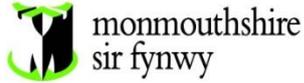


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 29 November 2022

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Conference Room - Usk, NP15 1AD** on **Wednesday, 7th December, 2022, at 5.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. National Collaborative Arrangements for Welsh (local authority) Adoption and Fostering Services, National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales – Enhancing Governance and Leadership 1 - 40

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To provide cabinet with information regarding the proposals for developing the governance and enabling structures for the National Adoption Service for Wales as it assumes responsibility for Foster Wales.

To seek agreement for Monmouthshire County Council to sign the Joint Committee Agreement for the proposed Joint Committee between the 22 Local Authorities in Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

The Agreement sets out the arrangements in relation to the manner in which the Councils will work together and use the Joint Committee to deliver the specified and agreed functions set out by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) and provides a framework for the parties to give effect to the coordination of identified foster service functions across Wales.

A copy of the Joint Committee Agreement is provided at Appendix One.

Author: Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health

Contact Details: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 – MONTH 6 FORECAST 41 - 92

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the Authority's financial forecasts for the 2022/23 financial year in respect of the revenue budget, capital programme, and associated reserves position.

Author: Jonathan Davies, Head of Finance (Deputy S151 officer)

Contact Details: jonathandavies2@monmouthshire.gov.uk

5. To consider the financial liabilities of the Regional Integration Fund 93 - 112

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to consider the financial liabilities and implications of the Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model. Members will need to consider and provide a response to the Gwent Regional Partnership Board on the outcome of the consideration as to whether the council accepts or rejects the liabilities.

Author: Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health

Contact Details: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officer – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation Cardiff City Region Joint Cabinet Regional working Government relations WLGA, LGA and Public Service Board</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy and Deputy Leader Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien</p> <p>Economic resilience and Sustainability focus towards foundational economy Local Development Plan and Strategic Development Plan Town Centre and neighbourhood investment and Stewardship Development Management and Building Control Skills and Employment including green jobs and apprenticeships Broadband connectivity Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Health, Licensing Registrars Service</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Rachel Garrick	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Frances O’Brien, Matthew Phillips, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Finance Developing and proposing the budget to Council Digital and Information technology Benefits Human Resources, Payroll, Health and Safety Strategic Procurement – promoting localism Land and Buildings Property Maintenance and management Emergency Planning</p>	Caldicot Castle

Martyn Groucutt	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs / Inclusion Post 16 and adult education School Standards & Improvement Community learning 21st Century Schools Programme Youth service</p>	Lansdown
Sara Burch	<p>Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities Lead Officers – Frances O'Brien, Ian Saunders, Jane Rodgers, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Affordable Housing Strategy Homelessness Community Safety Active Travel Leisure Centres Play and Sport Tourist Information, Museums, Theatres, Attractions Public Rights of Way</p>	Cantref
Tudor Thomas	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children's services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending Service Adult Services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental Health and wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision Welsh language</p>	Park
Catrin Maby	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officer – Frances O'Brien, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport Planning Local Food production, consumption and procurement including agroforestry and local horticulture Traffic network planning Public Transport Highways Pavements and back lanes</p>	Drybridge

	<p>Flood alleviation, management and recovery, river quality Waste management Street care, litter and public spaces Countryside and Biodiversity Public conveniences Fleet Management</p>	
<p>Catherine Fookes Angela Sandles</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement (Job Share)</p> <p>Lead Officers – Frances O'Brien, Matt Phillips, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Community inequality (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation) Democracy promotion and citizen engagement Community Hubs and Contact Centre Customer service and citizen experience Communications, public relations, marketing Working with voluntary organisations Refugees Electoral Services Constitution Review Ethics and Standards</p>	<p>Town Magor East with Undy</p>

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

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SUBJECT:

National Collaborative Arrangements for Welsh (local authority) Adoption and Fostering Services

National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales – Enhancing Governance and Leadership

DIRECTORATE: Social Care and Health

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 7th December 2022

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide cabinet with information regarding the proposals for developing the governance and enabling structures for the National Adoption Service for Wales as it assumes responsibility for Foster Wales.
- 1.2 To seek agreement for Monmouthshire County Council to sign the Joint Committee Agreement for the proposed Joint Committee between the 22 Local Authorities in Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).
- 1.3 The Agreement sets out the arrangements in relation to the manner in which the Councils will work together and use the Joint Committee to deliver the specified and agreed functions set out by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) and provides a framework for the parties to give effect to the coordination of identified foster service functions across Wales.
- 1.4 A copy of the Joint Committee Agreement is provided at Appendix One.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 For cabinet to agree that Monmouthshire County Council signs the Joint Committee Agreement for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales

3. KEY ISSUES:

BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The National Adoption Service (NAS) has been in existence since 2014 and has enabled significant change and improvement in adoption services across Wales. Its structure and governance through national, regional and local arrangements were agreed by all councils at that time. A review in 2018 led to proposals to streamline governance and improve accountability. Some of these, for example creating a Combined Governance Board (bringing together the Advisory Group and Governance Board required by the legislation) and a new Partnership Agreement to replace the original functional model have been already implemented.
- 3.2 Legal advice obtained by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) determined that in order for NAS to operate effectively on behalf of all 22 Welsh authorities, and for there to be a robust hosting arrangement with the host authority for the national and enabling functions (Cardiff), co-operation between Welsh local authorities needed to be put on a formal footing. The preference of the WLGA and the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADDSC) was that this should be through a Joint Committee. Work on a National Joint Committee, to give proper effect to the co-operation and oversight from all 22 local authorities, has continued and is ready for implementation.
- 3.3 Since 2015, the National Adoption Service Director and central team has been supporting the work of the National Fostering Framework (NFF) to create a similar national, regional and local collaborative arrangement to improve Welsh fostering services albeit not through the creation of a national fostering service. Foster Wales has now emerged from the NFF and will support a defined range of fostering functions linked to recruitment and retention of local authority foster carers. Throughout this time, the WLGA and Association of Directors of Social Services, Cymru as lead bodies wanted the national functions for fostering to be linked to the National Adoption Service national functions to reduce duplication and costs as well as to maximise resilience, flexibility and longevity across both functions.
- 3.4 The proposed Joint Committee and the agreement underpinning it have been extended to include Foster Wales, as has the capacity and functions for national co-ordination and enabling through a combined central team. The linking to the Joint Committee is critical for Foster Wales given the lack of a legislative basis for such co-operation for a national fostering services.

GOVERNANCE – ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE

- 3.5 The proposed governance structure is presented diagrammatically and with a narrative in Appendix Two. The national Joint Committee will, on behalf of the 22 Welsh Local Authorities, exercise their powers for the provision of the collaborative arrangements for the National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS) and for Foster Wales (FW). It will be comprised of Council Members meeting twice yearly.
- 3.6 WLGA lawyers, supported by Cardiff Council, have drafted a Joint Committee legal Agreement to be signed by all 22 local authorities; this is now ready to progress and is

available alongside this report at Appendix One. This also contains a formal Scheme of Delegation and provision for the formal agreement with the host local authority for national functions.

- 3.7 The Joint Committee will provide the mechanism for all Welsh local authorities to discharge an executive and oversight role for NAS and FW. It will approve / receive:
- The Annual Report of NAS and of Foster Wales.
 - The annual programme of work for the NAS and for Foster Wales.
 - The budget for the office of the Director and national work for NAS and for FW; and
 - The agreement, and any changes to the agreement, for the host authority support of the office of the Director and national work for NAS and FW.
- 3.8 For the National Adoption Service only it will also oversee how the authorities work together to exercise their powers and comply with the National Assembly Directions.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.9 Individual local authorities remain legally responsible and accountable for the provision of adoption and fostering services. In respect of adoption services, the legal provisions outlined in the paragraph below require adoption responsibilities to be delivered in accordance with the arrangements for the National Adoption Service.
- 3.10 The legal basis underpinning the National Adoption Service is contained in section 3A of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 [which was inserted by the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014] and the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015. **These set out in detail expectations on local authorities to co-operate at regional and national level to deliver and improve adoption services.** They do not, however, contain provisions that explicitly create a mechanism that gives proper legal effect to the co-operation at national level or for the agreement with one local authority to host the national functions. The Joint Committee, and the Agreement that will accompany it, will put this on a formal legal footing as well as providing greater clarity and certainty for all authorities, the WLGA as well as the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales.
- 3.11 There are no regulations underpinning Foster Wales so the Joint Committee will provide the basis for the co-operation that is needed so it can operate as proposed.

ENABLING – NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 3.12A functional structure is proposed which, below the Director role, has separate lead functions for adoption and fostering with a combined business and enabling function supporting both. The range of functions that will be carried out is described in Appendix Three with a staffing structure of 9.5 full-time equivalent staff, including the Director.
- 3.13 The proposals outlined are being progressed in order to formalise and consolidate the existing position of the Central Team in respect of the work it is currently doing for the

National Adoption Service and for Foster Wales. This will allow both collaborative arrangements to continue to function and meet agreed plans and commitments in the short to medium term.

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

- 4.1 Effective Adoption Services are integral to the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities in ensuring permanency for children who cannot live within their own birth families. Adoption provides some of our most vulnerable children with the opportunity to experience safe and secure family life which supports their holistic development.
- 4.2 Effective Fostering Services are equally integral to the Council's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities. Fostering provides opportunities for safe, family-based placements for children who may have experienced significant adversity, abuse or harm. Having sufficient in-house fostering placements to meet the varying needs of individual children and sibling groups, remains one of the strategic objectives for the Council supported by working collaboratively at a national, regional and local level.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Monmouthshire can decide to opt out of the joint committee agreement however, there are risks associated with this which include:

- Reputation damage
- Inability to comply with the legal obligations within the Adoption and Children Act
- Resource implication of setting out how we would comply with the duty to cooperate
- Reduced opportunity to make use of a national approach to placement finding for children in need of adoption
- Resource implication of having to establish an adoption service separate from national and regional arrangements
- Reduced opportunity to benefit from research and best practice afforded by the NAS
- Unable to take advantage of, influence, or participate in the brand of Foster Wales or any of the benefits of a regional or national service. This may have a de-stabilising effect over time on our carers and our ability to recruit new carers. Effectively, MCC would be out on a limb.

5.2 If the Council opted to withdraw from the Joint Committee, we would retain full local control of adoption and fostering services were delivered and governed within MCC. We would not be associated with the Foster Wales and therefore could concentrate purely on developing a local service. However, the top-slice would continue and any reduction to the top-slice would have to be agreed by the other 21 Local Authorities.

5.3 Accepting the proposal and agreeing to become a signatory to the Joint Committee will bring benefits to the Council through ensuring that Monmouthshire:

- Has access to the latest research and information about best practice and services for children who are fostered or adopted
- Remains part of the regional collaborative arrangements, and works from a consistent policy and practice platform as other Welsh authorities

- Has influence in shaping national conversations about the future of fostering and adoption services in Wales
- Benefits from any grant monies that flow through the national arrangements
- Benefits from potential opportunities with regards to developing shared resources at a more national level including carers
- Helps build sustainable services through partnership and collaboration rather than 'going it alone'.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- NAS annual report (see Appendix Three)
- Regional South East Wales adoption report
- Annuals numbers of adoptive placements achieved for MCC children
- Annual Foster Wales report
- Numbers of carers recruited per year within MCC
- Numbers of children placed in MCC carers as opposed to Independent Fostering Agency carers

7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Agreeing these proposals and signing the Joint Committee Agreement will put Monmouthshire County Council's cooperation in these collaborative arrangements on a formal basis as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities for the hosting of and delivery of national functions which support and enable local authority delivery of their adoption and fostering responsibilities.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The core funding for the national functions for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales is provided from a top slice of the Revenue Support Grant made available through the WLGA. This current allocation based on 2022/23 figures is, £517,000 (2022 /23) per annum for adoption and £433,000 per annum for fostering, is subject to the agreement of the relevant WLGA committee periodically.
- 8.2 Foster Wales has been awarded Welsh Government grant funding up to the end of March 2023 to fund specific purposes (this was £573,000 for 2021/22 and reduced by a small amount for 2022/23).
- 8.3 Although Welsh Government investment is available to adoption this is fully utilised for direct service delivery through the regional structure. There are resources in both the Foster Wales WLGA allocation and the Foster Wales Welsh Government grant aid that also part fund posts on a regional basis to directly support local authority activities.
- 8.4 The total cost of the proposed national structure is £586,384 (based on 2021/22 salary rates). Total available budget across NAS and Foster Wales for 2021/22 is circa

£1,449,000 albeit that over half the foster Wales funding stream is subject to WG grant conditions for specific purposes as indicated above.

- 8.5 The structure is affordable up to the end of the Welsh Government Grant period (31.03.23) but there are pressures on staffing and operating budgets for both NAS and Foster Wales beyond that. The financial pressures have been flagged with Welsh Government, and work is commencing to consider how to resolve this beyond the current grant aid period. A VERBAL indication has been given that grant funding to support the structure will be retained through the Government's term of office. However; resolving this will require the commitment of both Local Government and Welsh Government.
- 8.6 As outlined above, funding for the governance arrangements and central / national leadership and enabling, is provided from the WLGA via a top slice of the Revenue Support Grant plus grant funding from the Welsh Government. There is no expectation that individual councils will incur additional costs in relation to these functions.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 The top slice for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales will have been agreed by the WLGA Council early in 2022. Suzanne Griffiths, Director of the National Adoption Service is due at the Cabinet Members Network again on 5th December 2022.
- 9.2 The National Adoption Service Governance Board, the Foster Wales Lead Heads of Children's Services and Social Services Directors via ADSSC have agreed these proposals in principle.
- 9.3 The proposals have been informed by and developed with the full engagement of these key stakeholder groups.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Joint Committee Agreement

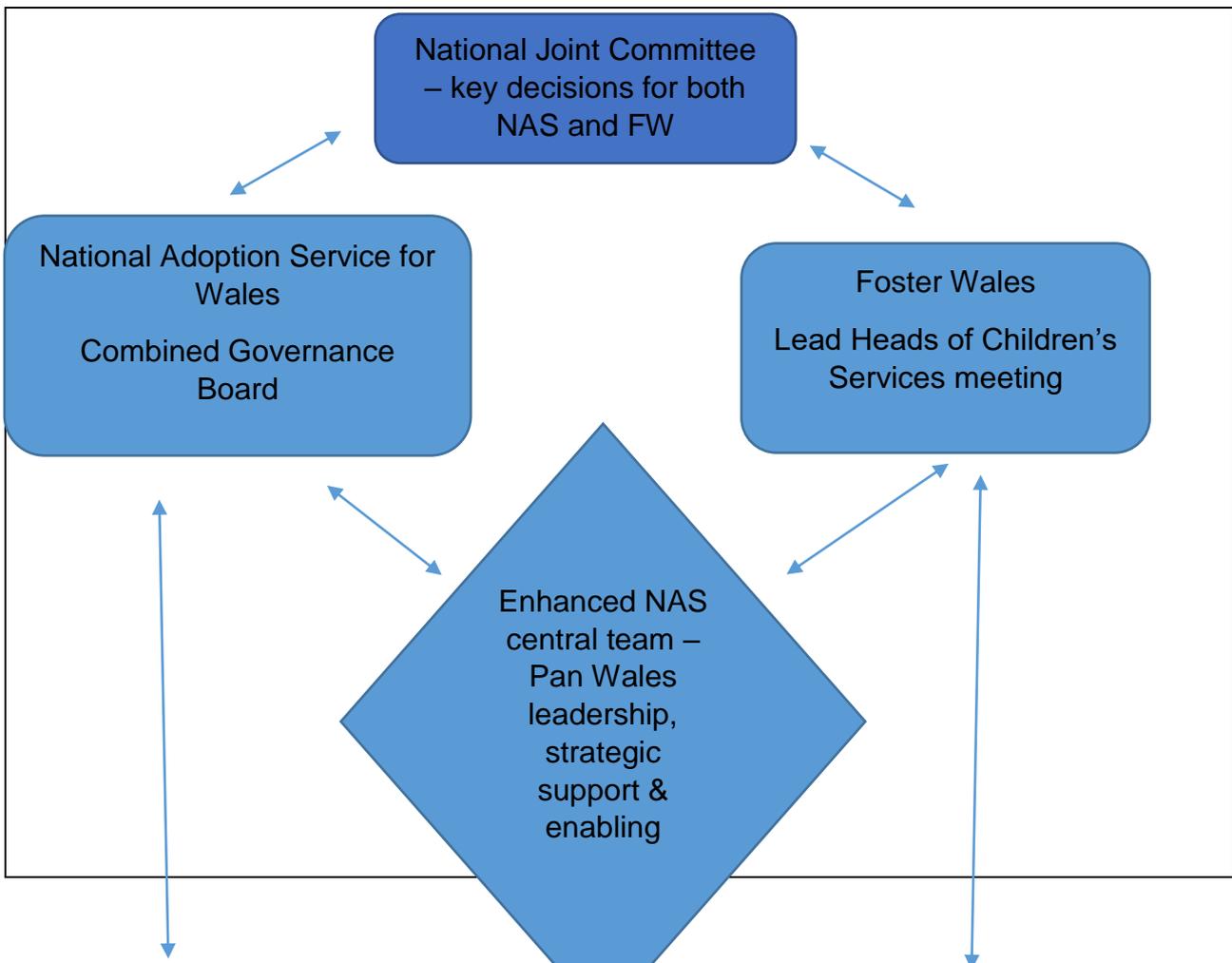
National Adoption Service Annual Report

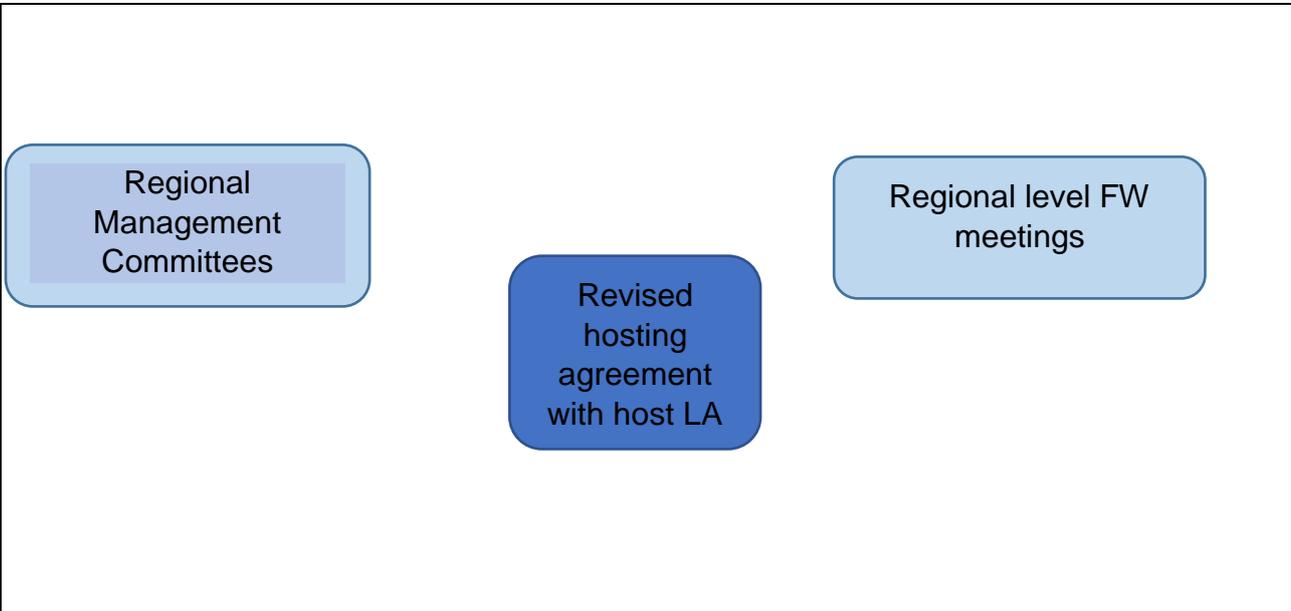
11. AUTHOR:

Jane Rodgers – Chief Officer Social Care

CONTACT DETAILS:

**APPENDIX ONE:
GOVERNANCE**





WLGA Joint Committee (all 22 LA’s) over-sees NAS & Foster Wales:

The Joint Committee will, on behalf of the 22 Welsh Local Authorities, exercise their powers with reference to the provision of the collaborative arrangements for the National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS) and for Foster Wales (FW). It will be underpinned by a legal agreement (Joint Committee Agreement) and be comprised of Council Members. Its role will be to oversee the work of NAS and Foster Wales and specifically approve / receive the below:

- The Annual Reports of NAS and of Foster Wales;
- The annual programmes of work for the NAS and for Foster Wales;
- The budget/s for the office of the Director and the national work of NAS and for Foster Wales; and
- The agreement, and any changes required, for the host LA support of the office of the Director to enable it to facilitate the work of NAS and FW.

For NAS only it will also oversee how the authorities work together to exercise their powers and comply with the National Assembly Directions.

NAS - National level - Combined Governance Board (CGB)

Provides strategic direction and decision making to facilitate the delivery and improvement of adoption services in Wales through the National Adoption Service arrangements in line the Senedd Directions and its Terms of Reference.

Foster Wales - National level - Lead Heads of Children’s Services meeting

Provides strategic direction and decision making in relation to the agreed national and regional functions of Foster Wales on behalf of Welsh local authorities in line with its Terms of Reference.

NAS – regional / LA level - Regional Management Boards & VAA’s Boards

Each region is made up of specified local authority areas, set out in the Directions and overseen by Regional Management

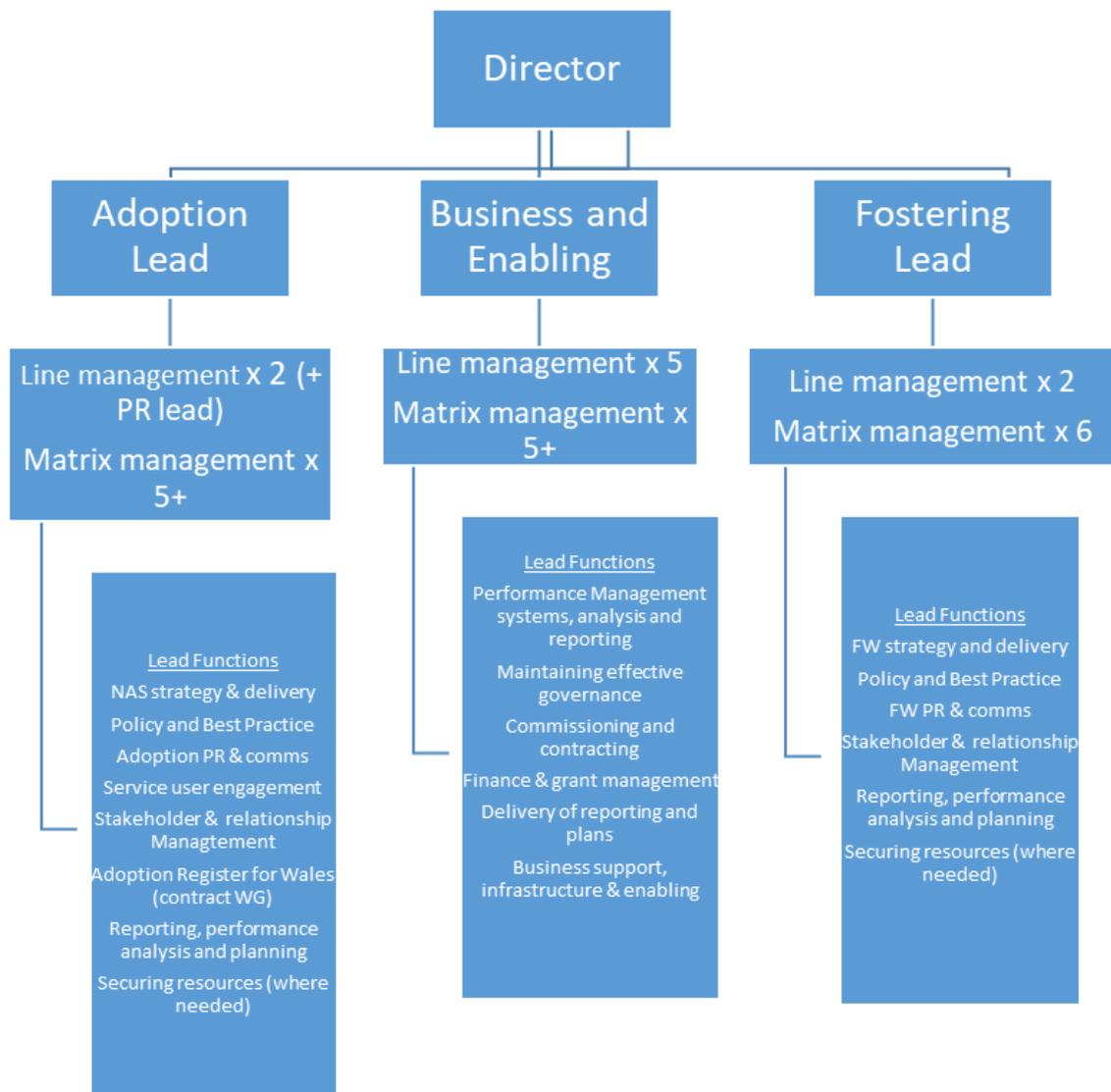
Foster Wales - regional / LA level - Regional HoS meeting

These are now in place and may be a specific FW meeting or included in the

<p>Boards (RMB's). Primary role is to coordinate adoption activities at the regional level and to implement decisions and strategies from the national Governance Board; may also have roles determined by their legal agreement. Plus VAA equivalent.</p>	<p>agenda of pre-existing HoS or HoS & DSS regional meetings.</p>
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APPENDIX TWO

CENTRAL TEAM – LEADERSHIP AND ENABLING





Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

Annual Report

2021/22



Achieving More Together

“The day that we finally drove over for the first day of introductions he was stood at the window beaming and it was just the most personal, but amazing feeling ... it was just mind blowing that feeling”

Ben

Ben and Adam – adopted their son



Foreword

2021/22 has been another busy and successful year for adoption services in Wales. Within an ongoing, fluctuating 'Covid' context, services have continued to recruit adopters, place children, and provide support to ensure these newly created families have the best start and can access support at other times, should they need it.

We are pleased that the Adoption UK Barometer survey states that Wales is comparing well to the other three UK nations.

Here are some of the key elements of our work this year:

1. A principal element of the work of NAS is to ensure adoptive parents and adopted children and young people continue to have a strong voice and clear influence over services and their development. This year we have further enhanced engagement with adopted children and young people with the launch of the new adoption **Youth Councils** and a **website for adopted children and young people**. The National Adoption Service is proud to have supported adopted young people to develop this in Wales:

www.connectcymru.com

*'For adopted young people **by** adopted young people'*

2. The **Adoption Voices** website and annual **Big Adoption Conversation** are now well established, as is the engagement with the AUK Adoption Barometer.
www.adoptionvoices.wales
3. The National Adoption Service continues to receive investment from the Welsh Government of £2.3m for adoption support services. This has supported the development of the Youth Councils, the website, and their support services, Connect, for children and young people. The funding is also facilitating the **'NAS Adoption Support Commitment'** to all adoptive families to provide them with consistent and accessible adoption support services.

4. The National Adoption Service participates in a wide range of working groups and activities which enables the improvement of services in a collaborative way involving services and other partners.
5. The National Adoption Service is pleased to report that the number of enquiries and interest in becoming an adoptive parent has increased. The long-term trend in enquiries is upward. The level of adopters approved increased by 6% showing signs of returning to pre-Covid levels.

The positive impact of this and proactive family finding is that the number of children waiting for a placement fell again this year. Linked to the work of NAS, and reduction in placement orders being made this continues the year-on-year improvement made.

This sits within a broader context of adoption being considered for fewer children. The pandemic has resulted in different patterns of court applications and placement orders over the last two years alongside a longer-term, UK-wide trend, of reducing placement orders due to how adoption is being used alongside other ways of achieving permanence for children.

Timewise, this report coincides with the local government elections and the prospect of change in the council members who form part of the Governance Board. The National Adoption Service thank them all for their commitment.

The National Adoption Service particularly wants to extend gratitude and best wishes to Councillor Cllr Alan Lockyer who stepped down as Co-Chair from March 2022. Alan has led the National Adoption Service through another challenging year, and his support and involvement will be missed.



Phil Hodgson

Phil Hodgson

Independent Chair of
the Advisory Group



Suzanne Griffiths

Suzanne Griffiths

Director

Introduction

The National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS) is the collaboration for the provision of adoption services across Wales.

Since November 2014, it has brought together all local authority adoption services into five regional collaboratives, with coordination and leadership provided by a small central team and Director. Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA's) operating in Wales are key partners in the collaboration, as are other agencies including health and education.

CENTRAL TEAM



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

National Adoption Service – Central Team

c/o City of Cardiff Council,
Room 409, County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW
029 2087 3927
contact@adoptcymru.com
www.adoptcymru.com

MID & WEST WALES

Ceredigion, Powys, Carmarthenshire,
Pembrokeshire



Mabwysiadu
Canolbarth a Goglewin Cymru
Adoption
Mid & West Wales

Mid & West Wales Adoption

Building 1, St David's Park,
Johnstown, Carmarthenshire,
SA31 3HB
01267 246970

Neuadd Brycheiniog, Cambrian Way,
Brecon, Powys, LD3 7HR
01597 827666
adoptionenquiries@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
www.adoptionmwwales.org.uk

NORTH WALES

Iste of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy,
Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Gogledd Cymru

North Wales
Adoption
Service

North Wales Adoption Service

3rd Floor, Lambpit Street,
Wrexham, LL11 1AR
01978 295311
adoption@wrexham.gov.uk
www.northwalesadoption.gov.uk

SOUTH EAST WALES

Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent,
Torfaen, Caerphilly, Newport



South East Wales Adoption Service
Achieving More Together
Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Deddf yrain Cymru
Cyflwyni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd!

South East Wales Adoption Service

North Wing, 2nd Floor Block B,
Mamhilad House,
Mamhilad Park Estate,
Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 0HZ
01495 355766
adoption@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF

Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf,
Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan



Vale, Valleys
and Cardiff
Adoption
Mabwysiadu
yn y Fro, y Cymedd
& Cheraidd

Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption

1st Floor, Dock Office, Subway Road,
Barry, CF63 4RT
0800 0234 064
adoption@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
www.adopt4vvc.org

WESTERN BAY

Swansea, Neath Port Talbot,
Bridgend

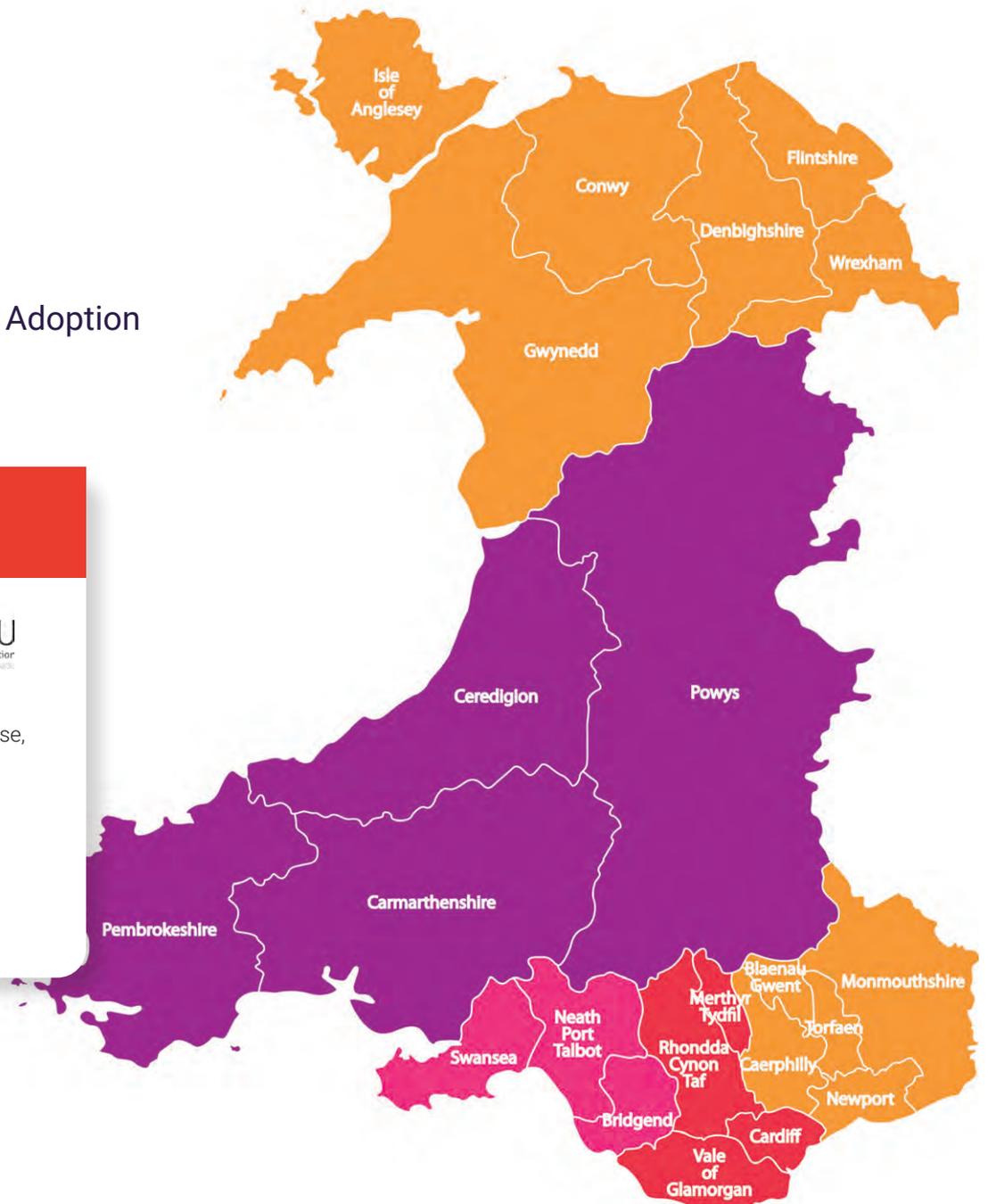


GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU
Bae'r Gorllewin
Western Bay
ADOPTION SERVICE

Western Bay Adoption Service

Tregelles Court,
Neath Abbey Road,
Neath, SA10 7DF
0300 365 2222
enquires@westernbayadoption.org
www.westernbayadoption.org

All Wales Voluntary Adoption Agencies Services



AFA CYMRU



AFA Cymru

G14, Ty Antur, Enterprise House,
Navigation Park,
Abercynon, CF45 4SN
029 2076 1155
Info-afa@stdavidscs.org
www.afacymru.org

ADOPTION UK



Adoption UK

Penhaved Studios,
Penhaved Street,
Grangetown,
Cardiff, CF11 7LU
029 2023 0319
www.adoptionuk.org

BARNARDO'S CYMRU



Barnardo's Cymru Adoption and Fostering Services

Britannia House, Van Road,
Caerphilly, CF83 3GG
02920 484316
adoptionandfostering@barnardos.org.uk
www.barnardos.org.uk/adoption

ST DAVID'S CHILDREN SOCIETY



St David's Children Society

28 Park Place, Cardiff,
CF10 3BA
029 2066 7007
info@stdavidscs.org
www.adoptionwales.org

Priorities for 2021/22

This report demonstrates how much has been achieved from our improvement priorities below.

Increase the number of children placed

- Increase recruitment of adopters to meet the number and needs of children waiting
- Optimise matching and placing all children subject to a placement order

Continue to improve adoption support across Wales

- Within the overall framework, agree and promote the NAS Adoption Support Commitment of support for Welsh Adopters
- Manage the £2.3m investment effectively for 2021-22 and plan for future years
- Continue to co-produce and use information from engagement

Thinking ahead

- Influence and improve the legal, policy and evidence framework that affects adoption
- Continue to build a 'one service' ethos and functioning
- Continue to raise adoption awareness amongst professionals and the public

Covid 19 Pandemic

Although restrictions are starting to ease, there is still significant pressure on operational services. Increased demand for adoption support services and staff absences add to workforce pressures already present because of a shortage of social workers. This is beginning to impact adoption work. At the time of writing, services are continuing to operate utilising Covid safe practices demonstrating the ongoing adaptability, flexibility, and commitment that has been present throughout the pandemic and for which the National Adoption Service is grateful.

Increase the number of children placed

Increase recruitment of adopters to meet the number and needs of children waiting

Our successes

- We reached our aim for this year to increase the number of adopters approved.
- The 'Truth Be Told' podcast won an award!

The NAS 'Truth be Told' podcast, produced by Cowshed, the Service's PR and Marketing Company, won a GOLD award at the CIPR Pride Cymru awards for 2021.

These prestigious awards, for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, celebrate and recognise great communications.

Congratulations to everyone involved, including the families who participated.



1M

over 1 million views

Choose Family Campaign

The Choose Family campaign reaches the heart of adoption because, in the end, everybody in adoption is searching for families. The core aim is to get people to consider adopting older children, boys, and sibling groups so they find a family sooner.

The campaign was delivered from October 2021 to March 2022 via:

- Media relations
- Social media
- TV, digital, train, and bus advertising
- Stakeholder and influencer engagement
- Video.

This resulted in 23 pieces of campaign coverage including over **one million views** of the video across the UK as well as in Wales creating a spike in interest and enquiries from prospective adopters.

AUK Passport Scheme

Starting in April 2022, Adoption UK launched a new enhanced membership package to be offered to all prospective adopters in Wales. Passport is a comprehensive package of learning resources that have been tailor-made to provide information on relevant and important topics and to support people going through the adoption approval process. It includes peer support, where each member can join a community of adopters from around the UK, as well as full access to the same resources and benefits that other AUK members enjoy. It also includes a programme comprised of 10 modules that takes members on a learning journey about adoption.

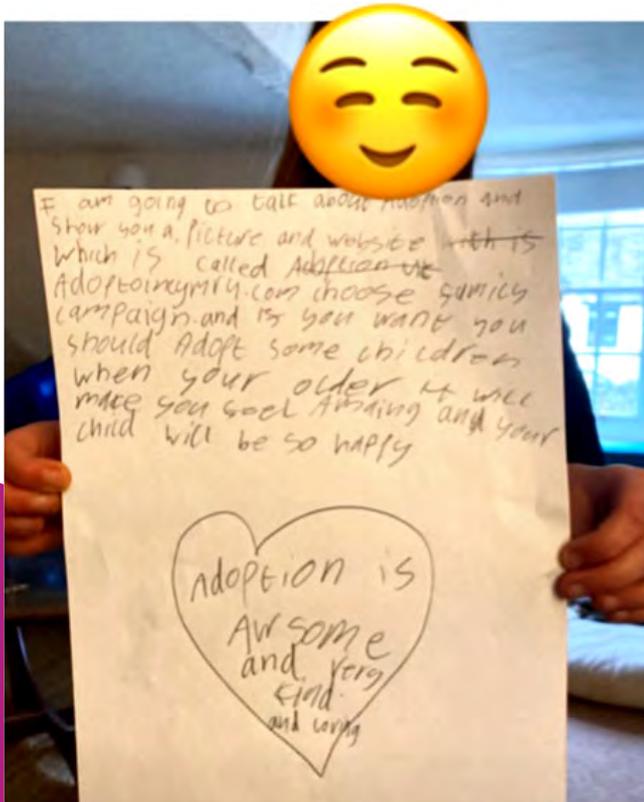


WalesOnline  NEWS - RUGBY FOOTBALL MORE -

The people adopting children across Wales and the touching reasons behind their decision

They include those who cannot have children of their own, or people like Natasha, a single adopter who was determined to provide a home for children who were classed as harder to place.

this is our 8 year olds completely unprompted discussion topic for Friday's show and tell in school. Kinda sums it all up I think!



What were the overall results on recruitment of adopters in 2021/22?

- Enquiries to adopt decreased slightly by 7% from the significantly higher increase in 2020/21 which is believed to be Covid related. However, enquiries continue to show a positive upwards trend.
- The number of adopters approved increased by 6% potentially indicating movement towards pre-Covid levels and ongoing recovery from the lower levels of 2018/19.
- Timeframes for adopter approvals increased a little to 7.4 months, from 6.9 months in the previous year.
- There has also seen an increase in adopters waiting, 27% of which have been waiting for more than 12 months.
- There was however a 23% decrease in adopter assessments starting, mostly due to a significant drop in a small number of services. The potential implications of this are being considered.

Initial Enquiries

2021/22 enquiries to adopt decreased by

Number of enquiries
2,021



Initial enquiries

Year	Number	% increase
2021/22	2,021	-7%
2020/21	2,163	23%
2019/20	1,764	4%
2018/19	1,689	9%
2017/18	1,550	21%
2016/17	1,280	7%
2015/16	1,197	3%
2014/15	1,161	

Adopter Assessments

2021/22 adopter assessments starting decreased by

Number of assessments 265



Adopter Assessments Starting

Year	Number	% increase
2021/22	265	-23%
2020/21	345	20%
2019/20	287	3%
2018/19	278	0%
2017/18	277	13%
2016/17	246	

Adopter Approvals

2021/22 adopter approvals increased by

Number of approvals
243



Adopter Approvals

Year	Number	% increase
2021/22	243	6%
2020/21	230	-8%
2019/20	250	18%
2018/19	212	0%
2017/18	212	-10%
2016/17	236	-11%
2015/16	266	-10%
2014/15	294	

“No matter how many challenges you have it is just the best thing I’ve ever done.

It’s magical and seeing the world through the eyes of my girl knowing the life she had...I just feel so grateful.

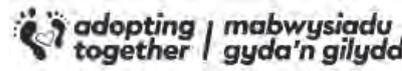
If I could just urge one person to do it. It’s brilliant”

Amanda and Martin adopted a girl



Optimise matching and placing all children subject to a placement order

The National Adoption Service manages the Adoption Register for Wales for the Welsh Government and part funds the Adopting Together Service; both support services to increase the number of children placed with families who meet their needs.



Adoption Register for Wales (ARW)

The Adoption Register for Wales (ARW) is a completely bilingual, online family-finding service with managed adopter access. The ARW team works closely with each of the Welsh regions and VAAs to ensure that children and adopters are referred to the Register within the required timescales. Regular monitoring of the Register takes place and assistance is offered to the Regions and VAA to ensure the information held by the Register is accurate and up to date.

Quarterly practitioner meetings are held between the ARW team, the regions, and VAAs. These meetings focus on the planning of family finding events, sharing profiles of children waiting, and discussing any issues around family finding from a Register or region/VAA perspective.

- There has been an increase in the number of children and families matched through the Register this year compared to previous years.
- The Adoption Register also works closely with the Adopting Together Service to assist with children on the register who meet the criteria for the ATS, particularly those children who have waited, or are likely to wait, 9+ months for a placement.
- ARW has held 4 online profiling events this year. Children from across Wales have been featured at these events, many with complex needs and who have been waiting for the longest. The events have proved popular with adopters and professionals due to their virtual nature and accessibility. The events generated many expressions of interest and as a result, a total of 5 successful matches have been made with others still being considered.
- ARW also held an Adoption Activity Day in October 2021. Unfortunately, this event was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions as some children were unable to attend at short notice due to illness. 20 children were profiled with 13 children physically attending the event in Cardiff. A total of 5 children were matched with adopters who attended the event.
- The team continues to work with Welsh Government towards re-commissioning the Register when the current contract ends next year.

Use of 'Adopting Together Service' for children who wait for the longest

St. David's has placed 4 children through the Adopting Together Service and has approved 23 families this year. They reviewed their recruitment strategy to meet the needs of children who wait for an adoptive family. St David's is proud that one-third of approvals and placements have been made with LGBTQ+ families. The Society has continued to invest in enhancing its offer of adoption support both pre- and post-order and as we moved out of the pandemic, arranged outdoor meetups and a family event. They continued to provide a range of direct interventions including one-to-one support, therapeutically led training events, and opportunities for peer-to-peer support.

6 bespoke recruitment campaigns have taken place:

- 2 identifying
- 1 personalised non-identifying
- 3 generic non-identifying.

Market Share Pilot

Western Bay Adoption Service (WBAS), St David's Children Society, and Barnardo's successfully piloted an initiative aimed at supporting the early identification of adopters for children with an adoption plan. Following a positive evaluation of the pilot, this has now moved to a new phase with an upfront agreement on the projected number of placements likely to occur between WBAS and the VAAs during the forthcoming financial year. Evaluations are evidencing that changes introduced by the pilot are offering improved opportunities in placement choice and are supporting more children being placed in Wales as well as positively impacting working relationships across the sectors.

What was the overall impact for placing children in 2021/22?

The Service continued to successfully reduce the number of children waiting for an adoption placement.

- Considering children with a strong link, there were just over 80 children waiting for a placement at the end of March 2022.
- The number of children waiting for placement has reduced significantly in recent years.

The number of children matched increased by 3% compared to the previous year. The increases were seen in all but one Region and ranging between 6% to 67%: one Region had significantly fewer matches, linked to fewer children becoming subject to a placement order.

- A total of 288 matches occurred in Wales during 2021/22, a slight increase from 280 of the previous year.
- 80 of these matches were identified via the Register compared to 59 the previous year.
- 279 children were placed, 6% more than the previous year.

The increases demonstrate the Service is moving on from the impact of the pandemic with placing activity moving back towards usual levels. The broader context is that 17% fewer children were referred to services this year alongside a 12% reduction in Placement Orders granted by the courts. This is linked to different patterns in court applications and orders over the last two years but there is also a longer-term, UK-wide trend of reducing placement orders linked to how adoption is being used alongside other ways of achieving permanence for children.

Placed for Adoption

2021/22 placed for adoption increased by



Number of placements

279

Placed for Adoption

Year	Number	% increase
2021/22	279	6%
2020/21	263	-14%
2019/20	306	-2%
2018/19	311	1%
2017/18	307	2%
2016/17	300	-8%
2015/16	326	-16%
2014/15	386	

Continuing to improve adoption support

Within the overall framework, agree and promote the 'NAS Adoption Support Commitment' of support for Welsh adopters

NAS has continued to focus on specific areas to improve the arrangements for the delivery of adoption support.

Our strategy for adoption support has a new name

In 2016, NAS developed its strategic plan for the development of adoption support services in Wales. With its distinctive umbrella symbol, the vision over time was to guarantee a 'Core Offer' of support for all Welsh adopted children and young people and their parents as well as to others affected by adoption. It is now called the 'NAS Adoption Support Commitment.'

The vision is for all adopters in Wales to feel supported at every step of their journey: whether at the start, at the time a child is placed, or later when issues or queries arise. The Service wants adopters to feel confident that when they ask for advice, information, or support it will be available to them when they need it and from professionals with specialist knowledge of adoption and a broad range of children's care needs.

The National Adoption Service has worked with services across Wales to agree on a national offer of support that all can commit to. The NAS Adoption Support Commitment of support will be launched in June 2022 and is based on the following underlying principles:

- **A ONE team approach:** Regional Adoption Services, Local Authority teams, and Voluntary Adoption Agencies working together as a team around the child and family
- **The Adoption Community:** adopters becoming part of a valued, Wales-wide, adoption community with access to peer support as well as specialist professional advice and services
- **Targeted or specialist services:** prompt and equitable access to specialist services if required
- **Communication and involvement:** keeping adopters informed and consulted in developing adoption support services, so that they are responsive to existing and emerging needs.



Work on adoption support service transfers at 3+ years

If a child is placed in another local authority area in Wales, the responsibility for adoption support services transfers from the placing authority to the authority where the child and family live 3 years after the adoption order is granted. Practice guidance was published for services in Wales to ensure the continuation of support for children and families when this happens. This guidance, endorsed and supported by the Welsh Government, reminds staff and organisations of their duties, as well as the steps that need to be taken to plan this transfer of responsibility and avoid any unnecessary delay in ensuring the right support for children continues throughout and after the transfer from one authority to another.

Support in education services

This remains an area of significant focus for most families and adopted children and young people.

'The majority of parents in Wales find that their children experience challenges in education, with 71% of adopted children reported to need more support in school than their peers (compared to 67% in 2018).'

Adoption Barometer report, Adoption UK, 2021

The two sources of information, Evaluation of the Adoption Support Framework in Wales: Institute of Public Care 2021 and the 2021* Adoption Barometer, both involving an extensive evidence base, identify 4 main themes:

1. Variations in the level of knowledge and understanding of the needs of adopted children amongst education professionals.
2. A lack of consistency at various levels – between regions, within regions, between schools, within schools.
3. A lack of coordination of different services accessed by adopted children and their families.
4. Typical patterns of difficulty in the experience of adopted children and their families in education

Adoption UK has worked with 250 schools across Wales through its professional membership scheme. 343 people attended a total of 28 events for teachers to help them think about how they can support adopted learners.

NAS has resumed its liaison meetings with the Welsh Government Education colleagues to continue to advise and support them to make improvements in policy and services. NAS has also discussed these issues with the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Care and there is a shared commitment to continue this dialogue and oversight.



* Commissioned by NAS, funded by Welsh Government investment – Evaluation of the Adoption Support Framework in Wales: Institute of Public Care 2021 [Adoption Support in Wales Report](#)

Manage the £2.3m investment effectively for 2021/22 and plan for future years

The 2021/22 financial year marks the third year of this investment from the Welsh Government which is being used primarily to transform the adoption support service across Wales.

Transforming services across Wales

The investment has allowed us to increase capacity in the staff and services of the NAS regional adoption services so that children, young people, and families are more effectively supported. It is also being used creatively to match fund other resources through the development of new and innovative services, many being delivered in partnership with the Welsh Voluntary Adoption Agencies e.g., TESSA, Adopting Together Service, and Connect.

Significantly more and varied types of support are now being provided because of this investment which funds elements of the NAS Adoption Support Framework and enable the Service to confidently publish the 'NAS Adoption Support Commitment'.

This year the investment has supported the following adoption support services:

- At any one time 261 families receive the TESSA service, including 132 new families this year.
- 233 children and young people are involved in the CONNECTED service including 95 new children and young people.
- Regional services have supported more than 450 families with a range of therapeutic interventions.

- Circa 200 children and families received life journey materials and more than 200 professionals received refresher days.
- 6 very complex children have been placed through the Adopting Together Service, plus ongoing recruitment of adopters including 6 bespoke recruitment campaigns.
- A significant amount of training has been provided on the four good practice events with more than 900 professionals working in a range of teams and services.
- AFA Cymru has recorded e-modules for practitioners, panel members, and parents on Wales Early Permanence and will be available by Autumn 2022.
- The funding has also supported further development work on Trauma Informed Practice and developed a 'Wales Early Permanence Framework,' launched in May 2022.



TESSA

TESSA (Therapy, Education & Support Services in Adoption), a UK-wide Lottery funded service by Adoption UK utilises match funding from the investment in each region to provide a wider reach in Wales. Based on delivery through paid parent-partners (experienced and trained adopters) it incorporates:

- An expert psychology assessment
- A 6-week reflective parenting course
- Plus, access to other recommended support services

The feedback received from families receiving the TESSA service and from the professionals that refer them is very good. There is also academic research being undertaken

The TESSA Pilot Study by Strathclyde University came out in June 2021 available [here](#). The summary states:

High levels of satisfaction were expressed by adopters with all pillars of TESSA.

- 85% of adopters reported that as a result of the clinical consultation they had a better understanding of their child's needs and felt better able to explain these needs to professionals.
- 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the report from the clinical consultation was a helpful resource.
- All adopters who attended the reflective parenting group agreed or strongly agreed that the groups were well organised, with relevant content and that group facilitators were respectful, non-judgemental, and sensitive to participants' needs.

- 85% of adopters matched to a Parent Partner felt they had benefitted from this support and 90% felt their Parent Partner understood them and their situation. On a practical level most felt that it was easy to stay in touch with their Parent Partner (90%).
- Adopters who had received TESSA support for around six months reported positive impacts of TESSA on their parenting experience such as:
 - increased confidence in dealing with challenges (95%)
 - an improved ability to anticipate stressful triggers (85%)
 - more optimism about the family's ability to cope (95%)

A key outcome of the clinical consultation was the development of a coherent comprehensive explanation of a child's strengths and needs captured in a single report that could be shared across settings such as school, nursery, childcare, etc.

The support of Parent Partners was highly valued by adopters who used this relationship to grow into their role of therapeutic parent. Adopters reported feeling less psychologically isolated, more confident in their parenting abilities, better connected to resources, and that children were calmer and family life more settled.

Strong supportive relationships also developed between adopters attending the reflective parenting group and some of these were maintained after the group meetings ended providing adopters with an enduring informal support network.

NAS is keen to ensure that the programme can continue in Wales when the current Lottery funding ceases.





Connected

The CONNECTED groups which are one part of the CONNECT service provide support to over 230 adopted children and young people across Wales. They are age-related, one is for 7–10-year-olds, one for 11+ and a small older group for 18 – 30-year-olds.

The groups have run mostly online this year with monthly sessions using zoom, although where restrictions allowed, some face-to-face sessions occurred. The aim is to provide support to children and young people as well as ensure the voices of adopted young people are heard and influence the services they access.

Youth Council

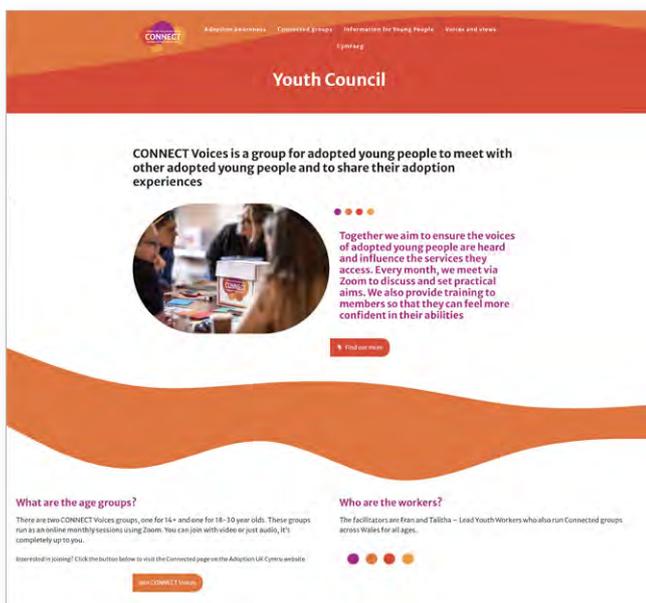
The Adoption Youth Councils (CONNECT Voices) held an exclusive event in Cardiff on Monday 4th April, at Techniquet. The young people from AUK's two CONNECT Voices groups introduced their Youth Councils. Connected families and adoption staff heard about the work of the youth councils and celebrated the launch of their brand-new website designed by, for, and about adopted young people across Wales. Deputy Minister, Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services was the Keynote speaker.

Speakers spoke about how this work is both ground-breaking and revolutionary. It is the start of a new phase of hearing the voice of adopted children and young people loudly, clearly, and consistently.

Website

The group is also involved in developing information for adopted children and young people. For example, the CONNECT website, newsletters, and link to the Youth Councils. <https://www.connectcymru.com/voices/youth-council> The groups are facilitated by staff from NAS regions and Adoption UK.

- *"My son has grown to know and trust the youth workers. Their approach is spot on. They understand the impact of adverse early childhood experiences and adoption. They are empathic, good listeners, creative, fun, supportive, and caring. My child enjoys the sessions, especially face-to-face. They support me as a parent. I don't feel judged."*
- *"My daughter often joins the sessions feeling a bit grumpy but within a few minutes the staff has her laughing and chatting away!"*
- *"...the group leader has been exceptional throughout lockdown and prior to this with supporting my children within the group and at home when they haven't been able to manage it. [She] has also continued to support and include my youngest daughter in activities even though she has moved into a residential home. The service has also supported the girls to have contact with each other during some of the activities. It has allowed my girls to be themselves and they have been supported to be themselves. It has made a huge difference to them. The leader has been a constant in their life for a number of years which has been really important when other professionals have come and gone. The service also allows and encourages the girls to have fun and participate as much or as little as they can manage. There is no pressure to be the same as others which you often find in social activity groups."*



Life Journey

There is a widespread desire amongst those involved in adoption in Wales to deliver Life Journey work to a high standard and a willingness to develop practice to allow this. NAS continues to coordinate and develop the delivery of its approach to Life Journey work through regional coordinators.

More than 150 members of staff from across Wales, including childcare social workers, attended Life Journey workshops this year. The workshops:

- *Explored best practice in Life Journey Work in the context of the NAS Life Journey Work framework*
- *Helped staff to become more familiar with the framework and the associated good practice guide*
- *Gave greater appreciation of the importance of Life Journey work as a tool to help adopted and looked after children to make sense of their history and build a positive identity*
- *Helped staff to be clear about what constitutes good quality LJW and give them and their organisation additional tools and resources to achieve this*

While sustaining the progress made, the challenge is to ensure that direct work and information gathering start as soon as a child is accommodated, resulting in Life Journey Materials that are of the highest quality and reflective of the child's individuality.

- *"This is fantastic. It is exactly what I was talking about yesterday. Had we received a life story in this format it would have exceeded our expectations, even if it had still not been received in the timescales..."*
- *"I think some of the information is a bit overwhelming for our children at this point in their emotional development, but if we can do our storybook alongside this for the now and have this for the near future it will be succinct for the 'ladder approach' so that there are no surprises in the later life letters, which is what we should all be striving for."*
- *"I am so happy to have received this, but also really sad that it is not already standard practice across authorities. It really takes the leg work out for Social Workers and will produce exactly what adopters want and need to support their children. Let me reiterate that – it is easier and less time-consuming to use these templates for Social Workers and will produce high-quality Life Story Books."*

“**N**owadays, adoption does reflect society, its moved away from that stringent profile that used to exist”

Tash – a single adopter of 2 children



Continue to co-produce and use information from engagement

A focus on the voice and influence of adopters and adopted children and young people

Actively seeking feedback from users of the service is a key priority and forms the basis of all that is done in the National Adoption Service for Wales. There are now established robust arrangements to facilitate this.

AUK Barometer

The Wales report, which NAS commissions from AUK was published at the end of September. Entitled 'Celebrating Success, Inspiring Innovation,' this report provides a useful focus on the Wales-only data from the 2021 UK-wide Barometer:

[NAS – AUK Barometer report for Wales – News](#)

Key findings for Wales were a picture of improved satisfaction indicating that what NAS is doing is working and showing a clear link between investment and improvement. It shows:

- High levels of positivity about adoption: 80% would encourage others to consider adoption and 83% were optimistic about their family's future
- Welsh adopters were the most likely of the 4 nations to say that they were doing well as a family in 2020 (difficult Covid year)
- Improved adoption support linked to the investment
- Highlights that there is more to do e.g., adolescents & Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder.

The Big Adoption Conversation

This annual event took place on 27th January 2022, chaired by the NAS Director, and attended by 99 adoptive parents and grandparents, adopted young people, and professionals.

It was a virtual event, free to attendees, to consider in more detail the latest Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer report and other relevant information to inform NAS' work, including the emerging Adopt Cymru 2025 plan.

The event included 4 smaller workshop discussions which considered the following in more detail:

- Teenage years and transitions to adulthood
- Education
- Contact with birth family
- Becoming an adoptive family

It was an extremely positive event with good engagement from participants both in the main discussion room with all participants and in the workshops. Several important overall themes emerged from the discussions, including a reminder of the lifelong implications of adoption from the small number of adoptive parents in attendance who are now grandparents and who still provide very significant levels of support to their adult children who are parents themselves.

Overall themes:

- Adoption has lifelong implications
- There are 'lost' generations of adopted children and adults, some of whom may/will need support due to previously unrecognised/unmet needs for support and information
- The importance of hearing the voices of all those affected by adoption as well as being able to identify them and provide information including about new/different services where relevant
- Support and services are rarely 'once and for all,' so opportunities for keeping in touch, obtaining advice and information, and/or reviews of active support are needed
- There are very good new and innovative services that are improving outcomes and family life for newer families

While highlighting issues that were already known, the event was significant in enabling NAS to consider how they could be addressed in service development plans.

Members of the emerging **AUK Youth Council** took part in the Adoption Barometer launch and the Big Adoption Conversation. They also coordinated a Hustings event for candidates in the 2021 Senedd elections which was attended by representatives of all parties who responded to a range of questions posed by adopted young people.

In January 2022, there was a session where they interviewed the Director of NAS and engaged with Health and Education as they worked on a National Lottery Bid over the autumn. The first two newsletters were also produced.

This was all ahead of the formal launch of the Youth Councils!

The new **Connected website** and the **Youth Councils** were launched on 4th April 2022 (see previous section).

One of the young people, Anna, shares her experience:

"I contacted Connected and I got invited to the 18+ group and then got involved in the social and the website group which became the Youth Council. I took part in the hustings... really enjoyed that and my Youth council involvement. I worked with youth workers trialling a focus group to gain young people's opinions on what Adoption UK should aim to offer young people back in February and then worked with them to make it more young people friendly before they did their research in Wales, Scotland, and England. The support around the Connected and Youth Council groups given by the youth workers is the reason I keep coming back- if I didn't feel supported, I wouldn't have bothered. They understand and make it safe – it makes us able to speak about our pasts. It's really difficult when you feel like you haven't got a voice but with this group, I feel like I have got a voice. I can use my experiences to help the next generation. I hope to see a lot of change in the future, the aim is to use my voice and my experiences to help the younger ones"



Thinking ahead

Influence and improve the legal, policy, and evidence framework that affects adoption

A considerable proportion of the Director and Central Team's role is to influence and improve the legal, policy, and evidence framework and to maintain the public profile of adoption. As such they participate in many working groups and initiatives.

Research

There is an extensive range of current research activities that include adoption. Many of the studies have a broader scope which includes current and former children looked after in a range of placements as well as adopted children.

'Pre-order meetings between children and their prospective adoptive families: their role in the formation of newly adoptive families.' This Ph.D. research being undertaken within Cardiff University School of Psychology is already revealing the potential value that a good practice guide in Wales could play.

Diversity in adoption in Wales – NAS has commissioned this as part of its Black Lives Matter response. It is being undertaken by an MSc student at Cardiff University with the oversight of CASCADE.

Adoption Breakdowns in Wales – commissioned by AUK Cymru from CASCADE and linked to an AUK project exploring possible interventions for 12-25 years old adoptees with high-level needs.

Re-think project – A multi-disciplinary research programme (psychology, social work, and social policy) led by Professor Lisa Holmes (University of Sussex) with Dr Rachel Hiller (University College London), Professor Katherine Shelton (Cardiff University), and Professor Julie Selwyn (Rees Centre, Oxford University). This is a four-year study, funded by the Medical Research Council to study 600 care-experienced children (currently and formerly CLA incl. adopted children), circa 200 from Wales. Aims include:

- Profiling children's mental health and well-being at key transition stages (move from primary school to secondary and from secondary education into college/work)
- Establishing what works, and what does not work, in supporting these children, young people, and their families.

NAS Officers have been involved in the following workstreams:

- The **Welsh Government Corporate Parenting** workstream is looking to extend and enhance these arrangements in Wales by developing a charter.
- **Public Law Working Group (PLWG) 'Modernising Adoption.'** The work has commenced, and the work streams include international adoptions; relinquished children; legal consequences of adoption/access to records; process and procedures in court; contact; and human rights.
- Link into meetings developing the **Welsh Government strategy for the education of looked after** and formerly looked after children and the implementation of the **Additional Learning Needs Act**.
- Developing a potential **Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder** model of services for Wales and meetings with WG to appraise them of the work.
- Work has been initiated to consider no longer changing the **NHS number** of children when they are adopted. This is a matter that has been considered previously but has come back on the agenda due to decisions made by the DfE and NHS in England to progress it, albeit without apparent consultation with Wales.
- **Historical Adoption Records** – the Welsh Government archive service is participating in a UK Government research project to gauge a sense of whether adoption records, which under current legislation can be destroyed after 100 years (in 2026) should be kept or destroyed. NAS has been asked to be involved in this project.
- **Welsh Government Programme for Government (P4G) Oversight Board** is independently chaired by Anthony Douglas (former chair of CAF/CASS and the English Adoption Leadership Board). The stated ambition for the board is to:

'Oversee delivery of relevant Programme for Government commitments for children's services and to support a new vision and ambition for children's social care, based on more consistent strengths-based practice, less risk adversity and more restorative approaches to children's care.'

NAS is keen to emphasise the links to the adoption of a number of the commitments as well as where NAS can support the delivery of Welsh Governments ambitions including:

- the proposed radical reform of current services for looked-after children and care leavers
- Strengthening public bodies in their role as 'corporate parent'
- The role of advocacy in supporting parents whose children are at risk of coming into care
- The role of specialist support for children with complex needs who may be on the edge of care

Together 4 Children and Young People (T4CYP) NEST: Lead consultant Liz Gregory provided a consultation session for regional managers and VAAs on the proposals that have emerged to meet the recommendations of the 'Mind over Matter' report. Conceptually the model fits well with NAS' Adoption Support Framework.



Continuing to build a 'one service' ethos and functioning

One of the reasons behind the creation of NAS was to put an end to the 'postcode lottery' that existed from the response to initial enquiries about adoption, placing children, and provision of adoption support to adopters. As such the 'one service' ethos underpins how services are developed.

NAS is a collaborative made up of Local Authorities, working nationally, regionally, and locally, alongside Voluntary Adoption Agencies, health services, education services, and many other stakeholders. The ambition to continue to operate consistently remains as strong as ever but the realities and practicalities of working together toward the same aim, at the same pace, remains challenging. NAS has continued to implement the changes to its governance below to create the best context for this.

Partnership Agreement

All 22 local authorities in Wales signed the new Partnership Agreement in the first half of the year. This agreement sets out the framework for NAS to operate consistently to an agreed optimal model of excellence and as a single service through:

- Increased ownership and accountability throughout the service for improvement against nationally agreed objectives, policies, and priorities
- Streamlined links between national and regional governance as well as service delivery and strategy
- More working together across regions and centrally to share best practice, improvement, and where appropriate, resources
- A business focus that maximises the contribution of all sector partners.



Joint Committee

Alongside the above, a national Joint Committee is being put in place on behalf of the 22 Welsh Local Authorities to enable them to exercise their powers for the provision of the National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales (FW). It provides an improved mechanism for political oversight to complement the NAS Governance Board and its new Partnership Agreement and puts in place an equivalent arrangement for Foster Wales. It will also provide an improved basis for the hosting arrangement with Cardiff Council. The process of each local authority formally agreeing to this is underway.

Additional resourcing

Adoption UK Cymru was successful in attracting short-term grant aid for service development through the Third Sector Resilience Funding. This is for one year and will fund the development of pilot 'products' for support and counselling for adopted young people and adults aged 13 – 30 in the future.

As a result of discussions about resources, NAS was successful in their £200,000 bid to meet additional Covid pressures in adoption services. The areas funded included:

- Additional demand for access to birth records, counselling, and intermediary service
- Additional adoption support services
- Additional adopter assessments
- Additional adopter panel costs
- Support for agile working with young people

The central team has worked with AUK to support the 'Minding your Futures' bid to the Big Lottery Community Fund. This was for resources to further develop the engagement of adopted children and young people through Connect and the Youth Councils. Unfortunately, the bid was not successful but may well be re-worked for a future Big Lottery fund.

Joint Working

The Central Team, Regions, and VAA's meet monthly, continuing a meeting that was established to respond to Covid but now provides a valuable whole sector operational group.

The NAS lead local authorities and the central team continue to meet regularly as the 'LA Business Planning' group and in the regional Adoption Managers meeting while the Director meets regularly with the VAA's in their network, the Strategic Voluntary Adoption Partnership (SVAP).

Subgroups

The membership of all the NAS subgroups and task & finish groups, which undertake the NAS improvement work 'on the ground,' is a cross-section of all the stakeholders in NAS:

- Adoption Support contributed to developing and improving the NAS Adoption Support Commitment to all adopters
- Performance has developed and contributed to expanding the data collection which will inform future developments
- Policy and Practice contributed to the development of the All-Wales Policy and Procedures work as well as the Welsh Early Permanence Framework
- Recruitment and Marketing contributed to and supported the very successful Choose Family campaign.



Continue to raise adoption awareness amongst professionals and the public

Adoption remains a small and discrete service within the whole Children's Services agenda. NAS works hard nationally and regionally to maintain awareness amongst fellow professionals and the public and to undertake development work as needed.

NAS Officers are involved in the following workstreams:

- The **Parenting Expert Action Group** which looked at the implications of the Abolition of Reasonable Punishment Act
- Annual meeting with the **Children's Commissioner for Wales**. There was a varied agenda including NAS performance through the pandemic, the Position Paper, and adoption-related casework by her office
- Member of the **Children in Wales Policy Council**
- Link to **Social Care Wales**, meeting with the Director of Improvement and Development Sarah McCarty regularly
- The Director spoke at both the **ADSS Cymru** Spring Festival and the Annual Conference
- The **Welsh Medical Group** to discuss various aspects of practice of mutual interest
- Member of the national stakeholder group for the **Nuffield Family Justice Observatory**

There has been interest from other parts of the UK in the work NAS is doing to improve adoption services

- The Co-chair of the Governance Board spoke at the **UK Council for Voluntary Adoption Agencies** conference in November.
- The Director met with the newly appointed **National Adoption Strategic Lead for England** in early January and there is an ongoing liaison in terms of areas of development work in common e.g., family finding practice and adoption support as well as the Adoption Register as England considers its position without one.

NAS has also continued to progress key pieces of development work

- **Black Lives Matter** – the additional 'Unconscious Bias' training has continued to be rolled out to staff groups across Wales. The Director and Head of Policy, Practice, & Communication met with Diverse Cymru to consider whether their Cultural Competency Toolkit was suitable for use across Wales. Although an excellent initiative, it is not suitable for the needs of a collaborative organisation such as NAS. Cardiff University School of Social Care was approached, and a MSc student is currently undertaking a research project as part of her dissertation to provide an overview of practice in this area across Wales. Additionally, the NAS data set for children and adopters is being amended to include ethnic information
- Continuing work to change practice concerning **Placement Order Revocations** by developing good practice guidance – a first draft is almost complete for consultation with all stakeholders including the judiciary.

“I've realised how diverse a group we are and each of our journeys to adoption are different”

Ben and Adam – adopted their son

Potential new relationships for Adoption Services in Wales

- The Director, co-chairs, and various members of staff from across Wales attended the **AUK annual conference** on 9th October 2021. It was an excellent online event, '**An equal chance for adopted people**,' using innovative conferencing software (Remo) with a very relevant programme. This included several opportunities to hear the experiences of adoptive parents and adopted people and included a recorded address by the Deputy Minister for Wales alongside ministers from the other UK administrations.
- NAS met with **The Family Place** to discuss their work in Wales. The Family Place is one of the few registered independent Adoption Support Agencies in Wales and offers very specialist therapeutic interventions mainly to children in foster care, kinship care, and adoptive placements. As a result of this meeting, consideration is being given as to whether this organisation should join the third sector SVAP in Wales and they will be providing some information to NAS about the commissioning of their service. This will enable NAS to consider, with relevant partners, whether a different commissioning arrangement may be beneficial for Welsh adoption services.
- NAS met with **Home for Good**, a faith-based organisation that works with adoption and fostering services to raise awareness within faith communities/churches of the need for more foster carers, adopters, and supported lodgings providers or help individuals who may want to apply. There is current consideration of whether NAS can work with them.

Complaints

NAS does not experience a high level of complaints, but these are some of the themes.

Adopters

Sometimes there are delays in the process, for example, waiting for a placement, waiting for the application to adopt, or a delay in accessing other services.

Birth Parents

Contact is very important for both birth parents and their children and sometimes delays occur in receiving contact letters.

Positive Feedback

It is always heart-warming for staff to receive compliments.

From an adopter

"I wanted to provide some feedback and a big thank you and compliment for the hard work that your team has put in for my family. I had a very positive experience right from the start. The preparation training was informative and enjoyable. It was nice to meet other people who are interested in adoption. A has fantastic people skills and she created a safe space to help me reflect on my life journey so far and how this can impact on my way of parenting. We had many conversations that prepared me for all kinds of bumps along the way. A also made sure that I had a great team around me. I am grateful for the consultation I had with S. The consultation helped me to make sense out of B's experiences so far and what strategies might help him moving forward.

'A' advocated for Theraplay for 'B' and I and I am delighted that the LA were happy to fund this. Having the Theraplay early on in our journey supported us growing together and build up a strong bond. And most importantly, 'A' found the most amazing little boy who is the perfect match. We are having so much fun together. Thank you for the support during such an anxious, emotional and exciting time in B's and my life."

From an adult adoptee

"I wanted to drop a line to express my gratitude to N for the help he has given me in the last few weeks. I was adopted by Welsh parents in 1957 but was born to an Irish nurse. I have been trying for many years now to locate the court order for my adoption. It was the last document, of countless documents that I needed, ... Yes, it's complicated! N helped me obtain the last part and I'm grateful for his help, promptness, and professionalism."

From a prospective adopter

"I just wanted to pass on to you the comments from prospective adopters today. They stated they have felt extremely well supported by P and the Social Work team during the planning of the introductions and throughout the transition. They also praised K and her partner for the preparation work that they did with X prior to the move. It is early days, but this was an extremely positive first review. Thank you to everyone involved."

About us

The National Adoption Service was created to improve services for all those affected by adoption in Wales. The National Adoption Service (NAS) for Wales, launched in November 2014, is an innovative collaborative for the provision of adoption services. It brought together Welsh local authority adoption services into a three-tier structure which includes partnerships at all levels with Voluntary Adoption Agencies based in Wales, Health and Education Services, as well as others.

At local authority level, all 22 Welsh councils continue to provide services to all looked after children whilst identifying and working with those children for whom an adoption plan is appropriate.

Regionally, local authorities work together within five regional collaboratives to provide a range of adoption services. Each regional collaborative has links with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies, Health, and Education. The services provided differ in each collaborative, but all provide:

- The adoption agency functions for children
- Recruit and assess adopters
- Offer counselling to birth parents
- Offer advice to adopted adults

Some currently directly provide adoption support services, whereas in others this remains with their local authorities.

Nationally the Director and small central team provide leadership, co-ordination, strategic support and enabling.



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu | National
Cenedlaethol | **Adoption**
Service

Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd



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**SUBJECT: REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23
– MONTH 6 FORECAST**

MEETING: CABINET
DATE: 7th December 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the Authority's financial forecasts for the 2022/23 financial year in respect of the revenue budget, capital programme, and associated reserves position.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That Cabinet recognises the concerning net deterioration of £355k since the previous revenue budget forecast that results in a forecast over spend at Month 6 of £9.15m, driven by an increase of £880k within Children's services to a £4.4m over spend; an increase of £194k in meeting the needs of the Homeless to a £1.5m over spend; offset by a number of favourable movements, significantly the level of ongoing staff vacancies being carried or held in the workforce.
- 2.2. That Cabinet notes that the Strategic Leadership Team have taken immediate action to arrest the forecast over spend and developed a robust recovery plan as outlined in **table 3** that will result in a balanced outturn position being achieved. These are notably through the one-off use of revenue and capital reserves; reprioritisation of grant funding; and through cost moderation or reduction in service delivery.
- 2.3. That Cabinet note the further financial risk represented by the current volatile environment that both Adult's and Children's services are operating within that is associated with the level and complexity of demand, inflationary pressures, and labour shortages, and the risk this represents to the ongoing financial sustainability of this Council.
- 2.4. That Cabinet require the respective Chief Officers and the Responsible Financial Officer to continue to closely monitor and manage operational and financial performance, specifically in relation to Children's services, Adult's services, and Housing, but also the other service areas highlighting forecast over spends, and to ensure the release of at least £2.185m of highlighted service budget mitigations across all directorates as a consequence of the budget recovery plan.
- 2.5. That Cabinet recognise the ongoing financial risks to the revenue budget of the current wider economic climate, including the inflationary and interest rate environment; supply chain disruption; the volatile energy market; and notably the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on communities, and the associated financial impact this may have on the Council.

- 2.6. That Cabinet recognises the importance of a balanced outturn position being achieved for 2022/23, in that it minimises the need to draw further upon any planned use of reserves and capital receipts and which will be required to assist in meeting the unprecedented projected budget deficit highlighted for 2023/24.
- 2.7. That Cabinet note that the overall revenue budget continues to be subsidised by £2.65m of capital receipts which are being used to fund identified eligible expenditure under the flexible use of capital receipts directive.
- 2.8. That Cabinet note the forecast 100% delivery of the budgeted mandated savings as detailed in **appendix 2** and as approved as part of the budget set by full Council.
- 2.9. Cabinet notes the extent of forecast movements in Schools reserve usage contained in **table 6**, and **appendices 1 & 3** which highlight the possibility of a further seven schools entering into a deficit reserve position by the end of the financial year.
- 2.10. Cabinet considers the forecast capital outturn spend of £59.9m as outlined in **appendix 1** that currently indicates a forecast over spend of £310k, noting the continuing difficulty in delivering capital projects to their allocated budget in the current challenging economic environment.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. In setting the 2022/23 budget there was an expectation that the Council would see a gradual return to a more stable operating environment relative to the last two years, with the direct impacts of the pandemic potentially set to ease.
- 3.2. There was a known and accepted risk that the Welsh Government Hardship fund would end and consequently any direct or indirect costs resulting from the pandemic would fall upon the Council to fund. It was also highlighted that the challenges experienced in achieving historic income levels would continue, and that the permanent change in national policy initiative around the needs of the homeless would not be adequately funded by Welsh Government.
- 3.3. The timing and degree to which these risks would manifest was the key uncertainty within the budget setting process, and on that basis, Cabinet agreed a package of measures to combat the known and unknown pressures presenting in terms of a mix of base budget provision of a further £10.1m, and the creation of specific earmarked reserves of £4m.
- 3.4. In respect of the £10.1m of budget pressures that were accommodated, these were notably:
 - All pay and pension related spending pressures in our schooling system, up to a threshold of a 3% pay award
 - The increasing demand on schools and the Local Education Authority of pupils with additional learning needs
 - The increasing complexity of cases being placed on our children's social services in respect of looked after children and for whom the Council acts as corporate parent

- The growing impact of an ageing population on adult social services and the challenges that result from a fragile and unsustainable social care market in Wales
- Significant service pressures within the passenger transport unit and within recycling and waste and that look to ensure that the Council supports and sustains key service delivery
- Responding to the needs of homelessness with housing related support
- Further investment in our Highways and transport infrastructure alongside our IT and network estate

3.5. It is therefore disappointing that despite accommodating the above pressures into the 2022/23 budget, that significant further in year service pressures are forecast, with many of these pressures developing in the same key areas that have been provided additional support in the budget.

3.6. **Table 1** below summarises the forecast £9.15m net over spend against the Council's revenue budget for the year.

Table 1: 2022/23 Revenue budget forecast as at Month 6

Month 6 Revenue budget forecast	Total budget for the year	Total forecast expenditure / (income)	Total forecast variance to budget	Variance as a % of budget	Change since Month 4
Directorate	£000's	£000's	£000's	%	£000's
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	57,870	63,581	5,711	9.9%	↑ 655
Children & Young People	59,513	60,245	732	1.2%	↓ 9
Communities & Place	23,713	24,472	759	3.2%	↑ 143
Monlife	4,494	4,957	462	10.3%	↓ 17
Chief Executive Unit	3,108	2,820	(288)	-9.3%	↓ 288
People & Governance	4,856	4,884	28	0.6%	↑ 28
Resources	7,637	8,246	609	8.0%	↓ 147
Corporate**	25,653	27,549	1,896	7.4%	↓ 22
Appropriations	5,853	5,603	(250)	-4.3%	↓ 24
Financing	(192,699)	(193,203)	(504)	0.3%	↑ 38
Total	(0)	9,155	9,155		↑ 355

** Includes the estimated impact (£2.1m) of the non-teaching pay award over and above the 3.5% already budgeted for.

3.7. A full breakdown of the variances forecast by services at Month 6 is contained within **appendix 1**, however at a summary level the principal pressures and mitigating savings forecast are within the areas of:

Table 2: Summary of principal pressures and savings forecast at Month 6

Pressure/Saving	£000's	Change	Description
Children's services	4,399	↑ 880	Children looked after numbers have increased by 7 since month 4, and there continue to be increasing numbers of high cost placements, including extremely costly emergency arrangements for children where there is no regulated placement. Alongside this there is continued use of agency staff to fill vacancies.
Adults Services	1,475	↓ 123	Older Adults budgets have seen a dramatic influx of clients requiring services as we move out of the pandemic, with continued pressures from hospitals to discharge patients into the social care sector, and some clients requiring more intense services due to delayed health care during the pandemic. Some in-house services are currently undergoing reviews, with in year savings being used to partially offset over spends.
Additional Learning Needs	499	↓ 34	Due to placement costs outside of our own schools (£313k), a reduction in income from other Councils for out of County pupils attending our schools (£108k), and additional support for pupils attending our own schools (£78k).
Housing	1,521	↑ 194	Primarily due to national policy change impacting upon the service and where our housing costs in relation to the needs of the Homeless are not attracting full funding. £228k in net additional costs, and £1.3m where by emergency accommodation placements do not allow the Council to claim full housing benefit subsidy.
MonLife	462	↓ 17	Due to the sections inability to generate the expected income targets in relation to Leisure and Outdoor education services.
Passenger Transport Unit (PTU)	377	↓ 47	Increased pay, fuel and repair costs have meant that operators have handed back contracts resulting in re-negotiated external prices or increased in-house provision required.
Non-teaching pay award	2,017	No change	An allowance is made within the forecast for the result of pay award negotiations over and above the 3.5% budgeted for. Negotiations have concluded between local government employer's representatives and trade unions which will result in an overall award of approximately 6.25%.
Car Parks & Civil Parking Enforcement	242	↓ 13	Parking enforcement fines will not hit budgeted targets and in addition there are over spends in expenditure primarily in transport, premises and software costs.
Markets	137	↑ 8	The number of traders has dropped off considerably since Covid-19 and this has meant the service is struggling to meet income targets alongside increases in waste disposal costs.
Council tax	(504)	↑ 38	Out-performance of budgeted Council tax collection.
Net Borrowing costs	(250)	↓ 25	A reduction in net budgeted borrowing costs reflective of a lower than budgeted interest rate environment at the start of the year, and significant capital slippage at the end of 2021/22 delaying borrowing need.
Staff vacancies	(872)	↓ 376	Significant staff vacancies being carried in the establishment.
Rental income	(172)	↓ 172	Recovery of the rental of Innovation House from the Ukrainian grant funding scheme.
Solar Farm & Sustainability	(153)	↓ 40	Improved income from our Solar Farm and PV installations caused by the increased market rates for energy.
Neighbourhood services	(164)	↑ 63	Primarily due to the improvement gained from the installation of LEDs in our street-lighting over and above budgeted levels (£125k), and Waste contract savings resulting from a strong recycling market (£29k). A downturn in the recycle market has impacted forecasts since month 4.

3.8. Alongside the efforts to put shape to the overall budget recovery plan, it should be noted that the Month 6 forecast includes a variety of measures that services have already undertaken in efforts to arrest the over spend position and in moderating cost, or exploring additional funding. This has resulted in significant forecast savings as noted above offsetting the increases in cost reported primarily within the areas of Children's services and Housing.

4. Ongoing budgetary risks

- 4.1. Whilst immediate mitigating action has been taken to arrest the significant forecast in-year deficit we need to be acutely aware of the further financial risks presenting during 2022/23 and in light of the turbulent socio-economic environment currently facing households, businesses and the public sector alike.
- 4.2. The Cost of living crisis continues to have a significant impact on our communities, with a growing need for additional Council services, the impact upon demand for the Council's income generating services, and risks around future debt recovery. Alongside this, the wider economic and inflationary environment continues to impact service delivery, both in respect of cost and supply chain disruption, and in presenting continued recruitment challenges.
- 4.3. The wider and longer lasting indirect impact of the pandemic continues to impact Council services, particularly in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional learning needs. There remains significant latent and complex demands in these areas as a result, and some of these impacts will take a significant period of time to unwind.
- 4.4. Significant savings from existing staff vacancies have already been factored into forecasts and alongside this there is very little scope for further savings in financing and treasury budgets in light of a rising interest rate environment.
- 4.5. Importantly the overall outturn position continues to be supported by £2.65m of identified eligible expenditure to be funded from capital receipts under the flexible use of capital receipts directive. Reliance on these mitigations was a short-term measure only and is not currently sustainable at this level beyond 2022/23 as capital receipts forecast to be generated start to fall away.
- 4.6. In considering all of the above, this presents a unique and unprecedented operating environment for the Council, and one which severely curtails the immediate ability of the Council to influence its primary expenditure and income drivers, and therefore its ability to be able to bear down on cost, or increase income to any significant degree without resorting to more extreme measures.
- 4.7. As we look to the remainder of the financial year the key financial focus now centres itself on two significant areas that will be vital to ensuring that the Council ends the year in a financially sustainable position:
1. Delivering on the range of service budget mitigations identified by the Strategic Leadership Team of at least £2.185m, and that involve a mix of cost moderation and reduction in service delivery;

2. Close monitoring and management of the operational and financial performance of Children’s services, Adult’s services, and Housing with a view to reassessing and considering what our financially viable “core offer” is in relation to these services.
- 4.8. When looking beyond this financial year, it is important to note that many of the savings that will assist the in-year budget recovery are one-off or temporary in nature and will not necessarily bring any further benefit to future year’s budgets. Conversely, the majority of those pressures highlighted above are demand driven and recurrent in nature and are being scrutinised for consideration as part of the wider budget process for 2023/24 and beyond.

5. Assessment of identified budget mitigation measures

Table 3: Summary of budget mitigation measures identified at Month 6

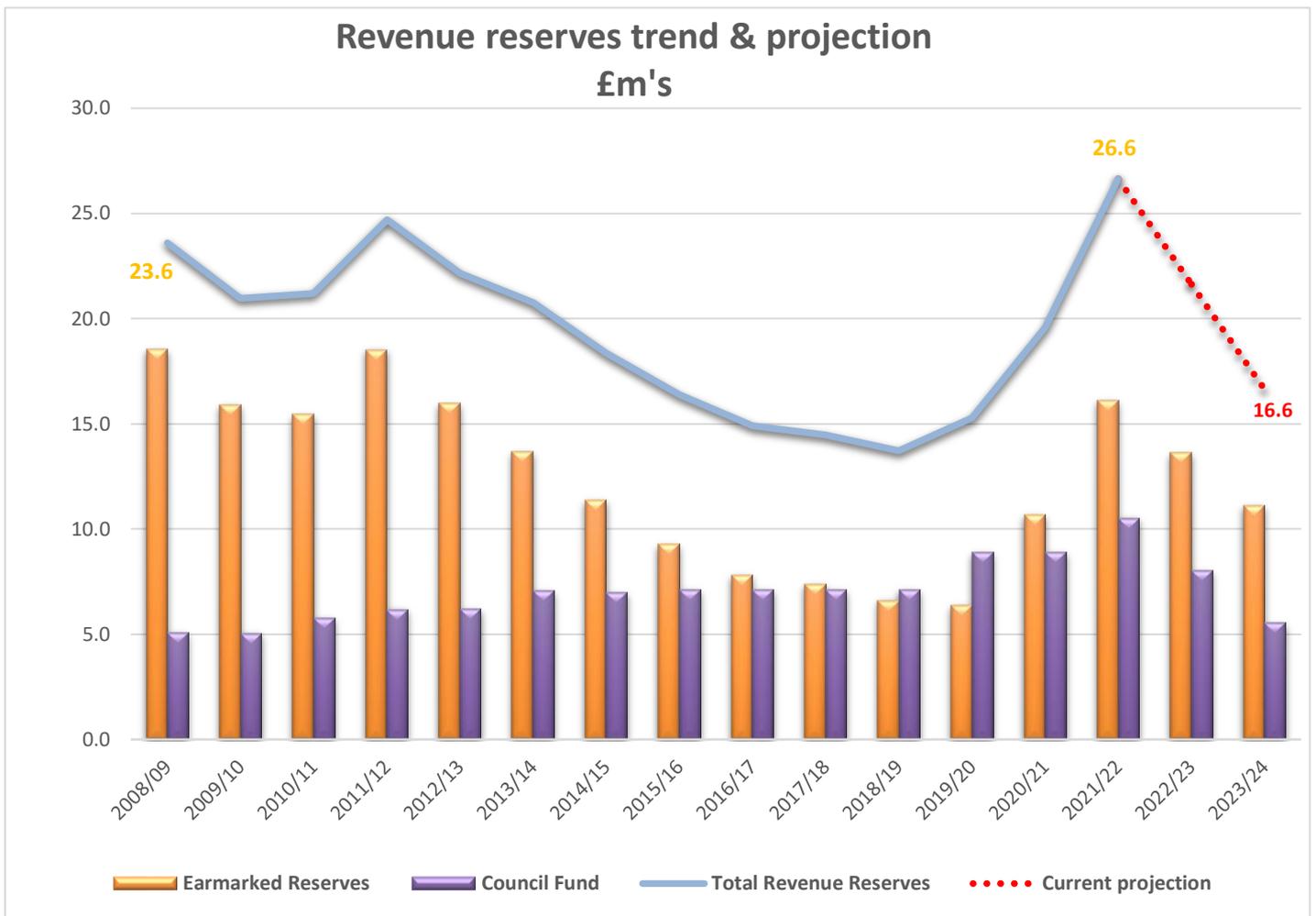
Mitigation measure	Application	Risks	Forecast usage
Revenue Reserves	Revenue reserves have been replenished by approximately £11m over past two years, with particular focus at the end of 2021/22 in providing protection against some the budget risks now manifesting (In particular Social care, Homelessness, Leisure income, and Pay).	Reserves only provide a finite and one-off source of mitigation and do not address recurrent and structural budgetary deficits. It is essential that a prudent reserve level continues to be in place to ensure ongoing financial resilience in light of the 2023/24 budget situation where unprecedented pressures are materialising around demand, inflation, energy, pay, and levels of funding.	£5m
Capitalisation directive	Identification of further revenue costs, over and above the £2.65m already budgeted, that can be categorised as enabling service transformation, and that can be legitimately funded from capital receipts under the regulations.	Capital receipts are a one-off source of funding and further use under this measure will restrict the amount available for future capital investment.	£1.27m
Funding	Further unbudgeted grant funding becoming available during the remainder of the year. Of particular note, since month 4 there has been notification from Welsh Government that no further funding will be made available in respect of winter social care pressures. (Circa £1m in previous years.) In mitigation of this, it is estimated that £700k of Social care workforce sustainability grant can be released to aid in budget recovery due to the ongoing inability to recruit or procure care to the levels required to meet unmet care needs.	Nil risk up to £0.7m level. In respect of further funding, all parts of the public sector are facing significant budget challenges in the current global economic environment and notably Welsh Government have made significant funding commitments in 2022/23 in relation to Free School meal provision, the Ukrainian crisis, and the Cost of Living crisis. Further funding commitments to Local Government therefore come	£0.7m

Mitigation measure	Application	Risks	Forecast usage
		with a significant level of uncertainty.	
Cost moderation / Reduction in services	<p>Non-pay cost reduction in supplies and services, third party, premises, and transport budgets.</p> <p>Pay budget cost reduction - significant vacancies are currently being held across services with many being forecast to be filled during the Autumn. Given the current recruitment market challenges it is expected that further savings could materialise.</p> <p>Reduce the level of service provision, either through reduced capacity or by the switching off of discretionary services.</p>	As outlined individually within Appendix 4.	£2.185m

6. Usable revenue reserve levels

- 6.1. Usable revenue reserves (excluding schools) have been replenished by approximately £11m over past two financial years, and stand at £26.6m at the start of 2022/23.
- 6.2. Reserves have been able to be replenished as above through the pandemic as a result of significant Welsh Government hardship funding and one-off grants. This reversed a continuing trend of depleting balances since 2011/12 through a period of financial austerity and challenging budget rounds for Council's.
- 6.3. Reserves are an integral part of the Council's financial strategy and are used to create long-term budgetary stability. As well as being available to fund unexpected funding pressures, they enable the Council to manage organisational change without undue impact on council tax payers and can also be an important funding source to support 'invest to save' initiatives designed to reduce the ongoing cost of providing services.
- 6.4. **Table 4** below outlines the trend in revenue reserves levels over time and includes a projection based upon drawing on £5m of revenue reserves as outlined in the above budget recovery plan. For illustrative purposes only, and to demonstrate how such a reliance on reserves would impact upon reserve sustainability, the table makes the further assumption that if no corrective budget action is taken to reduce the Council's overall costs for 2023/24 that £5m of such support would continue to be required.

Table 4: Revenue reserve trend and projection



6.5. Despite the replenishment in reserves over the past two financial years, balances remain at the lower end of the scale on an all-Wales comparison when comparing reserve balances as a percentage of the Council’s net revenue budget.

6.6. To put the balances in context, the balance of revenue reserves of £23.6m in 2008/09 represented 18.5% of the Council’s net revenue budget, whilst in 2021/22 the balance of £26.6m represents only 14.9%. If projections continue as estimated, this would fall to 9.3% by the end of 2023/24.

7. Progress against 2022/23 budgeted mandated service savings

7.1. The 2022/23 budget included mandated savings totalling £2.129m and the progress against these is summarised in **table 3** below and in more detail in **appendix 2**.

Table 5: Progress against mandated savings

Directorate	2022/23 Budgeted Savings £000	Savings forecast £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings Unachievable £000	% Achieved
Social Care & Health	(120)	(120)	0	0	100%
Communities & Place	(959)	(959)	0	0	100%
Resources	(300)	(300)	0	0	100%

Chief Executives Unit	(33)	(33)	0	0	100%
Corporate Costs & Levies	(717)	(717)	0	0	100%
Total	(2,129)	(2,129)	0	0	100%

7.2. It is pleasing to note the forecast 100% delivery of mandated savings, especially in light of the ongoing challenges faced by services in current operating conditions. Finance officers will continue to work with services to ensure that these mandated savings are fully delivered as well as identifying any further areas of service efficiency which may deliver additional savings.

8. School balances

8.1. From a financial perspective, 2021/22 was another unprecedented year for schools who continued to receive several significant Welsh Government grants to support them and their pupils during, and following a period of significant disruption to learning. This resulted in all but one of our schools bringing forward a surplus balance into the 2022/23 financial year, with the vast majority carrying significant surplus balances above those guided by Welsh Government school funding regulations (£50k for a Primary, £100k for a Secondary or Special school).

8.2. The Authority requires schools carrying balances above those levels guided by Welsh Government to provide investment plans setting out how they intended to spend the excess balances being held. These plans informed the budget process for 2022/23.

8.3. At month 6, the forecast is for an overall contribution from school balances of £4.9m, resulting in a forecast surplus at year-end of £2.05m.

Table 6: Forecast movement in school balances for 2022/23

Draft Council Fund Outturn 2022/23 – School Balances Summary outturn position at Month 6	(A) Opening Reserves (Surplus) / Deficit Position 2022/23	(B) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 4	(C) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 6	(D) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 9	(A+C) Forecast Reserve Balances at 2022/23 Outturn
	£000's	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cluster					
Abergavenny	(2,145)	1,181	1,272		(873)
Caldicot	(2,165)	1,570	1,284		(881)
Chepstow	(695)	863	899		204
Monmouth	(1,869)	1,425	1,353		(516)
Special	(82)	106	91		9
Total	(6,956)	5,145	4,900		(2,057)

- 8.4. The budget for 2022/23 made allowance for a pay award for schools staff up to a threshold of 3%, with any award agreed above this level to be funded from schools balances. The above forecast is predicated upon a further pressure of 2% over and above the 3% budgeted based upon the current level of pay offer put forward by the independent Welsh pay review body. This accounts for £1.2m of the overall £4.9m forecast draw upon school balances this year.
- 8.5. It should be noted that the teaching unions are currently balloting over industrial action in respect of the current pay offer and that this represents an associated downside risk to the current forecasts in place.
- 8.6. The investment plans enacted by schools look to deliver the best learning outcomes for pupils in line with the purpose of the grant funding provided over the past two financial years. **Appendices 1 & 3** outline the forecast movement in individual school balances for the year, and whilst it is clear that the investment plans enacted will bring many school balances more in line with those levels guided by Welsh Government, it is disappointing to note that a further seven schools are now forecast to move into deficit by year-end.
- 8.7. There remains significant concern from a financial perspective that the inherent structural budget deficits that led to a significant number of schools being in deficit pre-pandemic in some cases still remain. Whilst the current economic climate is severely challenging, schools balances are designed to provide a level of financial resilience to mitigate and smooth such risks and are not expected to fund ongoing day-to-day expenditure. Officers will continue to work closely with those schools of concern and look to aid the return to a more sustainable budget plan over the medium term.

9. Capital outturn forecast

- 9.1. The capital expenditure forecast detailed in **appendix 1** indicates a net forecast over spend of £310k, with numerous pressures presenting themselves totalling £1.165m, offset by the identification of over-capacity in the Disabled facilities grant budget of £855k.

Scheme Category	Scheme	Over / (Under spend) £000's	Comment
Development Schemes Over £250k	Crick Road Care Home	151	Additional costs in fitting-out equipment required for resident's privacy. An additional bid has been submitted to ABuHB for additional RIF funding to offset the over spend.
Development Schemes Over £250k	Property Acquisition for Children and Young People with Complex Needs	114	Additional refurbishment costs over and above original cost projection. A bid has been made to the Regional Integration Fund and we are waiting for a decision to offset the forecasted overspend.
Development Schemes Over £250k	Abergavenny borough theatre refurbishment	333	Currently running at a projected overspend due to increased construction costs over and above original cost projection due to unforeseen lighting costs and over-run

			charges from contractor. If further funding cannot be obtained from joint partners in the project, then additional borrowing funded from the service budget will be utilised as per the cabinet decision.
Infrastructure	Tintern Wireworks Bridge	130	The refurbishment of the Tintern Wireworks Bridge at Tintern in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council is currently forecast to overspend by £130k, due to the complexity of restoring this listed structure and the increased cost of materials.
Specific Grant Funded	Essential flooding works	360	Cost overruns for essential flooding works required at Capel-y-Ffin and Glan-Grywny embankments for works that couldn't be delayed any further. Urgently seeking clarification of potential Welsh Government flooding grants that could offset.
Specific Grant Funded	Siltbuster	76	The Siltbuster project is forecast to be £76k overspent due to increased costs. This will be funded from additional borrowing which will be funded by the Highways revenue budget.
Disabled Facilities grants	Disabled Facilities grants	(855)	There is an off-setting under spend on Disabled Facilities grants as referrals (over 50 to date) that have to be completed within year have been reached. Part of the overall budget assigned for DFG's can be released to aid in meeting alternative capital pressures, or in reducing future revenue pressures.

- 9.2. Finance officers will continue to work with the project managers concerned to seek budget mitigation measures, either through cost reduction measures or through the alternative funding mechanisms identified above.
- 9.3. As outline in **appendix 1**, nine schemes are indicating delays at this early stage in the year, with £6.2m forecast slippage following revision of project timescales. Whilst the month 6 forecast highlights £6.2m of capital slippage, previous year's trends would indicate that this will increase substantially as the year progresses, and as more certainty becomes available both in terms cost and contract delivery timescales.
- 9.4. The current economic environment continues to have a significant impact on the overall capital programme with cost inflation and supply chain issues continuing to present a challenge to project delivery. Whilst every effort is being made by project managers to work within the budgetary plans and timescales set, it is inevitable as the year progresses that further cost pressures will materialise. This will in turn limit the scope of project delivery, especially in the areas of property maintenance and Infrastructure works where less schemes can be delivered within the overall budget allocated.
- 9.5. The forecast movement in capital receipts balances for the year is shown below. Whilst overall balances on the face of it are healthy, there remains the risk that forecast receipts receivable for 2023/24 onwards are at comparatively low levels, and combined with the fact

that receipts are continuing to be used to subsidise the revenue budget through capitalisation direction means that the scope for further capital investment funded via receipts will be limited.

Table 7: Forecast movement in capital receipt balances

Month 6 update	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1st April	10,414	12,398	13,509	12,565	11,068
Capital receipts used for financing	(3,776)	(1,547)	(1,194)	(1,094)	(1,094)
Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(2,650)	(507)	(507)	(507)	(507)
Capital receipts received	7,071	-	-	-	-
Capital receipts forecast	1,338	3,165	756	104	104
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	12,398	13,509	12,565	11,068	9,572

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

10.1. The report itself covers the resource implications of the entirety of the revenue and capital budget activity during the year. There are no further resource implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

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

11.1. This report provides Members with information on the forecast revenue and capital outturn position of the Authority and carries no decisions. There are therefore no equality of future generations' implications directly arising from this report.

12. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Feedback from Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee 21st November 2022:

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Detailed outturn statements and directorate commentaries

Appendix 2 – Progress against mandated budget savings

Appendix 3 – Forecast movement in individual school balances

Appendix 4 – Detailed service budget recovery plan

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Overall Revenue Position

Table 1: 2022/23 Revenue budget summary forecast at Month 6

Service Area	Original Budget 2022/23	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M6	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M4	Forecast Variance M4 to M6
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	57,877	312	58,189	63,581	5,711	5,056	655
Children & Young People	58,990	523	59,513	60,245	732	741	(9)
Communities & Place	23,588	99	23,687	24,472	759	616	143
MonLife	4,430	137	4,567	4,957	463	479	(16)
Chief Executives Unit	3,155	89	3,244	2,820	(288)	0	(288)
People & Governance	4,663	70	4,733	4,884	28	0	28
Resources	6,660	1,004	7,664	8,246	609	756	(147)
Corporate Costs & Levies	26,207	(554)	25,653	27,549	1,896	1,918	(22)
Net Cost of Services	185,570	1,680	187,250	196,754	9,909	9,567	342
Appropriations	6,652	(1,204)	5,448	5,604	(250)	(225)	(24)
Expenditure to be Financed	192,223	476	192,699	202,358	9,659	9,342	318
Financing	(192,223)	(476)	(192,699)	(193,202)	(503)	(542)	38
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	9,155	9,155	8,800	355

Table 2: 2022/23 Revenue budget detailed forecast at Month 6

Service Area	Original Budget 2022/23	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M6	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M4	Forecast Variance M4 to M6
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Adult Services	9,548	(47)	9,501	9,073	(428)	(355)	(73)
Children Services	17,795	33	17,828	22,227	4,399	3,519	879
Community Care	26,111	269	26,380	28,449	2,069	2,081	(11)
Commissioning	1,418	(265)	1,152	1,056	(96)	(74)	(22)
Partnerships	436	8	445	445	0	0	0
Public Protection	1,910	(9)	1,901	1,739	(162)	(61)	(101)
Resources & Performance	659	4	663	592	(71)	(54)	(17)
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	57,877	(7)	57,870	63,581	5,711	5,056	655
Individual Schools Budget	47,775	500	48,276	48,498	222	176	47
Resources	1,162	5	1,167	1,178	11	32	(21)
Standards	10,053	17	10,070	10,569	499	533	(35)
Children & Young People	58,990	523	59,513	60,245	732	741	(9)
Enterprise, Housing & Community Animation	2,921	(84)	2,837	3,120	283	337	(54)
Facilities & Fleet Management	6,958	3,636	10,594	11,158	564	511	53
Neighbourhood Services	11,944	(3,175)	8,769	8,605	(164)	(227)	63
Placemaking, Highways & Flood	1,765	(252)	1,513	1,589	76	(5)	81
Communities & Place	23,588	125	23,713	24,472	759	616	143
Countryside & Culture	1,101	22	1,122	1,117	(5)	(3)	(2)
Finance & Business Development	2,263	21	2,283	2,276	(7)	14	(21)
Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure	1,067	23	1,089	1,564	475	469	6
MonLife	4,430	65	4,494	4,957	463	479	(17)
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service	3,155	(47)	3,108	2,820	(288)	0	(288)
Chief Executives	3,155	(47)	3,108	2,820	(288)	0	(288)

Service Area	Original Budget 2022/23	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M6	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M4	Forecast Variance M4 to M6
Communications	239	2	241	275	34	0	34
Democratic Services	1,597	132	1,730	1,757	27	42	(15)
Emergency Planning	158	2	160	184	24	0	24
Legal and Land Charges	963	7	969	962	(7)	(29)	22
People	1,706	51	1,757	1,706	(51)	(13)	(38)
People & Governance	4,663	194	4,856	4,884	28	0	28
Commercial, Corporate & landlord Services	1,115	532	1,647	1,449	(198)	71	(268)
Finance	2,659	430	3,089	3,960	871	749	123
Future Monmouthshire	4	1	5	0	(5)	(5)	0
Information Communication Technology	2,883	14	2,897	2,837	(60)	(58)	(2)
Resources	6,660	977	7,637	8,246	609	756	(148)
Precepts & Levies	22,319	312	22,630	22,630	0	(1)	1
Coroner's	171	0	171	171	0	0	0
Archives	196	0	196	196	0	0	0
Corporate Management	385	0	385	348	(37)	(2)	(34)
Non Distributed Costs (NDC)	651	0	651	651	0	0	0
Strategic Initiatives	867	(867)	0	2,017	2,017	2,017	0
Insurance	1,619	1	1,620	1,536	(84)	(96)	12
Corporate Costs & Levies	26,207	(554)	25,653	27,549	1,896	1,918	(22)
Net Cost of Services	185,570	1,275	186,845	196,754	9,909	9,567	342
Interest & Investment Income	(100)	0	(100)	(649)	(549)	(192)	(357)
Interest Payable & Similar Charges	3,956	0	3,956	4,628	672	192	480
Charges Required under Regulation	6,714	0	6,714	6,667	(47)	(51)	4
Other Investment Income	0	0	0	0	0	(49)	49
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	(3,520)	0	(3,520)	(3,845)	(325)	(325)	0

Service Area	Original Budget 2022/23	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M6	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M4	Forecast Variance M4 to M6
Contributions to Reserves	188	0	188	188	0	0	0
Contributions from reserves	(586)	(799)	(1,385)	(1,385)	0	200	(200)
Appropriations	6,652	(799)	5,853	5,604	(250)	(225)	(24)
Expenditure to be Financed	192,223	476	192,699	202,358	9,659	9,342	317
General Government Grants	(77,524)	0	(77,524)	(77,524)	0	0	0
Non Domestic Rates	(34,753)	0	(34,753)	(34,753)	0	0	0
Council tax	(87,309)	(476)	(87,785)	(88,085)	(300)	(320)	20
Council Tax Benefit Support	7,363	0	7,363	7,160	(203)	(222)	18
Financing	(192,223)	(476)	(192,699)	(193,202)	(503)	(542)	38
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	9,155	9,155	8,800	355

DIRECTORATE – DIVISION VARIANCE COMMENTS

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & SAFEGUARDING DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	5,056	5,711	0	0

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & SAFEGUARDING DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

For the midpoint of this financial year we are predicting an over spend of £5.711m based on known commitments and expectations against the directorate budget. Since month 4 the over spend has risen by £655K as a result of increasing expenditure within the Children's Services division.

The in-year budget recovery plan attached to this report provides details of the mitigations that the service has identified and is implementing to arrest the concerning trend in increasing costs within this budget area. It should be noted that both Adult's and Children's services remain in a highly volatile operating position with risks continuing to be associated with demand levels, the complexity of demand, inflationary pressures, and labour shortages.

Within the Children's Service budget there is an estimated over spend of £4.399m, due to the increasing numbers and costs of high cost placements, including extremely costly emergency arrangements for children where there is no regulated placement. Another influencing factor is the continued use of 11 agency staff to fill vacancies and stabilise the workforce within the division. This financial year sees the full effect of costs resulting from the removal by Welsh Government of the COVID hardship fund, Social Care Recovery Fund and Social Care Pressures grants. As at the end of September the number of Children Looked After increased by 7 since month 4 to a total of 211.

The combined Adults budget is forecast to over spend by £1.475m, which remains largely within predictions at month 4. As with month 4 the over spend has been as a result of the full year effect in costs to be borne by the budget from the loss of three vital Welsh Government funding streams. Older Adults budgets have seen a dramatic influx of clients requiring services as we move out of the pandemic, with continued pressures from hospitals to discharge patients into the social care sector, with some clients requiring more intense services due to delayed health care during the pandemic. A few in house services are currently undergoing reviews, with in year savings being used to partially offset over spends. This division is currently benefitting from a number of external grant funding streams, the main one being the Social Care Workforce Sustainability Grant of £1.1M, used to offset the over spend and limit the effects of Winter Pressures.

Public Protection is at present forecasting an under spend of £163k due to savings from vacant posts, which are currently in the process of being recruited to.

Adult Services

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(355)	(428)	0	0

The under spend is largely in the My Day My Life and Budden Crescent services and a review will be commissioned to determine the delivery model moving forward as we exit the pandemic and what is required to meet the future needs of our disability clients.

Children Services

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	3,519	4,399	0	0

Due to the increasing numbers and costs of high cost placements, including extremely costly emergency arrangements for children where there is no regulated placement. There is continued use of 11 agency staff to fill vacancies and help stabilise the workforce. This financial year sees the full

effect of costs resulting from the removal by Welsh Government of the COVID hardship fund, Social Care Recovery Fund and Social Care Pressures grants.				
Community Care				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	2,081	2,069	0	0
This financial year we have made 34 additional care home placements which has added to the over spend, along with the increase demand, especially for 24 hour care provision for domiciliary care to aid hospital discharge, to meet the challenges of an ageing population, but as a result of the pandemic clients are of a higher dependency as a result of delayed health care. This division is benefiting from a £1.1M Social Care Workforce Sustainability grant to help offset over spends and limit the effects of Winter Pressures.				
Commissioning				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	(74)	(95)	0	0
Saving from staff vacancy which is currently planned to go out to recruitment.				
Partnerships				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast.				
Public Protection				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	(61)	(163)	0	0
Savings from staff vacancies.				
Resources & Performance				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(54)	(71)	0	0
Savings from vacancies which are currently out to recruitment.				
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	741	732	0	0
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:				
The Directorate's Month 6 position is an over spend of £732k, which is a reduction of £9k on the Month 4 forecast. This improvement is largely due to forecasted ALN cost reductions, reported in the Standards section below, alongside some smaller savings in ICT costs and staff vacancy; offset by increased costs in relation to back pay and legal costs as noted within the ISB section.				
Individual Schools Budget				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn

Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	175	222	0	0
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The £47k increase in over spend compared to the Month 4 forecast is due to the following:-

- back pay for staff (£26k)
- legal costs (£17k)

The remaining ISB over spend of £175k is due to the following, which was not included in the budget:-

- funding of two protected salaries and a Teaching & Learning Responsibility payment (TLR) which falls to the Authority to fund (£45k)
- back pay for staff, which was not included in the MTFP. This was due to the late agreement for the pay award and the budget had already been set (£100k)
- payment for a bespoke home to school transport arrangement to Caldicot School pending a final catchment area review (£20k)
- School Staff Wellbeing Project (£9k)

Resources

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	32	11	0	0

There is a £32k over spend due to several cost centres not being able to meet the 2% staff employee cost efficiency savings target fully.

This has been offset since Month 4 by a £21k reduction in over spend due to:

- ICT saving i.e. the Cloud going live early in March 2022, rather than July 2022 (£15k)
- vacancy saving (the position has now been filled) (£6k)

Standards

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	533	499	0	0

The over spend of £533k at month 4, was largely due to ALN, which had seen costs increase due to the following:

- Several pupils have either moved into Monmouthshire or have left a Monmouthshire school to attend a school in their home County, so we are no longer able to recoup the income from other LA's (£68k)
- 2 new pupils attending an independent school (£105k)
- Full year costs for 2 pupils currently at an Independent school, who decided to stay on for Year 14 (were previously leaving at the end of Year 13 / the Summer Term (£60k))
- 1 pupil accessing SALT and Seirrah Therapies (£24k)
- 1 pupil attending MonLife (£30k)
- 3 new pupils attending schools in Blaenau Gwent & increase in costs for an existing pupil (£105k)
- 2 new pupils attending schools in Newport (£17k)
- 1 new pupil moving to a Bristol school (£9k)
- 1 new pupil potentially to attend a school in Torfaen, currently going through Tribunal (£50k)
- Staff costs due to the expansion of Pembroke SNRB (£32k)
- Blaenau Gwent contacted us to advise they had been paying transport costs, that we were liable for, as the pupil is a Looked After Child (£19k)

The remainder of the over spend is due to additional staff costs in the Education Welfare Support Team (EWS) and the EWS and Psychology Service being unable to currently meet the 2% staff efficiency savings.

The £54k reduction in over spend against the Month 4 Forecast, is due to the following:

- 6 pupils no longer attending out of county schools (-£129k), offset by;
- 3 further pupils have left a Monmouthshire school to attend a school in their home County, so we are no longer able to recoup the income from other LA's (£40k)
- 1 new pupil attending an independent school, which has been offset by some smaller savings regarding existing pupil placement costs (£31k)
- Backfill costs for a staff member who is supporting the Deri View Virtual School (SNRB) and Outreach (£27k).

COMMUNITIES & PLACE DIRECTORATE

	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	616	758	0	0

COMMUNITIES & PLACE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The Directorate is forecasting an outturn position of £758k adverse at Month 6. The inflationary rises and a post-covid environment are seeing an impact upon the cost of the provision of key services. In addition, national policy changes are impacting upon the services particularly within school catering and housing which are not attracting full funding.

Each service area sets out the detail behind these projects in the next sections of this report. Across all services, we will continue to ensure that all eligible costs are claimed from any funding available.

Enterprise, Housing & Community Animation

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	337	283	0	0

Enterprise & Community Animation is forecasting a £283k over spend at month 6, this is mainly due to:

- **Borough Theatre** – £20k over spend – The completion of the refurbishment works will now run into January and this will affect the number of shows that can be scheduled between now and year end, impacting turnover and causing a projected £20k shortfall against budget. Officers are looking at ways to mitigate this position.
- **Enterprise Mgt** - £28k over spend – Due to an increase in staff costs over and above available budget and an increase in contribution to City Deal.
- **Housing** - £302k over spend, this can be broken down into these main areas: -
 - **Homelessness** – £228k over spend – Current projections for the year indicate the authority will spend circa £2.330m on B&B accommodation for our homeless and an additional £688k on ancillary spend including security and damage repairs, which in part relates to accommodating those with higher support needs. The majority of this cost will be offset by pre-paid Covid-19 grant (£760k), Housing Prevention grant (£509k) and Housing Benefit (£1.521m) but the service will still be left with a £228k over spend against budget to manage. This is a volatile area where accommodation demands can fluctuate month by month, officers are reviewing placement requirements to try and mitigate this cost by year end.
 - **Shared Housing & Private Leasing** - £29k over spend – Current projections are forecasting that maintenance costs will exceed budget. The repairs expenditure relates to an increase in handing properties back to landlords withdrawing from private renting and higher turnover of properties relating to properties not being used to prevent

homelessness, but as temporary accommodation. The receipt of rental payments can be volatile so this figure could change between now and year end.

- **Strategic Services & Renovation Grants** – net £26k over spend – Mainly due to additional software and subscription costs in strategic services and increased administration costs for renovation grants.
- **Sewage Treatment Plants** - £20k over spend - due to delays in progressing the plant replacement projects which means the plants have to be emptied until the works are completed to resolve the issues.
- **Business Growth & Enterprise** – £46k under spend – Due in the main to the Strategic Operations Team forecasting a £44k under spend, recruitment into the team is ongoing but delays in filling posts have resulted in further staff saving.
- **Community & P/Ships development** - £22k under spend - due to the ability to passport staff costs to UKG Ukraine funding.

All other service areas are reporting a balanced budget.

Facilities & Fleet Management

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	511	564	0	0

Facilities & Fleet management are forecasting a £564k over spend, due to -

- **Schools Catering** – £129k over spend – No change from Month 4 projection. The cost of increased staff recruitment alongside food inflation has driven the total cost of the catering service above the available funding. WG have indicated the possibility of further funding later in the year to cover off any shortfalls so there is a potential that this will be covered.
- **Passenger Transport** – £377k over spend – Cost of living inflation increases have had a material impact on the PTU service, the additional burden of increased pay, fuel and repair costs have meant that operators have handed back contracts and our in-house budgets are being stretched due to :-
 - **External Commissioning** – Currently reporting a £204k over spend due to an increase in external contract prices and contract variations from September. This figure includes the contracts that were handed back and retendered at month 04. The forecast is based on the payment figure as at October.
 - **Internal Operations** – £173k over spend – due to the need to purchase vehicles and employ extra staff to run contracts in-house as a consequence of operator hand backs. There is a £33k improvement from M4 due to an increase in Private hire income as we are seeing a return to pre-Covid-19 levels.
- **Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme** – £13k over spend - This is due to a reduction in the number of members of the car salary sacrifice scheme resulting in actual savings falling below budgeted levels.
- **Fleet maintenance** - £99k over spend – This is mainly due to the effect of inflation increases on fuel & spare parts, in addition employee costs have increased due to the regrading of part of the workforce as a consequence of a job evaluation exercise.
- **Building Cleaning & Public Conveniences (PCs)** - £55k under spend – this is due to a saving on business rates as we no longer pay them on PC's (£25k) and improved turnover in Cleaning (£30k).

Neighbourhood Services

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
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Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(227)	(164)	0	0
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Neighbourhood Services are forecasting to under spend by £164k, this is due to-

- **Highways, SWTRA & Streetlighting** – £135k under spend - This is due to Streetlighting as a result of 1) Energy has underspent by £125k - the budget was set at 19/20 consumption levels, this has been found to be too high due to the improvement gained since then from the installation of LEDs, this has meant our actual cost of energy has fallen well below budget. 2) Staff saving of £10k due to the delay in filling a vacant post. Highways Operations and SWTRA & External Clients are both forecasting a break-even budget.

Waste & Street Scene - £29k under spend – The under spend has reduced by £63k since Month 4, this is mainly due to a change within Waste services where we are now forecasting a break-even position due to a downturn in the recycle market and an increase in staff costs due to a change in bank holiday entitlement that was not known at Month 4. This has partially been offset by an under spend in Grounds Maintenance due to a previously reported over spend in fuel now being reflected in Transport as a result of the centralisation of budgets.

Placemaking, Highways & Flood

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(5)	76	0	0

Placemaking, Highways & Flood is forecasting to over spend by £76k, this is as a result of -

- **Planning & Building Control** – £71k over spend – Over spend in Planning due to the inability to make staff vacancy savings (£21k), hardware and software costs to update microfiche system (£59k) offset by a net improvement in income (£9k).
- **Planning Policy & LDP** – Break-Even.
- **Car Parks & Civil Parking Enforcement** - £242k over spend – due to a shortfall in parking enforcement fines of £168k coupled with over spends in expenditure primarily in transport, premises and software costs of £74k.

Highways management & flooding - £237k under spend – position has improved since month 4 by £100k as a result of an increase in road closure and SAB income, the remaining under spend is due to delays in filling vacant posts.

MONLIFE DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	479	462	0	0

MonLife DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The Monlife directorate is forecasting to over spend by £462k, the two main areas of focus continue to be leisure and outdoor services, with these areas providing the most significant financial challenges in the current economy. Monlife are completing deep dives of each business unit assessing the best options for future sustainability and the tactics needed to improve performance in these areas. Future development work includes working closely with CYP and Social Services on other programs to reduce our over spend and ensure the future sustainability of our services. MonLife have seen an improvement of £17k since month 4 this is mainly due to reduced supplies and services.

(Monlife) Countryside & Culture

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(3)	(5)	0	0

Countryside & Culture is forecasting to under spend by £5k due to a small under spend on third party contracts.

(Monlife) Finance & Business Development

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	14	(8)	0	0

Finance & Business Development is forecasting to under spend by £8k the variance from month 4 to month 6 relates to reduced supplies and services.

(Monlife) Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	469	475	0	0

Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure is forecasting to over spend by £475k, this is mainly due to: -

Leisure Services - £279K over spend mainly due to the sections inability to generate the expected income targets. Memberships have grown significantly over the past 12 months and recovered to pre-pandemic levels; however, this still falls short of the income target set for the section built on a model pre-pandemic which looked at commercial growth over a 3-year period. Due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and Covid-19 this model is unachievable at present, we continue to work hard with teams to mitigate the financial loss and we hope that the significant investment in our site and targeted campaigns will assist in delivering more income.

Youth & Education - £196k over spend mainly due to: -

Youth Services - £16k over spend due to increased transportation costs where changes in licence legislation has meant the section has needed to buy in transportation rather than use existing staffing.

Outdoor Adventure Service - £180k over spend. The sections current income target was derived from a pre-pandemic business model that focused on a 3-year delivery plan first focusing on MCC internal schools and then moving on to commercial focused model. The impact of the pandemic has meant that the delivery of this model has been delayed this has led to a shortfall in income due to schools being reluctant to return to residential model (this is slowly changing). A project working group is set up looking at way to mitigate the financial loss part of this work will involve working closely with schools who show massive interest in the outdoor learning as the new curriculum in Wales is adopted which looks to support creative lessons with real life meaning..

CHIEF EXECUTIVES UNIT DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	(288)	0	0

HEAD OF POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMENTARY:

The current underspend of £288k is being achieved by numerous vacant posts across the department. This means existing staff are doing more and is not a sustainable long-term position. The month 6 forecast is also artificially inflated by the delay in purchasing a new telephony system to replace the current end-of-life solution. The position also reflects income to support refugees which is presently sat in the Chief Executive's budgets but will be used to offset overspends in other departments such as housing, community development, education and Passenger Transport who have been providing essential services to refugees from Ukraine.

Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Experience				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	(288)	0	0
<p>Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Experience are forecasting a £288k under spend at Month 6, the outturn position is made up of a number of under and over spends across the directorate with the main variances being :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships Mgmt - £40k under spend – The service has been able to fund core staff costs from a WHO grant resulting in an employee under spend. • Contact Centre - £16k under spend – the contact centre continues to see employee cost pressures through maternity cover and non-achievable vacancy factor savings but this is currently being offset by savings due to the delay in purchasing a new telephony system. • Equalities & Welsh Language - £52k under spend – There was a delay in employing the new welsh language officer and we are yet to fill the Equalities post, this has resulted in savings against the staff budget which have been partially offset by a significant over spend of £30k on external translation costs. • GIS Project - £30k under spend – Mainly due to employee savings as we are able to passport core staff time spent on digital innovation to capitalisation directive. • Ukraine Grant - £200k under spend – This is a temporary position and will be offset by corresponding over spends within other department's outturn figures resulting in a cost neutral position across the authority. The budget is being spent on housing, temporary accommodation, transport, education, well-being and exercise opportunities for refugees. <p>Offset by over spends in :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levies, Subscriptions & Donations - £15k over spend – membership subscriptions to external bodies such as the WLGA and LGA have increased over and above available budget. • Community Hubs & Libraries - £36k over spend – This is mainly due to unachievable staff efficiency savings. 				
PEOPLE & GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	28	0	0
<p>PEOPLE & GOVERNANCE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:</p> <p>People & Governance is reporting a £28k overspend at Month 6. Where gaps can be held and recruitment frozen it is being done with a view to an end of year underspend and important systems implementation is being undertaken to derive efficiencies in the next financial year and improve whole authority efficiency.</p>				
Communications				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	26	35	0	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications - £35k over spend - due to due to staff over spends caused by maternity cover and pay band increases plus increases in software licence costs. This has been partially offset by secondment income. 				
Democratic Services				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	21	27	0	0

Democratic Services is forecasting to over spend by £27k, this is due to -

- **Organisational Development** – £5k over spend – mainly due to inability to achieve staff vacancy saving.
- **Members Costs** - £22k over spend – due to cost pressures caused by transition to new cabinet membership structure and software maintenance costs.

Emergency Planning

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	0	24	0	0

Emergency Planning - £24k over spend – duty officer standby costs are forecasting to exceed available budget.

Legal and Land Charges

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	(7)	(7)	0	0

- **Land Charges** - £29k under spend – this is as a result of improved search income and savings from a vacant post.
- **Legal Services** - £21k over spend – due to increases in legal costs and systems & software contracts (£27k), potential under recovery of fee income (£17k) offset by under spends in staffing due to delays in recruiting posts (£23k).

People

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(39)	(51)	0	0

People Services is forecasting to under spend by £51k at Month 6.

- **People Services** – net £35k under spend – mainly due to net under spends in staffing across the department, we are carrying savings as a result of a senior post retirement that will not be filled along with savings generated by the delay in filling posts when a staff member leaves. In addition we are seeing a saving in Occupational Health due to a reduction in demand. This has been part offset by the projected cost of the implementation of a new recruitment system within payroll of £161k, there is a potential for this cost to be capitalised so the in-year under spend could increase.
- **Corporate Training** – £16k under spend – mainly due to savings from staff vacancies.

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	756	608	0	0

RESOURCES DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The Resources Directorate is demonstrating continuing signs of budget pressure. Departments will continue in their efforts to reduce or contain pressures and to implement the budget mitigations identified that can be achieved where this is practicable and does not have an unacceptable impact on core service delivery.

The most significant factor driving the forecast over spend is in relation to Housing benefits where national policy change has brought about increased expenditure required in relation to the housing needs of the Homeless. Whilst the housing placement cost element of this falls to the Communities & Place directorate, the shortfall in housing benefit subsidy claimable on B&B placements is a significant

additional cost to the Resources directorate. There are limited options available to the Council to arrest this situation in the very near term, however the Council is currently exploring options for a more permanent and lower cost solution.

There are significant offsetting under spends within the directorate as a result of staff vacancies being held. It is recognised that some of these vacancies have been unfilled for a significant period and that this is not a sustainable or resilient position for many of the service areas in the directorate to be in, and work is actively ongoing to rectify this.

Finance

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	748	871	0	0

Finance is forecasting to over spend by £871k, this is mainly due to -

- **Revenues** - £1.176m over spend, this is due in the main to –
 - **Housing Benefits** - £1.293m over spend - The majority of this over spend relates to emergency homeless B&B placements for which we are unable to claim full housing benefit subsidy. The forecast is based on a pro rata of cost incurred to date and has increased by £304k since month 4, which is a reflection of current placement activity. Work is ongoing to find alternative accommodation options which may result in fewer placements in later months. However, there is currently no certainty that this will mitigate demand and reduce the pressure on the budget.
 - **Council Tax** - £102k over spend – due to an £87k over spend against salary costs as staff budget was moved to Finance as part of structure adjustments and which forms part of the under spend in that service area. The remaining shortfall relates to summons income projecting to be £15k lower than budgeted.
 - **Debtors and Charity relief** - £219k under spend – The forecast under spend is made up of a number of elements. A saving of £126,000 is expected as money set aside for a business rate scheme is unlikely to be utilised this year. A further £87,000 administration grant funding (net of known expenditure) is expected for the various grant support schemes that are being administered on behalf of Welsh Government. In addition, there is a small under spend in Debtors due to reduced printing & postage costs (£5k).
- **Finance** - £212k under spend – This is a result of vacancies at senior management and where we are anticipating that these positions will be filled by December/January.
- **Audit** - £71k under spend – This is due to staff vacancy savings.
- **Systems & Cashiers** – £22k under spend – due to-
 - **Cashiers** - £4k over spend - The delay in fully implementing the decision to remove cheques has meant we will be unable to achieve the £20,000 staff saving that was carried over in the budget from 2020/21. This pressure has been partially offset by in year staff vacancies and reduced collection costs for our Security Carrier, bringing the over spend down to £4,000. The over spend has reduced by a further £8,000 since month 4, as we have seen a reduction in card payment fees compared to last year's activity.

Systems - £26k under spend - At the start of the year the team were carrying vacancies, generating savings of £17,000. These have now largely been filled, although some took longer to fill than expected hence the swing in forecast. A further £7,000 additional income has been received for the purchase card rebate.

Future Monmouthshire

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
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Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(5)	(5)	0	0
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Staff costs have been recovered from external partners.

Information, Communication & Technology

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(58)	(59)	0	0

ICT is forecasting to under spend by £59k at month 4, this is due to-

- **Digital Programme Office** - £2k under spend – due to small savings in allowances and subsistence.
- **Shared Resource Service** - £33k under spend – our contribution to the SRS service is currently projecting to be less than budgeted.
- **Digital Design & Innovation** - £10k under spend - mainly due to savings in staffing where a post has been replaced at a lower grade.
- **Cyber Security** - £14k under spend - due to staff savings as a post was only filled in May and savings on supplies & services.

Commercial & Corporate Landlord

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	71	(197)	0	0

Commercial & Corporate Landlord is forecasting to under spend by £197k, due to-

- **Investment Properties** - £53k over spend, due to –
 - **Newport Leisure Park** - £8k under spend – currently projecting to generate an £8k surplus above budget, where incremental rent increases on the site have ensured our rental receipts remain at the appropriate levels although we will be continually monitoring this position due to the potential effect the cost of living crisis could have on the leisure industry.
 - **Castlegate Business Park** - £61k over spend – Castlegate has significantly improved its position with the rental of 3 vacant units this year, which has considerably reduced our landlord liabilities. However, the rent-free period means we will fall short of our income target by £76k in this financial year but this will be rectified in 2023/24 once full year rental is payable.
- **Landlord Services** - £236k under spend – this is a £199k improvement from month 4 and is mainly due to a rental income increase of £172k as we were able to recover the rental of Innovation House from the Ukrainian Grant Fund, which was not known at M4. In addition, there are further delays in filling vacant posts resulting in staffing savings increasing to £64k.
- **County Farms** - £35k over spend – income projections are down due to a number of empty farms, these are due to be re-let but we've had to source consultants to facilitate in the lettings and also make improvements to the properties before the tenant can move in.
- **Solar Farm & Sustainability** - £153k under spend – due to improved income from our Solar Farm and PV installations caused by the increased market rates for energy.
- **Industrial Units** - £33k under spend – Rental income has increased above budget due to a number of new lettings.

- **Markets** - £137k over spend. This is due to the markets still recovering from Covid-19. Whilst rent prices have returned to pre Covid-19 levels we have seen a decrease in the number of traders. The layout at Abergavenny market has now been amended to a pre Covid-19 layout and we hope to see an increase in traders over the coming months.⁴ Income is currently predicted to be 107k less than budget, there is also a potential net increase in spend of £30k mainly due to an increase on waste disposal costs.
- **Property Services** – Break-Even -We are seeing a budget pressure in accommodation mainly due to unfunded borrowing costs relating to the refurbishment of J Block (£70k) and an increase in cleaning spend as post Covid-19 requirements have increased costs above available budget (£60k), this has been offset by a managed under spend on Corporate Building Maintenance.

CORPORATE COSTS & LEVIES DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	1,918	1,896	0	0
Precepts & Levies				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(2)	(0)	0	0
No variance forecast.				
Coroners Services				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast.				
Corporate Management				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(2)	(37)	0	0
Forecast has increased following notification of the anticipated Crematorium dividend.				
Non-Distributed Costs				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast.				
Strategic Initiatives				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	2,017	2,017	0	0
Current pay modelling based on the now agreed pay award offer of £1,925 for non-teaching staff which is estimated to result in a pressure of around £2.017m within services. For month 6 forecasting purposes an allowance for this pressure has been made within the Corporate directorate until such time that the Council has certainty on the final costs.				
Insurance				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(95)	(84)	0	0

The Council recently went out to tender on its insurance cover which has resulted in premiums payable for 2022/23 being less than anticipated reflective of a very competitive insurance market.

APPROPRIATIONS DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(225)	(250)	0	0
Fixed Asset Disposal Costs				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast.				
Interest & Investment Income				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(241)	(550)	0	0
Improved returns against the authority's investments due to a faster than expected increase in interest rates.				
Interest Payable & Similar Charges				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	191	672	0	0
Increased due to £15m of additional long-term borrowing taken since M4 to give more certainty to medium term budgets, along with an increase in interest payable to CSC due to increased interest rates. This increase is offset by an increase in interest earned in Interest and Investment Income.				
Charges Required Under Regulation				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(51)	(47)	0	0
This budget covers the statutory amount the Council is obliged to set aside to fund future loan repayments and the forecast is slightly lower than the £6.7m budget due to significant slippage in the capital programme which has reduced the need to borrow as quickly as anticipated.				
Borrowing Cost Recoupment				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(325)	(325)	0	0
This budget represents a technical accounting adjustment where borrowing costs relating to the purchase of capital assets is repatriated from service budgets to ensure that the full life cost of assets is borne by the end user. The variance to budget relates to vehicles purchased at the end of 2021/22 which were originally anticipated to be financed through a sale and leaseback arrangement, however following an options appraisal were found to be more cost effective to be purchased outright and financed from borrowing.				
Contributions to / from Reserves				

Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	200	0	0	0
An over spend of £200k was shown at M4 to match 200k under spend in Planning Policy for reserves no longer required in year. A budget adjustment has since been made resulting in 200k favourable movement which will be matched by a 200k adverse movement within the planning section.				
FINANCING DIRECTORATE	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(542)	(504)	0	0
Council Tax Benefit Support				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(222)	(204)	0	0
It is currently difficult to forecast the outturn position with any certainty. Caseload is now closer to pre-pandemic levels. However, numbers are starting to pick up again as the cost of living crisis deepens, hence the swing between month 4 and 6.				
Council Tax				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(320)	(300)	0	0
Continue to anticipate a surplus in income collected this year, although things have changed slightly since month 4. Generally, the tax base remains strong. However, the upward trend noted at month 4 of an increase in exemptions and discounts awarded has continued, which has a negative impact on the tax base. The surplus also reflects a continued strong collection rate over time, over and above the 99% rate used for budget setting.				
General Government Grants				
Outturn Forecast	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
Income received to budget.				

2. SCHOOL BALANCES

- 2.1. A Board of Governors who are responsible for managing the school's finances directly governs each of the Authority's Schools. However, the Authority also holds a key responsibility for monitoring the overall financial performance of schools. Below is a table showing the outturn forecast Schools' balances position based on month 6 projections for each Educational Cluster.

Draft Council Fund Outturn 2022/23 – School Balances Summary outturn position at Month 6	(A) Opening Reserves (Surplus) / Deficit Position 2022/23	(B) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 4	(C) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 6	(D) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 9	(A+C) Forecast Reserve Balances at 2022/23 Outturn
Cluster	£000's	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Abergavenny	(2,145)	1,181	1,272		(873)
Caldicot	(2,165)	1,570	1,284		(881)
Chepstow	(695)	863	899		204
Monmouth	(1,869)	1,425	1,353		(516)
Special	(82)	106	91		9
Total	(6,956)	5,145	4,900		(2,057)

- 2.2. Collective School Balances at the beginning of the financial year amounted to £6,956,114 surplus. At Month 4, the Schools forecasted anticipated draw on reserves was £5,145,631, resulting in a forecasted surplus balance of £1,810,483 at year-end. At Month 6, the forecast anticipated draw on reserves has reduced by £246,131 to £4,899,501, resulting in a forecast surplus balance of £2,056,614 at year end.

(The majority of the surplus balance brought forward into 2022-23 is due to several grants being awarded to schools at 2021-22 year end; Revenue Maintenance, Winter of Wellbeing, ALN New System, Recruit Recover & Raise Standards, Attendance Support & Community Schools, RISG and LA Education Grant).

- 2.3. The Local Authority budget for 2022/23 made allowance for a pay award for school staff up to a threshold of a 3%, with any award agreed above this level to be funded from schools balances. The above forecast is predicated upon a further pressure of 2% over and above the 3% budgeted based upon the most likely outcome of the initial pay discussions. This accounts for £1.2m of the overall £4.9m forecast draw upon school balances this year.

- 2.4. The movement of individual schools forecast to be in deficit at the end of the year is shown below:

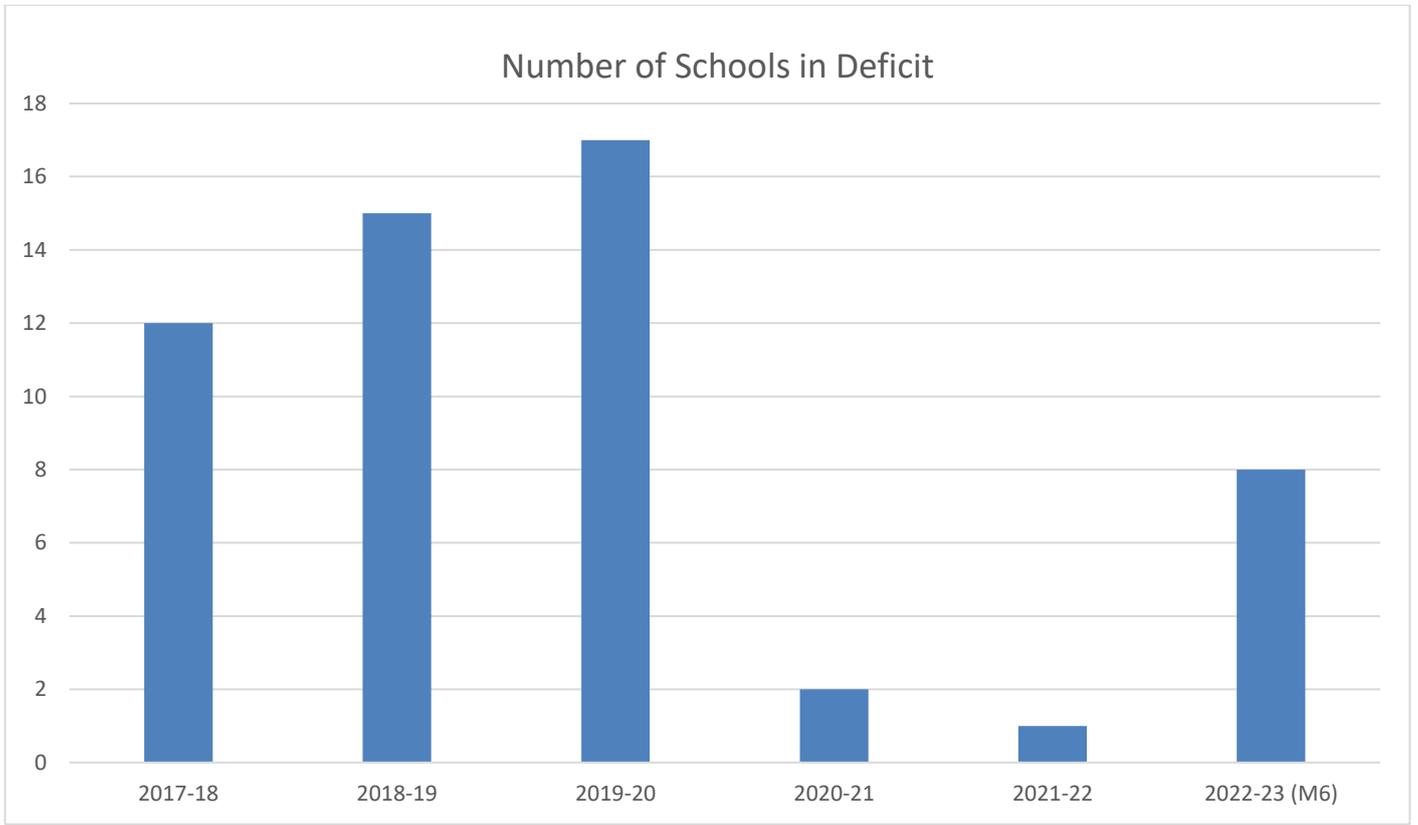
Start of year	Month 4	Month 6	Month 9
Total: 1	Total: 7	Total: 8	Total:
Chepstow Comprehensive	Chepstow Comprehensive	Chepstow Comprehensive	
	Ysgol Y Fenni	Ysgol Y Fenni	
	Archbishop Rowan Williams (CIW)		

	Cross Ash	Cross Ash	
	Kymin View		
	Llandogo	Llandogo	
	Pupil Referral Service	Pupil Referral Service	
		Deri View	
		Rogiet	
		Thornwell	

- 2.5. There isn't a consistent picture of schools' balances. There has been a fluctuating trend for some time with some schools showing a continuing reduction in schools balances, which is of concern, and others a more stable trend. However, as previously advised, grants awarded to schools at 2020/21 and 2021/22 year-ends have resulted in a large increase in overall school balances. Schools have developed grant investment plans in line with the terms and conditions of these grants and the balances are expected to reduce considerably during 2022/23.
- 2.6. The projected return of eight schools into deficit balance by the end of the year is disappointing and points to inherent structural budget deficits remaining in some cases, or a lack of planning for budgetary risks in the current economic environment. Finance officers will continue to work closely with those schools of concern and look to aid the return to a more sustainable budget plan over the medium term.
- 2.7. All schools that do register a deficit balance at the end of a financial year are required to bring forward budget recovery plans. These recovery plans will be confirmed with both the Local Education Authority and each School's Governing Body. Once finalised the schools with significant deficits will be monitored by the Cabinet member for both Children and Young People and Resources on a termly basis.

Financial Year-end	Net level of School Balances
2014-15	(1,140)
2015-16	(1,156)
2016-17	(269)
2017-18	(175)
2018-19	232
2019-20	435
2020-21	(3,418)
2021-22	(6,956)
2022-23 (Forecast)	(2,057)

- 2.8. The increase in school balances during 2020/21 and 2021/22 resulted in a reduction in the number of schools in deficit, as illustrated in the following table. Unfortunately, the current projection is a return of eight schools into deficit balance by the end of the year:-



3. CAPITAL OUTTURN

3.1. The summary forecast Capital position at Month 6 is as follows:

Scheme Category	Slippage B/F	Original Budget	Budget Adjustments	Provisional Slippage	Revised Budget 2022/23	Forecast	Variance
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Expenditure							
Capitalisation Directive	0	2,650	0	0	2,650	2,650	0
Development Schemes Over £250k	13,873	330	2,792	(2,959)	14,037	14,635	598
Development Schemes Under £250k	605	2,360	733	(2,235)	1,463	1,463	0
Schools & Education	637	13,681	1,666	0	15,984	15,984	0
Infrastructure	1,357	5,593	20	0	6,969	7,100	130
ICT Schemes	552	882	0	(153)	1,281	1,281	0
Property Maintenance	2,686	2,190	(273)	0	4,604	4,604	0
Renovation Grants	912	900	0	0	1,812	957	(855)
Section 106	1,147	0	0	(95)	1,052	1,052	0
Specific Grant Funded	3,679	1,000	4,317	(800)	8,196	8,632	436
Vehicle Leasing	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	1,500	0
Total Expenditure	25,448	31,086	9,256	(6,242)	59,548	59,858	310
Financing							
Supported Borrowing	0	(2,431)	0	0	(2,431)	(2,431)	0
General Capital Grant	0	(3,593)	0	0	(3,593)	(3,593)	0
Grants and Contributions	(5,494)	0	(16,927)	0	(22,421)	(22,421)	0
S106 Contributions	(1,854)	0	0	895	(958)	(958)	0
Unsupported Borrowing	(14,590)	(19,967)	7,671	5,112	(21,774)	(22,337)	(563)
Earmarked Reserve & Revenue Funding	(192)	0	0	0	(192)	(192)	0
Capital Receipts	(3,318)	(3,596)	0	235	(6,679)	(6,426)	253
Leasing	0	(1,500)	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	0
Total Financing	(25,448)	(31,086)	(9,256)	6,242	(59,548)	(59,858)	(310)

3.2. The capital expenditure forecast outturn at month 6 is demonstrating a net overspend £310k, due to the following variance identified:

Scheme Category	Scheme	Over / (Under spend) £000's	Comment
Development Schemes Over £250k	Crick Road Care Home	151	Additional costs in fitting-out equipment required for resident's privacy. An additional bid has been submitted to ABuHB for additional RIF funding to offset the over spend.
Development Schemes Over £250k	Property Acquisition for Children and Young People with Complex Needs	114	Additional refurbishment costs over and above original cost projection. A bid has been made to the Regional Integration Fund and we are waiting for a decision to offset the forecasted overspend.
Development Schemes Over £250k	Abergavenny borough theatre refurbishment	333	Currently running at a projected overspend due to increased construction costs over and above original cost projection due to unforeseen lighting costs and over-run charges from contractor. If further funding cannot be obtained from joint partners in the project, then additional borrowing funded from the service budget will be utilised as per the cabinet decision.
Infrastructure	Tintern Wireworks Bridge	130	The refurbishment of the Tintern Wireworks Bridge at Tintern in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council is currently forecast to overspend by £130k, due to the complexity of restoring this listed structure and the increased cost of materials.
Specific Grant Funded	Essential flooding works	360	Cost overruns for essential flooding works required at Capel-y-Ffin and Glan-Grywny embankments for works that couldn't be delayed any further. Urgently seeking clarification of potential Welsh Government flooding grants that could offset.
Specific Grant Funded	Siltbuster	76	The Siltbuster project is forecast to be £76k overspent due to increased costs. This will be funded from additional borrowing which will be funded by the Highways revenue budget.
Disabled Facilities grants	Disabled Facilities grants	(855)	There is an off-setting under spend on Disabled Facilities grants as referrals (over 50 to date) that have to be completed within year have been reached. Part of the overall budget assigned for DFG's can be released to aid in

3.3. There is a £6.242m forecast of Capital Slippage at month 6, as nine schemes have advised of delays within their project timescales.

- £2.2m for the Asset investment fund as this has been put on hold awaiting a new strategic direction of investments by the Cabinet;
- £2m for Housing homeless provision due to the complex lead time of acquiring properties;
- £759k for new EV charging infrastructure at County Hall due to implementation and supply delays;
- £234k Shire Hall / Museum move as awaiting grant approvals from third parties;
- £153k delay in the SRS Data Hall migration due to delays involving commercial providers

Section 106 Schemes

- £25k for the Abergavenny Skate Park as further funding needs to be acquired to facilitate a viable project;
- £25k for Children's Voices in Play project has been delayed due to third party issues;
- £28k for Little Mill Trail due to land ownership delays;
- £18k for Off Road Cycling Feasibility Study delayed by planning issues

3.4. Useable Capital Receipts Available

- 3.5. In the table below, the effect of the changes to the forecast capital receipts on the useable capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments are illustrated.

Month 6 update	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1st April	10,414	12,398	13,509	12,565	11,068
Capital receipts used for financing	(3,776)	(1,547)	(1,194)	(1,094)	(1,094)
Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(2,650)	(507)	(507)	(507)	(507)
Capital receipts received	7,071	-	-	-	-
Capital receipts forecast	1,338	3,165	756	104	104
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	12,398	13,509	12,565	11,068	9,572

Disinvestment Matrix 2022-23

REF.	Disinvestment 2022-23	2022/23 Budgeted Savings £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 4 £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 6 £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 9 £000	Value of Saving achieved at Outturn £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings deemed Unachievable YTD £000
	Social Care & Health	(120)	(120)	(120)	0	0	0	0
	Communities & Place	(959)	(959)	(959)	0	0	0	0
	Resources	(300)	(300)	(300)	0	0	0	0
	Chief Executives Unit	(33)	(33)	(33)	0	0	0	0
	Corporate Costs & Levies	(717)	(717)	(717)	0	0	0	0
	Totals Disinvestments by Directorate	(2,129)	(2,129)	(2,129)	0	0	0	0

		2022/23 Budgeted Savings £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 4 £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 6 £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 9 £000	Value of Saving achieved at Outturn £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings deemed Unachievable £000	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment	Assessment of Progress	Risk of current forecast saving NOT being achieved (High / Medium / Low)
Page 79	Social Care & Health										
	FEES 6 Fees & Charges 2022/23	(120)	(120)	(120)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low
	Total Social Care & Health	(120)	(120)	(120)	0	0	0	0			
	Communities & Place										
	C&P10 Increase in discretionary Fees & Charges	(13)	(13)	(13)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low
	C&P4 Waste management savings - Contract & dry recyclates rates	(856)	(856)	(856)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low
	C&P4 Street Lighting - Energy Savings	(90)	(90)	(90)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low
	Total Communities & Place	(959)	(959)	(959)	0	0	0	0			
	Chief Executive's Unit										
	PCEO0003 Reversal of previous pressure - Contact Centre - Additional staff to cope with booking system at HWRC	(33)	(33)	(33)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low
Total Chief Executive's Unit	(33)	(33)	(33)	0	0	0	0				
Resources											
RES 11 Solar farm income increase	(300)	(300)	(300)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low	
Total Resources	(300)	(300)	(300)	0	0	0	0				
Corporate Costs & Levies											
CORP 5 Increase in Capitalisation directive	(442)	(442)	(442)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low	
CORP 10 Council tax base increase	(275)	(275)	(275)	0	0	0	0		On Target	Low	
Total Corporate Costs & Levies	(717)	(717)	(717)	0	0	0	0				

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	A	B	C	D	A + D
	Opening Reserves 2022-23 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Month 4 (Surplus)/Deficit	Difference reported from Month 4 to Month 6 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Month 6 (Surplus)/Deficit	Projected carry forward at year end 2022-23 (Surplus)/Deficit
Abergavenny cluster					
E003 King Henry VIII Comprehensive	(755,570)	389,048	0	389,048	(366,522)
E073 Cantref Primary School	(254,092)	134,790	1,001	135,791	(118,301)
E072 Deri View Primary School	(189,790)	133,741	70,051	203,791	14,001
E035 Gilwern Primary School	(230,955)	116,685	0	116,685	(114,270)
E037 Goytre Fawr Primary School	(117,735)	81,985	323	82,308	(35,427)
E093 Llanfoist Fawr Primary School	(219,419)	86,308	(2,184)	84,124	(135,296)
E044 Llantillio Pertholey CiW Primary School (VC)	(109,698)	91,517	(5,744)	85,773	(23,925)
E045 Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School	(136,822)	23,616	22,485	46,100	(90,722)
E090 Our Lady and St Michael's RC Primary School (VA)	(58,649)	24,920	7,788	32,708	(25,941)
E067 Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	(72,015)	98,709	(3,090)	95,619	23,604
Caldicot cluster					
E001 Caldicot School	(807,785)	734,528	(160,201)	574,327	(233,458)
E068 Archbishop Rowan Williams CiW Primary School (VA)	(171,322)	187,566	(88,345)	99,221	(72,101)
E094 Castle Park Primary School	(159,298)	133,874	(26,318)	107,556	(51,742)
E075 Dewstow Primary School	(358,616)	100,426	23,375	123,801	(234,816)
E034 Durand Primary School	(104,979)	84,811	(10,976)	73,835	(31,144)
E048 Magor CiW Primary School (VA)	(196,816)	105,942	(50,047)	55,895	(140,921)
E056 Rogiet Primary School	(89,223)	79,041	25,269	104,310	15,088
E063 Undy Primary School	(210,643)	101,561	(944)	100,617	(110,025)
E069 Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin	(66,783)	42,083	2,561	44,644	(22,139)
Chepstow cluster					
E002 Chepstow School	124,934	369,873	21,875	391,748	516,682
E091 Pembroke Primary School	(218,667)	126,891	0	126,891	(91,776)
E057 Shirenewton Primary School	(239,292)	107,939	22,215	130,154	(109,138)
E058 St Mary's Chepstow RC Primary School (VA)	(104,932)	33,934	20,442	54,376	(50,556)
E060 The Dell Primary School	(146,839)	119,246	(40,510)	78,736	(68,103)
E061 Thornwell Primary School	(110,622)	105,398	12,194	117,592	6,970
Monmouth cluster					
E004 Monmouth Comprehensive	(814,258)	591,414	(2,547)	588,867	(225,391)
E032 Cross Ash Primary School	(79,755)	86,620	(3,500)	83,120	3,365
E092 Kymin View Primary School	(133,714)	152,013	(39,963)	112,050	(21,664)

	Opening Reserves 2022-23 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Month 4 (Surplus)/Deficit	Difference reported from Month 4 to Month 6 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Month 6 (Surplus)/Deficit	Projected carry forward at year end 2022-23 (Surplus)/Deficit
E039 Llandogo Primary School	(214)	9,060	(285)	8,775	8,561
E074 Osbaston CiW Primary School (VC)	(93,147)	43,288	26,052	69,340	(23,807)
E051 Overmonnow Primary School	(162,470)	155,228	(11,966)	143,262	(19,208)
E055 Raglan CiW Primary School (VC)	(160,593)	31,876	14,442	46,318	(114,275)
E062 Trellech Primary School	(153,939)	93,103	7,532	100,635	(53,304)
E064 Usk CiW Primary School (VC)	(270,840)	262,834	(62,259)	200,575	(70,265)
Cluster Totals	(6,874,560)	5,039,867	(231,274)	4,808,594	(2,065,967)
Special School					
E095 PRU	(81,554)	105,764	(14,857)	90,907	9,353
Special School Total	(81,554)	105,764	(14,857)	90,907	9,353
Total	(6,956,114)	5,145,631	(246,131)	4,899,501	(2,056,614)

Service budget recovery plan - Month 6

Directorate	Initial target £000's	Initial proposals £000's
Children & Young People	217	217
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	1,122	800
Communities & Place	457	546
MonLife	88	88
People & Governance	91	11
Chief Executives Unit	63	147
Resources	148	377
Total	2,185	2,185

Children & Young People

Indicative saving target: (£000's) 217

Initial options 217

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
CYP1	Education Psychology	Saving generated by not filling 0.4 FTE of a post	22	Not filling a vacant post	Following a recent recruitment process for a full time Education Psychology post the successful applicant has asked to work 3 days leaving 2 days vacant. The service is able to accommodate this.	Low
CYP2	Primary Behaviour support	Due to the delay in being able to recruit to the posts this has generated a saving	106	Delay in recruiting to the service	Due to a restructure there has been a delay in recruiting to this service therefore 9 months saving has been made on the budget.	Low
CYP3	Photovoltaic Recharges (Schools)	To release some of the surplus balance to support the recovery plan	89	Releasing some of the reserve	Following the installation of photovoltaic panels on at some school the recharges have been put in a reserve to be used for energy efficiency projects, the surplus reserve has been increasing year on year and no projects have been proposed. If agreed this would still leave £136k for projects	Low

Social Care, Health & Safeguarding

Indicative saving target: (£000's)

1,122

Initial options

800

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
SCH1	Children's	Reduce Placement Support Costs	38	Reduction in services	We have moved a younger person out of an OWR into a supported accommodation placement and are in the process of reducing the child's level of support	L - the care plan is on track
SCH2	Children's	Placement Cost	20	Reduction in services	We have moved a younger person from an OWR onto Skirrid which is now registered as a 2 bed (previously 1 bed). The plan is to move another child into the 2nd placement which will reduce the costs of the 2nd child's placement at £5,700 per week	M - sibling group complex needs, recently come into care, aim for joint March is achievable, pending on successful transition.
SCH3	Children's	Placement Cost	50	Changed Supplier	Child in OWR placement requiring agency residential care. A new supplied is now available at reduced cost.	L - change in supplier has already been made
SCH4	Children's	Placement Cost	22	Change of Care Plan	Child was rehabilitated to family member, which was not identified in M6 forecast	L - it has already happened
SCH5	Children's	Placement Cost	150	Reduction in services	At M6 forecast was based on a 6 :1, the current clinical assessment indicates 5:1 moving to 4:1. The child will be moving to bespoke accommodation.	M - £100K is Low risk as this equates to the reduction of 1 carer which is now in place. The further reduction of 1 carer will depend on outcome of clinical assessment following transition to new accommodation.
SCH6	Children's	Recruitment	8	Convert agency to T & C	An agency safeguarding TM has been in place, who has now been successfully appointed on T & C	L - successful appointment has been enacted, awaiting checks.
SCH7	Children's	Delay recruitment	12	Not filling vacancy	3 day Social Work post in the Children With Disabilities team	L - this is the status quo, so the work / risk is currently managed.
SCH8	Children's	Delay recruitment	4	Not filling vacancy	1 day Social Work post Families Together team	L -this is the status quo, so the work / risk is currently managed.
SCH9	Children's	Service re-design	12	Changing posts	Convert x2 agency Social Worker posts in the Long Term Support Team to x2 Family Support Workers	M - the risk is whether we are able to recruit in time to realise the savings

Social Care, Health & Safeguarding

Indicative saving target: (£000's)

1,122

Initial options

800

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
SCH10	DMT	Staffing	6	Not filling vacancy and releasing agency	0.5 Chief Officer Business Support and use Business Support for Head Of Adult Service instead	L - the post is shared with CO CYP so this may be jeopardised
SCH11	DMT	Delay recruitment	8	Delay recruitment	Delay arrival of Head Of Adult Service by 3 weeks	L - the risk is delay in further development and implementation of the MTFP
SCH12	Transformation	Utilise a WG grant	40	Additional income	An in-year Performance Grant has been awarded which can be used against a reconfigured performance post (to off-set core funding)	L - grant already claimed
SCH13	Transformation	Utilise a WG grant	50	Additional income	An in-year Workforce Development Grant has been applied for which can be used to off-set core funding for recruitment activity that has already been undertaken	M - the outcome of the application process is still pending
SCH14	YOS	Utilise a WG grant	10	Additional income	A Ministry Of Justice grant has been awarded to the YOS for prevention which we propose is used to off-set core funding	L - the grant criteria still needs to be worked through
SCH15	Directorate Staffing	Delays to recruitment	50	Delay filling vacancies	Delay to 1 data and performance lead, 1 EHO and 1 BS.	L - continues the status quo
SCH16	Directorate Staffing	Delays to recruitment	50	Delay filling vacancies	There are currently at least 36 vacancies within the directorate, which can be actively managed to mitigate the pressures.	M - this will require control via any recruitment being authorised by DMT. It will create workforce pressures regarding the unmet need.
SCH17	Adult Services	POC costs	200	Reduction in services	There are approximately 18 24 hour live-in care packages which are not pegged to our Fair Fee for residential care	M - social work time required to undertake the review, query over how much of the care can be safely reduced within this year.
SCH18	Adult Services	Debt Recovery	10	Additional income	The saving is predicted on targeted reduction of £100,000 in debt, which in turn will reduce the bad debt provision by £10K.	M - Reason for medium is the length and value of debt will be difficult to recover

Social Care, Health & Safeguarding
 Indicative saving target: (£000's) 1,122
 Initial options 800

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
SCH19	Adult Services	Means Tested Policy	60	Additional income	Ensure social workers discuss means tested charges with clients before care is provided and ensure the financial assessment process has been started.	L - Should be done as its laid down in legislation and the Authority's charging policy and procedures. Challenge is in embedding correct control mechanism

Communities & Place
 Indicative saving target: (£000's)

457

Initial options

546

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
C&P1	Street Lighting	Reduction in in-year revenue maintenance spend.	50	Passporting qualifying spend to capital budgets	Passporting qualifying spend to capital budgets	Low
C&P2	Grounds Maintenance	Drawing of S106 Commuted sum payment	200	Additional income	Further draw on S106 commuted sum - using unspent funds saved up from previous years. One-off benefit.	Low
C&P3	Car Parks	Realisation of Pay & Display income from opening of Severn Tunnel junction car park - Jan-March	10	Additional income	New car park coming on line in January. There is a risk around whether this level of income is achievable but this risk is felt to be low.	Low
C&P4	Highways Traffic Mgt	Further release of potential Road Closure income	41	Additional income	Projections show that road closure income will exceed what was included at month 4.	Low
C&P5	Highways Dev & Flooding	Freeze vacant post until new financial year	54	Temporary hold on filling vacant post	Temporary hold on filling vacant post	Low
C&P6	Building Cleaning	Managed reduction in material spend	28	Reduction in supplies & Services	Re-assessment of stock levels allows for further budget recovery	Low
C&P7	Schools Catering	Staff cost reduction	73	Temporary hold on filling vacant posts	Re-assessment of staffing requirement since month 4. The forecast indicates potential slow down in recruitment required in this financial year.	Medium
C&P8	Schools Catering	Windfall grant	56	Additional income	Windfall grant relating to WG Free Sschool Meals and covid grant administration that has been provided. This was not known at M4.	Low
C&P9	Borough Theatre	Delay staff recruitment until new financial year	9	Temporary hold on filling vacant post	Hold off on filling new structure until we understand future resource requirements.	Low
C&P10	Strategic Operations	Freeze vacant post until new financial year	25	Temporary hold on filling vacant post	Temporary hold on filling vacant post	Low

MonLife
 Indicative saving target: (£000's) 88
 Initial options 88

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
ML1	Finance & Business	Freeze Vacant Post - Business Support Team Leader	26	Freeze Vacant Post	Post is currently vacant, low risk but adds additional pressure to the business support unit.	Low
ML2	Finance & Business	Freeze Vacant Post - Project Officer	18	Freeze Vacant Post	Post is currently vacant, low risk as major projects in MONLIFE have reduced significantly.	Low
ML3	Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure	Outdoor Adventure - Increase income through winter promotions	20	Additional Income	Requires school uptake during a period where there has been limited interest previously, the section will look to use promotions to make this period more attractable to schools.	Medium
ML4	Finance & Business	Project Management - Grants	24	Additional Income	Recharge core staff to grant projects	Low

People & Governance

Indicative saving target: (£000's) 91

Initial options 11

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			<i>£000's</i>	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
PG1	Communications	Staff cost reduction	8	Staff cost reduction	Temporary saving that will be achieved between staff member leaving and filling of vacant post	Low
PG2	Communications	Staff cost reduction	2.5	Reduction in staff hours	A mutually agreed reduction in working hours for two staff	Low

Chief Executives Unit
 Indicative saving target: (£000's) 63
 Initial options 147

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
CEO1	Department wide	Moving qualifying staff costs to Ukraine Funding	115	Moving qualifying staff costs to Ukraine Funding	Since M6 report we have identified further staff costs that can be pushed against the Ukraine grant	Low
CEO2	Department wide	Freeze filling of vacant posts	22	Not filling vacant post	Freeze filling of vacant posts until new year	Low
CEO3	Improvement Team	Decision taken to not purchase MadeOpen subscription	10	Reduction in supplies & Services	Curtail purchase of MadeOpen subscription.	Low

Resources

Indicative saving target: (£000's)

148

Initial options

377

Ref	Service	Proposal	Amount	Recovery method	Details	Risk Factor
			£000's	<i>i.e. Not filling vacant post, reduction in supplies or services, additional income, curtailing service, etc.</i>	<i>A brief description of the proposal including any risks to being able to deliver</i>	<i>Low, Medium, High</i>
RES1	Property Services	Reduction in corporate Building maintenance	270	Make use of spare capital budget to fund maintenance	No risk - using spare capital funding to cover qualifying maintenance repairs from revenue.	Low
RES2	ICT	Reduce equipment spend through to year end	35	reduction in supplies & services	Managed underspend on equipment - majority of laptop spend can be pushed to capital budget.	Low
RES3	Insurances	Reduction in professional fees and ICT costs	20	reduction in supplies & services	Fees for the actuarial review are lower than budgeted, alongside delaying some further ICT investment	Low
RES4	Investment income	Additional investment income	52	Additional income	Additional investment income in light of rising interest rate environment and where we may be able to look at alternative counterparties	Medium

SUBJECT: To consider the financial liabilities of the Regional Integration Fund Regional Integration Fund

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 7th December 2022

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the financial liabilities and implications of the Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model. Members will need to consider and provide a response to the Gwent Regional Partnership Board on the outcome of the consideration as to whether the council accepts or rejects the liabilities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Council does not accept the financial liabilities and implications of the new Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model.

2.2 That the Council advocates that the Regional Integration Fund continues to be used to support the objectives of the Regional Partnership Board through allocating funds based on a process of evaluation and review using an evidence base focused on achieving best outcomes for residents of Gwent, rather than a formulated tapering approach.

2.3 That the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health, together with the Chief Officer provides this response to the Regional Partnership Board.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Welsh Government has made a 5 year commitment of revenue funding for Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs). This revenue funding, now known as the Regional Integration Fund (RIF), brings together previous funding streams provided to RPBs into one source of strategic revenue funding, providing £26.8m for Gwent annually, from April 2022 to March 2027.

3.2 The RIF is intended as a key lever to drive change and transformation within the health and social care system, with RPBs tasked to consider how they deploy their collective resources, including both partnership funding and wider core resources to meet their objectives.

3.3 The key features and values of the RIF are identified as:

- A strong focus on prevention and early intervention

- Developing and embedding national models of integrated care (also referred to as models of care within the guidance)
- Actively sharing learning across Wales through communities of practice
- Sustainable long term resourcing to embed and mainstream new models of care
- Creation of long term pooled fund arrangements
- Consistent investment in regional planning and partnership infrastructure

3.4 The models of care referenced within the RIF guidance have been developed with the intention of ensuring citizens experience an effective and seamless service, with the intention of nationally embedded models of care. The models of care are identified as:

- Community based care – prevention and community coordination
- Community based care – complex care closer to home
- Promoting good emotional health and wellbeing
- Supporting families to stay together safely, and therapeutic support for care experienced children
- Home from hospital services
- Accommodation based solutions

3.5 In Monmouthshire the RIF has been used to develop a range of preventative services/ projects in children's and adult services. Examples include preventative and family support services to support the safe reduction of Children Looked and preventative services for adults with care and support needs to maintain their independence, avoid admissions to hospital and facilitate hospital discharge.

3.6 Other projects supporting the identified objectives for RIF have been developed on a regional footprint such as Home First.

3.7 Within Gwent, RIF funded projects are supported by the Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO supports the RPB and its sub-groups to maintain monitoring and oversight of the various funded projects as well as collate significant amounts of performance and evaluative data, both for the purposes of reporting against the fund and as an aid to strategic decision making. The PMO assists with the development of projects and the flow of available money through the system, including developing business cases for the use of core money, to achieve the aspirations and objectives set out within the RIF guidance.

3.8 Monmouthshire Social Care and Health services, and Gwent as a region, has a positive reputation for innovative services that focus on people and outcomes.

3.9 The other Local Authorities within Gwent are similarly seeking decisions regarding a proposal not to accept the financial liabilities associated with the tapering model because of the impact that it will have on services. 3 out of the 5 have endorsed the recommendation, and 2 including Monmouthshire, remain in the decision-making process. The Gwent picture is reflective of the situation at a national level, with chairs of Regional Partnership Boards having collectively raised the issue at ministerial level.

4.1 The people who are predominantly affected by this decision are some of the most vulnerable within the county including children who are looked after and adults with care and support needs. The extent to which adequate preventative and support services are in place is critical to ensure that Monmouthshire residents, particularly those who are the most negatively impacted by social determinants of health, are supported to live the lives they want to live and have choice and control wherever possible over the services they receive.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

	Benefits	Disadvantages	Recommended
<p>Option 1 Accept the RIF tapering model and the liabilities that this entails</p>	<p>Local Authority core funding (as a consequence of the taper) and RIF funding would allow the projects to continue to help the Council meet its corporate objectives in respect of social care and health including the provision or preventative, community-based support for children and adults with care and support needs.</p> <p>The tapering effect would in theory release money for the development of new projects / innovations.</p>	<p>As a consequence of the Council's current budgetary position, there is a high risk that the Council will be unable to identify the financial resources available to contribute to the overall costs of these schemes in the medium / long term as the tapering effect is enacted. Consequently, the services supported by the RIF would have to significantly reduce, or cease with a negative impact on residents.</p> <p>Alternatively, if the RIF services are prioritised for core funding other services may be disadvantaged and delivery of these may need to be reconsidered or stopped.</p> <p>Sufficient resources in skills, workforce and organisational attention would be required to develop new projects or innovations. Within the current context these may not be forthcoming.</p> <p>Reducing resources into current innovation projects would have a de-stabilising effect with the risk of reduced</p>	<p>NO</p>

		capacity to meet the needs of Monmouthshire residents.	
<p>Option 2 Do not accept the financial liabilities and implications of the new Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model</p>	<p>Continued RIF funding would allow the projects to continue to help the Council meet its corporate objectives in respect of social care and health including the provision or preventative, community-based support for children and adults with care and support needs.</p> <p>Evaluation of projects and new innovations would continue through the mechanisms that are already in place, and would be driven through strategic decision making within the RPB partnership rather than being driven via a tapering model.</p> <p>Projects and current innovations would be allowed time to consolidate and build to ensure continuity of service provision to Monmouthshire residents, rather than risk de-stabilisation, particularly given the current financial and budgetary context.</p>	<p>The RIF funding freed up by the tapering approach would not be available to test other models of care.</p> <p>Whilst WG are aware that the tapering model is problematic for the RPB partnership, the risks as described have not been accepted. There is, therefore, an element of uncertainty for the region if the tapering model is rejected.</p>	YES

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Evaluation for RIF supported projects is conducted on behalf of the RRP and its partners through the Programme Management Office. Evaluative material is included at appendix 1.

7 REASONS:

7.1 The decision is required to enable on-going decisions regarding the development and implementation of the RIF strategic plan which in turn supports the objectives of the RPB as defined by the Population Needs Assessment and Local Area Plan under Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2016.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The funding model comprises four key elements which involves a tapering approach during the course of the 5 year programme. The tapering approach is intended to promote sustainability, with the expectation that local authorities and statutory partners fund the services from their core budget by the end of the 5 yr programme.

8.2 The 4 tapering models outlined below have been applied to all the projects and programmes in receipt of the RIF across Gwent.

1. Fully Funded National Priorities Fund (100% WG funded)
Ring fenced funding provided to Regional Partnership Boards at 100%, no tapering or resource match required for initiatives within this category. This includes Dementia ringfenced funding, and the Integrated Autism Service.
2. Acceleration Change Fund (90% funded via RIF, 10% tapering)
Funding to test and develop new models of care, for a maximum period of 2 years. Following robust evaluation these models can be considered to move into the embedding fund
3. National Delivery Model Embedding Fund (70% funded via RIF, 30% tapering)
Projects successfully tested can move into the embedding fund with a clear business case for sustainability. Embedding funding can be received for a maximum of 3 years. If appropriate, projects can move into the mainstreaming fund at the end of this period.
4. 50/50 Integrated Mainstreaming Fund (50% funded via RIF, 50% tapering)
After a project has concluded its three years funding under the Embedding Fund it should now be ready to be mainstreamed. Partners must agree and commit resources to ensure that the project or model of care will be sustained long term. This fund will take the shape of a recurrent pooled fund with partners contributing 50% and Welsh Government contributing the remaining 50%

8.3 The tables below show the itemising list of services in receipt of funding and the associated financial liabilities for consideration. As the funding model is delivered over a five year programme, the implications are identified for the remainder of the programme for financial periods 2023-24 to 2026-27. Although no organisational budgets have been released in Year 1 (2022/23) to contribute to the RIF, 2022/23 is still classed as Year 1. This means that when we have two years of an “Accelerate Scheme”, that will be for financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24

8.4 Children's Services Potential Liability Commitments

			2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Programme	Project Name	Accelerate / Embed	Year 1 Indicative Allocation	Year 2 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 3 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 4 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 5 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 6 Actual Budget Required from MCC
Early Intervention & Support: Edge of Care	Enhanced Edge Of Care (Monm)	Embed	£169,140	£50,742	£50,742	£84,570	£84,570	£84,570
Early Intervention & Support: Edge of Care	Family Group Conferences (Monm)	Embed	£34,835	£10,451	£10,451	£17,418	£17,418	£17,418
Early Intervention & Support: Edge of Care	Mediation Support (Monm)	Embed	£34,835	£10,451	£10,451	£17,418	£17,418	£17,418
Early Intervention & Support: Edge of Care	Sgo Support (Monm)	Embed	£120,957	£36,287	£36,287	£60,479	£60,479	£60,479
Grand Totals			£359,767	£107,930	£107,930	£179,884	£179,884	£179,884

8.5 Adult's Services Potential Liability Commitments

Programme	Project Name	Accelerate/ Embed	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
			Year 1 Indicative Allocation	Year 2 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 3 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 4 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 5 Actual Budget Required from MCC	Year 6 Actual Budget Required from MCC
Dementia: Living with Dementia	Early Intervention Dementia Reablement Services	Ringfenced	£136,317	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Improving System Flow	Monmouthshire County Council - Hospital Discharge Co-Ordination	Accelerate	£202,814	£20,281	£60,844	£60,844	£60,844	£101,407
Improving System Flow	Monmouthshire D2RA Resource	Accelerate	£219,344	£21,934	£65,803	£65,803	£65,803	£109,672
Place Based Graduated Care	Raglan Project	Accelerate	£76,378	£7,638	£22,913	£22,913	£22,913	£38,189
Place Based Graduated Care	Community Night Support	Accelerate	£287,154	£28,715	£86,146	£86,146	£86,146	£143,577
Place Based Graduated Care	Enhanced Intermediate Care (Previously Enhanced Intermediate Care & Strength Based Assessment)	Accelerate	£298,415	£29,842	£89,525	£89,525	£89,525	£149,208
Support for Unpaid Carers	Carers Support - Monmouth	Embed	£136,146	£40,844	£40,844	£68,073	£68,073	£68,073
Connected Communities	Community Support - Monmouth	Embed	£343,944	£103,183	£103,183	£171,972	£171,972	£171,972
LD Independence & Wellbeing Assistive Technology	Upside Down Pilot Dom Care Monmouth For Ld Commissioning (Locality V Hourly)	Embed	£51,000	£15,300	£15,300	£25,500	£25,500	£25,500
	Implementation of Better Care Project	Embed	£46,031	£13,809	£13,809	£23,016	£23,016	£23,016
Grand Totals			£1,797,543	£281,547	£498,368	£613,792	£613,792	£830,613
LD Independence & Wellbeing	My Mates	Embed	£160,960	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Grand Totals including My Mates			£1,958,503	£281,547	£498,368	£613,792	£613,792	£830,613

8.6 Key

■	Ringfenced - no budget contribution required from Lead Organisation
■	Accelerate - 10% budget contribution required from Lead Organisation for a maximum of 2 years, then 30% budget contribution as move into Embed Stage for a maximum of 3 years
■	Embed - 30% budget contribution required from Lead Organisation for a maximum of 3 years
■	Legacy Fund - 50% budget contribution required post Embed Stage
■	Regional Scheme - Liability to be determined

8.7 The tables illustrate the overall implications of the tapering model for Monmouthshire i.e. the extent to which there will be shortfalls in available funding to support the projects listed over the next 5 years. In total these shortfalls are:

YEAR	CHILDREN'S	ADULT'S	TOTAL
23/24	£107,930	£281,547	£389,477
24/25	£0	£216,821	£216,821
25/26	£ 71,954	£115,424	£187,378
26/27	£0	£0	£0
27/28	£0	£216,821	£216,821
TOTAL over 5 years	£179,884	£830,613	£1,010,497

8.8 It is important to note, that these figures are based on Monmouthshire specific projects. At this point in time, consideration has not yet been given to how liabilities may be shared between statutory partners for services that have been developed jointly. However, these projects will also be subject to the tapering model. Based on the assumption that Monmouthshire would bare 1/6th of the liabilities, this would increase the potential shortfall for Monmouthshire as follows:

YEAR	Additional Regional Liability
23/24	£54,183
24/25	£116,865
25/26	£132,093
26/27	£132,093
27/28	£194,775

8.9 Since the introduction of the RIF tapering model by Welsh Government, Directors and Heads of Service have been in discussion with Welsh Government to outline the risks and challenges associated with this model.

8.10 Monmouthshire Council, as with many authorities in Wales is attempting to manage a significant forecasted in-year overspend together with unprecedented budgetary pressures for 2023 / 24 onwards. At the same time, demand pressures in terms of increased volume of referrals and complexity of presenting need are well documented within both children's and adult's services.

8.11 These issues are impacting on our ability to maintain sustainable services without the added pressure of the further added pressure of the RIF funding being reduced via the tapering model.

8.12 In an effort to mitigate against this risk a one-off reserve of £390k has been proposed for this cost pressure. However, in light of the information highlighted this amount of reserve would only allow the current RIF projects to provide services at the current level for one further year.

9 CONSULTTEES:

- Gwent Directors
- Programme Management Office of the RPB
- Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
- Tyrone Stokes, Directorate Finance Manager

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Regional Integration Fund Guidance

<https://gov.wales/health-and-social-care-regional-integration-fund>

11 AUTHOR:

Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health

12 CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk



<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Jane Rodgers Phone no: E-mail:janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To consider the financial liabilities and implications of the Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Children's Services</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>22nd Nov 2022</p>

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.

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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	The RIF provides funding for a range of projects that are in place to support both children and older people / adults with care and support needs. The proposal to reject the funding taper will ensure that any potential service disruption is minimized.	None identified	If the taper is applied any reduction to service provision will be risk assessed as to the impact on children or adults with care and support needs.
Disability	The RIF provides funding for a range of projects aimed at supporting people with disabilities and their carers. The proposal to reject the funding taper will ensure that any potential service disruption is minimized.	None identified	If the taper is applied any reduction to service provision will be risk assessed as to the impact on children or adults with care and support needs.

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?
Gender reassignment	Services provided through RIF funding take account of individual circumstances and support people to live the lives they want to live as independently as possible.	None identified	If the taper is applied any reduction to service provision will be risk assessed as to the impact on children or adults with care and support needs.
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified	None identified	None identified
Pregnancy or maternity	None identified	None identified	None identified
Race	<i>None identified</i>	None identified	None identified
Religion or Belief	Services provided through RIF funding take account of individual circumstances and support people to live the lives they want to live as independently as possible. This includes recognising people's choice, control and ability to exercise their religion or beliefs.	None identified	If the taper is applied any reduction to service provision will be risk assessed as to the impact on children or adults with care and support needs.
Sex	There are more female than male workers employed through RIF funding. Increased stability to this funding source will provide better job-security for the workforce.	None identified	If the taper is applied any reduction to the workforce would follow the correct HR procedures.

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?
Sexual Orientation	Services provided through RIF funding take account of individual circumstances and support people to live the lives they want to live as independently as possible. This includes recognising people's sexual orientation and identity needs.	None identified	If the taper is applied any reduction to service provision will be risk assessed as to the impact on children or adults with care and support needs.

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	The people who are predominantly affected by this decision are some of the most vulnerable within the county including children who are looked after and adults with care and support needs. The extent to which adequate preventative and support services are in place is critical to ensure that Monmouthshire residents, particularly those who are the most negatively impacted by social determinants of health, are supported to live the lives they want to live and have choice and control wherever possible over the services they receive.	<i>None identified</i>	Services will continue to be developed to ensure that they are targeted at the most vulnerable and are preventative and enabling in orientation. Any reduction in service provision would be fully considered and risk assessed.

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	<p>The RPB and RIF have a duty to consider the promotion of the Welsh Language within all the supported programmes.</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>Evaluate and take into consideration the Welsh Language needs of all individuals and ensure this is reflected in any decisions taken by the RPB</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	<p>Some service information is available in Welsh.</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>Services need to seek ways to actively encourage Welsh speakers into social care and health posts by advertising more jobs as "Welsh essential" in line with the Council's Welsh Language Strategy.</p>
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	<p>Residents have the option to receive service in Welsh language through the 'more than just words strategy'.</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>Services need to seek ways to actively encourage Welsh speakers into social care and health posts.</p>

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

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?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The RIF injects a valuable funding stream into Gwent and in MCC supporting significant numbers of posts and developing skills, knowledge and learning across the social care and health sector	None identified
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	The RIF supports people's health and wellbeing needs through a range of preventative and support services.	None identified
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	The RIF supports people's health and wellbeing needs through a range of preventative and support services.	None identified
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Preventative services supported through the RIF are community orientated with the aims of minimizing isolation and maximizing community assets and community connection	None identified
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	None identified	None identified
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	The community orientation of many of the RIF supported projects enhances community wellbeing and builds on social connections, culture and recreational wellbeing activity.	None identified
A more equal Wales	<i>RIF projects work with many people who have experienced structural disadvantage, adversity and inequalities which have impacted on their health and</i>	None identified

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?
People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	<i>wellbeing. RIF projects are orientated around enabling approaches support people to live their own good lives and build resilience no matter what their background.</i>	

5. 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><i>The RIF and the RPB supports innovation and the development of sustainable social care and health services. The RIF taper model is part of the WG drive to accelerate new service developments through releasing funds.</i></p>	<p>That the proposal advocates that the Regional Integration Fund continues to be used to support sustainable innovation through allocating funds based on a process of evaluation and review using an evidence base focused on achieving best outcomes for residents of Gwent, rather than a formulated tapering approach.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The RIF and RPB uses partnership and integrated approaches to service design and development</p>	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>There are established citizen and 3rd sector engagement mechanisms within the structure of the RPB</p>	<p>None identified</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>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Many of the projects supported through the RIF are preventative and / or providing early help to families and individuals aimed at reducing levels of dependency and vulnerability.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>.The RIF and the RPB facilitates for partnership and integrated working across the health and social care sector.</p>	<p>None identified</p>

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	The provision of adequate care and support services is integral to safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs.	.none	Ensure that service development continues within early help and prevention
Corporate Parenting	Ensuring that there are sufficient services to work with children who are looked after and to prevent children from coming into care are key objectives for the council and for the corporate parenting panel,	None	Ensure that services continue to develop around preventing children from needing to be looked after in the first place

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

Financial data from the Programme Management Office regarding the impact of the tapering effect

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8. 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?

Continued RIF funding would allow the projects it supports to continue to help the Council meet its corporate objectives in respect of social care and health including the provision or preventative, community-based support for children and adults with care and support needs.

Evaluation of projects and new innovations would continue through the mechanisms that are already in place, and would be driven through strategic decision making within the RPB partnership rather than being driven via a tapering model.

Projects and current innovations would be allowed time to consolidate and build to ensure continuity of service provision to Monmouthshire residents, rather than risk de-stabilisation, particularly given the current financial and budgetary context.

9. 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
Inform the PMO / RPB as to the outcome of cabinet's consideration of the RIF tapering and the liabilities.	End of Dec 2022	Chief Officer Social Care & Health
Work with the RPB to continue to develop and implement services in response to current pressures; the local area plan based and population needs assessment.	March 2023	Chief Officer Social Care & Health

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

1	Cabinet circulation	22/11/22	