participation: working with our communities as equal partners and recognising them as experts in their own lives.
- Equity: ensuring people have what they need in order to be able to fairly access opportunities.
- Reducing disadvantage: removing the barriers that prevent people helping themselves and being able to live a good life.
- Inter-generational justice (including Ageing Well, CYP and future generations): ensuring that no-one is disadvantaged because of when they were born, whilst working to make sure that future generations have a life that is at least as good as we enjoy today.

The individual action plans now contained within the Strategy namely the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the Homeless Transition Plan and the Food Development Action Plan provide the detailed activities for the next two years and the targets by which we will measure our success to ensure that we achieve our goal – putting social justice at the heart of what we do in Monmouthshire. It is also the ambition to develop two additional action plans

in 2021 namely the Mental Health/Well-being/Social Isolation Action Plan and the Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

5. The Continuing Case for Change

Monmouthshire is often perceived to be leafy and affluent and in many aspects it is. However some of the differences within and between communities are stark, especially when they exist side-by-side. There are:

- wide variations in exam results between people from different social backgrounds who attend the same schools;
- Numerous high earners living in our County but wages available locally are lower than other parts of Wales with many people experiencing in-work poverty;
- Many of our citizens are getting older, suffering ill health and at risk of becoming lonely and isolated;
- The costs of living in our rural county and accessing very basic services, such as transport and health provision, are greater than the costs for people living in urban conurbations.

6. Evidence of Inequality

The Well-being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment undertaken by the Council in March 2017 both highlighted the strengths and opportunities within our communities and used an extensive evidence base to draw out some of the challenges individuals and communities will face in the future. We also know that the effects of the pandemic have not been felt evenly across our population, with those who already experienced disadvantage likely to be most affected. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation characterise this with the saying that “we are all in the same storm, but we are not all in the same boat”. This differential impact requires that we revisit our social justice priorities to ensure that they are sharply focused on the area in which the need is greatest. For example:

- Over 9,000 people were furloughed in Monmouthshire during the first lockdown;
- During April and May 2020 claims for Universal Credit in the county more than doubled due to the high levels of self-employed;
- Sectors identified by the Resolution Foundation as being particularly at risk of job losses are accommodation, non-food retail, pubs and restaurants, and arts and leisure – all of which are significant local employment sectors;
- As at December 2020, 129 households were in temporary accommodation in Monmouthshire, many of them single people;
- Since March 2020, the level of housing association vacancies has dropped significantly due to tenants not moving and the availability of operatives to prepare voids ready for re-letting;
- As at October 2020, there were ,3,387 live applications registered with Homesearch;
- During the Covid-19 crisis, the UK Food Bank network reported its busiest time ever with 81% more emergency food parcels being given out across the UK, including 122% more parcels going to families with children, compared to the same period in 2019;
- 1,379 children in Monmouthshire are currently registered to receive free school meals.



7. Our Aim – to put Social Justice at the of what we do

Monmouthshire County Council has a clear purpose.

We want to help build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.

This purpose gives focus to everything we do to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Monmouthshire and is in line with the goals and ambitions of our public service partners who form the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB).

8. Our Corporate Plan

Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Business Plan sets out the things we will be working on in the medium term. The plan sets out our five Organisational Goals (also our well-being objectives) supported by the 22 commitments to action we will make and the ways in which they will be measured in the run-up to 2022. This Strategy has been aligned to the direction set in the Corporate Plan and is underpinned by a clear policy framework that sets out, in more detail, our work to enable the delivery of the plan (see appendices). The aspiration and objectives set for Monmouthshire by the Public Services Board (PSB) and Council are:

Purpose	Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities	
PSB aspiration is to:	Reduce inequalities between communities and within communities Support and protect vulnerable people Consider our impact on the environment	
PSB Well-being Objectives	<i>People / Citizens</i>	<i>Place / Communities</i>
	Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
MCC well-being Objectives	The best possible start in life	Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment
	Lifelong well-being	Thriving and well-connected county
Future-focused Council		

9. Our Continuing Commitment to Social Justice

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to aligning evidence based policy, programmes of work and resources with the aim of supporting people and communities to fulfil their potential and live the lives they want to live. The Council has made some commitments to action in relation to the organisational goals in the Corporate Plan and this Strategy seeks to specifically address the following:

Council Commitment	How we're going to do it	Who is accountable
Lifelong Well-being		
6) THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS AND DELIVERS A NEW ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY	Raise the profile of Monmouthshire, support and grow the foundational economy including developing proposals for shorter supply chains to benefit consumers and growers. (New – Food Development Action Plan)	Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development
15) THE COUNCIL ENABLES CONNECTED AND CARING COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY	<p>Maximise the opportunities for all people to live the lives they want to live and the positive outcomes they identify.</p> <p>Co-produce our approaches to well-being, care and support.</p> <p>Develop opportunities for people to be involved in their local communities reducing isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>Improve opportunities for people with care and support to actively contribute through employment and volunteering.</p>	Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
16) THE COUNCIL WORKS COLLECTIVELY TO DELIVER ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENABLING PROSPERITY AND REDUCING INEQUALITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND WITHIN COMMUNITIES	<p>Continue to develop programmes to tackle poverty addressing worklessness and in-work poverty through schemes such as the Skills at Work programme.</p> <p>Ensure that all council policies services are focused on ensuring equity of access</p> <p>Promote equality and diversity and ensure opportunities are genuinely available to all</p> <p>Support and enable the development of community-led plans and placed-based working to improve well-being and increase prosperity.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health</p>
17) THE COUNCIL ENABLES BETTER LOCAL SERVICES THROUGH SUPPORTING	Ensure meaningful community engagement to understand the assets and priorities in each locality	Cabinet Member for Social Care,

VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION	<p>Approve volunteering policy, develop volunteering opportunities and continue to support the Be.Community Leadership Programme increasing the skills and knowledge of community volunteers</p> <p>Re-launch the Monmouthshire Made Open Platform to promote opportunities to engage with communities and improve well-being.</p>	<p>Safeguarding and Health</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Social Justice</p>
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10. Alignment to the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024

The Council has a long standing commitment to equality and diversity and although the publication of strategic equality objectives is a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is motivated by the belief of putting social justice at the heart of everything we do and are committed to a fair and equal society.

The 2020-2024 Strategic Equality Plan builds on the work delivered in the previous strategic equality plans and whilst it includes responsibility for equalities, there is a clear synergy with this Social Justice Strategy. Also built on extensive evidence from the Well-Being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment the Plan used the Equality and Human Rights Commission's "Is Wales Fairer 2018" report to highlight many issues that are pertinent to Monmouthshire. The Plan also includes poverty as part of the impact assessments undertaken on all council policy decisions – ahead of the new socio-economic duty, which will come into force in April 2021, alongside developed cumulative impact assessments of the Council's annual budget process looking at the combined impact of budget decisions on different households. The Socio-economic Duty will require the Council to consider how our decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions such as deciding priorities and setting objectives.

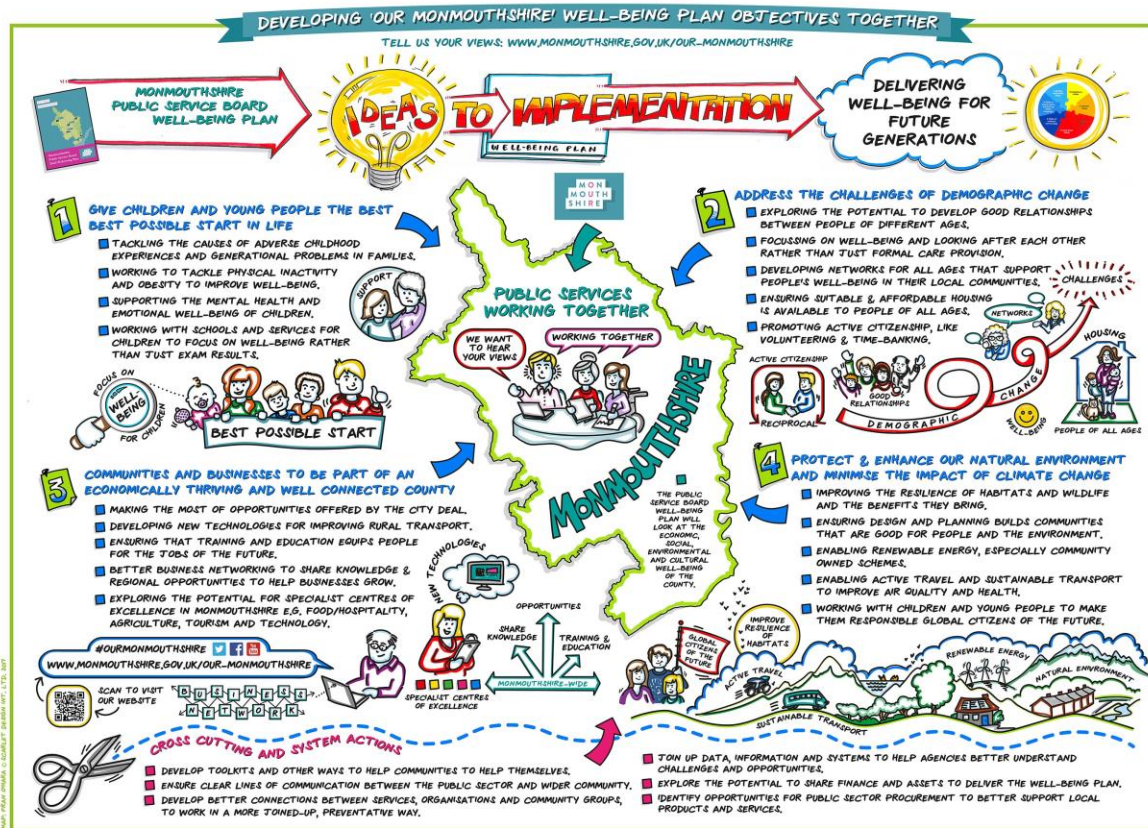
The Strategic Equality Plan, together with this Social Justice Strategy clearly demonstrates the Council's whole-hearted and unambiguous commitment to fairness and equality for the people and communities of Monmouthshire.

11. The Well-being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is the fundamental legislation that requires us to carry out sustainable development, further details of which can be found [here](#). The five ways of working, set out in the act i.e. Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future; Working together with other partners to deliver objectives; Involving those with an interest and seeking their views; Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse; and Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies, have all been considered when developing the Corporate Plan and the ambitions for the Social Justice Strategy.

12. Our Priorities for Social Justice and how we will deliver them

In May 2017, the Administration set out in its Political Manifesto, priorities and commitments, one of which was to support **Social Justice** – working towards a fair and equal society, respecting and upholding diversity within our communities, addressing child poverty and worklessness. The strategic priority for Social Justice is to keep the community at the heart of what we do'. We will continue to do this by taking a 'place based approach', working with communities to identify their own strengths and areas for development and well-being. We bring together public services, community leaders, business, schools and all residents to address the issues that matter to that community as we evidenced when developing our Well-Being plan objectives as depicted in the graphic below:



By working together around a place, we can achieve so much more than individual partners and community groups working in isolation. Bringing together support networks, aligning resources and assets, funding, development opportunities and people with a common sense of purpose, will really help to build sustainable and resilient communities. By working collaboratively with the people who live and work locally, we seek to highlight the strengths, capacity and knowledge of those involved for the greater good.

13. Our Community Response to the 2020 Covid19 Pandemic

When the Covid 19 pandemic hit in March 2020 and the UK went into lockdown, a substantial programme of direct community support was instigated via the Community Partnership and Development Team (the Social Justice 'Engine Room') who refocussed themselves and partnered with other Service areas, to provide much needed support to individuals and those who were shielding. Activities included:

- With Our Communities – a support structure for volunteer action;
- A COVID-19 Volunteer Action Group Virtual Network established with colleagues across many service areas focussed on residents need;
- A Volunteer Safe Recruitment Team to equip volunteers for community action;
- A 'Need Team' to ensure the right support was put in place in a very sensitive and professional way to support individual needs;

In addition:

- Our Social Services Team screened individuals applying to provide a collective support approach;
- Our Monmouthshire digital community exchange connected people across our county;
- Third sector partnership relationships were built upon to ensure our volunteer action groups had specialist support and could continue to flourish.

And it worked well. The refocussed networked, place based model provided a clear purpose and delivered what the communities and Council needed;

- 76 committed colleagues from 15 different teams and three external organisations worked together;
- There were no barriers, no silos, just the right people working in the right way:
 - Over 800 contacts were made;
 - Over 227 volunteers recruited; and over
 - 550 direct requests for help were addressed.

At the same time the Public Service Board (PSB) also started to evolve and are now supporting area based working for prevention and early intervention and providing governance and direction to steer the place based teams which comprise of multi-agency staff from across the PSB partner organisations. Staff are now working in a more networked/virtual way becoming part of the place based area teams across the county, working to mutually agreed hyper local delivery plans.

14. The Resulting Impact of Covid 19 and its corresponding impact on the Social Justice Strategy

Whilst the Community Support Network has always had a focus on Tackling Poverty and Inequality the lived experience of many individuals, families and households who experience very real financial hardship have been thrown into very sharp focus with the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic-related economic downturn.

As a result in July 2020, Members resolved to create two dedicated roles to lead and coordinate the Tackling Poverty and Inequality agenda for Monmouthshire. Since then a revised Action Plan has been developed which now sits under the umbrella of this phase three of the Social Justice Strategy to support the progression of the Council's work on this agenda.

The Covid 19 pandemic also resulted in a significant increase in homeless citizens needing to be housed, as lockdown rules stated citizens were no longer able to stay with friends or live on the streets. In response, Welsh Government produced three phase planning guidance and a plan for Homelessness and Housing Related support:

- Phase 1: March to August 20 – Covid-19 crisis management;
- Phase 2: July 20 to March 21 – Response to crisis and transition; and
- Phase 3: January 21 to March 22 – Move to 'New Norm' (Vision)

The Council's Housing Team are currently in Phase 2 of the Homeless Transition plan however during this time, it has become apparent that there is a need to take a more joined up strategic approach in order to ensure that the Council provides the right service to the right person; reduces duplication; improves budget efficiency; and importantly identifies future needs to enable the Council to plan longer term. The Social Justice Strategy will therefore also provide strategic context for the Homeless Transition Plan.

A demonstrable increase in food poverty and food insecurity has also been exacerbated by Covid 19, in recognition of this the Council has now produced its first Food Development Action Plan that sets out the complex challenges the County faces and activities that will increase the variety and equitable access to locally produced food for Monmouthshire's communities. This is therefore the third Action Plan that will form part of the overarching revised Social Justice Strategy.

15. Revised Priorities: Targeted Action Plans

As an evolving programme of work, this Strategy has previously set out a very broad programme of work that stretched across many services in the Council. This was the right approach at the outset, as this Social Justice Strategy was the first of its kind and therefore sought to understand how social justice principles could be applied across the Council. However, in light of the lessons learned throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, we now have a clearer sense of the how targeted action can create the greatest impact. Also, in terms of the previous set of Key Performance Indicators many were already being reported in to other Scrutiny Committees for example Children and Young People's Committee and therefore effort was being duplicated. Similarly, the risks identified in previous versions of the Strategy are also being monitored centrally and have therefore been removed from this Phase Three of the Strategy.

Therefore, in order to assess progress more clearly rather than a list of activity, this Phase Three of the Social Justice Strategy now provides the overarching policy coherence for the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the Homeless Transition Plan and the Food Development Action Plan.

As discussed in the section above, these areas have been selected as areas for priority action as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. The pandemic itself and the effects of the resulting lockdowns have shone a light on and exacerbated these underlying issues in our county. As a Council we are now subject to an enhanced set of duties around reducing homelessness which – while welcome – pose considerable challenges in implementation. The lockdowns and other Covid-related restrictions have served to crystallise the central importance of equitable access to affordable, high quality food. The economic effects of the pandemic have already been considerable and, in terms of personal and household finances, there is in all probability worse to come. We are committed to doing everything we can to protect our citizens from the resulting poverty and its effects.

Whilst the full Action Plans have been attached in the appendices for information, the 'Plan on a Page' summary documents for the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the Food Development Action Plan and the Homeless Transition Plan follow which provide an overview of:

- Why the Activity is important
- Who we will work with the achieve or aims and objectives;
- What we will do; and
- How we will measure progress

16. How will we measure progress?

In order to evaluate progress and ensure transparency and accountability as part of our governance arrangements, each individual Action Plan has its own performance measures which will be monitored through the appropriate mechanism e.g. Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Group, the Monmouthshire Food Partnership and the Social Justice Advisory Group who will monitor the progress of the overarching Social Justice Strategy. Regular progress reports will also presented to Strong Communities and Children and Young People's Select Committees for scrutiny purposes.

There is also evidence that we learn and develop most effectively through the sharing of stories therefore at a qualitative level of evaluation, we are committed to working with partners who can provide evaluative support to ensure that the impact of approaches and interventions can be effectively measured overtime (recognising some change will be generational) as well as understanding short term effectiveness. The Social Justice Advisory Group will therefore continue to oversee and direct the implementation of the Strategy using the following questions as a guide to evaluate progress,

- What changes (good and bad) have come about as a result of the work we are doing?
- What does good collaboration look like and have we achieved it?

- What are the enablers and inhibitors to effective collaborative working around well-being across Monmouthshire?

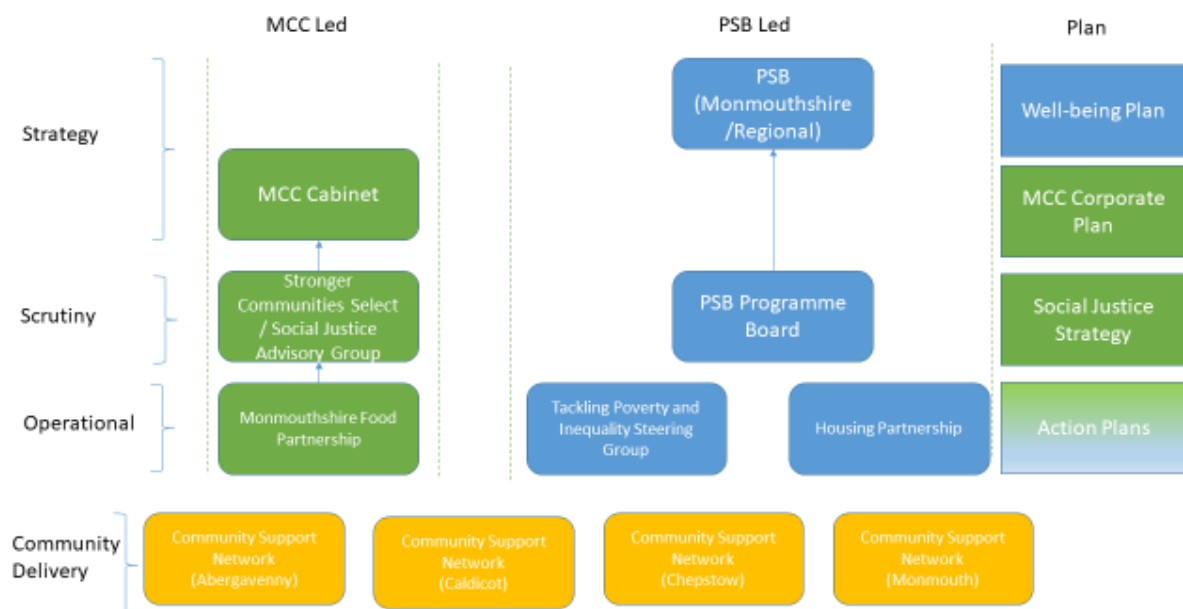
The reasons for using this particular methodology are:

- It fits with the 'spirit' of partnership with a strong focus on participation and stories;
- The use of stories and facilitated conversations will support the development of relationships between participants and a common understanding and purpose regarding the concept of well-being;
- The answers to the questions are difficult to predict and will emerge with many unanticipated findings and outcomes;
- The main focus is on learning and development rather than accountability;
- This is a social change programme with a before, middle and after.

17. Governance Overview

Diagram Two below provides an illustration of the governance arrangements for the Strategy from a strategic, scrutiny and operational perspective.

Diagram Two –Governance Overview



18. Further challenges – looking ahead

It is anticipated that further phases of the Strategy will include a Digital Inclusion Action Plan and a Mental Health/Well Being/Social Isolation Action Plan. Integration will also be sought with the Council's Community Volunteering Framework to provide a mechanism which will enable staff to volunteer in Monmouthshire's communities as part of the wider Community Support Network activities.

In addition, the Community Support Network will continue to provide support by:

- Maintaining cross directorate working via Virtual Network;
- Maintaining the momentum of service delivery based on community need rather than traditional service delivery restraints – targeted, evidence based, community interventions;
- Providing teams with permission, structure and support; and
- Building supercharged, hyper local, place based multi-agency networks that work bottom up tackling real community issues

The Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan: Plan of a Page

Why is this Activity Important?	Who will we work with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobody is immune from poverty and the causes of poverty can quickly become consequences, trapping people in a cycle from which they need help to emerge. Poverty can affect us all and issues such as education, crime, health, environment or employment can be exacerbated by poverty. • In attempting to define poverty in Monmouthshire we recognise the tension between objective/precise/quantifiable definitions which can be easily measured and tracked, yet can be considered a blunt instrument when capturing the lived experience of poverty. However, when more subjective/loose/qualitative measures are used they may provide a truer and more nuanced reflection but are much harder to measure. Monmouthshire has therefore chosen to adopt the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition: i.e. 'when your resources are well below your minimum needs'. • We will work together to promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire and wherever possible to prevent our citizens experiencing poverty. However, we recognise that despite our efforts, there will be points in people's lives at which they experience financial hardship. When this does occur services will come together to provide support to make that experience as brief, as infrequent and as manageable as possible, helping people to emerge from that experience with greater levels of resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners on a range of footprints, through our county's Public Services Board, and at a community level through our neighbourhood networks, to impact upon the causes of poverty and inequality at every level. • In addition to our PSB partners, we will also work alongside: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local organisations such as Food Banks (linking to Food Development Action Plan), Covid Support groups and faith organisations e.g. Christians Against Poverty; ○ County-wide providers such as Mind Monmouthshire, GAVO, Citizens Advice, Gateway Credit Union, Registered Social Landlords; and ○ Regional and National partners including Department for Work and Pensions, Welsh Government and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.
What will we do?	How will we measure success?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty is a result of both individual circumstances (e.g. life events/transition points) and circumstances over which individuals and households have limited control (such as the availability of local employment). • We will take a multi-layered approach, supporting individuals and households who need specific help, whilst also striving to create neighbourhoods, communities and systems within which everybody has the opportunity to flourish. Activities will therefore include coordinated support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employability skills and employment; ○ Children and young people disadvantaged by poverty; ○ Mental health /emotional support/ coping skills; ○ Isolated poverty cases (including private renters); and ○ Crisis prevention: helping people to access support at earliest opportunity, and support to navigate available offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use a basket of measures to help us build and deepen our understanding of poverty and inequality in Monmouthshire. Measures will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of households below 50% and below 60% GB median income (statistical definition of poverty) ○ Number of people in receipt of Universal Credit: in employment and not in employment ○ Number of Housing Gateway Referrals ○ Number of live applications on housing register ○ Number of food bank vouchers issued by MCC • Because we also know that poverty is fundamentally a qualitative experience, we will also work with our communities to develop story-telling and narrative that captures the lived experiences of those living in and on the edge of poverty in our county.

Food Development Action Plan – ‘Plan on a Page’ Why is this Activity Important?	Who will we work with?
<p>Although referred to as the ‘Food Capital of Wales, due to its excellent reputation for quality food and drink, issues exist within the County which this Action Plan seeks to address, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of continuity, volume, quality and connectivity in local food supply chains; • A lack of infrastructure and strategic coherence in sustainable land use and food production to help the County to supply and sustain itself; • A lack of opportunities to bring smaller producers into the current ‘public plate’ offer due to their current inability to provide continuous volume, at a competitive price; • Current public sector procurement pricing strategies focusing on value for money rather than local wealth creation; • A demonstrable increase in food poverty and food insecurity exacerbated by Covid 19; • A need to address the decarbonisation agenda through a reduction in food miles and a greater focus on the sustainable food agenda. 	<p>We will work with a range of partners at all levels to address the sustainable food agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and National partners including Welsh Government, Menter a Busnes, NFU, FUW, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Sustainable Food Network, Food Manifesto Wales, National Resources Wales • Local Producers and suppliers • Local organisations such as Food Banks (linking to the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan), farmers, food producers, private sector organisations; • County-wide providers such as Registered Social Landlords, Community Trusts etc. • Schools, Health Board, PSB, catering educationalists and academia to influence change
What will we do?	How will we measure success?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouthshire Food Resilience Data Mapping And Analysis Exercise; • Test Farm to grow and test the profitability of small scale ecological farming techniques; • Increase internal local food procurement through liaison with local suppliers to identify local, sustainable supply chains and business support needs; • Community Wealth Building Through Progressive Procurement/PSB; • Engagement with primary schools for circular pilot project to encompass all phases of food production; • Expansion of community pantry programme; • SHEP – School Holiday Enrichment Programme; • Extension of Healthy Schools/Healthy Eating Programme to implement scratch cooking across all catering outlets/services in the Council; • Monmouthshire Food Partnership share information on the development of the Food Agenda and shape future support for the county. • Maximising additional RDP funding opportunities for food and food tourism businesses. 	<p>The key indicators to be monitored will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in no. of food businesses engaged to 15; • Increase in no. of local food suppliers regularly supplying produce to MCC -15; • Increase in MCC local food procurement from 20% to 25%; • Establishment of Strategic Food Partnership – moving towards Monmouthshire as a recognised “Sustainable Food Place”; • No. of school children engaged in reducing school food waste 10 in pilot programme – x 2 school clusters; • No. of MCC catering staff trained in ‘scratch’ cooking – 20; • Reduction of food waste by 10% in schools

Homeless Transition Plan

Why is this Activity Important?	Who will we work with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New WG guidance for local authorities on responding to homeless and introducing new standards for temporary accommodation; • At 23rd November 2020 there were 117 households (mainly single people) in temporary accommodation, that need moving to other accommodation, with 66 households in B & B This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16/17 year olds – 2 (1 pending) • 18-24 year olds – 29 (3 pending) • Young people in B & B – 15 • Young people in Shared Housing - 15 • Many homeless applicants have a need for both specialist accommodation and specialist housing support; • Not all support needs can be met through the current Housing Support Grant Programme (recommissioning scheduled for April 2023); • Supporting applicants has been extremely challenging for the Housing Option Team due to staff capacity issues over the last six months. • The lack of 1 bed social housing stock • A reduction in the availability of social housing vacancies due to tenants not moving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government; • Registered Social landlords; • Public Service Board Partners; • MCC Service Teams e.g. Community Support Network, Flexible Funding Team; Social Services; Estates • Housing Intervention Panel • Housing Support Providers
What will we do?	How will we measure success?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give priority to developing services for Young People and those with Multiple Needs and strengthening homeless staffing • Increase the range and number of units of temporary accommodation including the provision of on-site support; • Introduce designated/ring-fenced permanent move-on accommodation; • Increase the type of specialist housing support for homeless people; • Increase other specialist support e.g. health related, in addition to housing support; • Strengthen the management of placements to reduce the risk of placement failure. This will also benefit the priorities of other statutory agencies; • Support the well-being of staff; • Support proposals which will provide cost benefits and help to mitigate against particular areas of expenditure e.g. B & B use. • Adopt a psychologically and trauma informed approach to delivering and commissioning homeless services 	<p>The number of households in temporary accommodation and specifically B & B</p> <p>The range and number of temporary accommodation available;</p> <p>The percentage of homelessness successfully prevented;</p> <p>The percentage of additional units of affordable housing delivered against the annual LDP target of 96</p> <p>The percentage of increase in the number of Monmouthshire Lettings Units</p>

Appendices

The Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan



Draft Tackling
Poverty Action Plan :

The Food Development Action Plan



Food Development
Action Plan Draft 20

The Homeless Transition Plan



201116 Draft
Homeless Transition

**Monmouthshire
County Council**

TRECHU TLODI AC
ANGHYDRADDOLDEB
**TACKLING POVERTY
& INEQUALITY**

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ACTION PLAN



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<p>Tackling Poverty and Inequality: Plan on a Page 'Why is this Activity Important?'</p>	<p>Who will we work with?</p>
<p>Nobody is immune from poverty and the causes of poverty can quickly become consequences, trapping people in a cycle from which they need help to emerge. Poverty can affect anyone and issues such as education, crime, health, environment or employment can be exacerbated by poverty.</p> <p>In attempting to define poverty in Monmouthshire we recognise the tension between objective/ precise/ quantifiable definitions which can be readily measured and tracked (yet can be a blunt instrument when capturing the lived experience of poverty), and more subjective/ loose/ qualitative measures which may provide a truer and more nuanced reflection but are much harder to measure.</p> <p>We have therefore chosen to adopt the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition: i.e. 'when your resources are well below your minimum needs', and to supplement this with statistical measures of household income and material deprivation.</p>	<p>We will work with partners on a range of footprints, through our county's Public Services Board, and at a community level through our community support networks, to impact upon the causes of poverty and inequality at every level.</p> <p>In addition to our PSB partners, we will also work alongside:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local organisations such as Food Banks (linking to Food Development Action Plan), Covid Support groups and faith organisations e.g. Christians Against Poverty; - County-wide providers such as Mind Monmouthshire, GAVO, Citizens Advice, Gateway Credit Union, Registered Social Landlords; and - Regional and national partners including Department for Work and Pensions, Welsh Government and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. <p>We will at all times adopt a co-productive approach.</p>
<p>What will we do?</p>	<p>How will we measure our effectiveness?</p>
<p>We will work together to promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire and wherever possible to prevent our citizens experiencing poverty.</p> <p>However, we recognise that despite our efforts, there will be points in people's lives at which they experience financial hardship. When this does occur services will come together to provide support to make that experience as brief, as infrequent and as manageable as possible, helping people to emerge from that experience with greater levels of resilience.</p> <p>Poverty is a result of both individual circumstances (e.g. life events/transition points) and circumstances over which individuals and households have limited control (such as the availability of local employment).</p> <p>We will take a multi-layered approach, supporting individuals and households who need specific help, whilst also striving to create neighbourhoods, communities and systems within which everybody has the opportunity to flourish. Our immediate priorities will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employability skills and employment; - Children and young people disadvantaged by poverty; - Mental health: poverty as a cause and as an effect; - Tackling the effects of financial inequality; and - Crisis prevention: helping people to access support at earliest opportunity, and support to navigate available offer. <p>A further priority of Housing will feature in each of the above because we know that a secure, good quality home is a pre-requisite for everything we are trying to achieve with this plan</p>	<p>We will use a basket of measures to help us build and deepen our understanding of poverty and inequality in Monmouthshire. Measures will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Number of households below 50% and below 60% GB median income o % of people in material deprivation o Number of people in receipt of Universal Credit: in employment and not in employment o Number of Housing Gateway Referrals o Number of live applications on housing register o Number of food bank vouchers issued by MCC o Number of Monmouthshire pupils in receipt of free school meals <p>Because we also know that poverty is fundamentally a qualitative experience, we will also work with our communities to develop story-telling and narrative that captures the lived experiences of those living in and on the edge of poverty in our county.</p>

1. Introduction

“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the action of human beings. Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice”

Nelson Mandela, ‘Make Poverty History’ event, London 2005

Monmouthshire is a beautiful county, blessed with strong communities, some of the finest natural assets in Wales, and a competitive local economy. Our citizens tell us that it is a fantastic place to live. However, we also know that our 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 of our citizens who are experiencing poverty, financial hardship and who do so in the context of the considerable financial inequality that exists within our county.

In many ways, living in an area of relative affluence and wealth whilst you are 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, to shine a light on, and to address.

2. Situational Analysis – what is the problem we are trying to solve?

2.1 How do we define poverty in Monmouthshire?

In order to address poverty and inequality effectively, we first need to describe what we mean by these terms and how we intend to understand and measure them.

In attempting to define poverty in Monmouthshire we recognise that there is a tension between objective/precise/quantifiable definitions which can be easily measured and tracked, (but are often a blunt instrument when capturing the lived experience of poverty), and more subjective /loose /qualitative descriptions which may provide a truer and more nuanced reflection but are much harder to measure and track.

Often the most readily available statistical data used to measure poverty relates to household income, but poverty is not the same as having a low income. People and families have different fixed costs to contend with for example childcare, housing, etc. as well as different levels of savings or assets to draw upon. Therefore individuals and families have different levels of personal and financial resilience and this will influence whether a specific level of income is adequate to live a full and active life.

In balancing this tension Monmouthshire has chosen to adopt the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of poverty which is:

‘When a person’s resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation).’

This will be supplemented with statistical measures:

% households below 60% median income (before and after housing costs); and

% households in material deprivation.

2.2 The UK poverty picture in 2020

According to the work of the UK Social Metrics Commission, the picture of poverty in 2020 at a UK level is as follows:

14.3 million people in the UK are in poverty: 8.4 million working-age adults; 4.5 million children; and 1.4 million pension age adults;

12.1% of the total UK population (7.7 million people or more than 1 in 10) live in persistent poverty i.e. a person is living in poverty in the current year and two of the last three years);

More than 6 in 10 working-age adults and children, who live in families who are more than 10% below the poverty line, are also in persistent poverty. For those less than 10% below the poverty line, the figure is 4 in 10.

Of the 14.2 million people in poverty, nearly half, 6.9 million (48.3%) are living in families with a disabled person.

Far fewer pensioners are living in poverty than previous measures suggested. Poverty rates amongst pension-age adults have nearly halved since 2001 (falling from 20.8% in 2001 to 11.4% in 2017).

The majority (68%) of people living in workless families are in poverty. This compares to just 9% for people living in families where all adults work full time.

Around 2.7 million people are less than 10% *below* the poverty line, meaning that relatively small changes in their circumstances could mean that they move above it.

2.5 million people in the UK are less than 10% *above* the poverty line. Relatively small changes in their circumstances could mean they fall below it.

The Social Metrics Commission pays close attention to families living just above or below the 'relative' poverty line, since relatively small changes to family circumstances could move a family either 'in to' or 'out of' poverty. For example, data from the ONS shows that half or more of families in all industries - aside from professional/scientific/Information and communication - would struggle to cover a three-month loss of income. Therefore the impact of Covid 19 on many of families may have been significant.

2.3 The poverty picture in Wales

One of the limitations of the Social Metrics Commission work is that it does not investigate below UK level; however Welsh Government undertook some analysis in April 2018 and March 2019, the results of which can be seen below:

23% of all people in Wales were living in relative income poverty between 2016-17 and 2018-19. **That is around 750,000 people.**

This figure has remained relatively consistent for some time. At 23%, the figure is marginally lower than last year. **That is around 280,000 children.**

Children were the age group most likely to be in relative income poverty (at 28%) and this has been true for some time. This is only the fourth time this figure has been below 30% since the period ending 2005-06.

One reason why children are consistently the age group most likely to be in relative income poverty is that adults with children are more likely to be out of work or in low paid work due to childcare responsibilities.

22% of working-age adults were in relative income poverty between 2016-17 and 2018-19. **That is around 418,000 adults.** This is down from the 23% reported last year. The figure has been around 21% to 23% for most of the time since the late 1990s.

19% of pensioners in Wales were living in relative income poverty between 2016-17 and 2018-19, the same as that reported last year. **This is around 120,000 pensioners.** This remains below what it was throughout the mid to late 1990s.

Source: <https://gov.wales/relative-income-poverty-april-2018-march-2019>

2.4 Poverty in Monmouthshire: the effects of Covid 19

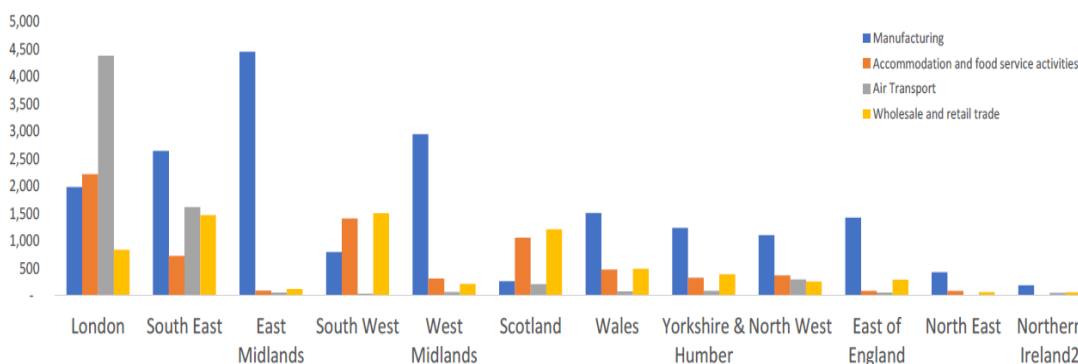
Many debt-counselling services work on the principle that we are all only three monthly paydays away from being in financial difficulty. As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, many households who have previously not made use of the benefits system, Foodbanks or other sources of support are now attempting to navigate these for the first time. Across Monmouthshire, people will have been relying on savings, family & friends to tide them over during the first few weeks/months of the crisis, but these sources of support and personal resilience will now be running dry, and so we can expect an increase in those seeking support. With the number of furloughed staff across our region, together with those on zero hour contracts who have not been working and those who have lost their jobs, the ability of households to cover a three-month loss of employment income will become strained.

During the Covid 19 Pandemic it has often been said that crisis has affected us all in the same way – and whilst to a certain extent this is true, the virus does not discriminate, its impact has been felt differently depending upon gender, ethnicity and income. Therefore, whilst we are all in the storm, we are not all in the same boat.

Figures from a recent DWP/Cardiff Capital Region City Deal presentation (Diagram Four below) suggest that manufacturing will suffer the largest jobs losses in Wales, followed by accommodation and then retail.

Diagram one – Potential Job Losses in Cardiff Capital Region

Potential job losses for most affected sectors by Region



The same DWP/Cardiff Capital Region City Deal presentation also indicated that 9,100 people were furloughed in Monmouthshire during the Covid 19 crisis (Diagram Five below) and that there was a doubling of claims for Universal Credit (UC) in Monmouthshire from January to June 2020.

Diagram two– Wales Furlough Numbers in the 22 Local Authority Regions as a percentage of the LA population

Area	Number	Percentage
Cardiff	36,000	21.4
Rhondda Cynon Taf	23,400	25.4
Swansea	23,000	23.7
Flintshire	18,800	27.8
Carmarthenshire	18,000	27.4
Caerphilly	17,900	24.8
Newport	16,600	25.6
Bridgend	15,300	25.5
Wrexham	15,100	26.5
Gwynedd	13,300	28.6
Conwy	13,200	31
Vale of Glamorgan	13,200	24.8
Powys	13,100	29.2
Pembrokeshire	12,900	29.2
Neath Port Talbot	12,700	22.5
Torfaen	9,900	26.5
Denbighshire	9,800	28
Monmouthshire	9,100	25.7
Blaenau Gwent	6,600	24.6
Ceredigion	6,500	28.9
Isle of Anglesey	6,400	24.6
Merthyr Tydfil	6,000	24.8

It is likely that the increase in Universal Credit claims were as a result of the significant number of self employed people and micro business owners in the county who were awaiting payments from the Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Non Domestic Rates Business Grants scheme and therefore the rate is likely to fall over the coming months. However, if we use the current Office for Budget Responsibility prediction that 15% of those furloughed will be made redundant, then we could make an assumption that approximately 1365 citizens could lose their jobs in Monmouthshire as a result of the Covid 19 crisis which would have a significant impact on local families.

The four sectors likely to re-open gradually as a result of the Covid 19 crisis are (Accommodation, Non-food retail, Pubs and restaurants, Arts and leisure) which are some of the main employment sectors across Monmouthshire. These groups are most likely to suffer from a lack of consumer confidence due to perceived health risks inherent in the activities represented by these sectors. Staff in these sectors have been most heavily impacted by employment changes due to Covid 19 although ONS data for 24th July shows that there has been a relative increase in consumer confidence in eating out both indoors (33%) and outdoors (52%) over recent weeks.

Although widely regarded as being a leafy and affluent area, Monmouthshire has many families who are currently living in poverty. The peaks in demand for support during Covid-19 have simply amplified pre-existing issues around poverty and inequality across Monmouthshire has been demonstrated with the increase in calls to Monmouthshire County Council for support with benefits and council tax during the peak of the crisis in March.

In assessing the level of poverty in Monmouthshire, the following statistics have been drawn using the Council's Monmaps Database and data from partner organisations such as Registered Social Landlords. The detailed diagrams and ward information for the headline data below can be found in *Appendix A – Defining Poverty in Monmouthshire Data*.

Before taking into account housing costs there are large areas across Monmouthshire with less than 10% of children living in poverty, a significant area with between 10 – 20% of children and a large area with 20 – 25% of children in poverty;

When housing costs are included, the number of children living in poverty increases significantly. There are several large pockets in Monmouthshire with over 25% of children living on poverty, a large area with 20 – 25% of children living in poverty and the rest of the county with between 15 – 20% of children living in poverty;

The distribution of Free School Meals families broadly reflects the pattern of the distribution of children living in poverty with a high concentration in the main towns and some rural pockets reflecting larger, hidden poverty especially when the associated higher costs of transport, broadband and food are considered.

The distribution of the three main Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Monmouthshire (Monmouthshire Housing Association, Pobl and Melin Homes) also mirrors the distribution of Free School Meals families. Whilst providing much needed social support for tenants the RSLs also provide hardship funds, the uptake of which has shown a sharp increase during the Covid 19 crisis as would be expected.

As described, there is no single measure which can effectively capture the extent or severity of poverty within Monmouthshire. Fundamentally, poverty is an experience which is qualitative in nature (i.e. having sufficient resources to live a good quality of life) rather than quantitative. However, there are a number of quantitative measures which, when considered collectively, can give a useful indication

of trends around household income and, by extension, likely changes in the experience of poverty in the county.

Some of these measures are set out below in Table Four, with information about the latest data in Monmouthshire (as at September 2020). Working in partnership with other organisations and with our communities, we will seek to continually track, develop and refine these measures to give us the best indication possible of poverty and inequality in Monmouthshire.

Table One: Quantative Key Performance Indicators

Indicator	Data source	Position as at September 2020
Number of households below 60% GB median income	CACI Paycheck estimates	9,076
Number of households below 50% GB median income	CACI paycheck estimates	6,713
Number of people in receipt of Universal Credit: not in employment	DWP Statexplore	3,202
Number of people in receipt of Universal Credit: not in employment	DWP Statexplore	2,063
Number of live applications on housing register	MCC Homesearch quarterly report	3,387
Number of clients supported by housing gateway services		
Number of children in receipt of free school meals	MCC education database	1,379
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation by local authority	National Survey for Wales	10%

Whilst the above data are not necessarily particularly revealing when viewed at a single point in time, the real value will come with tracking these figures over time to monitor trends.

3. Strategic Context

3.1 A Monmouthshire that works for everyone: Monmouthshire County Council Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022

The Corporate Business Plan sets out the Council's clear direction and resources required for delivery, informing and shaping a series of enabling and delivery plans focussed on People; Digital; Economy; Customers, Land and Assets.

The overall **purpose** of the Council is:

We want to help build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well - being of current and future generations

The Council's five organisational goals which also serve at the Council's Well-being Objectives, set out the aspirations and the actions necessary to deliver on them and identify the future we want. Of the five priorities the one that is the most appropriate for the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan is:

D: Lifelong well-being

Within the priorities there are specific actions which give context to the ambitions for the Tackling Poverty Action Plan as detailed below:

Action	Purpose
THE COUNCIL WORKS COLLECTIVELY TO DELIVER ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENABLING PROSPERITY AND REDUCING INEQUALITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND WITHIN COMMUNITIES	Continue to develop programmes to tackle poverty addressing worklessness and in-work poverty through schemes such as the Skills at Work programme. Ensure that all council policies services are focused on ensuring equity of access Promote equality and diversity and ensure opportunities are genuinely available to all • Support and enable the development of community-led plans and placed-based working to improve well-being and increase prosperity.

3.2 People, Place, Prosperity: A Strategy for Social Justice 2017 -2022

This Strategy demonstrate the Council's commitment to address inequalities in the county in order to make our society function better. The Strategy provides an approach that will help turn lives around by removing barriers and facilitating practical support and solutions to enable citizens to realise their full potential. This Action Plan supports the ambition of the Strategy and will be the sister document to the forthcoming Food Development Action Plan the aim of which will seek to reduce food insecurity in the County.

3.3 Gwent Homelessness Strategy

Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, it is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a Homelessness Strategy that sets out its plans to prevent and tackle homelessness in their area. The

Gwent Regional Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and Action Plan, includes Monmouthshire specific actions setting out the approach for tackling homelessness across Gwent. The report also includes a regional review of homeless services for Gwent, which informed the development of the strategy.

3.4 Welsh Government, Prosperity for All

Welsh Government consider delivering ‘Prosperity for All’ as part of their mission defining prosperity as ‘Not just about material wealth but about ‘every one of us having a good quality of life, and living in strong, safe communities’. One of the four themes of the strategy is ‘Prosperous and Secure’, their aim being to *‘drive a Welsh economy which spreads opportunity and tackles inequality, delivering individual and national prosperity. We will enable people to fulfil their ambitions and enhance their well-being through secure and sustainable employment. We will break down the barriers many face to getting a job, and create the right environment for businesses to grow and thrive’*.

3.5 Child Poverty Strategy for Wales

In 2015, Welsh Government produced the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales which set out the Welsh Government ambition to make sure no child is living in poverty by 2020. Welsh Government undertook a review of progress in 2019 which considered an analysis of the Family Resource Survey (2015-16 to 2017-18). The Survey indicated that there are more children living in relative income poverty in working households than there are in workless households – 67% of children living in relative income poverty are in households where at least one person is working. As a result, 29% of children in Wales live in poverty. The report stated that this is largely because of UK Government austerity cuts and reforms to tax and welfare policies, such as universal credit, the benefit freeze and the two child cap, with single working parent households being particularly susceptible to poverty. In conclusion the report stated that whilst there had been a near 20% drop in the number of workless households in Wales there was still much to do.

3.6 Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Prosperity Without Poverty 2016 – A Framework for Action in Wales

The JRF Framework seeks to answer what it would take to make a dramatic difference to poverty with an aim that by 2030 – *No one is ever destitute; Fewer than one in ten people are in poverty at any one time; and nobody is in poverty for more than two years*. The report written in partnership with the Bevan Foundation, draws on evidence and key recommendations for the UK to set out a framework for action for Wales. It includes measures that should be taken by Welsh Government and Local Authorities, along with measures practices that should be adopted by businesses, actions that should be taken by charities, social landlords and others, and steps that should be taken by individuals to help lower their own risk of falling into poverty.

3.7 Socio-Economic Duty

Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 requires relevant public bodies, when taking strategic decisions, to have due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome that result from socio-economic disadvantage. This duty will come into force in Wales on April 1st 2021.

There is no reporting duty attached to the duty, however, it is a statutory duty and relevant bodies should be able to demonstrate how they have discharged it. Once the duty is commenced, if an individual or group whose interests are adversely affected by a relevant public body’s decision, in

circumstances where that individual or group feels the duty has not be properly complied with, they may be able to bring a judicial review claim against that authority.

Whilst is self-evident that Monmouthshire Council and its affected partner bodies will need to comply with the duty, perhaps more significantly the duty will provide an important lens to our decision making and will support the aims and principles already set out in this plan

4. Strategic Partnerships

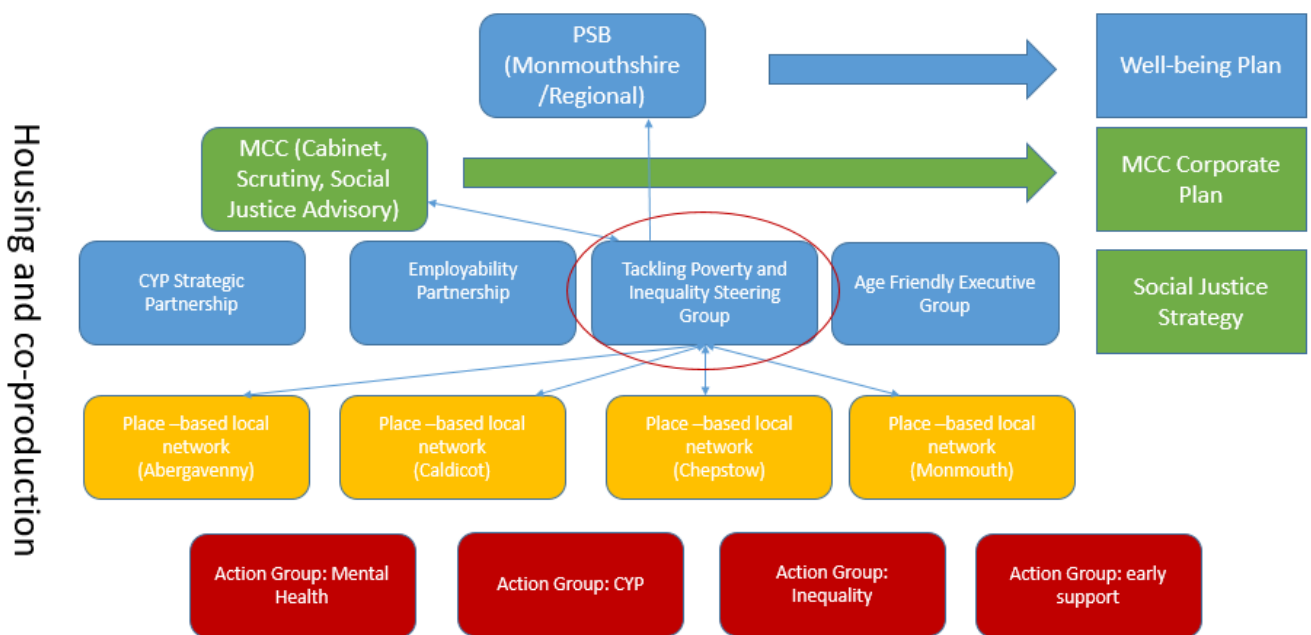
As illustrated throughout this plan, poverty and inequality are complex problems which no single organisation has the ability to solve working in isolation.

The catalyst for driving and delivering the actions set out in this plan will be the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Partnership, which will report directly to the Public Service Board. This Partnership will also link appropriately with other key partnerships which come under the auspices of the PSB.

Through the various MCC service areas that are represented on the Partnership, its work will also be reported to MCC's Social Justice Advisory Group, Strong Communities Select Committee and Cabinet.

In keeping with the principles of the Social Justice Strategy, co-production will be at the heart of our approach to tackling poverty and inequality; as such we will work with our communities as equal partners, working in a local, place-based way, using the local neighbourhood partnerships to bring the skills, knowledge and passions of local communities to the fore.

Diagram three: Monmouthshire's model for Tackling Poverty and Inequality



5. Aim, Activities and Benefits

5.1 The Aim of this Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan:

We will work together to promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire and wherever possible to prevent our citizens experiencing poverty.

The Council recognises that despite our efforts, there will be points in people’s lives at which they experience financial hardship. When this does occur services will come together to provide support to make that experience as brief, as infrequent and as manageable as possible, helping people to emerge from that experience with greater levels of resilience.

5.2 In adopting the right approach to promote equitable prosperity, the Council recognises that there will be different layers of intervention as detailed in Figure One below:

Diagram four: Layers of Intervention

These different layers of intervention will require differing levels of activity as detailed in Table Five below:

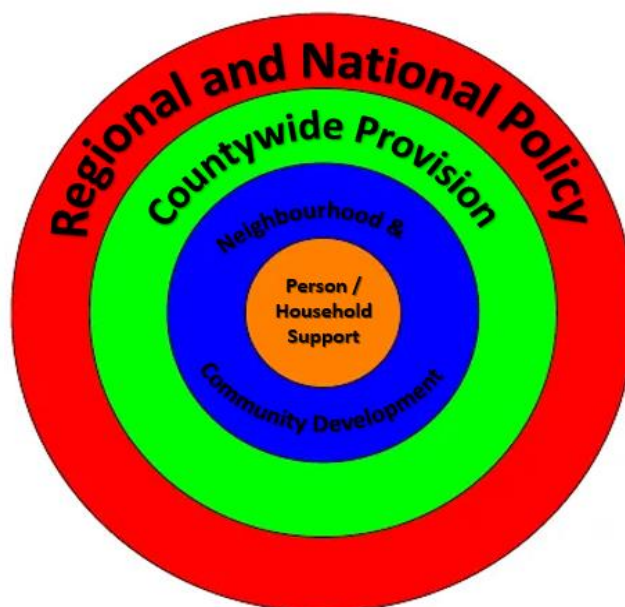


Table two: Layers of Intervention

Layers of Intervention	Activity
Regional and National Policy	Where we seek to lobby, influence and disrupt in order to address a specific issue e.g. labour market opportunities, welfare provision, cost of housing, etc.
Countywide Provision	Where we seek to connect and enable in order to provide efficient services e.g. in county transport, shared benefit service, housing support, etc.
Neighbourhood and Community Development	Where we seek to create conditions in which people can be supported and thrive e.g. social capital building, community development, community focussed schools, community service provision, etc.
Person and Household Support	Where we seek to provide joined up, wrap around support e.g. Communities 4 work+, Foodbanks, Skills@Work, Housing Support Gateway, debt counselling etc.

5.3 Priorities

In light of the Covid 19 crisis the emerging priorities for this Action Plan will focus initially upon the following, whilst recognising that the challenge will be to build sufficient humanity into the system to recognise that when people are under financial stress they are not at their most rational:

- Employability skills and employment support;
- Children and young people disadvantaged by poverty;
- Mental health as a cause and as an effect of poverty and inequality;
- Inequality - the particular character of poverty within a relatively affluent county; and
- Crisis prevention: helping people to access support at earliest opportunity, and support to navigate available offer.

In addition, there are two further themes which will weave throughout these priorities. These are:

- 1) Housing, because a secure, high quality home underpins every other aspect of a person's wellbeing; and
- 2) Community development and co-production, because lasting solutions can only be developed if the 'subjects' of interventions are empowered, involved and are able to exercise real agency in their own lives.

These priorities have been developed with partners in response to intelligence that has been gathered on the ground in a rapidly changing environment. They will be kept under constant review and may be subject to change over the life of this action plan. Any such changes will be reviewed by the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Group and Partnership on the basis of evidence and a clear rationale.

5.4 Activities and Benefits

The individual activities contained within the Action Plan (Section Six) will be structured around four specific layers of intervention, all of which impact upon the person or household at the centre:

Support for individuals, families and households to include the provision of timely, accessible support to build self- resilience;

Creating prosperous and supportive neighbourhoods and communities to include the development of support measures such as access to debt advice, Community Fridges, Community Car Schemes, Community Focussed Schools activities, etc. to enable communities to build local resilience;

A connected county where people and communities can thrive to include the provision of affordable homes, access to affordable broadband, provision of shared benefits services, etc. to reduce inequality; and

Using our leverage to influence the structural causes of poverty and disadvantage to include creating conditions for a fair housing market, playing an active role in regional partnerships to create opportunities for individuals to flourish, working collectively to influence policy to improve opportunities for prosperity for all, etc.

The Tackling Poverty Action Plan in Section Seven the follows details the activity, the Lead Officer(s), Partners, Progress and the RAG rating.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 The progress of the Action Plan will be monitored through the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Steering Group and the Social Justice Advisory Group who will monitor the progress of the overarching Social Justice Strategy and associated Food Development Action Plan, both of which will be updated on an annual basis.

6.2 A basket of success criteria and measures are being developed that will be tracked in order to monitor improvements and to demonstrate how the actions associated with this Plan are helping the Council to achieve the aim of this Plan which is to **‘work together to promote equitable prosperity in Monmouthshire and wherever possible to prevent our citizens experiencing poverty. We recognise that despite our efforts, there will be points in people’s lives at which they experience financial hardship. When this does occur services will come together to provide support to make that experience as brief, as infrequent and as manageable as possible, helping people to emerge from that experience with greater levels of resilience.’**

6.3 The measures we will use to understand the changing picture of poverty in Monmouthshire will include those set out in Table One on page 9 of this document. We are also developing measures which will help us to locally track :

- Poverty depth – using the CACI paycheck to look at distribution, including those slightly above the ‘poverty line’;
- Poverty persistence – how long citizens are remaining in poverty;
- Inequality – including income and wealth inequality, its geography and its effects within specific contexts (e.g schools, effect on mental health)

6.4 It is important to recognise that the national economic context – particularly in relation to Covid19 and its social and economic consequences – will be felt in Monmouthshire in ways that local strategies will be unable to prevent; it is highly likely that the numbers of households experiencing some form of financial hardship will increase in the coming twelve months. Our success measures, therefore, will also include measures such as income maximisation, access to appropriate and timely advice and support, support to gain qualifications etc, rather than absolute measures of financial hardship in the county.

7. Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan

Priority Column Key: E= employment and skills, C= Children and Young People, M= Mental Health, I= Inequality, P= crisis Prevention, H= housing

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
1. Support for individuals, families and households						
1.1 Provision of timely, accessible, high quality debt advice	Make sure people get the help they need to deal with their creditors and reduce their debt, leaving them financially sustainable and resilient for the long term.	Ian Bakewell MCC / Torfaen Shared Benefits Service	Citizens Advice, Christians Against Poverty, MHA, Melin, Pobl, United Welsh Working Families, Mind, Housing Support Service	No. benefits entitlement checks completed No. referrals for debt advice via Housing Gateway	P, M, H	
1.2 Provision of personal budgeting and financial planning advice	Equip households with the skills to make the best possible use of their financial resources and to plan for the future.	Ian Bakewell – Housing Gateway	Christians Against Poverty, MHA, Melin, Pobl, Housing Support Service, benefits team	No. referrals for financial planning advice via Housing Gateway	P, M, I, H	
1.3 Support for those who are out of work to find employment	Preventing and relieving poverty through access to employment opportunities providing a decent and reliable household income	Hannah Jones, Employment Team	DWP, RSLs, Communities 4 Work+,	No. clients successfully supported to find employment through MCC employability programmes	E, P, H	
1.4 Support to improve skills	Access to high quality, dependable employment and pathways	Hannah Jones, Employment Team	Skills@ Work, RSLs – Pathway to Work, Passport to Employment	No. clients successfully supported to gain further qualifications	E, I	

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
				through MCC programmes		
1.5 Support for families to remain strong and resilient	Family breakdown and stress increases risk of experiencing poverty	MCC – Building Stronger Families	Acorn, Edge of Care, Building Strong Families, children and communities grant services	No families supported through Flying Start, Acorn and Building Strong Families projects	P, C, M	
1.6 Housing – support to find and sustain tenancies and avoid homelessness	A secure, good quality home is an essential precondition for many of the actions which are required to prevent or to alleviate poverty	Ian Bakewell – Housing Gateway	Housing Gateway services, Mind, RSLs	No. referrals to Housing Gateway support	H, P	
1.7 Implementation of Homelessness Transition Plan	Preventing homelessness and providing the right support to those with complex needs.	Ian Bakewell – Housing Gateway	Housing Gateway services, Mind, RSLs	No. households in temporary accommodation	H, M, I	
1.8 A network of emergency support for those who are experiencing or on the edge of crisis	Ensuring that people who are experiencing or on the edge of poverty are able to fulfil their basic needs and are kept physically safe and well.	Jude Langdon – Tackling Poverty and Inequality	RSLs, community support (e.g. local hardship funds), Fare Share, Foodbanks, primary care, churches, community hubs, RABI	Total households supported via emergency support networks and services in Monmouthshire	C, H	
1.9 Digital skills development	Giving individuals and households the skills and the confidence to interact digitally, in order to access employment, skills development opportunities and benefits entitlement	Ryan Coleman – Tackling Poverty and Inequality	GAVO, RSLs, DCW, Community Learning,	No. people in total engaged in digital skills projects	I, E, C	

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
1.10 Mental health support	Poor mental health is both cause and an effect of poverty and low income.	Sharran Lloyd - Community and Partnership Development Team Manager with Gwent Community Psychology	RPB, PHW, Mind, ABUHB Primary Care and SCH	<i>Under development through relevant partnership action group</i>	M, H	
Creating prosperous and supportive neighbourhoods and communities						
2.1 Provision of budgeting and financial planning advice	Creating an environment in which good financial planning is spoken about, information is readily available and knowledge is shared	Ian Bakewell – Housing Gateway	Moneywise, CAP courses, Gateway CU products	No. referrals for financial planning advice via Housing Gateway	H, P	
2.2 Promotion of emotional and mental wellbeing services	Poor mental health is both cause and an effect of poverty and low income. Creating a neighbourhood environment which supports good mental health is a protective factor in supporting individual and community resilience	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager – working with Gwent Psychology Service	Mind, employers, Community Psychology Service	Delivery progress of specific wellbeing projects	M, H, C	
2.3 Community Fridges/Community Food Hubs	Access to healthy and nutritious food and the skills to eat healthily. Developing ‘community fridges’/community pantry programme and expansion of Fare Share Programme in four towns	Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead	Partners to include financial/debt support (e.g. CAB), mental health sessions (e.g. MIND), coffee morning drop in (e.g. Re-engage), cookery classes (e.g. Foodbank), lunch club (e.g. Chepstow	Delivery underway although currently paused due to Covid-19 restrictions	P, I	

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
Page 57	<p>across Monmouthshire in partnership with the local community and housing associations.</p> <p>Hubs will be based around food – offering a community fridge to develop a wider partnership approach marrying up local community groups, established charities and other third sector groups to address local social issues linked to food. The hub could also offer opportunities to signpost people to other sources of support in MCC or wider.</p>		Community Focused Schools Approach), as well as other social activities based around food.			
	2.4 Community Development	Strong, connected communities promote personal and household resilience. Strong individual social capital is a predictor of a range of positive outcomes including employment,	Owen Wilce – Community and Partnership Development Team	MCC CPD team, RSLs, Bridges, GAVO, churches, wider community	Community projects initiated through place-based neighbourhood networks	P, M, I, H

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
	health, housing and educational attainment					
2.5 Community Car Schemes	Friendly, flexible, door-to-door transport for people who require additional support getting to local shops, social activities or appointments – keeps people connected and prevents loneliness and isolation	Owen Wilce – Community and Partnership Development Team	Bridges / Volunteering for Wellbeing	No. clients supported through scheme	E, I, P	
2.6 Community Focused Schools	Developing connections between schools and their wider communities in order to create opportunities for young people to benefit equitably from the social capital of the county	Ryan Coleman – Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead / Sharon Randall-Smith – MCC Education	MCC Community Focused Schools	Update on specific programmes delivered through CFS programmes (including developing support for closing attainment gaps resulting from school closures).	C, P, M	
2.7 SHEP – School Holiday Enrichment Programme Provision of food & nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children in areas of social deprivation	Provision of free healthy breakfasts and free healthy lunches to primary aged children (5-11 years) as part of a structured play provision to 80 children per site per day on 19 days of the school summer holiday period.	Mike Moran, Community Infrastructure Coordinator (MCC play lead) Tel: 07894 573834 Email: mikemoran@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Welsh Government (WG) Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABHB) Dietetics Service Gwent Psychology Service Participating Primary Schools	SHEP operated for the first time in Monmouthshire in 2019 at two sites, with attendances/meals delivered totalling 2,494. The take up of places available at	C, P, I, M	

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Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
during the school summer holidays.			Town and Community Councils (in 2019, 11 of the 33 councils participated – in 2020, 15 councils had “signed up” before the scheme was cancelled due to Covid-19)	Overmonnow Primary School was 97% and at Thornwell Primary School 66%.		
A connected county where people and communities can thrive						
3.1 Provision of quality affordable homes	A secure, good quality home is an essential precondition for many of the actions which are required to prevent or to alleviate poverty	Mark Hand / Ian Bakewell – MCC Place making / Housing	RSLs	No. additional units of affordable housing developed (annual)	H, M, C, I, E, P	
3.2 Rural broadband / digital infrastructure	Ensuring equitable access to the opportunities provided by high speed broadband	Mike Powell – Rural Development Programme	RDP		E, I, P	
3.3 Developing the foundational economy – public service procurement	Utilising public resources to secure the maximum possible benefit for the local economy and environment and supporting the development of local opportunities.	Scott James – MCC Procurement and Commissioning	PSB	In development	E, I	

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
3.4 Investment in in-county and out of county public transport	Providing the infrastructure that allows equitable access to employment, learning and cultural opportunities	Mark Hand / Richard Cope	MCC PTU		E, I	
3.5 Provision of Shared Benefits Service	Ensuring that citizens are able to swiftly access all the resources to which they are entitled	Richard Davies – MCC/Torfaen Shared Benefits Service	MCC	No. clients supported to access benefits	C, M, H	
3.6 Working with CYP Strategic Partnership to fully understand impact of poverty on children, young people and families.	Provide evidence base and understanding to design services which recognise and address impacts of poverty in the lives of children and young people	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead / CYP Strategic Partnership lead	Tackling Poverty Partnership / CYP Strategic Partnership	In development	C, I	
3.7 Communications campaign to promote existing services to support people experiencing financial and related hardship	Ensuring that citizens are able to swiftly access all the resources to which they are entitled – particularly those who have never had cause to access provision before. Encouraging people who are struggling to seek help at earliest possible opportunity.	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager / MCC Communications and Marketing team	Tackling Poverty Steering Group	Campaign reach and effectiveness	C	
3.8 Voices, experiences and assets of those who	To ensure that services and projects reflect the experiences of and utilise	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager / Communities and Partnerships Development Team	PSB, Tackling Poverty Steering Group / Network	Tackling Poverty and Inequality network established	I, C	

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
are experiencing and have experienced poverty within Monmouthshire are brought to the fore through meaningful co-production	the skills of people they are designed to support.			Specific projects resulting from network		
3.9 Qualitative research undertaken to understand the lived experience of both poverty and inequality within Monmouthshire	To enable service provision to be reviewed and adapted where appropriate to most effectively meet the needs of citizens experiencing financial hardship	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager	Tackling Poverty Steering Group / Inequality Action Group		I, C	
3.10 Recommissioning of WG flexible funding grants in line with emerging priorities	Aligning funding and resource with need in the most effective way possible to prevent and tackle homelessness and poverty	Lyn Webber – Flexible Funding Manager	MCC	Progress of CCG and HCG recommissioning	C, H, E	
3.11 Implement the requirements of the Socio-Economic Duty from April 2021	To ensure that MCC decision have due regard to the experiences of those who are already socio-economically disadvantaged and to ensure that disadvantage is not deepened or extended.	Equalities and Welsh Language Officer		Mechanisms established to consider socio-economic implications within MCC decision making.	I, P	

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
Using our leverage to influence the structural causes of poverty and disadvantage						
4.1 Creating the conditions for a fair housing market	<p>Delivery of revised Local Development Plan</p> <p>Creation of a publicly owned housing company which can counteract unhelpful or socially unjust market forces</p>	Mark Hand / Deb Hill Howells	PSB priority	<p>Progress of revised LDP against plan</p> <p>No. new affordable housing units proposed though revised LDP</p> <p>Progress of MCC housing company / investment proposal</p>	H, E, I	
4.2 Working as a regional partner to develop employment and other infrastructure which creates the opportunities for people to flourish	Cardiff Capital City Region projects	Cath Fallon / Frances O'Brien	Cardiff Capital Region partners	Progress of CCR projects	E, H, I	
4.3 Working collectively to influence national policy to recognise the social impact of inequality through the provision of a specific grant	The effects of extreme wealth and income inequality are corrosive and impact on almost all areas of social and public policy	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager	PSB	Key areas for collective campaigning identified and clarity of shared messages established	I, C, H, M	

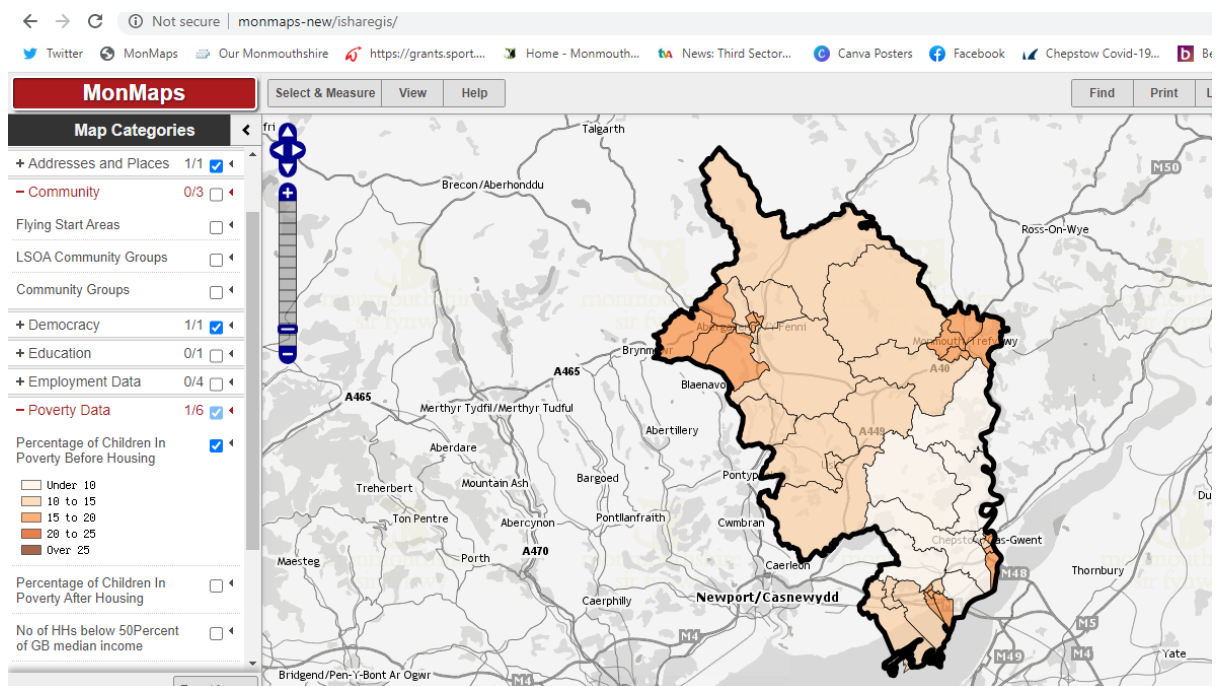
Action	Purpose	Lead Officer (MCC)	Partners	Measure / Progress	Priority*	RAG Rating
4.4 Investigate the extent and effects of income and wealth inequality across Monmouthshire's communities.	Evidence shows that high levels of income inequality within and between communities can have a corrosive effect on many social outcomes. It can also perpetuate forms of social injustice. In order to develop effective and widely-supported interventions we require a deeper understanding of the current situation.	Tackling Poverty and Inequality Manager	PSB	Report to PSB and MCC Members completed	I, C	

Appendix A – Understanding Poverty in Monmouthshire

1.1 Children in poverty in Monmouthshire, before housing costs

Diagram one below details children living in poverty before housing costs there are large areas across Monmouthshire with less than 10% of children, a significant area with between 10 – 20% of children and a large area with 20 – 25% of children.

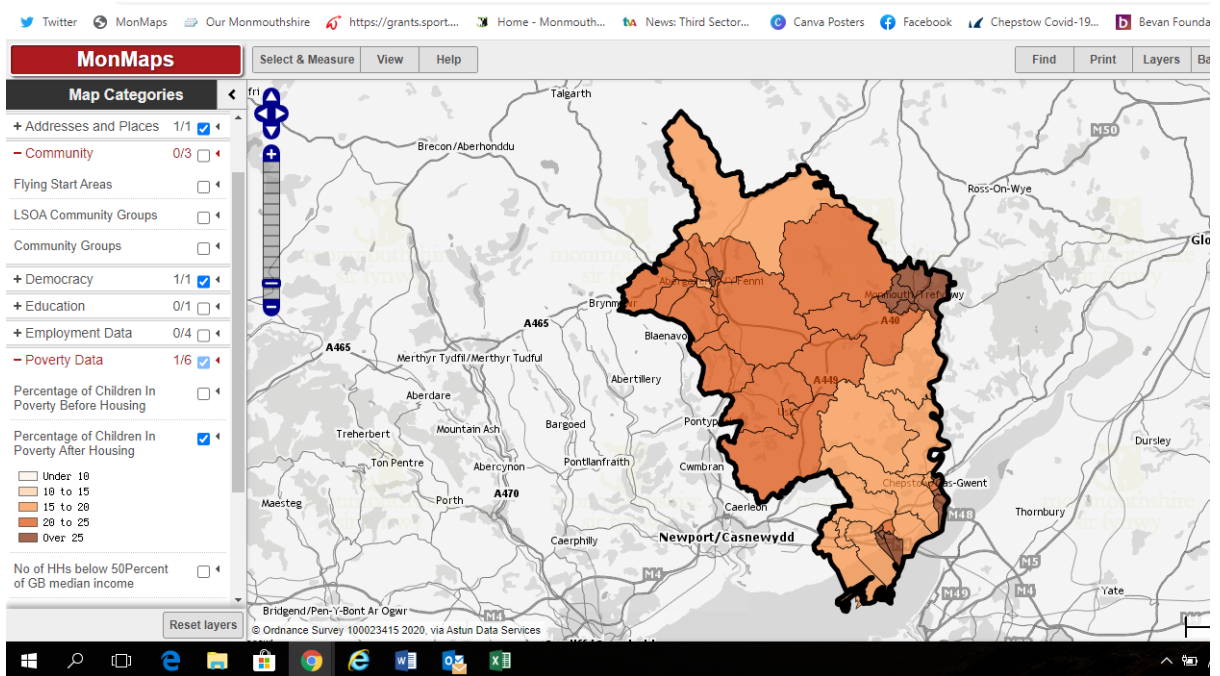
Diagram One – Children in Poverty in Monmouthshire, before Housing Costs



1.2 Children in poverty in Monmouthshire, after housing costs

When housing costs are included, the number of children living in poverty increases significantly. There are several large pockets in Monmouthshire with over 25% of children living on poverty, a large area with 20 – 25% of children living in poverty and the rest of the county with between 15 – 20% of children living in poverty as detailed in Diagram 2 below:

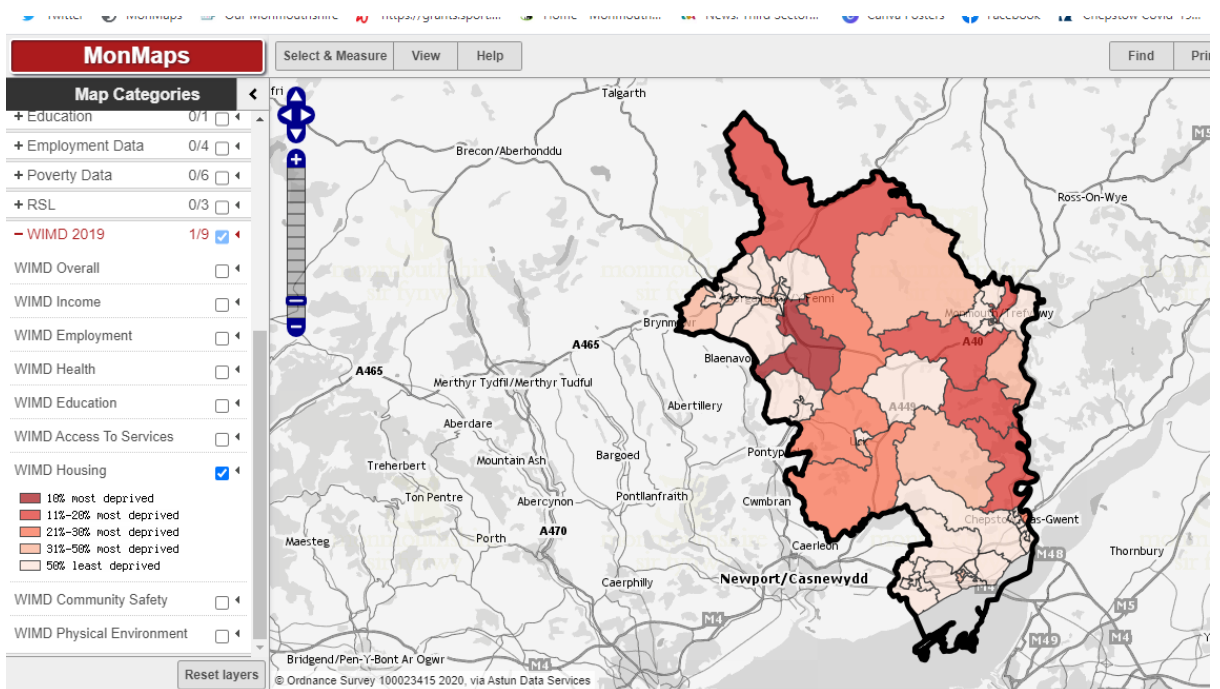
Diagram Two - Children in poverty in Monmouthshire, after housing costs



1.3 Registered Social Landlords

The distribution of the three main RSLs in Monmouthshire (MHA, Charter and Melin) mirrors the distribution of FSM families i.e. largely across those more deprived areas. The RSLs provide much social support for their tenants and have staff whose role is specifically around community development. Diagram Three below compares the RSL distribution with the WIMD data for housing in Monmouthshire.

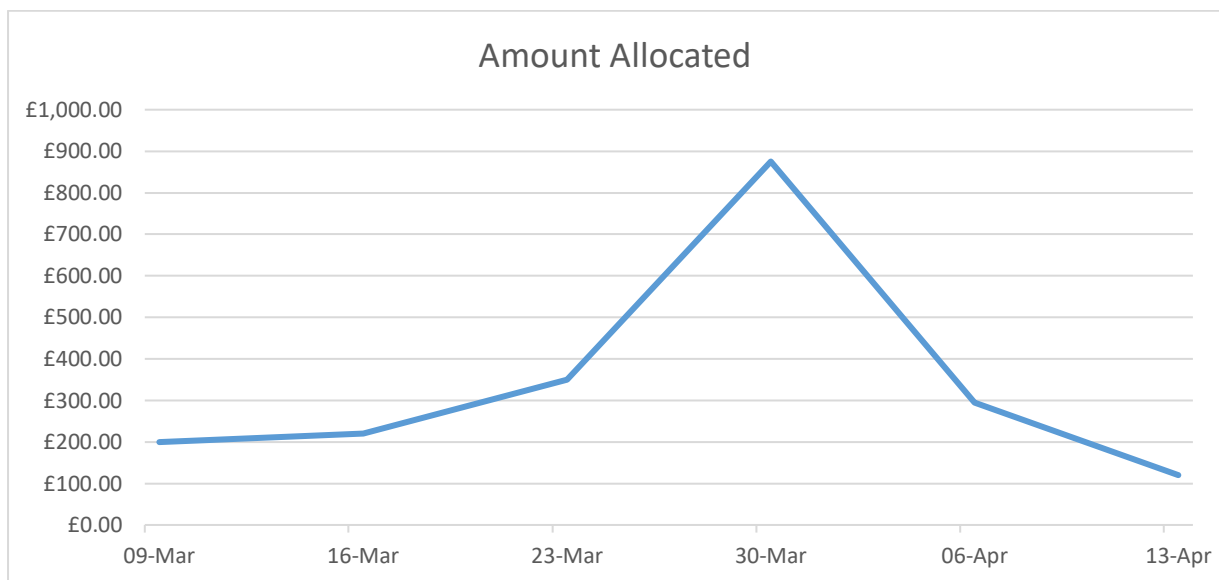
Diagram Three – RSL Distribution



1.4 RSL Hardship Funds

Additionally, the RSL have hardship funds that are accessible to their tenants in times of exceptional need. One of the local RSL has given data for the uptake of the hardship fund over the last few months as detailed in Diagram Four below. Again, there is a spike in money allocated during the peak of the first Covid 19 crisis, but it is important to highlight that there is a regular average paid out each month to tenants – reflecting a wider, ongoing need.

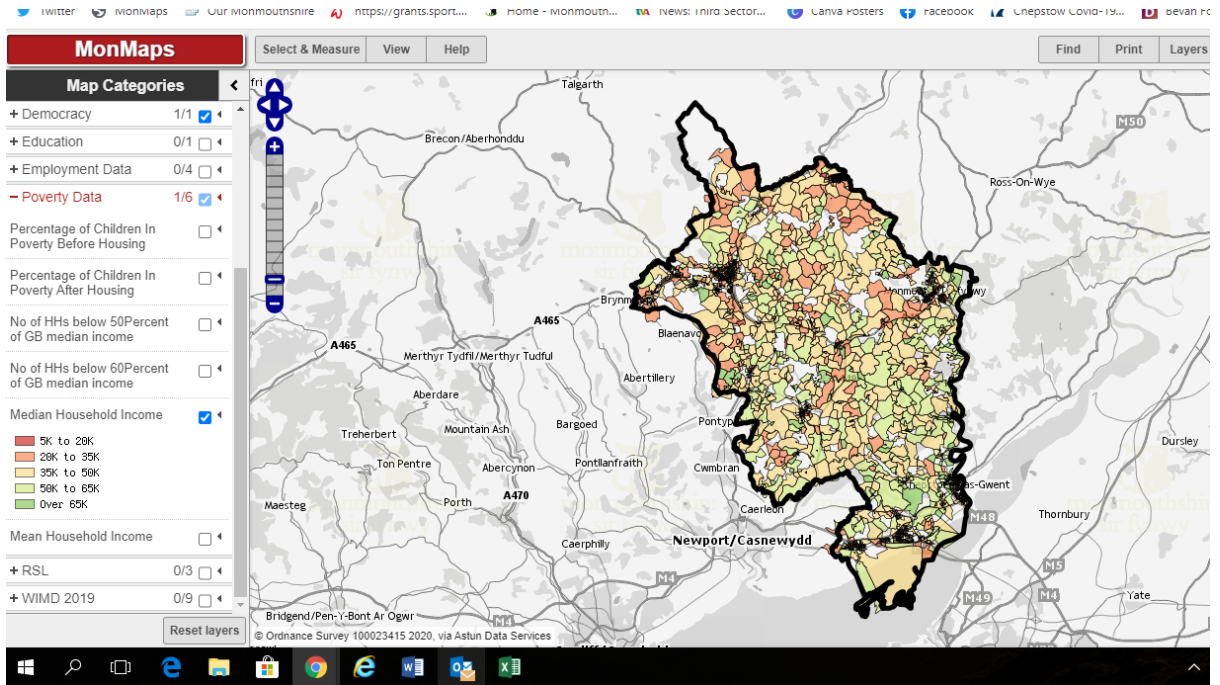
Diagram Four – Distribution of RSL Hardship Funds



1.5 Median Household income

In keeping with the leafy affluent image of Monmouthshire, Diagram Five below demonstrates a wide distribution of £50 – £60K and over £60K income households.

Diagram Five – Distribution of £50k+ income



A closer look at Diagram Six demonstrates a large distribution of households in the £20k – £35k and £35 – £50K.

Diagram Six - £20k - £50k 35k and below

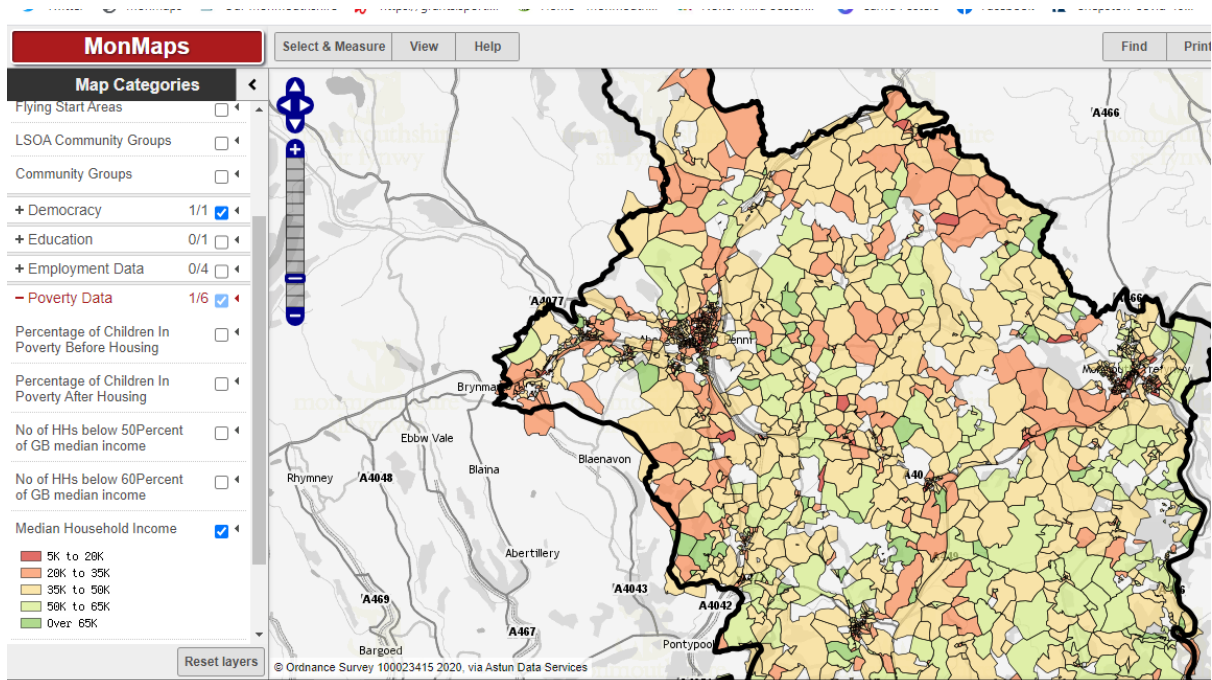
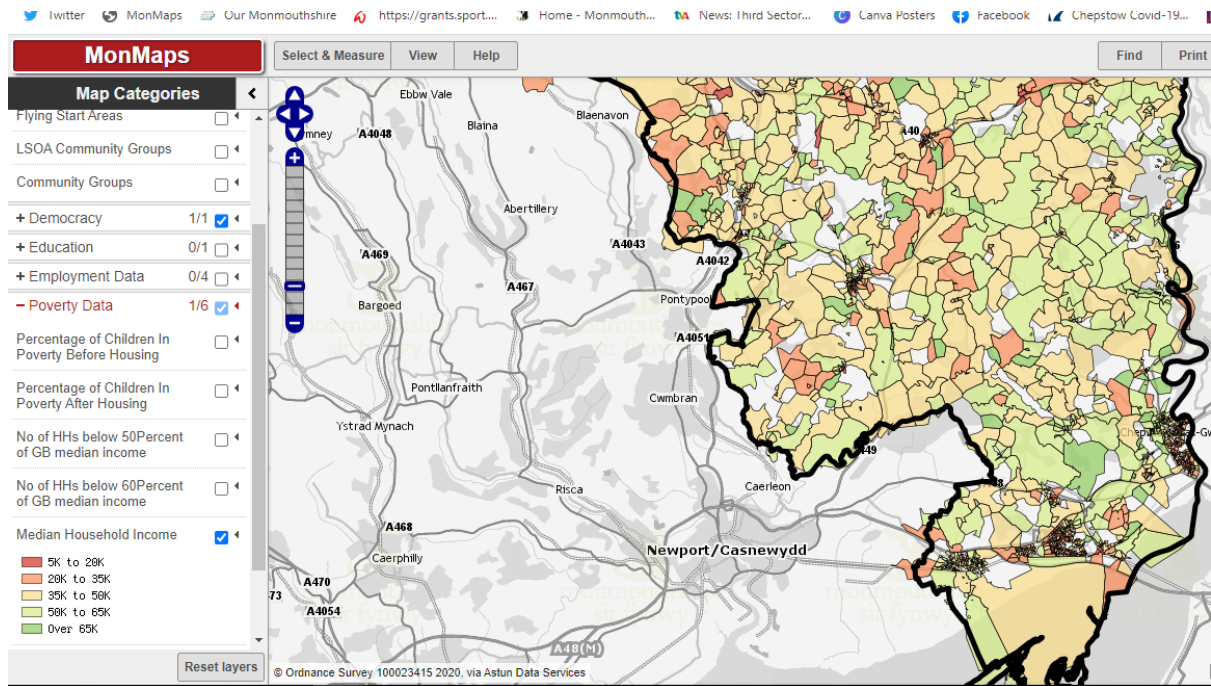


Diagram Seven - £5k – £20K income range.



Diagrams Eight, Nine and Ten depict the WIMD data for income across the county reflects the median income distribution and shows those areas of higher deprivation focused around the towns.

Diagram Eight – Median Income Distribution and Higher Deprivation around Monmouthshire Towns

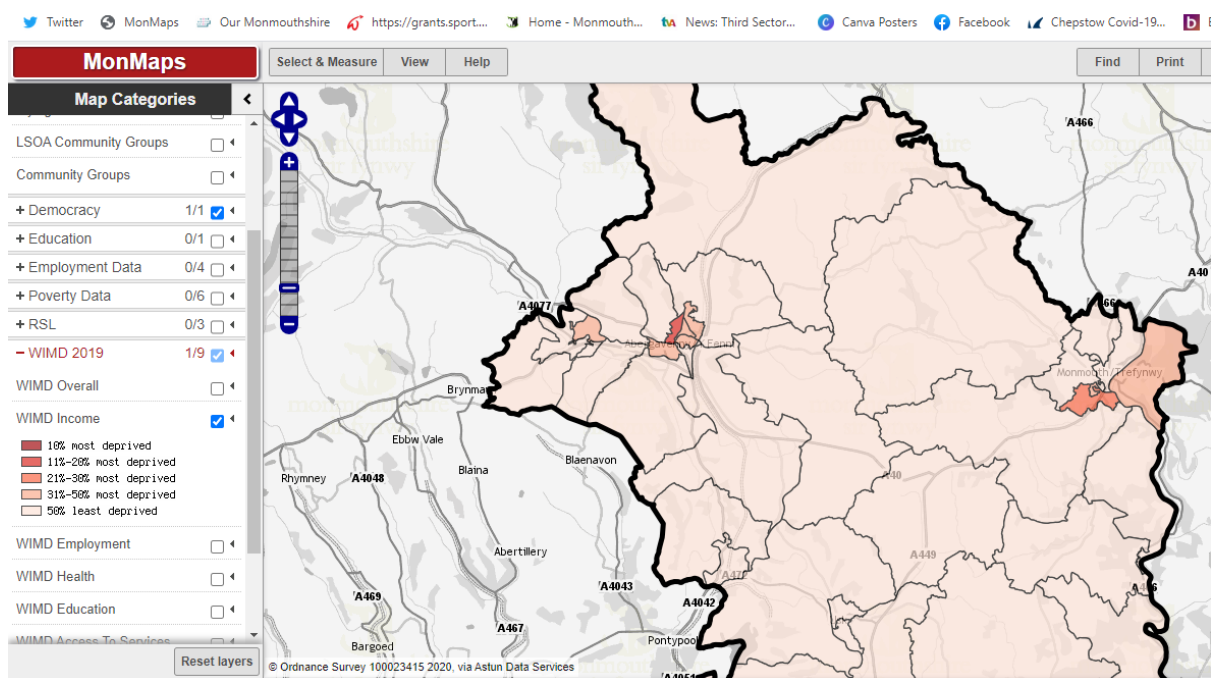


Diagram Nine

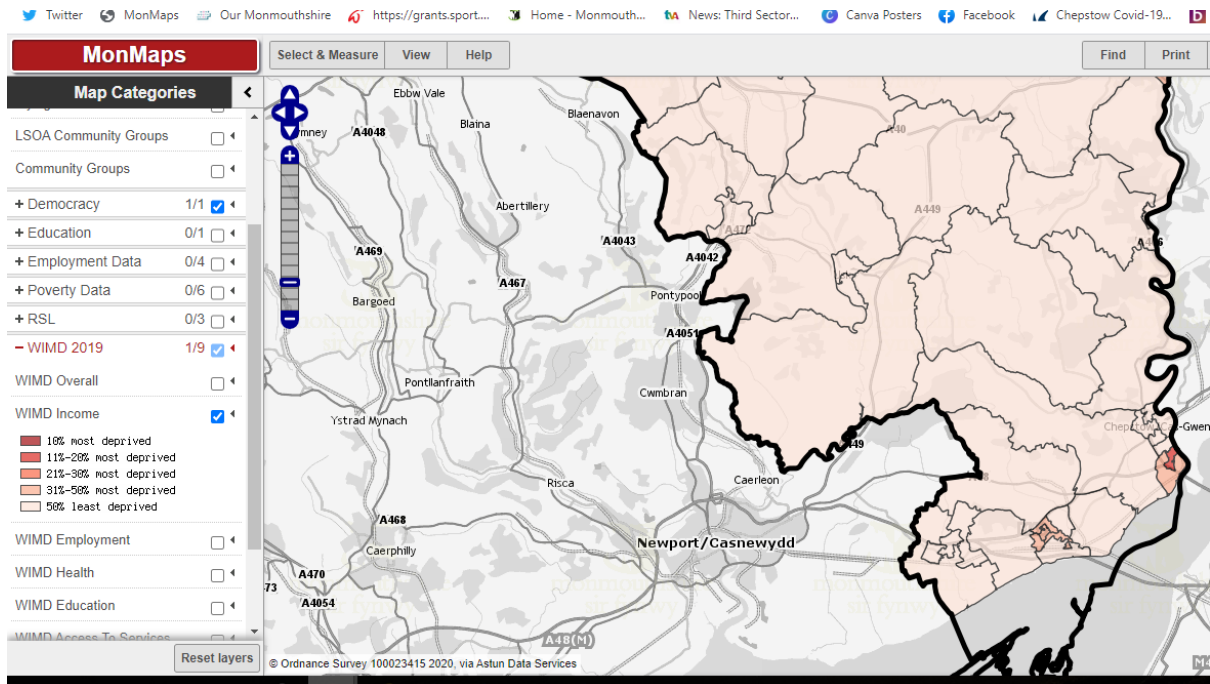
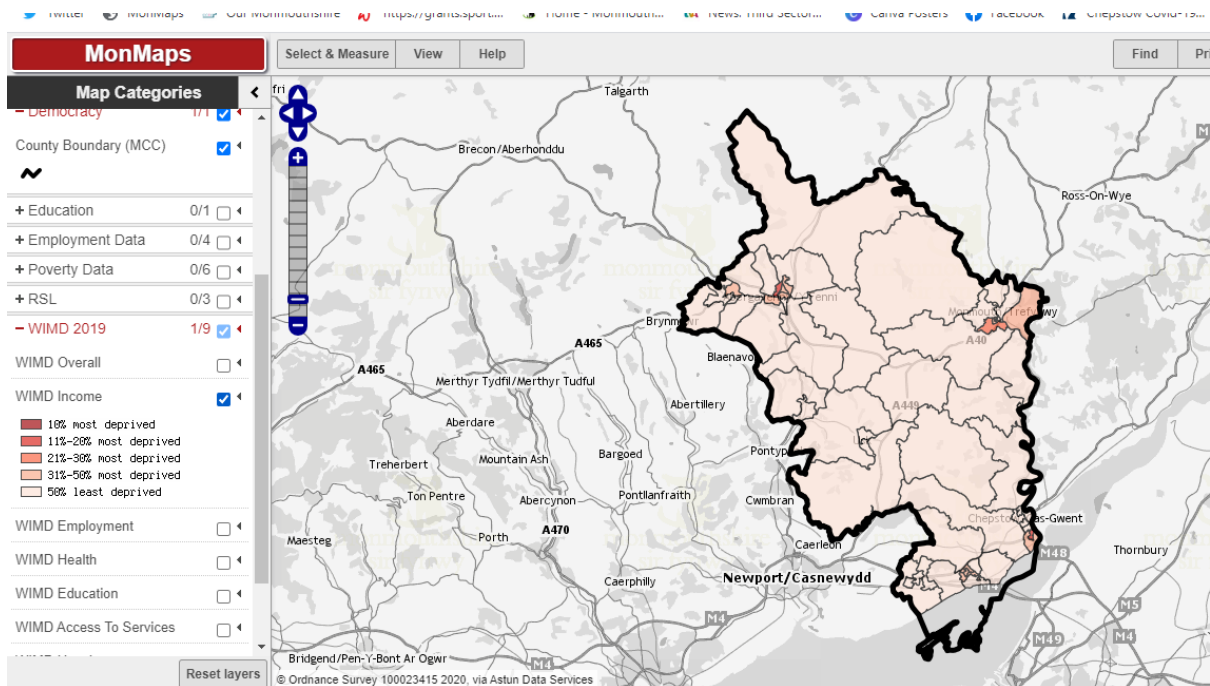


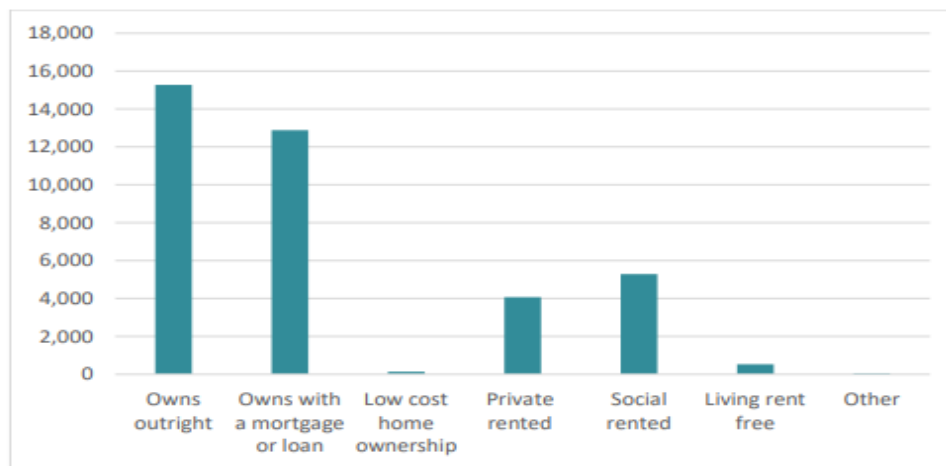
Diagram Ten



1.6.1 Housing

1.6.2 Monmouthshire has a significant number of families living in social or private rented homes. Many of these families will also have been significantly affected by the economic impact of Covid 10 – there is potential here for a large knock-on to family financial circumstances and may lead to an increase in demand for support. A profile of Monmouthshire’s Housing Stock can be found in Diagram 11 below:

Diagram 11: Monmouthshire profile of housing stock

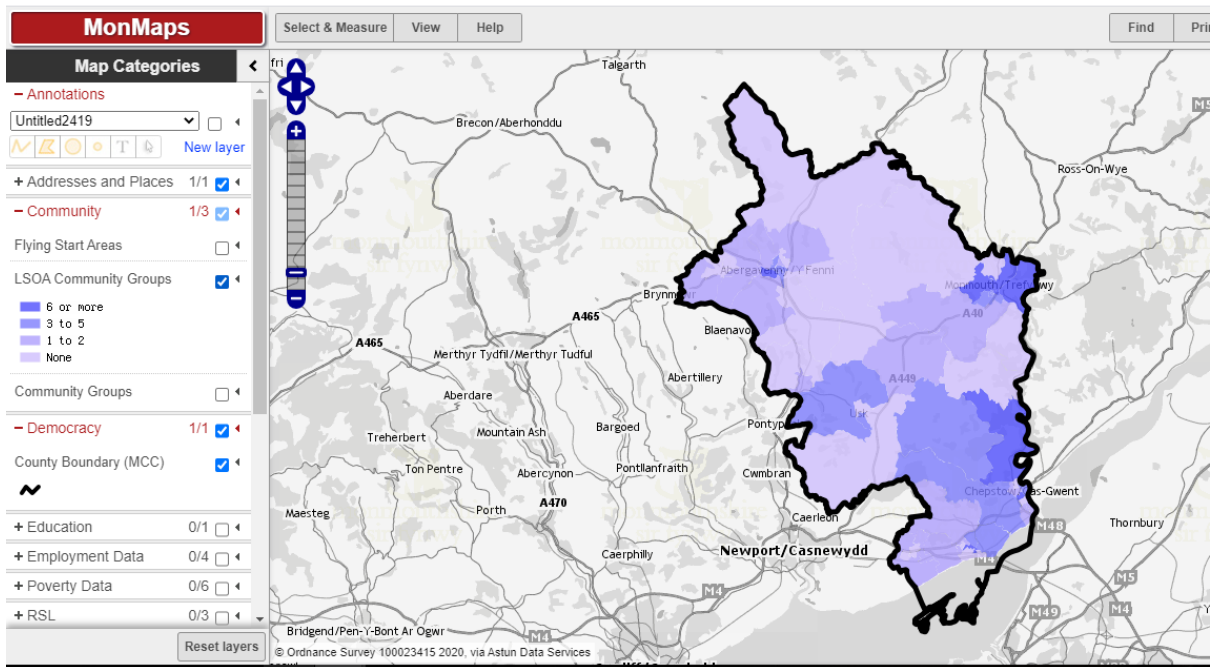


Source: Hometrack September 2018

1.7 Community Cohesion

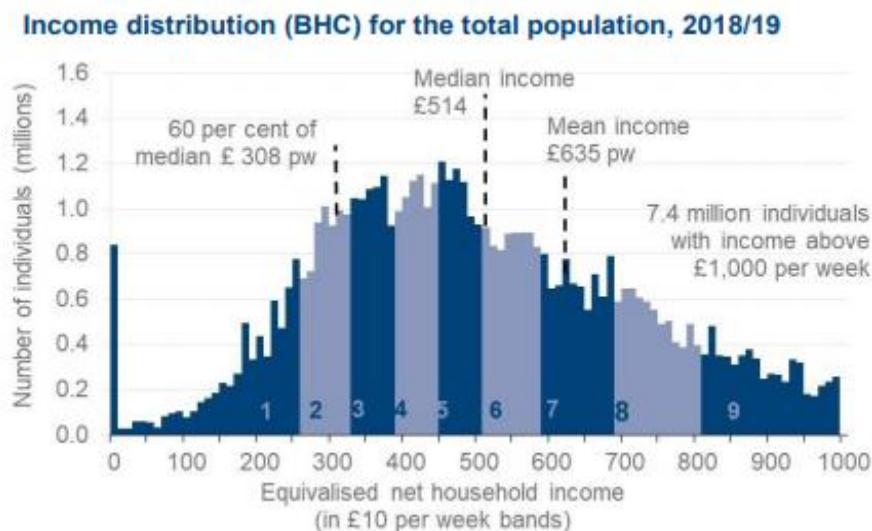
Diagram 12 below demonstrates that community groups are not equally distributed across Monmouthshire. This is something that might affect the ability of place based teams to really connect with people at a local level and through this enable local communities to fully engage in any action plans.

Diagram 12 – Community Group Distribution



1.8 Context of poverty data

It is worth noting that there are a significant number of individuals with relatively high incomes in the UK, and this produces a non-symmetric income distribution curve. As a result, the mean income can be skewed due to these extreme outlier values. The median income (currently £514 per week) is the standard measure of average income. The median represents the income of the individual in the middle of the distribution curve. Relative poverty is typically measured as 60% below or less than this median income level.

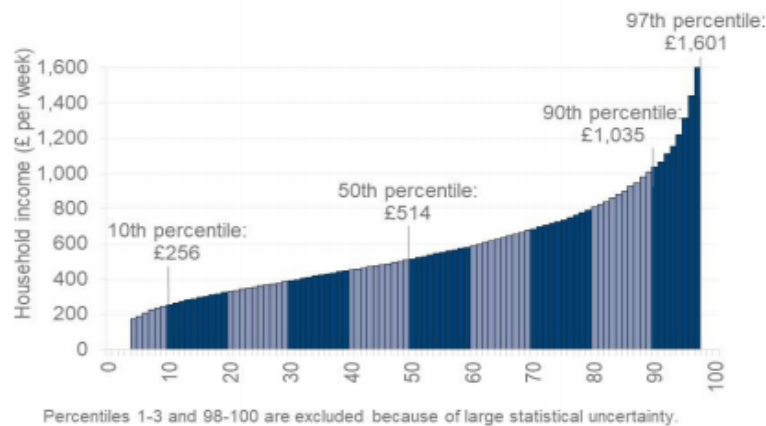


DWP National Statistics: Households on Below Average Income analysis 1994 – 2019

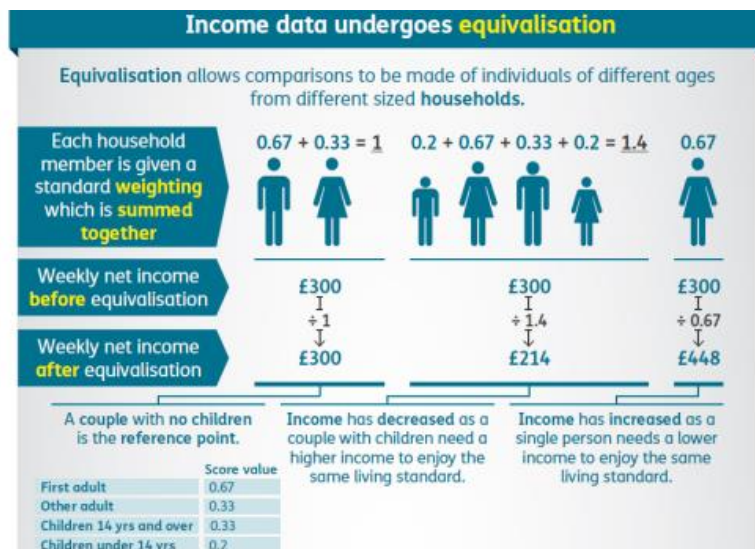
Percentiles divide the population into 100 equal sized groups, when ranked by household income. The chart below indicates the amount of weekly net equalised (see diagram below for explanation) household income needed at each percentile of the UK income distribution. Income before housing costs (BHC) at the 10th percentile is around half of the median (50th

percentile) implying that around 10 per cent of the population have less than half of the median household income BHC. Incomes increase sharply past the 90th percentile BHC. In 2018/19, income at the 90th percentile is nearly double that of the median, whilst the top 3 per cent of the population (97th percentile and above) have at least three times that of the median.

Weekly net equivalised household income BHC by percentile 2018/19



DWP National Statistics: Households on Below Average Income analysis 1994 – 2019



DWP National Statistics: Households on Below Average Income analysis 1994 – 2019

6 Covid 19 Trends - The Resolution Foundation

In their April briefing note, 'Risky Business', the Resolution Foundation outlines some of the key economic impacts of different groups of workers during the first Covid 19 crisis. They found:

- Key workers are disproportionately likely to be female, with employed women more than twice as likely to be in this group as employed men;

- Parents are more likely to be key workers than non-parents, and mothers even more so; 39 per cent of working mothers were key workers before this crisis began, compared to just 27 per cent of the working population as a whole;
- Workers in shutdown sectors are the lowest paid across the workforce. Typical pay for workers in shutdown sectors is less than half that of those able to work from home – £348 a week compared to £707 a week;
- Those in shutdown sectors are younger – their average age of 39 is four years below the average age of those who can work from home. Differences are even more pronounced at the very bottom of the age distribution: nearly two in five of every 16-24-year old who works are in these sectors and for those born after 2000 this figure is over than three-fifths;
- Workers with little job security are some of the most likely to be in the most exposed groups. Almost three-quarters of those on zero-hours contracts are either key workers or work in shutdown sectors;
- A similar trend is visible when looking at housing security: private renters, who generally face the greatest insecurity in their housing situation, are 40 per cent more likely to work in shutdown sectors than homeowners; and
- With schools and day-care closed to all except key workers, parents faced extra challenges. People born in the early 1980s are the most likely to be parents of children under nine.
- **Table One: Children in Wales in relative poverty by tenure type -% Households below average income**

Type of Tenure	2016 – 2019
All households	28
Social rented	52
Private rented	53
Owner occupied	12

- **Source:** Family Resources Survey, Department for Work and Pensions March 2020

- **Table Two: Percentage of all individuals, children, working-age adults and pensioners living in relative income poverty Wales 2016-17 to 2018-19 (3 year averages of financial years) (after housing costs)**

All individuals	United Kingdom	22
	Wales	23
Children	United Kingdom	30
	Wales	28

Working age adults	United Kingdom	21
	Wales	22
Pensioners	United Kingdom	16
	Wales	19

- **Source:** Family Resources Survey, Department for Work and Pensions March 2020

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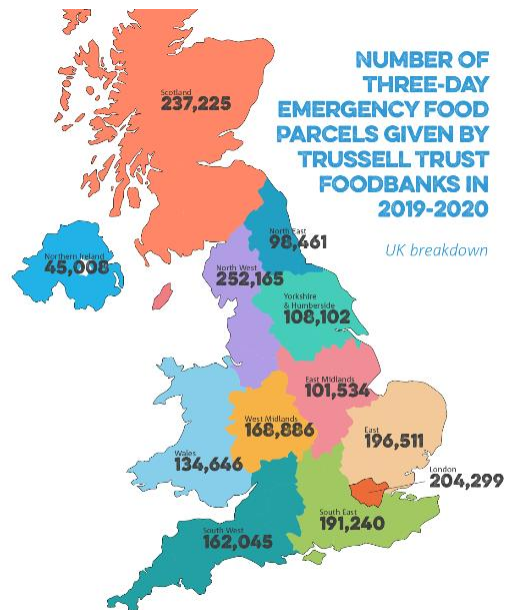
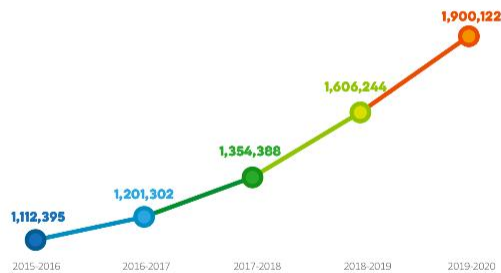
- **Table Three: Food bank usage in Wales 2013 – 2020**

-

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Wales	79,996	87,935	86,314	97,144	100,362	116,087	134,646

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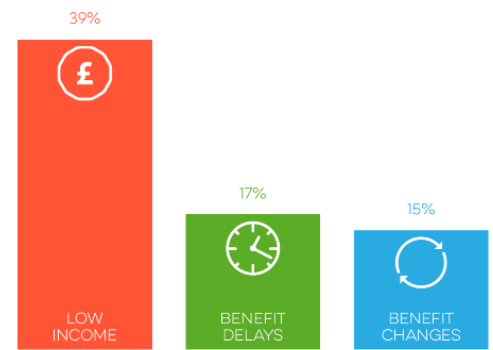
IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, FOOD BANK USE IN OUR NETWORK HAS INCREASED BY 74%



-
- **Source:** Trussell Trust Annual Statistics 2020

PRIMARY REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO TRUSSELL TRUST FOOD BANKS IN 2019-20

The top three reasons for referral to a food bank in the Trussell Trust network in 2019-20 were low income', benefit delays' and benefit changes'.



- **Source: Trussell Trust Annual Statistics 2020**

The impact of Covid 19

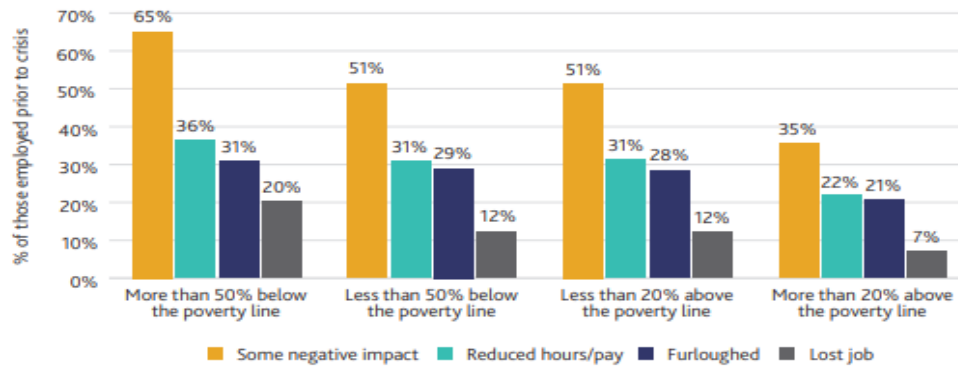
2.5 Covid 19 Trends

2.5.1 The Social Metrics Commission

The Social Metrics Commission (SMC) and YouGov carried out polling during March to May 2020 to explore how Covid-19 has affected people's financial situation, attitudes towards society, experiences of loneliness and the extent to which they are confident about the future.

There were some concerning trends. Those in the deepest levels of poverty have felt the largest employment impact. 65% of those employed prior to the Covid-19 crisis who were in deep poverty, experienced some kind of negative labour change (reduced hours or earnings and/or been furloughed or lost their job). This compares to 35% of those who were employed and more than 20% above the poverty line prior to the Covid-19 crisis as detailed in Diagram Two below:

Diagram Two: Impact of Covid 19 on Employment



Source: YouGov, SMC analysis.

Those in poverty, or close to the poverty line, who have remained in employment have also been more likely to be furloughed and/or to see their hours or wages cut in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

Combined with the results of this polling (which suggests larger increases in unemployment and a higher incidence of pay cuts for those below the median), this suggests that, even with the support provided through temporary increases in the social security system and the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, under the Commission's measure of poverty:

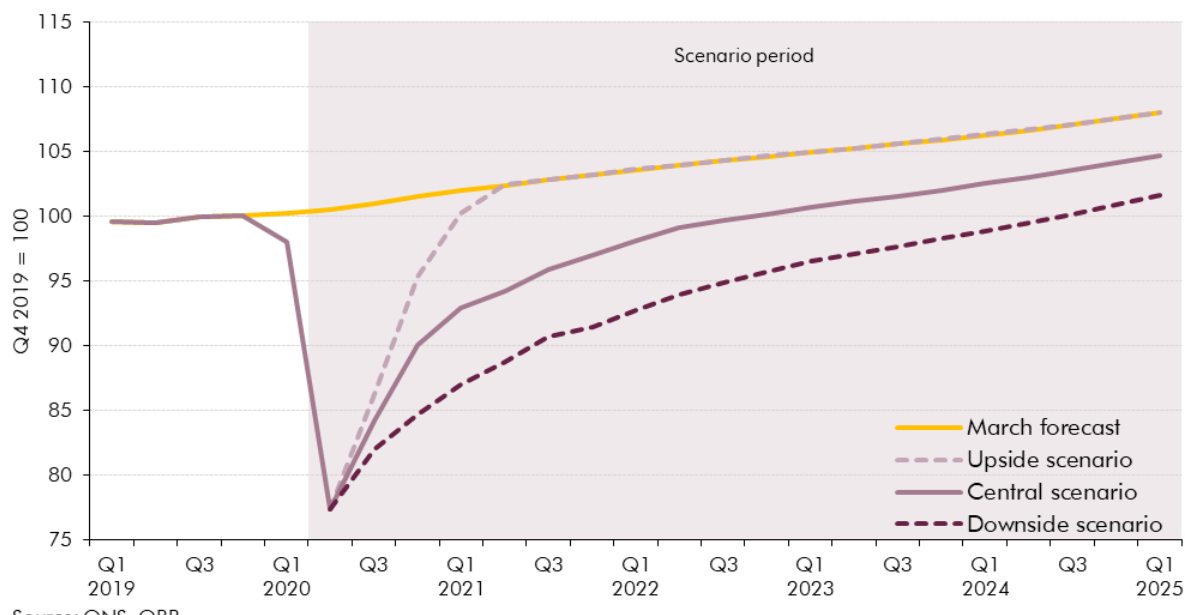
- Many of those already in poverty could move deeper into poverty because of losing their jobs, or having lower earnings because of reduced hours or pay. This would exacerbate the already increasing trend in deep poverty seen over the last 20 years; and.
- Those previously close to, but above, the poverty line could move into poverty by their changing employment status.

2.5.2 The Office for Budget Responsibility

The UK's GDP fell by 25% between February and April 2020 but is now in recovery as detailed in Diagram Three below. The pace of recovery and long-term 'scarring' of the economy will depend on the:

- Course of the pandemic and development of effective vaccines and treatments;
- Speed and consistency with which Government lifts health restrictions;
- Response of individuals and businesses as it does so; and
- Effectiveness of policy in protecting viable businesses and sustaining employment

Diagram Three: GDP Impact and Projected Recovery



Source: Office for Budget Responsibility

2.5.3 Rent Smart Wales

A Rent Smart Wales survey ([survey](#)) of 1,343 private landlords found 38% had tenants unable to pay the full rent since lockdown began on the 23rd March. The survey also found that 40% of an estimated 180,000 tenants in private housing in Wales have fallen behind on rent in lockdown – and 28% of those were more than two months in arrears. Rent Smart also found that one in five landlords were struggling to pay their mortgage during lockdown.

2.5.4 Citizens Advice Cymru

Citizens Advice Cymru have said they are concerned about a potential "wave of evictions" from the point at which the pause on evictions ends. They have experienced a doubling of calls for help with rent during lockdown. Monmouthshire Citizens Advice have also seen an increase in calls, the top reason for needing help was employment, followed by help with benefits and tax, then housing, benefits and Universal Credit and then relationship and family issues.

2.5.5 Community Issues

The ONS data for 24th July reports that of those receiving medical care for a long term mental or physical health condition before the pandemic, 51% had had their care cancelled or reduced since the outbreak. Of these, 24% said they feel their health had become worse during this time. This – and the wider impact of lockdown and economic impact – has the potential for significant effect on people’s mental health and general wellbeing.

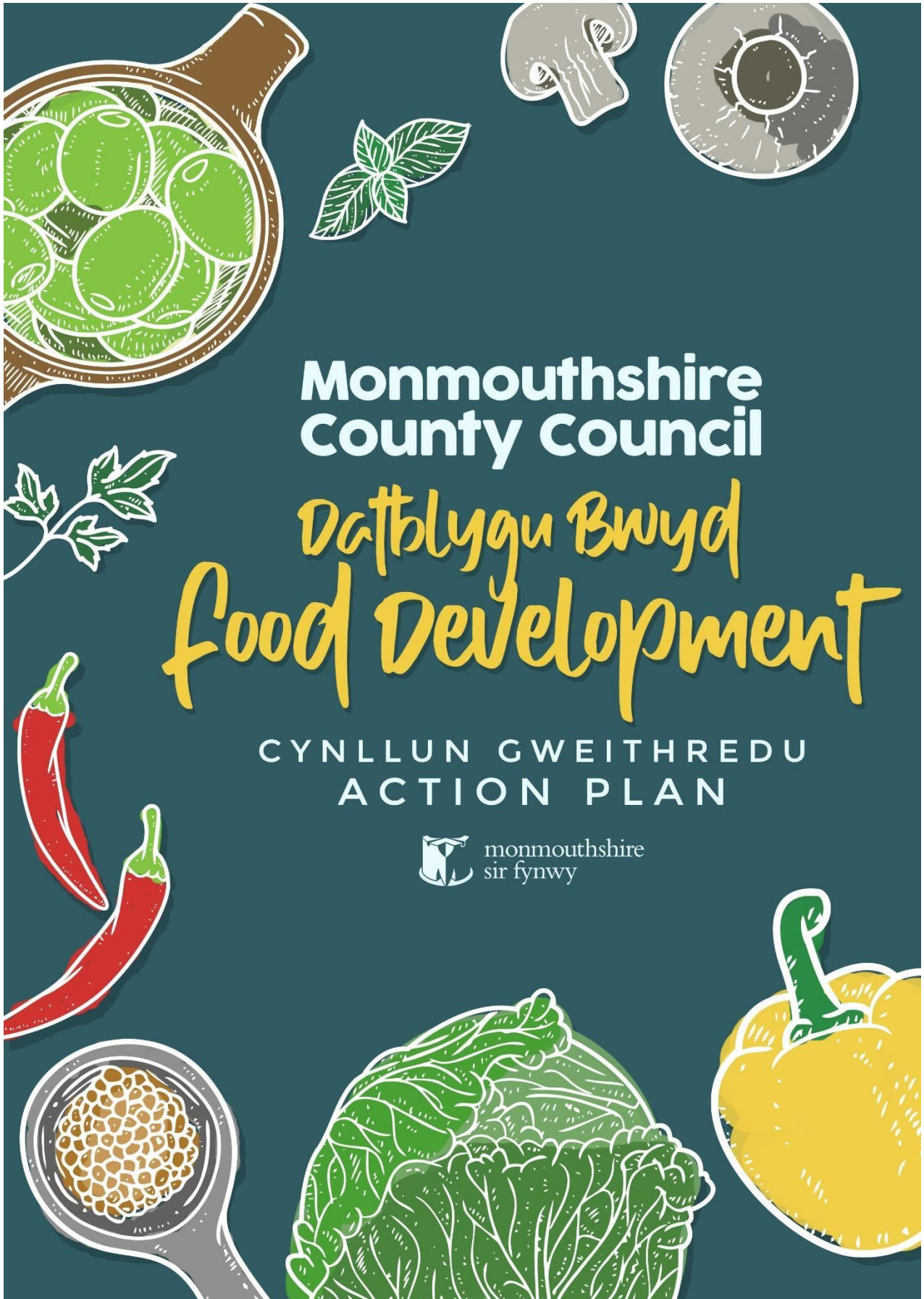
One of the wonderful positive aspects to have come from the Covid 19 crisis is the emergence of many local community groups who have supported neighbours with shopping, collecting prescriptions, dog walking and keeping people socially connected. However, a report from the new, all-party parliamentary group for left behind neighbourhoods found that, despite volunteering ballooning in some areas, the amount of mutual aid groups in ‘left behind’ areas

equated to 3.5 per 100,000 people. This compared to an average of 10.6 per 100,000 people across the rest of England.

- Broadens the approach of poverty measurement to include an assessment of overcrowding in housing and those sleeping rough.

Providing a better understanding of the nature of poverty, by presenting a detailed analysis of poverty depth and persistence for those in poverty; and

Providing an assessment of Lived Experience Indicators that shine a light on the differences in experiences of those living in poverty and those above the poverty line.



**Monmouthshire
County Council**

Datblygu Bwyd
Food Development

**CYNLLUN GWEITHREDU
ACTION PLAN**



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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<p>Food Development Action Plan – ‘Plan on a Page’ Why is this Activity Important?</p>	<p>Who will we work with?</p>
<p>Although referred to as the ‘Food Capital of Wales, due to its excellent reputation for quality food and drink, issues exist within the County which this Action Plan seeks to address, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of continuity, volume, quality and connectivity in local food supply chains; • A lack of infrastructure and strategic coherence in sustainable land use and food production to help the County to supply and sustain itself; • A lack of opportunities to bring smaller producers into the current ‘public plate’ offer due to their current inability to provide continuous volume, at a competitive price; • Current public sector procurement pricing strategies focusing on value for money rather than local wealth creation; • A demonstrable increase in food poverty and food insecurity exacerbated by Covid 19; • A need to address the decarbonisation agenda through a reduction in food miles and a greater focus on the sustainable food agenda. 	<p>We will work with a range of partners at all levels to address the sustainable food agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and National partners including Welsh Government, Menter a Busnes, NFU, FUW, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Sustainable Food Network, Food Manifesto Wales, National Resources Wales • Local Producers and suppliers • Local organisations such as Food Banks (linking to the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan), farmers, food producers, private sector organisations; • County-wide providers such as Registered Social Landlords, Community Trusts etc. • Schools, Health Board, PSB, catering educationalists and academia to influence change
<p>What will we do?</p>	<p>How will we measure success?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouthshire Food Resilience Data Mapping And Analysis Exercise; • Test Farm to grow and test the profitability of small scale ecological farming techniques; • Increase internal local food procurement through liaison with local suppliers to identify local, sustainable supply chains and business support needs; • Community Wealth Building Through Progressive Procurement/PSB; • Engagement with primary schools for circular pilot project to encompass all phases of food production; • Expansion of community pantry programme; • SHEP – School Holiday Enrichment Programme; • Extension of Healthy Schools/Healthy Eating Programme to implement scratch cooking across all catering outlets/services in the Council; • Monmouthshire Food Partnership share information on the development of the Food Agenda and shape future support for the county. • Maximising additional RDP funding opportunities for food and food tourism businesses. 	<p>The key indicators to be monitored will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in no. of food businesses engaged to 15; • Increase in no. of local food suppliers regularly supplying produce to MCC -15; • Increase in MCC local food procurement from 20% to 25%; • Establishment of Strategic Food Partnership – moving towards Monmouthshire as a recognised “Sustainable Food Place”; • No. of school children engaged in reducing school food waste 10 in pilot programme – x 2 school clusters; • No. of MCC catering staff trained in ‘scratch’ cooking – 20; • Reduction of food waste by 10% in schools

1. Introduction

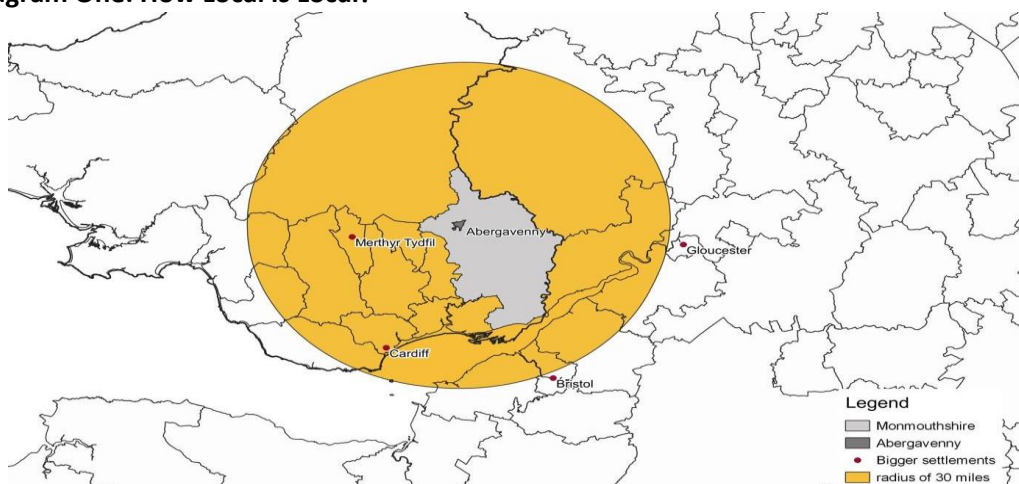
1.1 Known as the 'Food Capital of Wales', Monmouthshire is a 'Taste of Wales Destination' award winner and a county brimming with real, traceable food and drink, numerous high profile chefs and Michelin-starred restaurants. The County's excellent reputation is also supported by the Abergavenny Food Festival which attracts over 30,000 visitors per year. However whilst this is all positive, currently opportunities to increase employment, local wealth creation and reduce environmental food miles are being missed within the County's food sector due to a range of issues such as:

- A lack of continuity, volume, quality and connectivity in local food supply chains;
- A lack of infrastructure and strategic coherence in sustainable land use and food production to help the County to supply and sustain itself;
- A lack of opportunities within the current 'public plate' offer to bring in smaller producers due to their current lack of ability to provide continuous volume, at a competitive price;
- The current public sector procurement pricing strategy which focuses on value for money/cost minimisation rather than local wealth creation, reducing the ability and willingness of small suppliers to engage;

In addition, the Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated a demonstrable increase in food poverty and food insecurity. These issues will be addressed jointly with actions detailed in this Action Plan alongside the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan.

1.2 When examining actions that will support local supply chains and reduce environmental food miles, it is important to clarify what is meant by 'local'. Whilst there is no hard and fast definition of local in the context of food supply chains, it is widely considered by industry that local is ideally within a 30 mile radius. In Monmouthshire's case this would take into account not only the wider Cardiff Capital Region, but also the English border counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Bristol and the South West Region as detailed in Diagram One below:

Diagram One: How Local is Local?

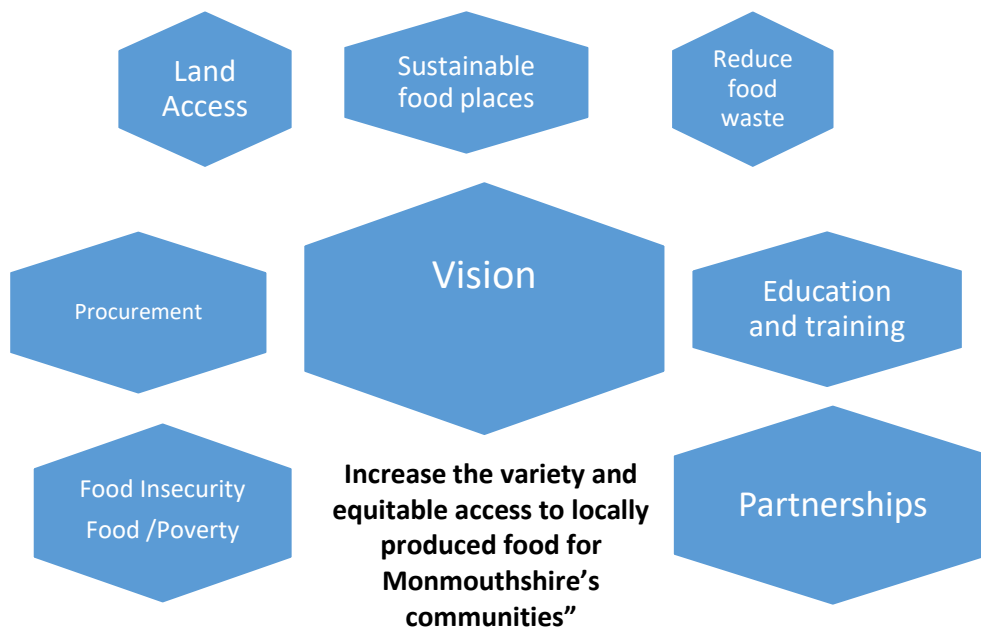


Map showing Monmouthshire's boundaries alongside a 30 mile radius (from Abergavenny) © Lisa Bauchinaer

***Source:** *How local is Local? Rethinking local food and the public plate in Monmouthshire. A study by Aberystwyth University and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data*

- 1.3 This is the first Food Development Action Plan for the Council and has been produced to identify a range of actions and measures that will provide opportunities to improve the continuity, volume, range and quality of locally grown produce. The focus of the activities is detailed in Diagram Two below:

Diagram Two: Food Development Action Plan – Focus of Activities



2. Situation Analysis – What is the problem we are trying to solve in Monmouthshire?

2.1 Current Land Use

The vast majority of Monmouthshire’s land is laid over to grassland for livestock, which is predominantly beef, lamb and dairy with some growth over the last ten years in poultry, pigs and goats. Only 20% of Monmouthshire’s land is currently being cultivated for crops which includes barley, wheat, maize, stock feed and other cereals. There are currently nine primary vegetable producing businesses (2017/2018) across Monmouthshire and those selling direct to the public are small in size, the largest being 15 acres. In order to reach a truly sustainable food system, the current dominance of existing food production groups in some sectors may need to shift considerably and a data analysis exercise is therefore being undertaken, to better understand the food/growing landscape in order to identify market opportunities and provide the necessary support to the sector.

2.2 Access to Markets

Despite a strong reputation for high quality local food, there is anecdotal evidence that local food producers selling direct to the public, may find it difficult to compete with supermarkets as the quantity they produce is too small. Supermarkets dominate 90% of the UK food market which is largely due to convenience, choice of product, continuous supply and competitive pricing and their business models are based on highly developed stock control systems and logistics functions.

Unfortunately, this model does not always reflect the complex needs of a truly local supply chain, where flexibility, seasonality and cooperation are key. According to figures from DEFRA, farmers receive less than 8% of the added financial value produced in the food chain and increasingly rely on subsidies, a proportion of which could be at risk following Brexit. As farm to plate food chains have lengthened over the decades and involved more 'actors', more profit has accrued to manufacturers, distributors and retailers with less money being made at the farm gate. These low financial farm gate returns have meant that farmers have, at times, been under greater financial pressure in the market particularly with commodities such as milk, where the return on production costs has been negative during some periods.

There will, therefore, always be a conflict of conscience for the weekly food shopper between convenience and price, over authenticity and the local wealth creating benefits of localism.

2.3 Food Insecurity

Food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

World Health Organisation:

Despite the county's excellent reputation for food, food poverty and food insecurity exists. Food poverty as a concept is by no means limited to those who have reached a point of food crisis. Other factors affecting access to affordable food and an appropriate diet are the availability of a range of healthy goods in local shops, income, transport, knowledge about what constitutes a healthy diet, and a lack of skills to create healthy meals. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the issue of food insecurity and diet has become more pronounced, exposing the fragility of some people's economic situation and exacerbating food and health inequality.

2.4. Food Poverty

2.4.1 Food Banks

Monmouthshire has four Food Banks, one in each of the county's larger towns. Three of these food banks are co-ordinated by the Trussell Trust and one is affiliated to the Ravenhouse Trust. During the Covid-19 pandemic March 2020 lockdown, the UK Food Bank network reported its busiest time ever with 81% more emergency food parcels being given out across the UK, including 122% more parcels going to families with children, compared to the same period in 2019. This has since tailed off and returned to pre-Covid levels however these trends have been broadly mirrored in Monmouthshire.

2.4.2 Food Larder /Food Pantry

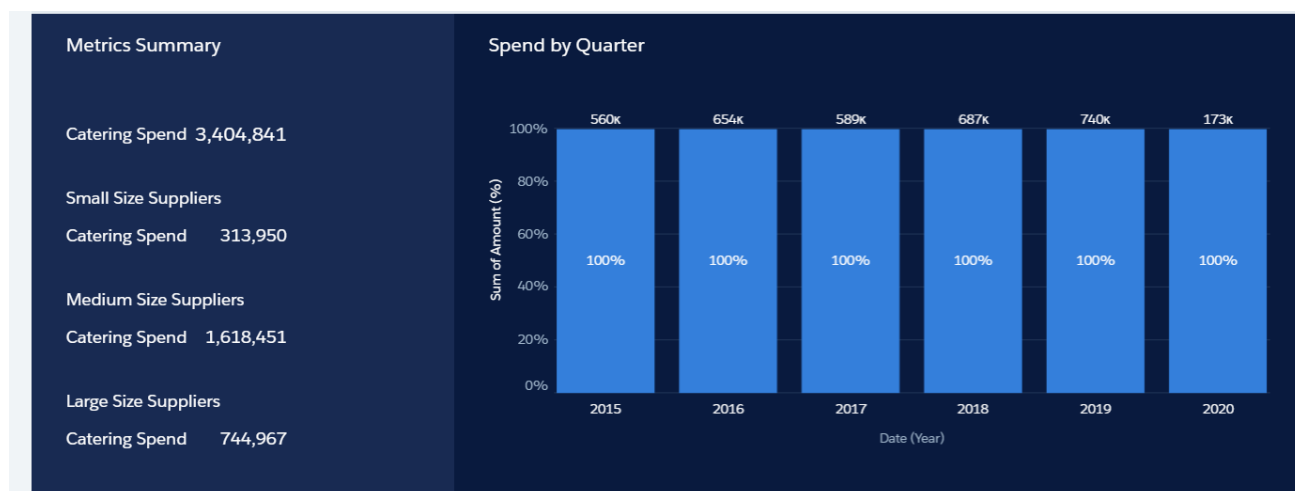
Developed in the community, Monmouth hosts the first of the County's free food larder. The Larder takes waste food from supermarkets and donations of food from the community, offering the items to whoever needs them. This alleviates the stigma of engaging with a Food Bank if in need and reduces food waste. This is being considered for replication across the county, taking into consideration the different community aspirations.

2.5 Food Procurement

2.5.1 As a Council we also need to consider our own socio-economic duty to drive change and deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. As one of the biggest purchasers of food in Monmouthshire (in 2019/20 the Council spent £433k with external food suppliers), we need to do all we can to work with our local suppliers. We need to identify our food suppliers and their supply chains to understand if they wish to scale up production to supply the Council and to understand what support they will need to do this. As a Council we also need to inform them of the type of ingredients we need in order to produce locally sourced meals for our meals services. This will include considering the seasonality of our own menus, flexibility to introduce changes in ingredients to accommodate the restrictions on smaller suppliers, etc. We will therefore need to open up discussions with our local suppliers to understand firstly if they wish to supply the Council and if not, why not so we can understand what we can do to assist, ensuring that we make evidence based decisions to enable us to make a commitment to contracts at a later date to ensure the sustainability of our local producers.

2.5.2 As a Council we also need to consider our own food procurement, our own public plate. We need to ensure we are offering the best food we can as part of our catering service offer. Further development and work is required with our local suppliers to help them understand what we need on our menus to enable us to procure fresh local produce and put Monmouthshire food into our Monmouthshire schools and meals services. And there is work for us to do. The Council's current third party on contract food expenditure in 2019/20 was £433k of which 20% was spent locally, there is therefore room for improvement. Table One below details the Council's Third party food procurement expenditure for the last five years.

Table One: Monmouthshire County Council Third Party Food Procurement Expenditure 2015-2020



3. Situational Analysis – Welsh Food and Drink Industry

The food and drink supply chain is a key part of the Welsh economy ([Business Wales: Economic Appraisal of the Welsh Food & Drink Sector 2017](#)). The industry employs more than 240,000 people, in 27,575 business units with a turnover of £19.1bn. Exports totalled £0.436bn, Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands, and Belgium being the top 5 destinations with Welsh retail sales of food and drink at £5.4bn. The sector in Wales represents 18% of all Wales employment; 22% of

the total number of business units in Wales; 18.4% of turnover of the non-financial business economy in Wales (against a UK average of 13.5%) with 4.2% of the turnover of the UK food and drink sector. The Food and Farming Sector which represents primary production and farming only, is a small sector of the industry, representing 79,900 workers if all farmers and agricultural workers are included and a turnover of £6.9bn.

4. Capitalising on Opportunities – The Food Development Action Plan

- 4.1 Within the existing landscape there is clearly potential to bring new food products to market in Monmouthshire as well as divert some of the raw commodity (meat, milk, vegetables, fruit and possibly grain) away from the mainstream supply chain to the Monmouthshire plate (both public and private). However, many producers are hesitant to trial new products due to the cost of setting up processing facilities and have become accustomed to operating in the mainstream food system with poor profitability. Farmers selling into the mainstream have become ‘price takers’ rather than ‘price makers’ with relatively little power to change the status quo. Linked to this situation is the lack of a local processing plant and the demise of slaughtering facilities in Monmouthshire. Apart from a few exceptions, Monmouthshire food, especially meat and dairy, wine, cider and beer is processed outside of the county and often out of Wales, due to a lack of facilities in the region.
- 4.2 Evidence also suggests there is more to be done to educate and inform local residents and visitors of the benefits of locally produced, accessible and affordable food. There needs to be better communication centred on its freshness and taste; the environmental and cost benefits of reduced transportation; and the increased opportunities for building resilience within the local economy through job safeguarding and creation. Making more locally produced food available can contribute to improved food resilience and security in the locality, which will be of growing importance in the context of factors such as Brexit (as we import 27% of our food from the EU), and also climate change with its impacts on food production in countries from which we import food. Transporting food from other parts of the world can also impact on limited resources such as fossil fuel and water.
- 4.3 Taking all these factors into account the vision for Monmouthshire County Council’s Food Development Action Plan is to:

‘Increase the variety and equitable access to locally produced food for Monmouthshire’s communities’

In order to deliver the vision, a range of actions have been identified that will look to balance some of these issues highlighted within the Situational Analysis above, alongside some of the market opportunities identified and set out a way forward. In doing so, a number of actions and measures have been developed which will seek to improve the continuity, volume, range and quality of locally grown produce within the County

- 4.4 The activities within the action plan will focus on the following **guiding principles**:
- Building sustainable, local economic growth through the provision of support for local food businesses and sharing of intelligence to help boost local procurement opportunities and create more jobs;
 - Improving diversity and usage of land for food production to improve self-sufficiency whilst conserving and enhancing our natural resources;
 - Considering how food is produced, packaged, distributed and disposed of in order to reduce waste, energy consumption and increase recycling and composting; and

- Improving food security and the health and wellbeing of Monmouthshire residents through increasing the availability of fresh, local, affordable produce.

4.5 The Plan will also serve to provide strategic context and direction in improving sustainable land use and food production in the County, building on the ambition of Monmouthshire’s Climate Emergency Strategy, Social Justice Action Plan and key National and Local Partnership agreements, whilst working alongside the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan in addressing food insecurity and food poverty.

5. Strategic Context

5.1 A Monmouthshire that works for everyone: Monmouthshire County Council Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022

The Corporate Business Plan sets out the Council’s clear direction and resources required for delivery, informing and shaping a series of enabling and delivery plans focussed on People; Digital; Economy; Customers, Land and Assets.

The overall **purpose** of the Council is to develop:

We want to help build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well - being of current and future generations

The Council’s five organisational goals which also serve at the Council’s Well-being Objectives, set out the aspirations and the actions necessary to deliver on them and identify the future we want. Of the five priorities the one that is the most appropriate for the Food Development Action Plan is:

A: Thriving and well-connected county; and

Within the priorities there are specific actions which give context to the ambitions for the Food Development Action Plan as detailed below:

Action	Purpose
THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS AND DELIVERS A NEW ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY	Raise the profile of Monmouthshire, support and grow the foundational economy including developing proposals for shorter supply chains to benefit consumers and growers.
THE COUNCIL UNLOCKS ECONOMIC VALUE OF ITS SPENDING POWER	Review our procurement spend, improve analysis of expenditure, encourage and support the creation of local supply chains where possible. Minimise the long-term impact of our activities by using resources where they are needed, reducing waste, recycling materials, increasing local value-creation and focusing on whole life costs.

5.2 Monmouthshire’s Climate Emergency Strategy

Monmouthshire’s Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan was adopted in October 2019 and sets out how the Council plans to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, as well as

working with communities and partners to reduce wider carbon emissions across the county. The Food Development Action Plan is an important component in helping to address the Climate Emergency, since the Action Plan includes promoting and supporting local food growing, reducing food miles, promoting sustainable land management and agricultural practices and reducing food waste.

5.3. **People, Place, Prosperity: A Strategy for Social Justice 2017 -2022**

This Strategy demonstrate the Council’s commitment to address inequalities in the county in order to make our society function better. The Strategy provides an approach that will help turn lives around by removing barriers and facilitating practical support and solutions to enable citizens to realise their full potential. An action to seek to reduce food insecurity will be included as part of the refresh of the Strategy and the forthcoming Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the sister document to this Action Plan.

5.4 **Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy – LEADER**

The Vale of Usk 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy (LDS) is funded via the Rural Development Programme (RDP) and Welsh Government (80%) with 20% match funding support from project sponsors. The territory covers the rural wards of Monmouthshire and Newport. LEADER is a community led programme which aims to improve the quality of life and prosperity of rural areas through the delivery of locally inspired and delivered projects. From a food perspective, the programme provides funding for projects which seek to shorten local supply chains and add value to local identity. Investment from the RDP has enabled the creation of a dedicated Food Development Officer post who will be responsible for delivering this Action Plan.

5.5 **Welsh Government: Towards Sustainable Growth - an Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020**

The current Welsh Government Strategy for Food and Drink ‘Towards Sustainable Growth’ sets out their ambition to make people passionate about Welsh food and drink, prioritising food safety and standards, sustainable development and supporting the drive for food security. The document was put under review in July 2019, a consultation paper was published and a number of views were received from a variety of stakeholders. The review has been paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic however it is expected to resume shortly when new Strategic Plan for the Food and Drink Industry in Wales will be published.

The proposed mission was agreed i.e. to develop a thriving food and drink industry through working collaboratively with the sector to achieve the following three strategic aims:

- To grow our businesses’ scale, value, and productivity, through targeted investment, support, innovation and co-operative activity throughout supply chains, and by creating strong and diverse routes to UK and export markets;
- To benefit our people and society by providing attractive careers and fair work, committed to developing the skills of the workforce, using resources sustainably, and encouraging businesses to play a part in addressing public health and poverty; and
- To create and communicate a global reputation for Wales as a Food Nation by showcasing our sector through Taste Wales, developing and living our sustainable brand values, widely adopting high production and accreditation standards, and celebrating businesses’ successes.

5.6 UK Government National Food Strategy - <https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/>

The UK Government have very recently released Part One of their National Food Strategy, the Government's first review of the food system in 75 years. The purpose of the Strategy is to work with citizens to figure out how to build a more resilient, less harmful food system for future generations. Part One contains urgent recommendations to support the country through the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare for the end of the EU exit transition period on 31 December 2020. Whilst the governance of food and health is a devolved issue the food systems of the UK are tightly interwoven so many of the issues will be similar so it is important to consider the recommendations in this context, which include shoring up the diets of disadvantaged children and maintaining standards and ensuring scrutiny post Brexit to ensure environmental and animal welfare standards are upheld.

6. Strategic Partnerships

6.1 Monmouthshire Public Services Board

Monmouthshire County Council is a key partner of the Monmouthshire Public Services Board (PSB), whose remit is to improve the 'Social, Cultural, Economic and Environmental' wellbeing within the county for current and future generations. The PSB has committed to working in partnership to deliver the following 'steps' within its wellbeing plan, which complement the 'Food Development Action Plan', these include;

- Working to tackle physical inactivity and obesity in order to increase the health and wellbeing of future generations;
- Improving the resilience of ecosystems by working at a larger scale (landscape) to manage biodiversity and maximise benefits such as natural flood risk management;
- Exploring the potential for specialist centres of excellence in Monmouthshire e.g. food/hospitality, agriculture, tourism and technology

Monmouthshire is well known for its hospitality, agriculture and tourism sectors, which have the potential to be growth areas, in particular for specialist training for excellence. Linked to the "natural environment and climate change" objective within the wellbeing plan, the green economy also has the opportunity to grow in Monmouthshire - renewable energy production and locally sourced food are two such examples. Adapting to the challenges that climate change may have on industries such as food production is also important. Public sector partners have the opportunity to lead the way in further procuring local goods and services where possible, maximising this opportunity regionally and nationally where possible. (Monmouthshire's Wellbeing Plan, 2018).

The PSB welcomed the publication of Welsh Governments long-term strategy [Healthy Weight; Healthy Wales](#) 2020 – 2030, to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales. At a regional level, the annual report of the Gwent Director of Public Health, 'Building a Healthier Gwent' was subject to extensive public engagement, before the final document was agreed. These significant national and regional strategic developments have heavily influenced the PSBs approach in Monmouthshire on tackling obesity; they provide an important framework with which to garner collective efforts as the PSB moves forward.

6.2 **ROBUST**

Monmouthshire County Council is a key partner in the ROBUST partnership which works across both academic institutions and community practitioners. Wales is one of 11 EU counties included in the ROBUST project with WLGA being lead partner and Monmouthshire County Council being the practitioner for sustainable food development. ROBUST partners have recently completed a paper commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council “How local is Local /” which offers an emphasis on buy local /economic and employment effects and effects on procurement. The report can be found [here](#).

6.3 **AGRI-URBAN**

During 2016-2018 Monmouthshire County Council became a partner in AGRI-URBAN an action planning network within the URBACT programme. The network consisted of 11 European cities working towards sustainable food systems. Each partner was required to set up an URBACT Local Group to bring stakeholders together to give a joint perspective on the problems to be faced in the Agriculture and Food systems. In Monmouthshire’s case the activity was centred in and around Abergavenny and the overall purpose was to produce an Integrated Action Plan to act as a guiding vision document, highlighting short term actions and longer term visions necessary to advance the Agri Urban themes in the region. The Action Plan that was produced has been the guiding document for this Action Plan and can be found [here](#).

6.4 **MONMOUTHSHIRE FOOD PARTNERSHIP**

An external Monmouthshire Food Partnership has been developed, including external agencies such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Ordnance Survey (OS), Welsh Government, Gloucester and Aberystwyth Universities, individuals and group representatives. This is a fledgling group and will increase membership as appropriate.

The purpose of the group is based on the following actions:

- To act as a focal point for the exchange of information and views on the Food Agenda in Wales, connecting and supporting Monmouthshire /Wales and beyond;
- Develop a shared vision and identify common ground and opportunities for development in the food sector as a Cross Boundary Working Group; and
- To formulate cooperative actions and initiatives which impact on the development and delivery of strategic and local interventions for the sector including development of a Sustainable Food Network

6.5 **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOD PROCUREMENT NETWORK**

Monmouthshire County Council Officers have a Food Procurement Network made up of Officers with a responsibility for the provision of fresh and packaged foods. The group seeks to consider current food procurement operations, food supply chains, the environmental impact of food miles, food safety/complaints and training requirements. The group also share intelligence and map complaints to identify which suppliers are supplying below standard food with a view to removing sub-standard suppliers in order to maintain quality and choice.

The Council is engaging with Caerphilly County Council, who is the Lead for the strategic procurement for food across Welsh Local Authorities. This partnership, will encourage a shared

understanding of the key issues and ensure any interventions identified are considered on a strategic level whilst working closely on key projects at a local level.

7. Food Development Action Plan - Aim, Activities and Benefits

7.1 The Aim of this Food Development Action Plan is to:

Increase the variety and equitable access to locally produced food for Monmouthshire's communities and the wider region.

7.2 The activities will include the following:

- The collation and analysis of data to enable evidence led decisions to be made whilst developing innovative responses to the challenges identified;
- The creation of new opportunities and enhanced access to new markets for producers by exploring the opportunities for extending markets (locally, nationally and internationally);
- Working co-operatively at a strategic level to facilitate the sharing of skills, ideas and best practice between each partner and co-build practical tools to assist in shortening supply chains (locally and on an international basis);
- Raise the ambition and increase local food procurement within the Council from the current 20% by ensuring the Council is more flexible in its approach to seasonality, continuity and quantity of supply, etc. This will be very much led by the outcomes of the data analysis and working with the right stakeholders in order to build confidence to enable them to act upon market opportunities;
- Decrease food poverty through improved integration between Food Bank referrals and a range of support structures/mechanisms (with particular emphasis upon use of the Housing Support Gateway);
- Support for community food programmes in partnership with community and housing associations;
- Increased knowledge as a result of an on line training course and shared knowledge to encourage scratch cooking throughout the Council using seasonal, locally sourced foods; and
- Reduce levels of public food waste by monitoring food waste in schools and using the data to inform future purchasing for school meals – Table Two that follows details food collected and diverted from landfill for the period 2018 – first quarter of financial year 2020-2021.

Table Two - Food collected and diverted from landfill for the period 2018 – first quarter of financial year 2020-2021

Food collected and diverted from landfill				
Food Waste Tonnage Collected 2018- 2021				
Period		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Q1	April - Jun		1023.12	1281.71
Q2	July – Sept		1059.92	
Q3	Oct- Dec	326.96	1130.98	
Q4	Jan - Mar	1072.84	1190.60	
Average monthly		349.95	367.05	427.24

7.3 The benefits of delivering the associated actions will lead to:

- Sustainable, local economic growth for the region through the provision of direct business support and sharing of intelligence;
- Improved diversity and usage of land for food production, improving self-sufficiency;
- Improved health and wellbeing of Monmouthshire residents due to increased availability of fresh, local, affordable produce; and
- Reduced levels of food insecurity and food waste leading to a reduction in Monmouthshire’s carbon footprint.

7.4 The Food Development Activity Work Plan (Appendix One) details the activity, the Lead Officer(s), Partners, Progress and the RAG rating.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 The progress of the Action Plan will be monitored via the Vale of Usk Local Action Group, who monitor all spend associated with the Rural Development Programme, and the Social Justice Advisory Committee who monitor the progress of the overarching Social Justice Strategy and associated Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan both of which will be updated on an annual basis.

8.2 The key indicators to be monitored will include:

- Increase in no. of food businesses engaged to 15;
- Increase in no. of local food suppliers regularly supplying produce to MCC to 15;
- Increase in MCC local food procurement from 20% to 25%;
- Establishment of Strategic Food Partnership – moving towards Monmouthshire as a recognised “Sustainable Food Place”.
- No. of school children engaged in reducing school food waste 10 in pilot programme – x 2 school clusters;
- No. of MCC catering staff trained in ‘scratch’ cooking - 20
- Reduction of food waste by 10% in schools

Food Development Activity Work Plan 2020 – 2022

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer	Partners	Measure/Progress	RAG Rating
Partnership Projects					
<p>Monmouthshire Food Resilience Data Mapping And Analysis Exercise</p>	<p>Pilot to identify key issues and reinforced knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physical environment data (soil type, crop usage, topography etc.); ○ economy (what food is grown, where it is moved to, how much money it generates, what levels of employment result from it); ○ ownership and responsibility within the food ecosystem (the location of food businesses, the ownership of land etc.); and ○ identify the gaps which relate to but not solely limited to the above. <p>Information will inform and develop programmes of work in the food production sector and will create a layered picture of both the current and future potential landscape of the county to direct focused interventions. Findings will be used across Wales and in other sectors in the future.</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer</p>	<p>Funded through the Welsh Government Foundational Economy Fund.</p> <p>Wide range of delivery partnerships - including businesses, producers, academia, local and national government, NHS, NRW, and Vale of Usk LAG.</p>	<p>Consultants appointed</p> <p>Internally data is being sourced and used to test the system and look at the gaps, to identify potential quick wins.</p> <p>Weave the data into opportunities for farmers and produce an action plan.</p>	<p>Green</p>

Conservation Farming Trust - Test Farm Development	<p>Project to grow and test the profitability of small scale, 1-4 acre agro ecological farming techniques, to see how they apply in a Monmouthshire context – including climate, topography and local/regional markets – to establish which can generate enough income to support a family.</p> <p>Project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage landowners to make land available and advise farmers on contractual leasing matters particularly if multiple small plots exist on the same site. ○ Recruit entrepreneurs who have well-formed business plans and provide advice planning a new enterprise, using on-line models from across the world that demonstrate profitability/sustainability and share their business data. ○ Support networking and collaboration among small farmers, for example, knowledge exchange, cooperative marketing. 	Rural Programme Food Development Officer	Funded via the Rural Development Programme	Funding approved bid	Amber

<p>Monmouthshire PSB Community Wealth Building Through Progressive Procurement</p>	<p>Aims: To effect systemic change in local economies across Wales by working with anchor institutions in selected Welsh Public Service Board areas to introduce and embed the community wealth building concept in these areas and disseminate policy and practice lessons across Wales; with a specific focus on progressive procurement approaches. Recognises that the public sector is a key stakeholder in the local economy and that “building resilience and sustainability into supply chains in Wales has become even more important as we begin preparations for recovery from this pandemic and the uncertainty of Brexit”.</p>	PSB	Monmouthshire PSB, along with the other 4 Gwent PSB’s, project funded by Welsh Government, and led by The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).	Mapping underway	Green

<p><u>Monmouthshire PSB</u> Environmental Review of PSB Partners</p>	<p>Aims: To focus on environmental projects and initiatives which address the climate crisis, reduce carbon emissions, improve resource efficiency, and minimise the organisation's/PSB's environmental footprint. Key areas of focus will be PSB partner's internal environmental management, exploring where the PSB could add value through collaboration, knowledge sharing and pooling resource, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fleet 	<p>PSB</p>	<p>Led by NRW & MCC</p>	<p>Review underway</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings - Land (land management and use across the county, working with the farming community specifically) - Procurement (linked to regional CLES work with environmental considerations see above) 				

Direct Delivery Projects					
<p>Encouraging active engagement with primary schools with the aim of educating and influencing the curriculum.</p>	<p>Gilwern Cluster School Project An active partnership with local schools and (Abergavenny) Food Forum and Community Centre. Project intended to develop a circular pilot project which will encompass all phases of produce /cooking /composting /growing /planting /vegetable harvest. It will encourage the development of a programme of learning which will include education about produce /seasonality and growing cycles and to offer practical involvement in all elements of the food cycle where appropriate.</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer</p>	<p>Funded via the Rural Development Programme</p>	<p>Delivery underway although currently paused due to Covid-19 restrictions</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>Community Fridges/Community Food Hubs</p> <p>Work differently to Foodbanks. The intention is to redistribute surplus</p>	<p>Developing 'community fridges'/community pantry programme and expansion of Fare Share Programme in four towns across Monmouthshire in partnership with the local community and housing associations.</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead (link to Tackling Poverty and Inequality Strategy)</p>	<p>Partners to include financial/debt support (e.g. CAB), mental health sessions (e.g. MIND), coffee morning</p>	<p>Delivery underway Monmouth Community Fridge operational</p>	<p>Green</p>

<p>food to the local community from supermarkets and others, in order to facilitate the redistribution of surplus food to the local community to avoid it going into landfill.</p>	<p>Hubs will be based around food – offering a community fridge to develop a wider partnership approach marrying up local community groups, established charities and other third sector groups to address local social issues linked to food. The hub could also offer opportunities to signpost people to other sources of support in MCC or wider.</p>		<p>drop in (e.g. Reengage), cookery classes (e.g. Foodbank), lunch club (e.g. Chepstow Community Focused Schools Approach), as well as other social activities based around food.</p>		
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<p>Monmouthshire Food Banks</p>	<p>Supporting the continued sustainability of local food banks through the improved integration of Food Bank referrals and a range of support structures / mechanisms (with particular emphasis upon use of the Housing Support Gateway).</p> <p>Continue to support local residents through the introduction of a digital system to allocate food “vouchers”. The voucher system enables the food banks to prepare suitable emergency food, sufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>Support personal development opportunities for Food Bank volunteers through the Communities and Partnerships Development Team</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead</p>	<p>Collective team role to engage with individuals self-referring; liaise with the Food Banks; coordinate distribution logistics and ensure collaboration with other agencies to support underlying issues.</p>	<p>On going</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>and the Be Community Leadership Programme.</p>				
<p>Addressing access to affordable and nutritious food ‘Grub Club’</p>	<p>A pilot programme of activities to teach family nutrition and cooking skills</p>	<p>Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead</p>	<p>Partnership with local schools and community organisations</p>	<p>In development</p>	<p>White</p>

<p>SHEP – School Holiday Enrichment Programme Provision of food & nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children in areas of social deprivation during the school summer holidays.</p>	<p>Provision of free healthy breakfasts and free healthy lunches to primary aged children (5-11 years) as part of a structured play provision to 80 children per site per day on 19 days of the school summer holiday period.</p>	<p>Mike Moran, Community Infrastructure Coordinator (MCC play lead) Tel: 07894 573834 Email: mikemoran@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Welsh Government (WG) Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABHB) Dietetics Service Gwent Psychology Service Participating Primary Schools Town and Community Councils (in 2019, 11 of the 33 councils participated – in 2020, 15 councils had “signed up” before the scheme was</p>	<p>SHEP operated for the first time in Monmouthshire in 2019 at two sites, with attendances/meals delivered totalling 2,494. The take up of places available at Overmonnow Primary School was 97% and at Thornwell Primary School 66%.</p>	<p>Amber – Scheme paused due to Covid 19</p>
			<p>cancelled due to Covid-19)</p>		

Extension of Healthy Schools/Healthy Eating Programme	<p>Extension of the Healthy Primary Schools programme where meals are cooked from scratch from approved suppliers. The Healthy eating agenda covers all establishments feeding school age children between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm</p> <p>Aim to implement scratch cooking across all catering outlets/services in the Council.</p> <p>To include development and delivery of a half day, on line course for all catering managers in every MCC catering establishment, depending on levels of reasonability.</p>	<p>Catering Manager with Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Environmental Health.</p>	<p>Partnership with all departments offering catering services and WLGA</p>	<p>In development</p>	<p>Amber</p>
Increasing local food procurement within the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of all food produce and producers used within the Council to identify products that could be sourced locally. • Liaison with local suppliers to identify local, sustainable supply chains and business support needs. • Understand the opportunities and the voids. • Once evidence has been collated of opportunities and the Council needs, hold a series of 'Meet the Buyer' events to share the Council's vision for increasing local food procurement. 	<p>Catering Manager, Rural Programme Food Development Officer, Strategic Procurement Team and Environmental Health.</p>	<p>Partnership with all departments offering catering services</p>	<p>In development</p> <p>Encouraging or mandating public procurement to buy local through new suppliers.</p> <p>Engage with the principal stakeholders who can influence change.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council in turn to agree to bulk purchase produce • Council also to consider if the Council spend is significant enough and whether or not it would be more beneficial to roll this out as a PSB initiative. 				
Provision of specialist community meals via in house service	<p>Specialist meals for example allergen free, pureed are currently outsourced to a frozen food company.</p> <p>Pilot to identify viable business model to cook meals from scratch, in house. * also affects food waste reduction</p>	Catering Manager, Community Meals Team, Strategic Procurement Team and Environmental Health.	Partnership with Enterprise and Adult and Social Care Services	In development	White
Partnership Development Monmouthshire Food Partnership	<p>Strategic group bringing together key colleagues/interested parties who have a role or interest in the food agenda. To include (but not be solely) food poverty, land management, food waste, nutrition and health and wellbeing, farming/land management, food business support/ food procurement and food waste. To share information on the development of the Food Agenda across the County along with skills and knowledge to shape future support for the sector.</p>	Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Rural Programmes Manager	Key Officers, Food Business Support Agencies, NFU, FUW, Food Innovation Wales	In Development	White

	The intention is to move towards a shared vision for sustainable food development.				
Maximising additional funding such as RDP funding opportunities for food and food tourism businesses	<p>An additional £106M has been identified by WG for RDP type activities which includes support for food and food tourism businesses with additional opportunities via the CCR Challenge Fund.</p> <p>Opportunities to be identified and built into this Action Plan as they become available.</p>	Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Rural Programmes Manager	<p>Monmouthshire Food Partnership</p> <p>Vale of Usk Local Action Group</p>	In development	White

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Appendix 1

Monmouthshire County Council Homeless Transition Plan – October 2020

1. Have a move-on protocol in place with rapid re-housing at its heart

Current Situation

It is a requirement of Welsh Government, as per the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support, for the Council to have a 'move-on protocol with rapid re-housing at its heart' for re-housing those in emergency/temporary homeless accommodation into suitable permanent accommodation.

At present the Council does not have a move-on protocol per se, although the Homesearch Housing Register policy facilitates the re-housing of homeless households through the use of quotas.

It is proposed to request the Homesearch partners to sign up to the draft protocol below, which is currently being consulted upon:

The Council is required to minimise the number of placement moves for any individual or family that experiences homeless. Settled permanent accommodation following a short period of time in emergency accommodation is the desire for all partners when working together to eradicate homelessness and promote sustainable tenancies.

MCC will work closely with the Monmouthshire Housing Partnership to facilitate adequate availability of social housing stock through local housing associations to help meet local homeless need through the flexible quota arrangement within the existing Monmouthshire Homesearch Housing Allocation Policy. The Council is committed to RSL's having the guarantee of immediate Intensive Resettlement Housing Support for those needing to be accommodated via the homeless route. In the short-term this will be provided through an interim reconfigured Housing Support Grant funded service provided by Pobl.

Should this support not be available this may prevent the Council from moving some applicants on to permanent accommodation.

On a homeless determination and a 2B Banding status assessment under the Homesearch Allocation Policy, Housing Options Officers will work closely with Homesearch Officers to ensure registration of housing applications and minimise delays in processing applications. The allocated Support Worker will be involved by providing individual support plans to illustrate the intensity of support to be delivered, as well as the individual's commitment to working towards a successful tenancy.

Any barriers to an offer of accommodation, such as previous rent arrears, will be negotiated by this triage, and if necessary, the Council will utilise the Homeless Prevention Fund to reduce/refund arrears. Any support issues such as previous behaviour or substance misuse issues which could inhibit an offer being successful, will be addressed via the support plan and evidenced by the involvement of the Substance Misuse Assertive Outreach Worker (also part of MCC bid), and Mental Health services.

To further support individual clients, the Council or support providers will refer clients into the multi-agency Housing Intervention Panel to consider and identify solutions. The Council, housing associations and support providers are committed to both referring clients and attending meetings.

As the Temporary Accommodation and Resettlement Support Service are delivered through the same Providers, there will be a seamless move with support during the resettlement process. High-intensity flexible, client-led support will be provided for between 12 to 16 weeks, with ongoing support being provided via the RSL or generic floating support service after this period.

Of relevance to the above, the Council does not have any formal Housing Support Grant Contracts in place to provide Re-settlement Support to facilitate move on to permanent accommodation.

There is, however, currently an informal interim arrangement in place (which also provides Temporary Accommodation Support) through an existing Provider that has effectively temporarily re-modelled an existing generic floating support contract. This interim arrangement is relying on the goodwill of the Provider. There is a need to formalise the arrangement to provide certainty going forwards. There, however, is an additional annual cost of £66,000 to facilitate this. There is currently no funding capacity within the existing Housing Support Grant Programme, which is not scheduled to be re-commissioned until April 2023. An application to the Welsh Government Phase 2 grant programme was unsuccessful.

Consideration is currently being given to de-commissioning existing projects in order to potentially formalise this goodwill arrangement from April 2021 through four existing projects being amalgamated to provide to provide a Temporary Accommodation and Re-Settlement Service and a Tenancy Support Team.

Recommendation

- To establish and agree a Move-On Protocol between the Council and Homeseach partners.
- To underpin the proposed Move-On Protocol, continue to give consideration to de-commissioning and amalgamating four existing HSG projects to provide Temporary Accommodation and Re-Settlement Service and a Tenancy Support Team.
- To provisionally aim to fund Intensive Re-Settlement and Temporary Accommodation Support from the Housing Support Grant Programme from April 2022, subject to a review assessment.

2. Improve the quality and reduce the dependency on emergency/ temporary accommodation solutions

Current Situation

As at 30th October 2020 there were 56 people (mostly singles) accommodated in B & B, plus two in the MCC Nightshelter. In addition the Council's other homeless accommodation (eg shared, private leasing and managed accommodation) is occupied at capacity. The historical reliance on Generic Floating Housing Support has highlighted the deficiencies both, in the diversity and range of the Councils temporary accommodation together with the type of housing support provision available.

There is a need, therefore, for the Council to increase the diversity and range of temporary accommodation. Some accommodation should have dedicated and specialist support.

The dispersed nature of Monmouthshire also impacts on the accessibility to this accommodation. Often there is a need to displace applicants from their home communities in order to access temporary accommodation.

Furthermore, Welsh Government policy (Annex D) has now determined minimum accommodations standards for Phase 2 onwards. In summary these are:

- Minimum standards – eg self-contained and suitable for independent living; appropriate location
- Homes should be of high quality, innovative and sustainable
- Homes should be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the occupants
- Homes should be safe and secure.

Welsh Government are also advising that they no longer expect local authorities to use night-shelter type accommodation. This has implications on the Council currently using on office space for temporary accommodation, although every effort is being made to cease this arrangement.

There is a need to assess the Council's accommodation against these standards.

The following are types of accommodation are needed in Monmouthshire:

- **Emergency Family Accommodation**

- **Current Situation**

- At present the Council's only emergency family accommodation is a 5 bedroomed shared emergency accommodation situated in Monmouth. (This is temporarily being used as multiple needs accommodation).

In addition, a 6 person property was purchased in Caldicot in 2019 by Monmouthshire Housing on behalf of the Council for use as shared emergency family accommodation. The property hasn't come into use as yet due to opposition from the immediate local community. For Planning purposes there is a need for the Planning Committee to agree to a management plan after consultation with the immediate local community. This should be completed by December 2020.

Further to the above, further opportunities to provide emergency family accommodation through the Social Housing Grant Programme have arisen in Caldicot and potentially Monmouth, providing 10 units of self-contained accommodation. In addition a potential scheme was identified in Abergavenny which would have been cross funded by Welsh Government homeless capital grant. Unfortunately, the land owner decided not to sell.

- **Recommendations**

- To cease using the emergency shared accommodation in Monmouth for families and utilise for an alternative homeless purpose eg Multiple Needs accommodation.
 - In respect of the proposed emergency shared family accommodation in Caldicot, consult on the draft management agreement and submit to Planning Committee for final planning approval and on acquiring final planning approval, sign up to the lease agreement with Monmouthshire Housing. This proposal is cost neutral.
 - Through the Social Housing Grant programme, continue to explore the possibility of providing emergency self-contained family accommodation in Caldicot (4 units) and Monmouth (6 units) under lease arrangements with the developing housing associations.
- **Self-Contained Temporary Family Accommodation**

- **Current Situation**

- The Council currently has a portfolio of family accommodation which is made up of:

- Private leased units x 49 (which includes a number of RSL properties)
- However, 1 is rolling on during COVID and is likely to end, 2 terminate on 31st December 2020, 2 terminating on 30th September 2020 and 1 is on a monthly rolling lease with an RSL.
- Managed units (on behalf of private landlords) x 33
- MCC low cost home ownership unit x 1

Subject to landlord approval and financial sustainability, the aim is to continue with the existing portfolio and proactively seek to identify additional properties using the Monmouthshire Lettings Service branding.

Running alongside recruiting private landlords there is also a proposal to target private sector tenants who may be starting to experience problems with sustaining their

accommodation but as yet may not have reached out to the Council for assistance. Perhaps due to rent arrears, unemployment, debt etc

Recommendation

- Under the Monmouthshire Lettings branding, to continue to engage with private landlords and promote landlord incentives, to seek to identify private sector accommodation. This will be funded through existing resources
- Seek to engage with private sector tenants and/or landlords who may be experiencing as an approach to providing an early intervention and minimise the possibility of tenants presenting as homeless.

- **Housing First**

Current Situation

At present a Housing First scheme available in Monmouthshire. There is a current need of 6 people in Monmouthshire who have extremely high support needs and there is no suitable support or accommodation available to them.

A Housing First scheme currently operates in Newport and there is the opportunity to extend into Monmouthshire through the existing provider. The provider will provide the support and identify accommodation which could be from any source, but will include housing association stock. There is a cost of £32,000 to provide this until April 2021 and Welsh Government homeless grant has been secured to fund this service. At present, however, there is no funding currently available for 2021/22. Again there is no current funding capacity through the Housing Support Grant Programme.

Recommendation

- For the Council to support the Housing First proposal by potentially assisting with acquiring/providing accommodation alongside Pobl, Monmouthshire Housing and Melin Homes.
- To identify options for securing £36,000 to facilitate the continuation of the Housing First project after 31st March 2021, subject to need.
- Subject to on-going need, provide evidence on the need for the Housing First project to continue to inform re-commissioning of the Housing Support Grant Programme from April 2023.

- **Emergency & 24 Hour Multiple Needs Accommodation**

Current Situation

There is no emergency specialist multiple needs accommodation in Monmouthshire beyond the current interim provision of 4 units of shared accommodation in Monmouth under the supervision of security. Temporary Assertive Outreach support x 0.5 has been established to support 4 residents in this accommodation. 11 applicants with high needs are currently being supported through the Assertive Outreach.

Historically the Council's shared housing supplemented by generic floating support. Placement breakdown was common-place. The Council currently has approximately 26 people who have multiple needs in B & B and 33 people in shared accommodation.

The Council submitted a provisional scheme for Welsh Government homeless grant to convert the existing shared accommodation in Monmouth to self-contained accommodation and acquire an additional property that is currently on the market. The bid totalling £215,000 was refused.

Recommendation

- To work towards establishing a scheme to cover the North and a scheme to cover the south.

- For the north, continue to explore the feasibility and costs of potentially converting/reconfiguring the existing family hostel to achieve 3-5 units of self-contained accommodation and purchasing an additional property that has recently come on to the market.
- To explore and identify opportunities to establish a scheme to cover the south of the County.

- **Young Persons Accommodation**

Current Situation

There are currently 21 units of supported accommodation across two separate schemes in Abergavenny and Chepstow. Being dedicated accommodation for young people this is extremely important accommodation. The schemes, however, are for young people with low needs and aren't suitable for all young people, particularly those who are more vulnerable and with higher needs. It is not un-common for either the Housing Options Team or the Through Care Team to be unable to place in this accommodation. As a result, young people on occasions may need to be placed in B & B or the Council's shared housing with floating support, although there is a interim Temporary Accommodation Support in place.. Such accommodation and support (generic floating support) doesn't adequately meet the needs of such young people

There is no step-down accommodation in Monmouthshire for those young people who make good progress towards independent living, but aren't quite fully ready.

An initial opportunity arose to establish five units of emergency self-contained accommodation for Young People with provision for specialist on-site support. The capital costs were to be funded through the Social Housing Programme and Welsh Government homeless capital grant. Unfortunately, this project didn't progress as planned due to the housing association being unable to purchase the site in question.

As an alternative option the Council is now working with a local housing association on developing a medium to high needs young persons scheme with 24 hour on site support and with move on accommodation. The scheme is owned by the housing association and will involve re-modelling existing provision. The project will be a partnership between Housing & Communities; Children's Services, Housing Support Grant Commissioning and the said housing association.

The number of units at the scheme is yet to be confirmed, but architects have been appointed to develop initial designs, which are expected to be available mid November 2020. The number of medium to high needs units is expected to be approximately six, with four or five move on units. All will be self-contained units.

Recommendation

- To continue to develop the proposed 5 self-contained units of Young Persons accommodation in the North of the County with facility for on-site support.
- As an interim arrangement, identify an appropriate shared housing property that can be re-designated to provide a temporary scheme for young people utilising an existing shared property.
- Seek to identify interim funding for a dedicated Young Persons Accommodation Support Officer of £36,000 until April 2022.
- To potentially aim to fund dedicated young persons accommodation support through the Housing Support Grant Programme from April 2022, subject to a review assessment and need.

- **Low Need Single Persons Accommodation**

Current Situation

The Council currently has 70 units of shared accommodation (which is expected to reduce by 5/6 units to facilitate for the proposed interim Young Persons Accommodation). There will be a need for the Council to continue with the portfolio of shared housing for the short to medium term. However, there will be a need to

review the future of this accommodation in the context of Welsh Governments quality standard.

Recommendation

- Undertake an options appraisal against Welsh Government 'Annex D' Quality Standard of the existing shared to inform the future use of the accommodation eg improvements, possible disposal etc. The options appraisal will also be used as an opportunity to identify potential improvements to the service provided and the general standard of accommodation provided

• Self-Contained Temporary Family Accommodation

Current Situation

The Council currently has a portfolio of family accommodation which is made up of:

- Private leased units x 49 (which includes a number of RSL properties)
 - However, 1 is rolling on during COVID and is likely to end, 2 terminate on 31st December 2020, 2 terminating on 30th September 2020 and 1 is on a monthly rolling lease with an RSL.
- Managed units (on behalf of private landlords) x 33
- MCC low cost home ownership unit x 1

Subject to landlord approval and financial sustainability, the aim is to continue with the existing portfolio and proactively seek to identify additional properties using the Monmouthshire Lettings Service branding.

Recommendation

- To continue to engage with private landlords to seek to identify private sector accommodation, using Monmouthshire Lettings Service branding. This will be funded through existing resources

• Domestic Abuse

Current Situation

The Council will provide homeless accommodation directly for victims of domestic abuse and specialist housing support is available through Cyfannol and the Llamau Modas service.

Cyfannol Womens Aid provides a five unit refuge in the County and the service of one crisis worker. In addition, a Gwent wide sexual violence service is available in Monmouthshire. Cyfannol are currently experiencing a 50% increase in the need for their crisis service.

Cyfannol have acquired direct funding to establish 2 dispersed properties in the south of Monmouthshire which will be available shortly.

In addition, the Council has acquired Welsh Government homeless grant for Cyfannol to enable them to extend their crisis service. They will be appointing an additional part time Crisis Worker until April 2021. No funding is available after April 21 should this additional resource be needed.

The Council has met with Cyfannol to ensure that both services are working closely for mutual benefit, particularly in respect of homeless prevention.

Recommendation

- To continue to work closely with Cyfannol and ensure the service is fully utilised by the Housing Options Team to support victims of domestic abuse.
- To provisionally aim to fund an additional Cyfannol Crisis Worker 0.5 wte through the Housing Support Grant Programme from April 2022, subject to a review assessment.

3. Put rapid re-housing at the heart of services and utilise a range of support models (i.e. Housing First, CTI, floating support, assertive outreach) for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Current Situation

At present the Council does not have a Rapid Re-housing mechanism that will apply generally apply to all homeless applications.

The Council will seek to establish 'rapid re-housing' through the mechanisms of the Rapid Re-housing Protocol detailed previously in this report. There will be a need to monitor this.

In addition, it is proposed that the Rapid Re-housing principal will also be supported by a proposed relaxation of housing register exclusion criteria and an introduction of designated and ring-fenced 'move-on' permanent social housing. The intended availability of Intensive Resettlement Support will also contribute to Rapid Re-Housing by providing reassurance to housing associations. The Re-Settlement Support will provide the following benefits:

Resettlement Support is linked to Temporary Accommodation Support. Support, therefore, will in effect have started prior to an offer of accommodation:

- No waiting list for support
- Assurance to RSL that intensive work to sustain tenancy is in place prior to sign up
- Support is tailored to the individual's needs over a 12 week period with scope for extension in 6 week periods under agreement from Gateway Assessment Officers.
- No 3 missed appointments and closure.
- Workers are expected to explore ways to engage the individual on their terms i.e. evening / weekend appointments if necessary.
- Support can be daily/intensive/ flexible from the start of tenancy and will tail off as needs are met and client is supported to engage in substance use / mental health services.
- No set hours per individual
- If it is agreed that support is needed to sustain tenancy going forward (identified at 12 weeks) steps are put in place to facilitate a move to a step down provider.
- Named support provider/work given to RSL for liaison.

Welsh Governments expectations are that Councils utilise a range of support services through the Housing Support Grant programme to meet local homeless need. The current availability of types of services is limited and is heavily reliant on generic floating support, which is more appropriate for low level and short-term support needs. Whilst it is considered there continues to be a need for generic floating support and it has the advantage of providing flexibility, it is considered it will not meet the higher needs or specialist requirements relating to the need in Monmouthshire.

The following are models of support needed in Monmouthshire:

- **Housing First** - the Council currently as at least four applicants that need this type of support including two applicants occupying vacant MCC office space. The Council has acquired funding to extend an existing service in Newport into Monmouthshire. There is no funding to extend this to beyond April 2021.
- **Temporary Accommodation Support & Intensive Re-Settlement Support** – This has been established as an interim arrangement to align with the Councils shared housing and B & B and to assist people to move on to permanent accommodation. The current arrangement is a good-will arrangement with one of the Councils Providers. It is considered that the arrangement needs to be formalised. However, there will be a cost of £20,000 for the remainder of 2020/21 and £40,000 for 2021/22. The Council will seek to recover the £20,000 from Welsh Government emergency homeless Covid-19 funding. This service is critical due to the high needs of many residents to minimise placement breakdowns and to provide assurances to landlords.

- **Young Persons Accommodation Support** – at the end of July 20 there were 25 young people (eg under 25) in temporary accommodation and a further three are expected to need accommodation imminently. This includes 3 x 16/17 year olds who are in B & B, all of whom are considered at risk of Sexual Exploitation' and have needed to be moved due to behaviour issues. Such cases need to be appropriately accommodated and going forwards such cases will benefit from the proposed dedicated young persons accommodation with specialist support.

Currently no funding has been identified for the dedicated support, until such time it can be potentially factored into re-commissioning of the Housing Support Grant Programme in 2022.

- **Assertive Outreach** - the Council currently has a temporary part-time arrangement with a Provider for a part time worker to support high need applicants such as rough sleepers and sofa surfers. This support is also currently supporting clients who are accommodated in the Councils hostel. The Council is seeking to recover the costs from the Welsh Government emergency homeless Covid-19 grant.

The Council has successfully secured further Welsh Government homeless grant funding to extend this provision to two full time posts until March 2021.

It is anticipated that there will be a need for this type of support beyond March 2021. However, at present there is no funding in place for 2021/22.

- **Floating Support** – there will be a need to continue with generic floating support, albeit with a lower capacity than currently to support people with lower needs and those who are able to move from specialist support due to their needs declining. This support is currently in place and Housing Support Grant available
- **Domestic Abuse** – the Modas service had 168 referrals last year and there are currently 32 open cases. In addition Cyfannol Womens Aid have seen referrals increase by 50% on 2019/20 demand. Abergavenny is a particular hotspot.

In addition to the above there is a need for specialist substance misuse and mental health support. In this regard, the Council has

Recommendation:

- Subject to on-going need, identify funding for the following for 2021/22
 - The continuation of Housing First - £36,000
 - A dedicated Young Person Accommodation Support Officer - £36,000
 - Temporary Accommodation & Intensive Re-settlement Support - £40,000
 - The continuation of Assertive Outreach Support - £72,000

4. Increase the availability of social housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Current Situation

The broad approach to making social housing available for homeless people is:

- The operation of lettings quotas for the allocation of vacant units of social housing. Over recent years a fixed quota hasn't been utilised because natural turnover has facilitated a 20-25% allocation of accommodation to homeless applicants. But a fixed, higher or lower, can be set if required. This is monitored on an on-going basis in relation to homeless demand.
- Increasing the development and availability of social housing is a priority for the Council. This is facilitated through the annual development programme, the core focus of which is Social Housing Grant funded accommodation. Typically, the programme provides additional General Needs accommodation which in benefits all Housing Register applicants including homeless applicants.

Due to the numbers of households currently in temporary accommodation, increasing the availability of social housing for homeless people will be achieved by:

- Continuing with working with the Homesearch Housing Register Partnership in respect of flexible quotas in respect of homeless applicants. This will continue to be monitored on a weekly basis.
- A current review of the Homesearch Allocation Policy is proposing that higher thresholds will apply for exclusion triggers meaning that there is expected to be a reduction in clients excluded from the Housing Register. It is anticipated that the Policy will be considered by Cabinet in September/October 20.
- It is anticipated that there will be a need to specifically factor homeless accommodation into the development programme on an annual basis. This will be reviewed annually and will be subject to need.
- Consider designating specific pending social housing development schemes as ring-fenced move on, permanent accommodation.

Recommendation

- For the Housing Options Team to liaise closely with the Homesearch Partnership in respect of all social housing vacancies and where appropriate, ring-fence to homeless applicants, particularly in the short-term.
- Reflect the requirement in the Homesearch Allocation Policy and continue with the review of the Policy, with the aim of completing in October 2020.
- Homelessness needs and requirements to be routinely considered in the annual development programme
- Liaise with RSL partners about potentially designating new social housing grant schemes as homeless move-on accommodation.

5. Increase the availability of private rented housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Current Situation

Access to the private rented sector in Monmouthshire is challenging for both housing applicants and the Council due to:

- The level of market rents in relation to the local housing allowance is high and that the percentage of properties let at local housing allowance levels is low. This is estimated at about 6%
- Recent research has identified that the rental market in Monmouthshire has contracted by approximately 50%
- Landlords and estate agents can be reluctant to take low income households and reliant on benefit. Homeless people are regarded as a risk.
- Landlords are able to easily find professional tenants. Monmouthshire is a commuter area to employment hubs such as Bristol (increasingly because of the Bridge tolls going), Cardiff and Birmingham.

To mitigate against the challenges, the Council has established Monmouthshire Lettings Service as arms-length branding under which to encourage private landlords to make available properties to the Housing Options Team. This is a 'no fee' service, which seeks to offer a range of flexible options for landlords such as property leasing; room leasing and a management service and bespoke solutions for individual landlords.

It is considered that this approach has been extremely successful and it is appropriate to continue to build upon this success. The Council's portfolio of accommodation is currently.

- 33 managed properties

- 49 leased self-contained properties (the number of leased properties has previously been higher but has needed to be reduced due to the loss of the temporary accommodation management subsidy.
- 70 leased rooms in shared houses
- 1 supported lodgings host

To continue to develop Monmouthshire Lettings it is considered that the timing is appropriate to refresh the approach to promoting/marketing and seek to develop further options to encourage landlords to engage with the service.

In recognition that the rental market in Monmouthshire is not only small but has also contracted, in developing Monmouthshire Lettings it is also considered that in addition to recruiting vacant private sector properties there should also be a focus on recruiting landlords who are already have tenants, but those tenants who may be starting to experience problems maintaining their tenancy. The approach, therefore, would also be recruiting landlords whose tenants may already be on the road to potential homelessness. This is very much a preventative and early intervention approach that it is hoped, would reduce the need for the Council to provide accommodation.

Recommendations

- To implement the following:
 - Survey all landlords and establish annual satisfaction and exit surveys to identify opportunities for service improvement.
 - Consider new incentive options eg 'buying' rent arrears of households at risk of homelessness in return for use of accommodation; finders fee etc
 - Explore good practice
 - Make greater use of social media and the Council's Communications Team
 - Improving Google search provision
 - Consider how MLS and work in collaboration with the Bond Scheme
 - To develop a dual approach and target existing landlords whose tenants may be starting to experience tenancy difficulties.

6. Bring empty properties back into use to house people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Current Situation

Bi annual letters are sent to positively encourage all empty property owners to contact the Council and discuss their property and options available to bring properties back into use and sign posting them accordingly, particularly in relation to promoting Monmouthshire Letting Service.

In addition the Council adopts a 'targetted approach', ie, long term empties (over two years) within in or around the town centres. This approach will then involve a yearly 2nd stage letter, property visits and photographs. This would build up a representation of a property which would document it's deterioration over time. This would then provide evidence should further enforcement action be needed.

Housing & Community Services liaise with Environmental Health in respect of complaints about properties or those that require their involvement and the possible use of their enforcement powers where there is sufficient evidence to warrant their intervention.

A survey of empty space above shops was undertaken in Abergavenny last year. Although this did identify a small number of shops where the space above was not being used, due to the current availability of resources, there was limited opportunity to convert and utilise such space as homes. However, it is considered appropriate to undertake similar surveys in the other main towns.

Recommendation:

- Continue with the above routine to engage with empty homes owners
- Subject to being safe to do so, undertake High Street surveys of space above shops for Monmouth, Usk, Caldicot and Chepstow with a view to identifying potential accommodation opportunities.

7. Provide Support for Young People experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Current Situation

It is a priority of the Council to strengthen both the homeless prevention and support roles of available staffing as well as increasing accommodation and support resources. The current dedicated support available is:

- **MCC Young Persons Accommodation Officer x 1:** To prevent homelessness and where not possible, find alternative accommodation. Housing Support Grant funded
- **Solas Young Persons Supported Hostel Accommodation – 21 units in Chepstow & Abergavenny:** To meet low level need. Housing Support Grant funded. This is currently the only dedicated provision in Monmouthshire.

This will be reviewed by the Partnerships Team to inform the future commissioning of Housing Support Grant from April 2022.

- **Solas Hostel Move On Accommodation – 3 units in Chepstow.**
- **Llamau Family Mediation Service –** To prevent homeless for young people aged 18-24 who are at risk of having to leave home or to support young people to return home. Welsh Government funded
- **Llamau – EMPHASIS Housing Support –** To support ‘non-engaging’ young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) / homeless or at risk of becoming NEET / homeless. Target group are young people aged 16 – 21. Housing Support Grant funded.

This will be reviewed by the Partnerships Team to inform the future commissioning of Housing Support Grant from April 2022.

- **Supported Lodgings Hosts x 1:** Accommodation for a young person in someone’s home.
- **MCC Compass x 1.5:** Provides the link between accommodation and homelessness with education, training, employment, physical and mental health, positive relationships, outside interests etc. Youth Enterprise funded

This is an extremely valuable additional resource. There is a need to ensure that the project is fully integrated with both the Housing Options Team and other homeless services, such as housing support, to ensure that it fully aligns with the Council’s statutory homeless responsibilities and there is effective partnership working and no duplication.

- **Pobl ‘Steps to Independence’ Young Persons Shared Accommodation:** This is a Gwent project. It is Welsh Government funded.

As yet there no shared accommodation under this scheme. It is hoped that when accommodation is sourced that homeless young people are accommodated.

As previously mentioned in this report there is a need for additional temporary accommodation for young people of a different type to the existing Solas Young Persons Accommodation. As stated, a proposal to establish this accommodation is being taken forward. There is, however, currently a funding gap in terms of on-site support provision.

A further gap identified is the level of support for young people with health needs, including mental health issues. The Council, therefore, has started to engage with Health to identify additional support that can possibly be facilitated for young people. Some provisional opportunities have been identified for 16/17 year olds and care leavers

Recommendation

- Liaise with the Compass Youth Homeless project to ensure that the service is fully integrated into homelessness. The aim is to maximise the staffing resource available to support homeless young people.
- Liaise with the 'Pobl Steps to Independence' project to identify homeless young people that can be accommodated.
- Partnerships Team to undertake a review of young persons Housing Support Grant Services to inform future re-commissioning of the HSG Programme.
- Identify £36,000 to fund a Young Persons Accommodation Support Officer.
- To potentially aim to fund dedicated young persons accommodation support through the Housing Support Grant Programme from April 2022, subject to a review assessment and need.
- Establish bespoke homeless information for young people
- Continue to engage with Health to facilitate the provision of health related support that will operate alongside housing support.

8. Multi-agency involvement at a strategic level and in the delivery of support.

This will be facilitated by the existing and emerging partnership arrangements.

9. The full adoption of a psychologically-informed (PIE) and trauma-informed approach to commissioning and service delivery within local authorities, housing and support providers.

Current Situation

Although some PIE or trauma informed practice is currently delivered by the Council's homeless service, such an approach isn't being delivered in a structured way nor has it been formally adopted. However, work has started in this regard, which was unfortunately was disrupted by Covid-19.

The Council has started working to develop a PIE and trauma informed service. An external agency has been commissioned to provide a two stage programme of training and service planning over five sessions to Housing staff. This started on 16th March 20 but remains incomplete due to Covid-19 restrictions. This will hopefully be resumed perhaps in October 2020.

The Council is keen that the delivery approach of homeless service is one that is good at listening, is sensitive, is sympathetic and offers empathy. Essentially, it is a priority that the service is regarded as kind and caring.

In addition to training, it was proposed to second an 'expert' from another organisation, to embed themselves within the team to fully understand the current method of delivery to and identify potential opportunities for change and improvement. A key priority is to enhance the service user experience for the homeless assessment part of the service and the living experience in relation to the Councils temporary accommodation. A bid to Welsh Government to fund the said secondment was, however, unsuccessful.

In addition, the findings of a Shelter Take Notice project and the pending link with the Gwent Community Psychology Team are further opportunities to identify changes.

It was proposed to second an expert in PIE into the team to identify opportunities to change the way the service is delivered and to support staff implement changes. The

proposal was to utilise Welsh Government homeless grant funding, but unfortunately this request wasn't successful.

Recommendations

- Resume PIE training as soon as safe to do, aiming for January 2021.
- On completion of training, use the training to inform service planning, giving particular attention to temporary accommodation.
- Utilise Shelter 'Take Notice' recommendations to inform future service planning

10. The appropriate combination and safe delivery of remote and face to face support.

Current Situation

As part of working towards adopting a Psychologically and Trauma service, face to face support is considered fundamental.

Prior to the Covid-19 crisis the Council had started working towards a model of an area/community based approach to managing temporary accommodation. The Council recognises the importance of engaging positively and proactively with residents to achieve the best outcomes for both the Council and residents.

Each Accommodation Assistant has a 'patch' of accommodation that they are directly responsible for. The expectation is that staff will have a regular and sustained presence on their area 'patches.' As close as possible to daily. The Council is keen that staff get to know both residents and any support workers together will having a good all round understanding of their support need together with a good knowledge of their patch as a whole. This helps the Council to be more responsive to situations eg ASB and intervene early. It also helps the Council to liaise closely with other agencies, particularly support providers, Social Services and the Police. Being familiar with and having good relationships with neighbours is also a priority.

Some properties have empty rooms, that can be used as informal/casual 'stopping-off' points from which Accommodation Assistants can utilise to base themselves for short periods of time. This accommodation can also provide 'hub' type locations to easily access other nearby accommodation.

The Council already uses CCTV to support the management of accommodation and will regularly engage with residents via personal mobile video apps. The Council is keen to develop this further to maximise networking with residents.

The current access arrangements to the Housing Options Team and homeless assessments is through a centralised telephone arrangement. The Council is keen to review this to achieve more face to face contact. Possible options being considered are a return to using surgeries, home visits, joint meetings with other agencies and the use of video technology, including equipment being available in the Council's four area Hubs.

Recommendations:

- Implement an area and patch based approach to managing accommodation
- Identify opportunities to maximise face to face contact with a particular focus on persons needing homeless advice or making homeless applications.

Recommendations

- To identify opportunities to increase face to face interaction with Housing Option Team service users, including exploring the use of technology.
- As soon as safe to do so, implement a 'patch and area based approach to housing management.

11. Up-skill and empower local volunteers and community assets to help deliver a strategic, coordinated response to ending homelessness.

Current Situation

The use of volunteers and community assets currently isn't part of the Council's homeless service, although the Council has used Monmouth Churches to provide a winter night-shelter for the last two years.

This Transition Plan currently doesn't include any proposals in relation to links with local volunteers or community assets.

However, the Council has close and established links with Monmouth Churches Partnership with whom the Council has worked closely with over the last two years in respect of winter night-shelter arrangements. Monmouth Churches also provides informal support to one of the client currently occupying the Council's vacant office space in Monmouth.

Also, the Gateway Church, Abergavenny has provided 'drop-in' space for the Gwent Drug & Alcohol Advisory Service until very recently.

It is, however, expected that the Council will engage closely with these organisations going forwards.

12. A collaborative approach to planning and delivery.

The Council is committed to the collaborative development of homeless services in Monmouthshire. A particular priority is to work in partnership with other agencies to particularly identify and maximise opportunities that strengthen prevention, facilitate additional accommodation and increase support to applicants. Some of the existing and emerging partnership arrangements include:

Emerging partnerships include:

- MCC Partnerships – Housing Support Grant Programme
- Housing Associations – permanent and temporary accommodation
- Gwent Community Psychology – mental health services for young people (16 & 17 year olds)
- Skills for Living – mental health services for Care Leavers
- Gwent Substance Misuse & Alcohol -
- Pobl – Steps to Independence shared living service. Pobl are due to acquire a property in Abergavenny which it is hoped can be used for homeless young people
- Cyfannol – acquiring two units of dispersed accommodation in the South. It is hoped that through closer links with Cyfannol this will benefit victims of domestic abuse.

13. Solutions for people with No Recourse to Public Funds.

Presentations from this group are extremely rare in Monmouthshire. Only one presentation has been received in the last few years. It is, therefore, anticipated that this is likely to be the case going forward. However, in the unlikely event of such a presentation, the Council would receive any approach sensitively.

14. Housing Options Team

Current Situation

In addition to the Welsh Government policy themes, it is also appropriate to give focus to give consideration to not just service delivery of the homeless service by the Housing Options Team but also ensure staff are fully supported in the context of a change in the nature of the demand.

Due to additional homeless need caused by Covid 19 it has been extremely challenging for staff to manage both the demand of applicants presenting and the need to provide accommodation. It has been extremely difficult to prevent homelessness due to the 'actual homeless' status of many applicants together with less availability of prevention 'tools,' such as letting agencies. It is considered though that there is a need to review arrangements to minimise the number of people coming through who may need accommodation.

Equally, although the Council has been relatively successful in acquiring additional Accommodation, the additional accommodation acquired together with the proposed temporary accommodation changes detailed in this report means that the Housing Options Team management responsibilities have increased such as sign-ups, voids, rent arrears, tenant welfare and support, health and safety and anti-social behaviour.

Discussions are well advanced with staff to identify issues and opportunities. Key areas emerging include:

- Identifying opportunities to improve service efficiencies and streamline procedures to enable staff to dedicate more time to homeless prevention, the priority being to minimise those applicants coming through who would need temporary accommodation.
- Closer working with partner agencies, such as support agencies and housing associations, but also private landlords
- Closer working with individual applicants to help facilitate the Trauma Informed approach
- Use the Monmouthshire Lettings Service (eg to support landlords) as a mechanism to seek to facilitate more households to remain in their current accommodation in anticipating that households may have fallen into arrears or lost their employment during the last few months and there may be an increase in landlords wanting to gain possession.
- Greater team involvement in supporting the development of Monmouthshire Lettings
- Maximising team flexibility to ensure there is adequate cover across all functions in the event of sickness, annual leave or the need to quickly respond to arising issues.
- Reviewing the staffing needs of the team.
- Reviewing staff training needs
- Ensuring staff are fully supported in the context of the change in the working environment and it being increasingly reactive and challenging. Keeping on top of day to day priorities and maintaining routine procedures is. This is currently facilitated by a temporary Senior Accommodation Officer post, which is working very well.

Recommendation

- Establish an action plan specific to the needs and priorities of the Housing Options Team, including a review of the existing team structure to particularly focus on homeless prevention.

Appendix

Summary of Proposals

Proposal	Funding 20/21	Funding 21/22	Funding 22/23	Comments
Housing Support				
Interim Remodelling of Existing Contracts x 3 to Create Temporary Accommodation & Intensive Re-Settlement Housing Support	£20,000 needed. No funding identified	£40,000 needed No funding identified	Potentially Housing Support Grant, subject to needs assessment and approval	Application to Welsh Government for £40,000 for 2020/21 was unsuccessful. Important to under-pin the principal of Rapid Re-housing and the Rapid Re-housing Protocol
Housing First Housing Support	£32,000 WG Homless Grant	£xxxxxx needed No funding identified	Potentially Housing Support Grant, subject to needs assessment and approval	
Family Accommodation				
Establish 4 units of self-contained family accommodation in Abergavenny	Social Housing Grant identified	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Establish 4 units of self-contained family accommodation in Caldicot	Social Housing Grant identified	Not applicable	Not applicable	

Finalise the Planning approvals and leasing arrangements in respect of emergency family accommodation in the South	No capital funding required. Property was purchased in 2019.	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Multiple Needs Accommodation				
Explore feasibility and viability of converting existing shared Family accommodation in Monmouth to self-contained accommodation and changing use to Multiple Needs	Feasibility and costs being determined by Property Services No funding identified. Grant application to Welsh Government unsuccessful.	No funding identified	No funding identified	
Develop five units of young persons accommodation in Abergavenny with on-site support	Capital - Social Housing Grant plus £298,464 Welsh Government homeless grant funding. Revenue - No funding has been identified for on-site support	On-site support – no funding identified	Revenue – Potentially Housing Support Grant, subject to needs assessment and approval	
As an interim arrangement (pending the development of 5 units of young persons accommodation) re-designate a shared property	No funding necessary for accommodation On-site support - no funding identified	On-site support – no funding identified	Revenue – Potentially Housing Support Grant, subject to needs assessment and approval	

as dedicated accommodation for young people with on-site support				
Provide an Assertive Outreach Service	£48,000 Welsh Government Homeless Grant	£72,000 needed No funding identified	Revenue – Potentially Housing Support Grant, subject to needs assessment and approval	
Housing Options Team				
Under the branding of Monmouthshire Lettings continue to engage with private landlords to either identify opportunities to access accommodation or to enable tenants at risk of becoming homeless to remain in their accommodation.	Housing Options Team Prevention fund	Housing Options Team Prevention fund	Housing Options Team Prevention fund	