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Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

Dydd Llun, 19 Medi 2022

Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:

Cyngor Sir

**Dydd Mawrth, 27ain Medi, 2022 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber - Council Chamber**

AGENDA

Cynhelir gweddïau cyn y cyfarfod Cyngor am 13.50pm. Mae croeso i bob aelod ymuno â'r Cadeirydd ar gyfer hynny os ydynt yn dymuno gwneud hynny

Eitem No	Eitem	Tudalennau
1.	Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb	
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3.	Datganiadau o Fuddiant	
4.	Cwestiynau Cyhoeddus	
5.	Cyhoeddiad y Cadeirydd – Ei Mawrhydi'r Frenhines Elizabeth II	
6.	Adroddiadau i'r Cyngor:	
6.1.	DATBLYGU CYNLLUN DATBLYGU LLEOL DIWYGEDIG 2022 SIR FYNWY	9 - 62
6.2.	CYNIGION AR GYFER YR AFONYDD A'R MÔR	63 - 86
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6.4.	HUNAN-ASESIAD CYNGOR SIR FYNWY 2021/22	111 - 178

7. Cynigion i'r Cyngor:

7.1. Cynnig a gyflwynwyd gan y Cyngorydd Sir Ian Chandler

Mae'r Cyngor yma yn nodi:

Roedd y Datganiad o Argyfwng Hinsawdd a gymeradwywyd gan y Cyngor ar 16eg Mai 2019 yn cynnwys yr ymrwymadau:

- *Bydd y Cyngor hwn yn parhau i adolygu'r Cynllun Corfforaethol, y Cynllun Llesiant, Cynlluniau Datblygu Lleol ac unrhyw gynlluniau a pholisïau perthnasol eraill er mwyn cefnogi'r uchod.*
- *Yn gweithio gyda phartneriaid ar draws y Sir a Chynghorau a mudiadau eraill i helpu datblygu a gweithredu arferion gorau wrth gyfyngu ar y cynhesu byd-eang i lai na 1.5 gradd Celsius.*

Mae deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol yn gosod dyletswydd ar gyrrff cyhoeddus i atgyfnerthu egwyddorion datblygu cynaliadwy ym mhob un practis.

Mae'r Cyngor hwn yn nodi hefyd:

Mae angen i'r Cyngor yn gyfreithiol i ddal o leiaf £10 miliwn mewn arian parod wrth gefn, ac er mwyn rheoli'r llif arian sydd yn amrywio, mae'r Cyngor fel arfer yn dal rhwng £10 miliwn ac £16 miliwn mewn arian parod wrth gefn sy'n cael ei fuddsoddi.

Y Cyngor yw Ceidwad Buddsoddiad cyrff eraill gan gynnwys Cronfa Eglwys Cymru ac Ymddiriedolaeth Gwaddol Ysgol Fferm Sir Fynwy, ac mae eu buddsoddiad cyfun hwy yn fwy na £5 miliwn.

Mae'r Cyngor yn rhan o Gronfa Pensiwn Gwent Fwyaf sydd yn meddu ar asedau sy'n cael eu buddsoddi gwerth mwy na £3.7 biliwn.

Mae'r Cyngor yn cytuno i:

- a) Ymchwilio pa mor gyfrifol y mae'r Cyngor yn buddsoddi ei falans arian parod
- b) Datblygu polisi buddsoddi cynaliadwy sydd yn gyson gyda Datganiad o Argyfwng Hinsawdd y Cyngor a Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol.
- c) Gweithio gyda Chronfa Pensiwn Gwent Fwyaf er mwyn mabwysiadu polisi buddsoddi cynaliadwy tebyg.

7.2. Cynnig a gyflwynwyd gan y Cyngorydd Sir Frances Taylor

Mae'r Cyngor hwn yn galw ar Lywodraeth Cymru i adolygu eu polisi a'u dull o weithio o ran Ardrethi Annomestig ar gyfer busnesau bach.

O'r 1af Ebrill 2022, mae'r Cynllun Rhyddhad Ardrethi Annomestig ar gyfer Busnesau wedi ei ddiwygio er mwyn lleihau'r lefel o ryddhad y mae busnesau bach yn derbyn erbyn hyn, a hynny hyd at uchafswm o 50%. Mae hyn yn golygu bod busnesau a fu cyn hyn yn medru manteisio ar y ffaith nad oeddynt yn gorfod talu, nawr yn gorfod talu 50% o'u biliau cyfradd dreth ar ôl derbyn unrhyw ryddhad arall sydd yn berthnasol.

Wrth gydnabod y storm berffaith sydd yn wynebu busnesau bach o ran costau, egni a chyflenwadau gyda nifer yn parhau i ddelio gyda phethau ar ôl pandemig Covid-19, bydd y Cyngor yn ysgrifennu at y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol yn gofyn am adolygiad o'r polisi cyfredol.

8. Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf – 27ain Hydref 2022

**Paul Matthews
Prif Weithredwr**

CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

MAE CYFANSODDIAD Y PWYLLGOR FEL SY'N DILYN:

Cynghorwyr Sir:

Laura Wright
Tony Kear
Catrin Maby
Jan Butler
Ian Chandler
Sara Burch
Alistair Neill
Su McConnel
Mary Ann Brocklesby
Fay Bromfield
Jane Lucas
Emma Bryn
Peter Strong
Meirion Howells
Paul Griffiths
Jackie Strong
Rachel Garrick
Maria Stevens
Steven Garratt
Angela Sandles
Ben Callard
John Crook
Tomos Davies
Dale Rooke
Catherine Fookes
Sue Riley
Jayne McKenna
Jill Bond
Louise Brown
Lisa Dymock
Tony Easson
Christopher Edwards
Martyn Groucutt
Simon Howarth
Richard John
David Jones
Penny Jones
Malcolm Lane
Phil Murphy
Paul Pavia
Maureen Powell
Frances Taylor
Tudor Thomas
Armand Watts
Ann Webb

Gwybodaeth Gyhoeddus

Mynediad i gopiâu papur o agendâu ac adroddiadau

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

Edrych ar y cyfarfod ar-lein

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

Y Gymraeg

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn yn barchus i chi roi rhybudd digonol i ni er mwyn darparu ar gyfer eich anghenion.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

Ein diben

Adeiladu Cymunedau Cynaliadwy a Chydnerth

Amcanion y gweithiwn tuag atynt

- Rhoi'r dechrau gorau posibl mewn bywyd i bobl
- Sir lewyrchus a chysylltiedig
- Cynyddu i'r eithaf botensial yr amgylchedd naturiol ac adeiledig
- Llesiant gydol oes
- Cyngor gyda ffocws ar y dyfodol

Ein Gwerthoedd

Bod yn agored. Rydym yn agored ac yn onest. Mae pobl yn cael cyfle i gymryd rhan mewn penderfyniadau sy'n effeithio arnynt, dweud beth sy'n bwysig iddynt a gwneud pethau drostynt eu hunain/eu cymunedau. Os na allwn wneud rhywbeth i helpu, byddwn yn dweud hynny; os bydd yn cymryd peth amser i gael yr ateb, byddwn yn esbonio pam; os na allwn ateb yn syth, byddwn yn ceisio eich cysylltu gyda'r bobl a all helpu - mae adeiladu ymddiriedaeth ac ymgysylltu yn sylfaen allweddol.

Tegwch. Darparwn gyfleoedd teg, i helpu pobl a chymunedau i ffynnu. Os nad yw rhywbeth yn ymddangos yn deg, byddwn yn gwrando ac yn esbonio pam. Byddwn bob amser yn ceisio trin pawb yn deg ac yn gyson. Ni allwn wneud pawb yn hapus bob amser, ond byddwn yn ymrwymo i wrando ac esbonio pam y gwnaethom weithredu fel y gwnaethom.

Hyblygrwydd. Byddwn yn parhau i newid a bod yn hyblyg i alluogi cyflwyno'r gwasanaethau mwyaf effeithlon ac effeithiol. Mae hyn yn golygu ymrwymiad gwirioneddol i weithio gyda phawb i groesawu ffyrdd newydd o weithio.

Gwaith Tim. Byddwn yn gweithio gyda chi a'n partneriaid i gefnogi ac ysbrydoli pawb i gymryd rhan fel y gallwn gyflawni pethau gwych gyda'n gilydd. Nid ydym yn gweld ein hunain fel 'trefnwyr' neu ddatrysyr problemau, ond gwnawn y gorau o syniadau, asedau ac adnoddau sydd ar gael i wneud yn siŵr ein bod yn gwneud y pethau sy'n cael yr effaith mwyaf cadarnhaol ar ein pobl a lleoedd.

Caredigrwydd – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 21st July, 2022 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor Laura Wright (Chairman)
County Councillor Ann Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Su McConnel, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Peter Strong, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Catherine Fookes, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Tudor Thomas and Armand Watts

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Lisa Dymock, Bob Greenland, David Jones and Frances Taylor

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2022

Upon being put to a vote the minutes were accepted as an accurate meeting of the meeting of County Council held on 23rd June 2022.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Public Questions

None.

4. Chair's Announcement

Noted.

5. Cabinet Member Announcements

5.1. County Councillor Catherine Fookes, Cabinet Member for Equalities and

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Engagement - Tackling inequality and poverty

The Cabinet Member highlighted how the manifesto stated that the administration would prioritise tackling inequality and poverty and was pleased to announce that this would be a standing item on the Council agenda to allow regular feedback on these issues.

County Councillor Fookes noted that inflation and food bills are at an all time high and a Wales Governance Centre report has found that the recent National Insurance increase will leave the average Welsh household worse off by £220 per year. She went on to explain what we are doing to alleviate some of the effects of the cost of living crisis.

The Revenue and Benefits team, to date, have issued 17,746 payments of £150 totalling £2.6m. Next steps are to issue post office vouchers, which can be exchanged for cash, for those not registered. Welsh Government provided £500,000 in discretionary funding to MCC, and first payments targeted at free school meals families were made the previous week.

A total of £475,000 winter fuel payments have been issued.

Other work in poverty and equality include the use of discretionary housing payments to prevent homelessness, and a Food and Fun school holiday enrichment programme.

A cross-party working group is set to take place which will develop the corporate and community plan and ensure all views and ideas are heard.

Chair welcomed questions and comments.

Following a question from the Leader of the Opposition the Cabinet Member recognised that the Social Justice Strategy developed under the previous administration does require some updating and revisiting but was unsure as to how this would look going forward. She has spoken to officers about the Poverty Group and would work out the cleanest way of working.

County Councillor Fookes added that she recognised and supported the real living wage.

It was expressed that rural poverty must be acknowledged.

5.2. County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment - Addressing the climate and nature emergency

The Cabinet Member explained that Council has already made commitments to take action on the climate emergency, and on river pollution and stressed the importance of making it clear we recognise that we are in both a climate and a nature emergency. For this reason, the Cabinet Member will be reporting on these matters on a regular basis by making it a standing item on the Council agenda, ensuring that our response to these urgent matters is both coherent and continuous.

The Cabinet Member made the following points:

The most recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change make two things very clear:

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1. That human activity has already made irreversible climate change inevitable, that this brings severe consequences that we will need to adapt to, and which we will see increasingly in coming years.
2. That if we do not take urgent action to mitigate further climate change, we are on a path towards making the planet unliveable for future generations.

The Environment Agency confirmed in their report published just last week, *the biodiversity crisis joins the climate crisis as an existential risk to our survival - almost a fifth of UK plants are threatened with extinction, and a third of British pollinator species have declined In fact the UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.*

In Wales, the 2019 State of Nature report confirmed that 30% of wildlife is found in fewer places than it was in 1970 with 1 in 6 species being at risk of extinction. Bringing the focus back to our local area, the need for nature recovery is clear:

- The Greater Gwent State of Nature report identified 34% of species showing a decline in their numbers.
- The Wildlife Trusts 'Bugs Matter' survey identified a 40% decline in flying insects in Gwent since 2004. (On a UK scale, that figure is as high as a 60% decline.)
- Phosphate targets for the Usk are being failed at a rate of 88% and the Wye at 68% - with algal blooms smothering other life in the rivers, especially in hot weather.

The condition of rivers has a direct impact on the species that it provides habitat for – and a Cardiff University study showed a substantive decline in otter populations in 2021 for the first time since the 1970s.

We live in a wonderful county, and we must fiercely protect our natural environment, which is recognised for its significance. For example:

- Monmouthshire has 7 internationally important protected sites (SACs, SPAs and a Ramsar site).
- It has 67 SSSIs and almost 700 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation including large numbers of small species rich grasslands and ancient woodlands.
- Monmouthshire has 24 Habitats (including Marine) and 219 Species considered to be of 'principle importance for conservation in Wales' as defined by the Environment Wales Act 2016.

During the next few weeks, the Cabinet Member will agree with senior staff a cycle for reporting on the different elements of work to address the climate and nature emergency. The intention is that it will cover the climate and nature aspects of the full range of activities and operations, across buildings, fleet, procurement, land use and land management, as well as waste management, green infrastructure and biodiversity.

Monmouthshire County Council is already doing a lot of good things and wants to ensure to monitor and report back on what we are doing. MCC needs to work together to build a nature-positive response to the challenges being faced, across a full spectrum of activities to restore biodiversity, and both to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The Chair welcomed questions and comments.

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Reference was made to how the Council is influencing the carbon footprint of the County, and how we can work on that.

A question was raised to how the Council is adapting its services to cope with extreme weather events, for example, how Social Care will respond during heatwave conditions.

With regards to phosphates, we heard that we were looking to work within the Rivers Wye and Usk catchment areas, and the Cabinet Member has joined a cross-border group relating to the Wye River which had been attended by NRW, Environment Agency and Welsh Water. The group is at an early stage but plans to have a serious action plan to push forward. Similarly, a group has been set up by Brecon Beacons for the Usk River and the Cabinet Member awaits a report on that.

In response to a question around bus travel and transport the Cabinet Member advised that there has been work on a response to the bus consultation and WG is working towards a more coherent system for the whole country.

6. Timing of Council Meetings

The Vice Chair of Democratic Services Committee presented the report in order for Council to consider the recommendation from Democratic Services Committee, in line with the Local Government Wales Measure, to review the timing of Full Council meetings for the current term of Council.

County Councillor Ben Callard proposed an amendment to the recommendation that

This Council asks the Democratic Services Committee to table at the October Democratic Service Committee meeting options for the timing of Full Council meetings which can be considered and voted upon.

That individual committees are free to set the timing of their meetings that suit the committee and members of it.

Comments made:

- Where changes are made there should be a lead-in time, possibly 3 months
- Fairer that all members be consulted on the recommendation
- DS Committee had discussed the matter in full and a fair recommendation was being presented
- Corporate Plan to be unveiled in October and evening meetings may not be appropriate.
- Care must be taken to ensure a diverse council
- Evening meetings will impact on family life
- Evening meetings better for working parents
- The amendment could be seen to undermine the recommendation of DS Committee

Following full discussion, a vote saw the amendment defeated.

Debate returned to the original recommendation.

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Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

That meetings of Full Council remain at 14:00 to allow newly elected councillors time to understand the role and impact of being a councillor fully. Democratic Services Committee may review the arrangements again and report back to Council following a minimum period of 12 months.

That individual committees are free to set the timing of their meetings that suit the committee and members of it.

7. Motions for Council

7.1. Submitted by County Councillor Jill Bond

Council resolves that we commit ourselves as a Council to working with our families and our communities, with the Welsh Government and the UK Government to provide practical support to those that need it most. We ensure that we continue to take a coordinated approach towards addressing the cost-of-living emergency.

Seconded by County Councillor Su McConnel

It was expressed that this led back to the need to address the gulf between the amount of core funding to MCC from Welsh Government compared to the average council in Wales.

It was noted that there had been a 100% increase at Chepstow Community Fridge since opening in March 2022.

It was recognised that a key issue is the difference between incomes and the current rate of inflation.

County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities, highlighted that with the support of WG, MCC have been able to bring forward the programme of summer activities through MonLife. She also stated that reducing household costs equates with reducing our impact on the environment, and how this is being addressed through school uniform recycling and community fridges.

It was expressed that there is a lack of housing strategy and we should revert to building Council housing.

Reference was made to the increasing energy prices and how Council has a duty of obligation to help the residents of Monmouthshire.

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement highlighted the gender issue around the crisis.

County Councillor Simon Howarth left the meeting at 16:32pm

Upon being put to a vote the motion was carried.

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7.2. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

This council opposes any proposals from the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust to down grade the ambulance stations in Monmouth and Chepstow by removing the Rapid Response Vehicles. It calls on WAST executives to attend the appropriate select committee for pre-decision scrutiny of their national roster review proposals prior to Welsh Government approval and implementation.

County Councillor Tony Kear left the meeting at 16:40pm

Seconded by County Councillor Alistair Neill.

Members across the chamber were keen to express their support for the motion.

Comments referred to:

- Consequences of ambulance response times.
- Ambulance waiting time outside the Grange Hospital impacting ambulance response times.
- A wide rural area such as Monmouthshire requires good coverage.
- WAST attending a scrutiny committee to present their proposals would allow due diligence scrutiny.
- Lack of care packages impact the bed space at the Grange Hospital
- If most ambulance staff are based in a regional station, how will they provide a rapid response to this in need in rural Monmouthshire. The idea of local fire stations should apply to rapid response vehicles.

Upon being put to a vote the motion was carried.

8. Member Questions

9. From County Councillor Fay Bromfield to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on steps to tackle speeding in Llantrisant?

The Cabinet Member advised that a petition has been received from the local community seeking a speed reduction on the Usk to Wentwood road and the petition is to be reported to Place Scrutiny Committee in September. Meanwhile officers have added the request to the work programme so they can assess the situation and give it due consideration.

As a supplementary County Councillor Bromfield wished to emphasise the concerns of residents and welcomed the Cabinet Member to attend a meeting at the road to understand those concerns. The Cabinet Member agreed to attend.

10. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Rachel Garrick, Cabinet Member for Resources

What assessment has the administration made regarding the impact of the Welsh Government's planned council tax revaluation on Monmouthshire residents?

The Cabinet Member explained that the WG consultation on a fairer council tax opened on Thursday 14th July 2022 and is running until October 2022 and is in the interest of reviewing the

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Welsh council tax system. The scope of the consultation includes completing a council tax revaluation for the 1.5 million properties in Wales to rebalance the system to reflect property values. This is because the current system is now nearly 20 years out of date. The scope also extends to designing a new system of bands and tax rates that is more progressive including considering adding more bands to both the top and bottom ends of the scale if needed. It is looking to revalue more frequently the values of houses to keep the council tax more fairly distributed and on a more regular basis. It looks to improve the framework of discounts, disregarded persons, exemptions and premiums to ensure that arrangements are aligned to WG goals. It is also looking to improve the council tax reduction scheme which provides support to low-income households.

This is the first phase of the consultation which considers revenue support grants and council tax income. Phase 2 is targeted for summer 2023 and the WLGA are considering a joint response which would consider all revenue networks across Wales and the society of Welsh Treasurers. We can also submit a response as an individual council.

The Cabinet Member recognised concerns across the chamber regarding the impact on Monmouthshire and the position of families who are asset rich in terms of their own homes but are income poor. She urged Councillors to bear in mind that the scope of the consultation does include providing support to low-income families.

As a supplementary County Councillor John referred to the previous revaluation in 2003/2004 when MCC was one of the local authorities hardest hit and asked for assurance that the administration will do everything it can to stand up for Monmouthshire residents and ensure that they are not disproportionately impacted by the changes WG decide on.

The Cabinet Member assured the County Councillor John that they would not want Monmouthshire residents to be disproportionately affected compared to the rest of Wales.

11. Date of next meeting - 22nd September 2022

The meeting ended at 5.25 pm

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SUBJECT: PROGRESSING MONMOUTHSHIRE'S REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP)
MEETING: COUNCIL
DATE: 27 September 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the proposed way of progressing the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses key local issues, in particular affordable housing, demographic balance and the climate and nature emergency.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

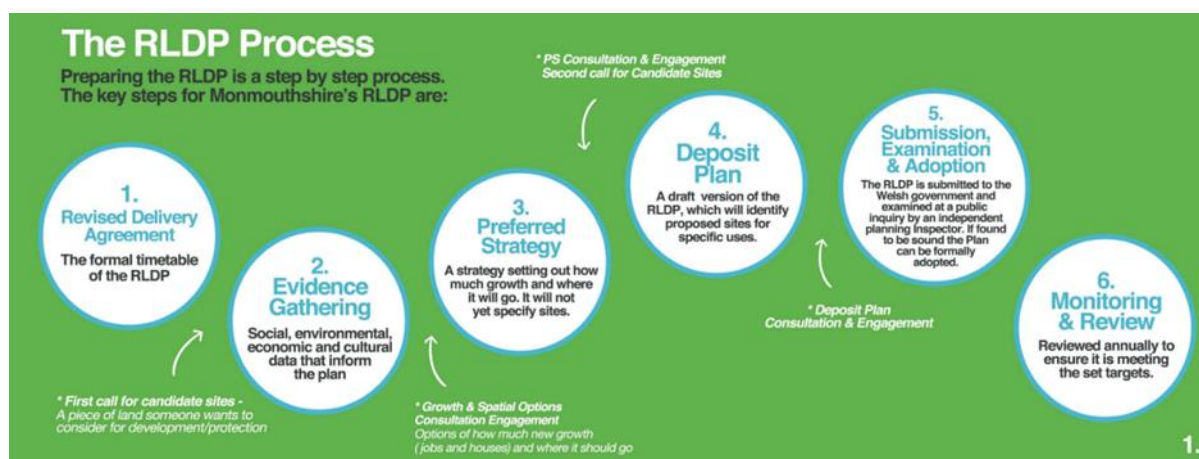
- 2.1 That Council endorses the proposal for progressing the RLDP, noting that a report will be brought to Council in December 2022 seeking endorsement to consult on a new Preferred Strategy.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

- 3.1 The Council is preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the period 2018 to 2033. The RLDP is a key Council policy document that allocates land for development, designates areas for protection and contains policies to provide the basis for deciding planning applications. It will cover the whole of the County except for the part within Brecon Beacons National Park. The current adopted LDP covered the period 2011-2021 but remains the planning policy framework for making decisions in Monmouthshire until the adoption of the RLDP.
- 3.2 The RLDP will identify where and how much new, sustainable development will take place to 2033, underpinned by a clear and robust evidence base. Early stages of the project identified 38 issues facing the communities we serve, based on a range of evidence including responses to consultation on the Public Service Board's Local Wellbeing Plan. The RLDP's issues, vision and objectives were subject of targeted engagement in January-February 2019 and were [reviewed](#) in the light of the subsequent Climate Emergency declaration by Council in May 2019. A [further review](#) in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic concluded that the Plan's strategic direction of travel remained relevant and identified a number of key messages that will require ongoing consideration as the RLDP progresses.
- 3.3 The seventeen Plan objectives are grouped to reflect the seven wellbeing goals and not order of importance. However, as the Plan has developed, three core objectives have become apparent: delivering affordable housing to help address inequality, rebalancing the County's demography to ensure communities are socially and economically sustainable, and responding to the climate and nature emergency to ensure proposals are environmentally sustainable.

- 3.4 The diagram below shows the key steps in the RLDP process. Although the Preferred Strategy is the first statutory consultation stage in the RLDP preparation process, the Council chose to engage from the outset and consulted on the issues, vision and objectives, and the growth and spatial options stages.



- 3.5 The Preferred Strategy stage provides the strategic direction for the development and use of land in Monmouthshire (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park) over the Plan period 2018 to 2033 and identifies how much sustainable growth is needed and where this growth will broadly be located. Its preparation is guided by a framework of key inputs that includes the assessment and consideration of the growth and spatial options, responses from the consultation process, the findings of the [Integrated Sustainability Appraisal \(ISA\)](#), the [Sustainable Settlement Appraisal](#), [Future Wales the National Plan 2040](#), the LDP tests of soundness¹, Welsh Government's [Building Better Places](#) document, and the pressing need to address the key challenges relating to the County's demography, housing affordability and climate and nature emergency to achieve a sustainable, balanced and deliverable outcome.

Progress to date

- 3.6 Stakeholder consultation and engagement on the 'Sustainable and Resilient Communities [Preferred Strategy](#)' took place in Summer 2021, alongside a second opportunity for stakeholders to suggest sites for inclusion in the Plan for development or protection (the second call for candidate sites). This Strategy sought to:
- Make provision for 8,366 homes to deliver a housing requirement of 7,605 homes (this provision adds a 10% flexibility allowance which will be given further consideration and refined at Deposit Stage). As the Plan period began in 2018, the existing supply of housing land contributes towards the Plan's housing target. This means we would be required to allocate new sites for approximately **3,660 new homes**.
 - This housing growth figure included the provision of 2,170 to 2,450 affordable homes. Approximately 1,210 to 1,490 of these would be on new allocations.
 - Set out the planning policy framework to support the provision of 7,215 additional jobs by allocating sufficient employment land in the right places in the County to meet the needs of new and existing businesses.
 - Spatially distribute growth proportionately across the County's most sustainable settlements, with the majority of housing growth in Primary Settlements (Abergavenny including Llanfoist, Chepstow and Monmouth including Wyesham),

and Severnside (Caldicot, Caerwent, Crick, Magor, Undy, Rogiet, Portskewett and Sudbrook), with some growth in our Secondary Settlements (Penperlleni, Raglan and Usk) and Rural Settlements.

- 3.7 The consultation also sought views on options for strategic growth areas around each primary settlement and Severnside. These were set out in the [Easy Read](#) guide.

Reasons why a different approach is now proposed

- 3.8 Following the consultation/engagement on the Preferred Strategy, a number of challenges have arisen which have impacted on the progression of the RLDP and require further consideration, namely the Welsh Government objection to the Sustainable and Resilient Communities Preferred Strategy and phosphate water quality issues in the Rivers Wye and Usk.

Welsh Government Consultation Response to the Preferred Strategy

- 3.9 The Welsh Government's (WG) Planning Division response to the Preferred Strategy consultation raised some significant concerns regarding the proposed level of growth and the Strategy's 'general conformity' with policies 1 and 33 of the Future Wales: the National Plan 2040. This suggested that growth in Monmouthshire would undermine growth in the national growth area of Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys (Appendix 1). WG's consultation response takes the unprecedented step of prescribing a maximum growth of 4,275 dwellings for Monmouthshire to 2033. This is considerably lower than the Preferred Strategy dwelling requirement that we consulted on (7,605 dwellings) and would result in barely any new housing allocations over RLDP period due to the existing housing landbank. This approach would fail to deliver on our key locally evidenced issues and objectives including affordable housing delivery, economic growth/prosperity and rebalancing our demography, to the detriment of the sustainability of Monmouthshire's communities. It would also fail to accord with policies 4, 5 and 7 of Future Wales 2040: the national plan (FW2040) which specifically support rural communities and seek to increase the delivery of affordable homes throughout Wales (Appendix 1).
- 3.10 On 14th December 2021, a [a special meeting of the Council's Economy and Development Select Committee](#) considered the implications of the Welsh Government Planning Division's response on Monmouthshire's communities and on addressing the locally evidence-based outcomes and objectives.
- 3.11 The Welsh Government Planning Division's letter poses a significant challenge. An amended RLDP that follows the letter's requirements would not meet the tests of soundness at examination because it would not address the evidenced based issues or achieve the outcomes. Conversely, proceeding as originally proposed would be a high risk strategy. Consequently, officers and elected members have been liaising with Welsh Government officials and the Minister to seek to identify an acceptable way forward.

Phosphates

- 3.12 As a result of recent evidence regarding the environmental impacts of phosphate in watercourses, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) adopted tighter targets for the water quality of watercourses and conducted an assessment of the 9 riverine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in Wales. This assessment has established that phosphorus breaches are widespread within Welsh SAC rivers with over 60% of waterbodies

failing against the new targets. Within Monmouthshire, NRW identified that within the River Usk, 88% of the river's water bodies failed to meet the required target and within the River Wye, 67% of the river's water bodies failed to meet the required target.

- 3.13 In response, NRW has issued detailed planning guidance to ensure that the environmental capacity of the rivers does not deteriorate any further. Any proposed development within the affected catchment areas of the rivers Usk and Wye that might increase phosphate levels need to clearly evidence that the development can demonstrate phosphate neutrality or betterment in its design and/or its contribution to the water body. This issue affects the upper (non-tidal) parts of the two rivers, as shown in the plan at Appendix 2.
- 3.14 The phosphates water quality issue affecting the River Wye and River Usk has implications for the progression of the RLDP as the Preferred Strategy that we consulted on in July-August 2021 directed future growth to a number of key sustainable settlements within these affected catchment areas. Further consideration has, therefore, been given as to the RLDP can progress in light of this issue, carefully balancing the need for growth with the climate and nature emergency. Following discussions with Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW) and NRW, it has become apparent that whilst a workable solution to this water quality issue is achievable for the Llanfoist Waste water Treatment Works (WWTW) (River Usk catchment), there is no identified strategic solution for phosphate mitigation at the Monmouth WWTW (River Wye catchment) at this time that will be implemented during the Plan period. Without an identified deliverable solution, it will not be possible to demonstrate at examination that sites in the upper Wye catchment are deliverable, making the Plan unsound. This means that new site allocations for future growth cannot be directed to settlements within the affected Wye catchment area, including the primary settlement of Monmouth, until a feasible solution is identified that can be implemented within a timescale that facilitates development within the Plan period. The restrictions on new housing and employment development in this area during the Plan period has obvious implications for the RLDP spatial strategy.
- 3.15 Therefore, notwithstanding the Welsh Government Planning Division's objection to the Sustainable and Resilient Communities Preferred Strategy consulted upon in July and August 2021, the phosphates issue means a revised strategy is needed. This approach aligns with the Motion of the Rivers and Ocean Action Plan that is also being reported to this Council meeting.
- 3.16 Consideration has therefore been given to how to progress the RLDP having regard to the above challenges, whilst also ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses the core issues of delivering much needed affordable housing at pace and scale, responding to the climate and nature emergency by delivering zero carbon ready new homes for our communities, and ensuring our communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic. This report invites Council to agree a proposed way forward.

Preferred Option for Progressing the RLDP

- 3.17 The recommendation to Council is that the best option to proceed is to progress with an amended growth and spatial strategy that responds to the challenges identified above. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's agreement to this direction of travel. If agreed, a report will be brought to December's Council meeting containing an amended Preferred Strategy and Delivery Agreement for Council's endorsement for going out to public consultation.

- 3.18 The proposed revised preferred strategy would reduce the level of growth proposed and would amend the spatial distribution of new growth to avoid the upper Wye catchment. The revised Preferred Strategy would:
- Provide for approximately 5,400 - 5,940 homes over the Plan period 2018-2033. This includes the provision of approximately 1,500 - 1,770 affordable homes². As there are currently approximately 3,940 homes in the housing landbank³, the RLDP would need to allocate land for approximately **1,460 - 2,000 new homes, including 730 - 1,000 new affordable homes**. The Council's current data on affordable housing contained in the 2020 Local Housing Market Assessment indicates that 68% of the affordable housing provided needs to be social housing for rent, 7% intermediate rent and 25% low cost home ownership. This assessment is being updated based on a new WG template, but given increased property prices and the cost of living crisis, social rented affordable housing is expected to remain the greatest proportion of need.
 - Set out the planning policy framework to support/enable the provision of approx. 6,240 additional jobs by allocating sufficient employment land in the right places in the County to meet the needs of new and existing businesses. The Plan will also include policies to facilitate growth in retail, leisure and tourism sectors. The RLDP will be supported by an economic development strategy.
 - Locate growth proportionately across the County's most sustainable settlements, including Abergavenny, Chepstow and Severnside, as well as some growth in our rural settlements to deliver much needed affordable homes and to address rural inequality and rural isolation in these areas. Due to the lack of an identified strategic solution to the treatment of phosphates at the Monmouth WWTW within the Plan period, no new site allocations can be considered in settlements within the upper River Wye catchment area north of Bigsweir Bridge, including the primary settlement of Monmouth.
 - Identify preferred strategic sites in our primary settlements of Abergavenny and Chepstow and in Severnside.
 - Set out strategic policies on a range of topic areas, reflecting the four placemaking themes in Planning Policy Wales (PPW)⁴.
- 3.19 On balance, it is considered that the revised Preferred Strategy (as set out in paragraph 3.18) would best achieve sustainable balanced deliverable outcomes by:
- Delivering a level of growth (homes and jobs) that addresses our locally evidence-based issues and objectives in the south of the County and River Usk catchment area, including in relation to the delivery of affordable homes, rebalancing our demography and responding to the climate and nature emergencies, whilst having regard to WG officer concerns regarding alignment with Future Wales: the National Plan 2040.
 - Maximising affordable housing delivery on new housing allocations, reflecting the Administration's manifesto commitment to deliver 50% affordable homes on new housing sites which would help to tackle Monmouthshire's housing need, homelessness and social inequality. This approach would also enable the Council to consider alternative mechanisms for delivering affordable homes.
 - Providing a wider choice of smaller homes to enable younger people to live and work in Monmouthshire which would make our ageing communities more socially and economically sustainable.

² This adds a 10% flexibility allowance which will be given further consideration and refined at Deposit Stage

³ As the Plan period has already begun (2018) some of the homes in the landbank have been built, are under construction or have planning permission. The landbank figure also takes into account windfall sites and small sites.

⁴ PPW edition 11, WG, February 2011.

- Requiring new homes to be zero carbon ready, reflecting our commitment to responding to and tackling climate change.
- Delivering growth in our most sustainable settlements⁵. This would limit the impacts of climate change and ensure good placemaking principles of attractive, accessible places to live and work that have access to sustainable transport links and reduce the need for journeys by the car.
- Reconsulting on a revised Preferred Strategy which would enable the Council to progress the RLDP in a timely manner, with a view to adopting the Plan in summer 2025.

3.20 Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that the preferred option would not deliver the Council's objectives or address key issues, including the delivery of new affordable homes, in those settlements in the phosphate affected upper River Wye catchment. However, as there are currently no identified strategic solutions to the treatment of phosphates in the River Wye catchment area during the Plan period, this shortcoming is unavoidable. It is not possible to allocate sites for new growth (homes and employment) in the affected river catchment. In contrast, strategic solutions are being developed to enable the treatment of phosphates in the River Usk catchment area. This will enable sustainable growth within the most sustainable settlements within the River Usk catchment area over the Plan period.

3.21 In recommending this level of growth, there would need to be a commitment to ensuring that the new site allocations provide 50% affordable housing. In order for residential sites to be allocated in the RLDP, it will be essential to demonstrate that sites are viable and deliverable, having regard to the Administration's commitment for 50% affordable housing provision on new sites, the requirement for zero carbon ready homes and associated infrastructure to support the development. This might require WG policy position changes on use of Social Housing Grant or other public sector funding. Additional viability work will be required to demonstrate site viability and deliverability based on these policy requirements. Current policy seeks neutral tenure, but the RLDP could, if desired include a policy specifying the affordable housing mix (social rent, intermediate rent and low cost home ownership). Such a policy should be based on the evidence contained in the updated Local Housing Market Assessment: this detail is a matter for the Deposit Plan at a future stage. The revised Preferred Strategy will seek to identify sites which provide sustainable access to existing urban settlements. It will seek to ensure high levels of sustainability in the construction and liveability of the new housing.

Next Steps

3.22 If Council endorses this proposal for progressing the RLDP, a revised Preferred Strategy based on this strategy option will be reported to Council in December 2022 for endorsement to be issued for statutory consultation/engagement in December 2022 to January 2023. The responses received will inform the next key stage of the RLDP process, the Deposit Plan. The Report will also seek Council's agreement of the RLDP Revised Delivery Agreement, which will amend the project timetable for Plan preparation, for submission to the Welsh Government for Ministerial approval.

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

4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) sets out the requirement for all LDPs to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). All stages of the RLDP will be subject to an Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) (including Strategic

⁵ Excluding those settlements in the River Wye catchment area due to the inability to deliver strategic solution to phosphate mitigation the area's WWTW.

Environmental Assessment (SEA), Well-being of Future Generations (WBFG), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA)). The ISA findings would inform the development of the revised Preferred Strategy and will be used to inform detailed policies and site allocations in the Deposit Plan, in order to ensure that the Plan will promote sustainable development. The Initial ISAR would be published alongside the revised Preferred Strategy.

- 4.2 An Equality and Future Generations Evaluation (including equalities and sustainability impact assessment) is attached to this report at Appendix 3.

Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting

- 4.3 There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising directly from this report. The RLDP has the potential to provide affordable housing, delivery and allocation of which should be cognisant of the needs of children leaving care.

Socio-economic Duty

- 4.4 The RLDP seeks to tackle inequality, specifically by seeking to address house price unaffordability, which currently prevents some of our communities accessing suitable housing within the County. This is likely to benefit younger people, who in turn will make our ageing communities more socially and economically balanced and more sustainable. Good quality and affordable homes are important in achieving poverty reduction and equitable prosperity, and supporting the best start in life. Good spatial planning helps to build cohesive communities. The provision of affordable homes combined with policy interventions in relation to the requirement of a mix of market housing will increase opportunities for those in poverty to access safe, secure and suitable housing. In accordance with the WBFGA, the RLDP also seeks to prevent future problems and will therefore continue to avoid new development in flood risk areas and will seek zero carbon ready development to help address the climate and nature emergency and also tackle issues such as fuel poverty.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 In arriving at the proposed way forwards above, a number of options have been considered:

Option 1: Proceed with the existing Preferred Strategy that we consulted on in July-August 2021;

Option 2: Adopt an amended approach and proceed with a demographic-led strategy (based on the latest detailed population data⁶) and an amended spatial strategy to take account of the phosphate constraint in the River Wye catchment. This is the recommended option;

Option 3: Proceed with the WG prescribed maximum dwelling requirement (4,275 dwellings over the Plan period), and a spatial strategy that takes account of the phosphate constraint in the River Wye catchment; or

Option 4: Restart the RLDP process.

- 5.2 A detailed options appraisal of the four options has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix 4. This sets out the demographic, dwelling and jobs growth levels associated with each option, together with the benefits and risks, including in relation to the ability of each option to meet our objectives and address our key issues, the impact on plan preparation and deliverability of the RLDP. The table below provides a high level summary.

⁶ ONS 2020 Mid-year Estimates

5.3 The options appraisal concludes that Option 2, to proceed with a revised Preferred Strategy based on a demographic-led strategy and an amended spatial strategy to take account of the phosphate constraint in the upper River Wye Catchment (i.e. avoiding growth in the affected settlements), is the most appropriate option for progressing the RLDP in light of the aforementioned challenges. The other three options have been discounted for various reasons, as set out in the options appraisal (Appendix 4).

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
Endorse Option 2 (proceed with an amended Strategy) as the Preferred Option to progress the RLDP.	This option would best deliver on the Council's objectives to create sustainable and resilient communities for current and future generations and enable the RLDP preparation process to progress in a timely manner.		Option 2 is considered to promote an appropriate level and spatial distribution of housing and employment growth for the County to 2033 having regard to the key challenges (set out above) and the pressing need to deliver key outcomes, including housing affordability, demographic balance and climate change. This is the preferred option.
Endorse one of the alternative options to progress the RLDP.		As set out in the Options Appraisal, the alternative options have been discounted for various reasons and are not considered an appropriate basis on which to progress the RLDP.	As above, it is considered that Option 2 would best deliver on the Council's objectives to create sustainable and resilient communities for current and future generations and enable the RLDP preparation process to progress in a timely manner. It is not considered appropriate to endorse one of the discounted options.
Do not endorse any of the options to progress the RLDP.		This would lead to a significant delay in the RLDP preparation process with resultant implications, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A delay in addressing our key issues, including housing affordability, demographic balance and climate change. • Policy gap - evidence/ policy framework in the extant adopted LDP becomes more out dated. 	As above, it is considered that Option 2 would best deliver on the Council's objectives to create sustainable and resilient communities for current and future generations and enable the RLDP preparation process to progress in a timely manner. Not endorsing any option would result in significant delays to the RLDP preparation

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associated lack of certainty for communities and investors. 	process with associated negative implications.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Officer and consultant time and costs associated with the preparation of the revised Preferred Strategy option will be met from the Planning Policy budget and existing LDP reserve.
- 6.2 Delivery of the RLDP, once adopted, will need to be accompanied by a range of infrastructure provision including transport, education, health care, leisure and affordable housing. The infrastructure requirements will be identified in the Infrastructure Plan and updated Local Transport Plan accompanying the RLDP. Although it is expected that most of this infrastructure would be funded via S106 planning contributions (or possibly a Community Infrastructure Levy), there may be a requirement for Council expenditure to assist in providing some infrastructure or in bringing some sites forwards. This might include the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders and/or potential commercial investment to provide 'shovel ready' sites or business premises. There may also be grant funding available.

7. CONSULTEES

- Informal Cabinet
- Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy, Deputy Leader
- SLT
- Communities and Place DMT
- Member workshop 12th September 2022
- Place Scrutiny 26th September 2022

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [RLDP Preferred Strategy](#) (June 2021)
- [Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report](#) (AECOM, June 2021)
- [HRA of the Monmouthshire RLDP Preferred Strategy](#) (AECOM, June 2021)
- Preferred Strategy consultation responses, including Welsh Government Planning Division's response.
- [RLDP Delivery Agreement](#) (Second Revision, October 2021)
- Monmouthshire RLDP Demographic Update Report (Edge Analytics, November 2021)

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: Welsh Government Planning Division's response to the RLDP Preferred Strategy (June 2021), Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 Policies 1, 4, 5, 7 and 33 and South East Wales Regional Strategic Diagram.

APPENDIX 2: Map of River Usk and River Wye Catchment Areas

APPENDIX 3: Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

APPENDIX 4: RLDP Options Appraisal



Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Gynllunio
Planning Directorate

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mark Hand
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27 August 2021

Dear Mark

**Monmouthshire County Council – Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP)
Preferred Strategy Consultation: Welsh Government Response**

Thank you for consulting the Welsh Government on the Monmouthshire County Council Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) – Preferred Strategy consultation. It is essential the authority is covered by an up-to-date LDP to give certainty to local communities and business.

Without prejudice to the Minister's powers, the Welsh Government is committed to helping Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) minimise the risk of submitting unsound plans by making comments at the earliest stages of plan preparation. The Welsh Government looks for clear evidence that the plan is in general conformity with Future Wales: The National Development Framework and that the tests of soundness (as set out in the 'LDP Manual') are addressed.

The development planning system in Wales is evidence led and demonstrating how a plan is shaped by the evidence is a key requirement of the LDP examination. It is essential that a plan is in general conformity with Future Wales, responds to national planning policy and the place making agenda, addresses climate change and nature emergencies, and demonstrates strategy delivery.

After considering the key issues and policies in Future Wales, the **Preferred Strategy, as presented in relation to the scale of growth, is not in general conformity with Future Wales: The National Development Framework**. Specific comments are set out in the **Statement of General Conformity** (Annex 1 to this letter) with additional guidance contained in the Development Plans Manual (3rd Edition, March 2020) – 'the DPM'.

The Preferred Strategy has been considered in accordance with the tests of soundness as set out in the DPM (Table 27, page 166). **Our representations are provided by topic area, with further detail in the attached Annex 2.**

National planning policies are set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11, which seeks to deliver high quality, sustainable places through a place-making approach. The implementation of the core policy areas in PPW, such as adopting a sustainable spatial strategy, appropriate housing and economic growth levels, infrastructure delivery and place-making, are articulated in more detail in the LDP Manual (Edition 3). We expect the core elements of the Manual, in particular Chapter 5 and the 'De-risking Checklist', to be followed.

It is very disappointing that key background documents on issues including Strategic Site delivery, a high-level/site-specific viability appraisal, a Renewable Energy Assessment and Gypsy and Traveller Assessment have not been completed to 'front load' the process and inform findings in the Preferred Strategy. A robust evidence base is critical to fully understand the plan.

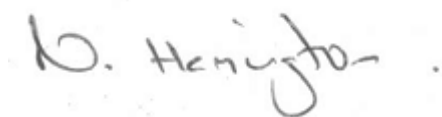
Our representation includes more detailed issues set out in Annex 1 and Annex 2 to this letter. Collectively, our comments highlight a range of issues that need to be addressed for the plan to be considered 'sound'. The key areas include:

- Housing and economic growth levels
- Affordable housing policy-on approach
- Site delivery/implementation, including financial viability
- Phosphates and nutrient neutrality
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Minerals

I would urge you to seek your own legal advice to ensure you have met all the procedural requirements, including the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), as responsibility for these matters rests with your authority. A requirement to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) arising from the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, if appropriate, should be carried out to assess the likely effect of the proposed development plan on health, mental well-being and inequality.

My colleagues and I look forward to meeting you and the team to discuss matters arising from this response.

Yours sincerely



Neil Hemington
Chief Planner Welsh Government

For matters relating to general conformity with Future Wales and planning policy please contact: PlanningPolicy@gov.wales

For matters relating to Local Development Plan procedures please contact: Planning.Directorates@gov.wales

Statement of General Conformity

The Welsh Government has very significant concerns regarding the Monmouthshire LDP Preferred Strategy. Future Wales places great emphasis on the development of National Growth Areas. The Preferred Strategy is not in general conformity with Policies 1 and 33 of Future Wales and undermines the role of Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys as the main focus for growth and investment in the South East region.

Reasons

The Welsh Government acknowledges the work the local authority has undertaken in developing the Preferred Strategy, which includes consideration of a number of growth and spatial options. However, there is fundamental concern about the impact of the chosen growth option of 7,215 new jobs and 7,605 homes on the South East region as defined in Future Wales.

As the local authority acknowledge, Monmouthshire forms part of the South East Wales Region which includes a National Growth Area that focusses new development in Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys. Monmouthshire is not within the National Growth Area, as defined by Policy 1 and Policy 33 of Future Wales. **The level of economic and housing growth proposed by the Preferred Strategy undermines Future Wales focus for strategic economic and housing growth in the SE Wales National Growth Area.**

With regard to housing, the level of housing proposed is 4,740 units above the Welsh Government 2018-based principal household projection of 2,865 homes. The housing requirement is based on data for Monmouthshire County Council as a whole and includes land within the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). The WG principal projection for the plan area, minus BBNPA area, is 2,610 units which means that the Preferred Strategy is actually some 4,995 dwellings above the WG 2018 principal projection. The proposed level of housing growth (507 dpa) is also very significantly above the past 5 and 10-year build rates (310 and 285 pa respectively).

Monmouthshire is predominantly a rural area with widely distributed market towns and villages. The south of the county has strong functional linkages to Newport, Cardiff and Bristol. The county is characterised by very significant environmental assets including the Wye Valley AONB, the setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Gwent levels, Special Areas of Conservation, numerous SSSI's and many historic buildings and landscapes. The County also possesses some of the most significant tracts of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land in Wales.

The level of growth proposed has the potential to negatively impact on environmental assets and have adverse consequences for climate and nature emergencies. This is heightened by the absence of brownfield land development opportunities and the consequential need to identify significant green field sites for development.

There are major regional strategic impacts arising from the level of growth proposed. Displacement of population, housing and jobs from elsewhere in the region to Monmouthshire will occur. This will hinder regeneration and the take up of brownfield land for development in the National Growth Area.

To be considered to be in general conformity with Future Wales the Monmouthshire RLDP must provide for a lower level of housing. The WG principal housing projection for the plan area, 2,610 units, provides a starting point for the level of housing required. In recognition of build rates achieved over the last 10 years, a higher level of housing may be justified. The proposed level of housing growth should however be no greater than 4,275 units (15 x the 10 year build rate) plus an appropriate flexibility allowance. This will ensure that Monmouthshire continues grow in a

sustainable manner based on a locally appropriate level of development which is compatible with policies 1 and 33 of Future Wales.

There are also significant reservations about proposed levels of employment growth which are set out fully in Annex 2.

It is positive that the Strategy recognises the importance of biodiversity enhancement with language such as “must maintain, protect and enhance.” As well as highlighting ranges of opportunities such as minimum garden standards and planting in public realm spaces. However, the statement *the RLDP must ensure biodiversity is considered in any development in order to protect any interest on the site and encourage biodiversity enhancements where necessary* should be stronger. As outlined in Future Wales Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure, rather than encourage biodiversity enhancements where necessary, biodiversity enhancements must be considered in all development and the enhancements should be proportionate in size and scale to the development.

Future Wales identifies a Green Belt to the north of Cardiff, Newport and the eastern part of the region and is clear that LDPs should not permit major development in areas shown for consideration as Green Belts, except in very exceptional circumstances. This is until the need for Green Belts and their boundaries has been established by an adopted Strategic Development Plan. Although the areas identified for growth in the Preferred Strategy fall outside of the indicative Green Belt boundary and national planning policy allows for extensions to existing settlements within and adjoining the Green Belt of an appropriate scale, there should be no ambiguity about the need to protect land elsewhere.

The additional comments below are intended to provide assistance to the authority and ensure the plan and supporting evidence better aligns with the requirements in the National Development Framework (NDF):

- **Strategic Policy S3** - ‘promote’ in clauses 2 and 3 is a weak word. A stronger approach is encouraged.
- **Strategic Policy SP4** sets the right tone, but the concern is that ‘positive impact’ will be subject to too much debate and won’t achieve significant impacts. The list of methods in the policy shouldn’t be in the policy text.
- **Strategic Policy S5** regarding infrastructure provision uses the term ‘delivered in phase with proposed development’. PPW states for active travel infrastructure - ‘should be prioritised and put in place from the outset’. This policy should be strengthened to be clear what ‘in phase’ means.
- **Strategic Policy S12** uses the term ‘within or adjoining town and village development boundaries subject to detailed planning considerations’. The supporting text should include reference to the town centre first approach.

Strategic Policy S10 – this policy should take into account Llwybr Newydd and should also address reducing parking levels and refer to rural transport issues including the provision of EV charging.

- **Strategic Policy S11** – suggests that retailing will remain the predominant land use focus in town centres. The emphasis should be switched to overall town centre health/vibrancy, rather than retail hierarchy, to ensure a more effective approach.

Annex 2 to Welsh Government Letter dated 27 August 2021 in response to Monmouthshire County Council's Replacement LDP – Preferred Strategy

Phosphates

Following NRW's publication of updated guidance relating to phosphates and nutrient neutrality in January 2021, the ability of LDPs to demonstrate they can align with the revised approach is paramount for plans to be able to be considered 'sound'. This primarily applies to the scale and location of new development, the ability of the existing infrastructure to remove phosphates to accommodate growth, the levels of phosphates within the riverine system and how nutrient neutrality can be achieved. **The Deposit Plan and associated HRA must demonstrate nutrient neutrality or betterment in order to be considered sound.**

Growth Levels: Homes and Jobs

The Council's Preferred Strategy is based on Growth Option 5, a population/demographic-led projection, with added policy assumptions. This results in a requirement of 7,605 dwellings (507 dpa) over the plan period 2018-2033.

Policy S6: Delivery of Homes, makes provision for 8,366 dwellings to deliver a requirement of 7,605 units with a 10% flexibility allowance. The Council needs to explain why 10% is appropriate in line with requirements in the DPM as a lower flexibility allowance may be suitable.

The proposed level of housing is very significantly above the WG 2018 principal projection, requiring an annual completion rate higher than both the previous 5 and 10 year averages. Monmouthshire is outside the South East Wales National Growth Area, as set out in the Future Wales. **The Preferred Strategy is not in general conformity with Future Wales due to the very high level of housing growth proposed. Further detail is provided in Annex 1.**

Spatial Distribution of Housing

Monmouthshire's preferred spatial strategy, Option 2: 'Distribute Growth Proportionately across the County's most Sustainable Settlements' states the level of growth proposed in each settlement will be proportionate to its size, amenities, affordable housing need and capacity for growth. The settlement hierarchy listed in Strategic Policy S2 is underpinned by findings in the Council's Sustainable Settlements Appraisal (June 2021). The appraisal confirms the dominant role of the Tier 1 County towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth that account for the majority of all housing development at 58%. The appraisal identifies the other Tier 1 settlement of Caldicot within the Severnside cluster, which has strong geographical and functional linkages to other Tier 2, 3 and 4 settlements along the M4 corridor. There is also a strong functional linkage with Newport, Cardiff and Bristol. Together the area accounts for 28% of the plan's housing growth. This could be increased to reflect proximity to the National Growth Area and Bristol, future improvements to public transport capacity, land released by the withdrawal of the M4 Highway Orders and the possibility that growth in Abergavenny and Monmouth will be constrained by phosphate pollution. **Welsh Government does not object to the Preferred Strategy's settlement hierarchy and distribution of housing growth** with 86% of all new housing development proposed in the Tier 1 settlements and the Severnside cluster.

The Deposit Plan should:

- Specifically identify the number of new homes proposed in Tier 4 Main Rural Settlements and Tier 5 Minor Rural Villages separately. Tier 5 will not have settlement boundaries.
- The rationale for including Tier 6 Open Countryside in the settlement hierarchy is unclear as new buildings away from existing settlements or allocated sites must be strictly controlled.

Affordable Housing

The Local Housing Market Assessment 2020-2025 (LHMA) identifies a need for 468 affordable units per annum (or 7,020 units over the plan period), of which 68% is for social rent and 32% intermediate need. The greatest demand is for 1 bed properties across Monmouthshire with the level of housing need greatest in the sub-market area of Chepstow and Caldicot (at 46%).

To address housing affordability, the Council aims to deliver 10% (705 units) of the identified LHMA need on sites of 50:50 affordable and market housing, thus providing an additional 1,410 affordable and market units over the plan period. **The Welsh Government supports the principle of affordable housing-led sites, but their delivery will need to be evidenced by testing in the Council's viability appraisals** at Deposit stage. Evidence should also include a resolution to use public land for this purpose, a binding legal agreement where the land is in private ownership or a resolution of the council to use compulsory purchase powers. The Council should explain why 10% of the need identified in the LHMA has been chosen and not alternative percentages. The location of sites to accommodate the additional 705 affordable units is unclear.

Strategic Policy S7 identifies the plans affordable housing target totalling 2,450 units based on viability percentages in the adopted LDP. There is **no viability evidence to accompany the revised plan on either a high level or site specific viability appraisals**. This needs to be rectified by Deposit stage. The Welsh Government also has the following observations:

- The Council should clarify if the 1,489 affordable units (Table 7, LDP) on allocated sites include 705 units through the affordable housing policy-led element, or whether these are additional.
- The Deposit Plan should meet the requirements as set out in the DPM 'Affordable Housing Policy Framework – Checklist'.

Employment Provision and Job Growth

Strategic Policy S13 makes provision for a minimum of 43ha of employment land. This is supported by the Council's Employment Land Review (ELR, 2021) advising that employment forecasts are based on past take-up rates (2.1ha per annum) plus a 5-year buffer (10.7ha), equating to a requirement of 43ha over the plan period (2018-2033).

The scale of job growth being sought by the Council is accelerated growth, beyond existing levels achieved, described as radical structural economic change (Future Monmouthshire, Economies of the Future Analysis: Strategic Direction Report, October 2018). This is above the Oxford Economics baseline growth level, as well as UK growth rates. The Regional Employment Study, Larger than Local (March 2020), suggests that:

"Between 2018 and 2040, employment is forecast to decrease by 1%, a drop of 400 jobs. This decline is against the growth trend projected for the UK (+7%) and Wales (+1%)." (Page 164)

This study was undertaken by BE Group, which would appear to be at odds with the Edge Analytical evidence to support the LDP, a difference of 7,600 jobs.

Furthermore, *"The relatively low employment growth projections for Monmouthshire were challenged by considering another set of employment projections by Experian, illustrated in Figure 38, which were found to be even more negative for the County. As per Experian's projections, employment growth is expected to stagnate/decline throughout the next two decades, placing Monmouthshire below both UK and Welsh projected growth levels."* (Future Monmouthshire, Economies of the Future, Economic Baseline Report, March 2018, page 34)

The Councils strategy is not to reflect past trends, but increase job opportunities. On the basis of the evidence the levels of job growth are extremely optimistic and do not reflect historic trends. This could result in housing delivery not being matched to new job opportunities, leading to further out commuting. **It will be essential to demonstrate how the increase in jobs can be achieved in a way which is compatible with the South East Wales National Growth Area.** This is particularly relevant when Newport is considered to have high levels of B1 office provision/expansion to meet the majority of need in the region.

The following should also be addressed by Deposit stage:

- Of the 7,215 new jobs, the Council acknowledges that not all of these jobs will be in the B-Class sector and will build on existing sectors including agri-food and manufacturing. However, the Council's own evidence identifies a decline in these sectors over the plan period. The Council will need to demonstrate greater certainty on delivering the scale of job growth as an under delivery of jobs will not deliver on the key issues the plan is seeking to address.
- The Council needs to explain how growth in surrounding Councils, as expressed in the 'Larger than Local Study', such as the strong economic driving force of Newport and high employment take-up rates in Caerphilly, will impact on employment growth in Monmouthshire.
- Allocations at Quay Point (13.76ha) and Gwent Europark (13.30ha) account for almost 67% of available supply in the County. For the development of these sites to occur, significant infrastructure investment is required before making them available for development in the medium to long term. With a reliance on these sites to deliver a high number of B-Class jobs, the council needs to demonstrate how their timing and phasing relates to the delivery of 481 new jobs per annum.
- Significant new employment land allocations will be required in Abergavenny and Monmouth to support proposed housing growth. Failure to provide suitable sites will result in further out commuting contrary to one of the stated aims of the plan. Alternatively, a higher proportion of housing growth could be allocated to settlements where employment land is available.

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

No Gypsy and Traveller Assessment (GTAA) for the replacement plan has been included in the evidence base (the Council submitted a draft assessment for approval to Welsh Government's Communities Division early 2021). The draft assessment identifies a need for 13 pitches over the plan period (2018-2033) with 9 residential pitches 2020-2025 and a further 4 pitches 2026-2033.

A GTAA must be agreed by Welsh Ministers by Deposit stage and cover the full plan period 2018 to 2033. Provision must be made in the Deposit plan for appropriate and deliverable site allocations to meet the identified need in the timescales set out. Failure to agree the GTAA and meet the identified need, specifically in the short to medium term, is likely to result in the plan being considered 'unsound'. We would therefore encourage your authority to work with our Communities Division to ensure an agreed GTAA is in place by Plan Deposit.

Minerals

The second review of the Regional Technical Statement (RTS2) has been endorsed by Monmouthshire County Council and identifies that no allocations are required in the plan period for crushed rock or sand and gravel. It is a requirement of the RTS2 for all authorities, including Monmouthshire, to agree a Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration (SSRC) on their contribution to the future provision of aggregate production in the Former Gwent sub-region, which also includes the authorities of Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent. A SSRC is pertinent for the region as the RTS2 identifies a shortfall of crushed rock, particularly in Newport and Torfaen, with extensive unworked reserves in Monmouthshire.

Other Matters to address at Deposit Stage

- Ensure all development is compliant with TAN15 and flood risk issues. This should be done in compliance with the revised TAN15, anticipated to be published September 2021.
- Set out a robust housing trajectory, clearly identifying the phasing and timing of sites, linked to any infrastructure required to deliver the housing requirement. Tables 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 and Diagram 16 in the DPM should be completed.
- The selected strategic growth options should be progressed further, with greater clarity, including schematic diagrams and the key issues which need to be addressed for each site to come forward.
- Ensure there is a net benefit for biodiversity (PPW, paragraphs 6.4.5 – 6.4.8).
- Prepare an Infrastructure Plan to demonstrate how relevant infrastructure to support development will come forward (DPM, paragraphs 5.125 – 5.128).
- For some strategic development sites, there is potential for cumulative trunk road capacity impacts, especially at Abergavenny and Chepstow. All strategic development sites should be supported by Transport Assessments that are underpinned by the Welsh Transport Strategy and have regard to Active Travel and air quality, especially in existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).
- Undertake further work on the contribution renewable energy can make to assist with climate change and decarbonisation.

Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 – Key Policies and South East Wales Regional Strategic Diagram

Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 - Policies 1, 4, 5, 7 and 33

Policy 1 – Where Wales will Grow

The Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales. In three National Growth Areas there will be growth in employment and housing opportunities and investment in infrastructure. The National Growth Areas are:

- Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys
- Swansea Bay and Llanelli
- Wrexham and Deeside

The National Growth Areas are complemented by Regional Growth Areas which will grow, develop and offer a variety of public and commercial services at regional scale. There are Regional Growth Areas in three regions:

- The South West
- Mid Wales
- The North

Development and growth in towns and villages in rural areas should be of appropriate scale and support local aspirations and need.

Policy 4 – Supporting Rural Communities

The Welsh Government supports sustainable and vibrant rural communities.

Strategic and Local Development Plans must identify their rural communities, assess their needs and set out policies that support them. Policies should consider how age balanced communities can be achieved, where depopulation should be reversed and consider the role of new affordable and market housing, employment opportunities, local services and greater mobility in tackling these challenges.

Policy 5 – Supporting the Rural Economy

The Welsh Government supports sustainable, appropriate and proportionate economic growth in rural towns that is planned and managed through Strategic and Local Development Plans.

Strategic and Local Development Plans must plan positively to meet the employment needs of rural areas including employment arising from the foundational economy; the agricultural and forestry sector, including proposals for diversification; start-ups and micro businesses.

The Welsh Government also strongly supports development of innovative and emerging technology businesses and sectors to help rural areas unlock their full potential, broadening the economic base, and creating higher paid jobs.

Policy 7 – Delivering Affordable Homes

The Welsh Government will increase delivery of affordable homes by ensuring that funding for these homes is effectively allocated and utilised.

Through their Strategic and Local Development Plans planning authorities should develop strong evidence based policy frameworks to deliver affordable housing, including setting development plan targets based on regional estimates of housing need and local assessments. In response to local and regional

needs, planning authorities should identify sites for affordable housing led developments and explore all opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys will be the main focus for growth and investment in the South East region.

Strategic and Local Development Plans should recognise the National Growth Area as the focus for strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; transport and digital infrastructure.

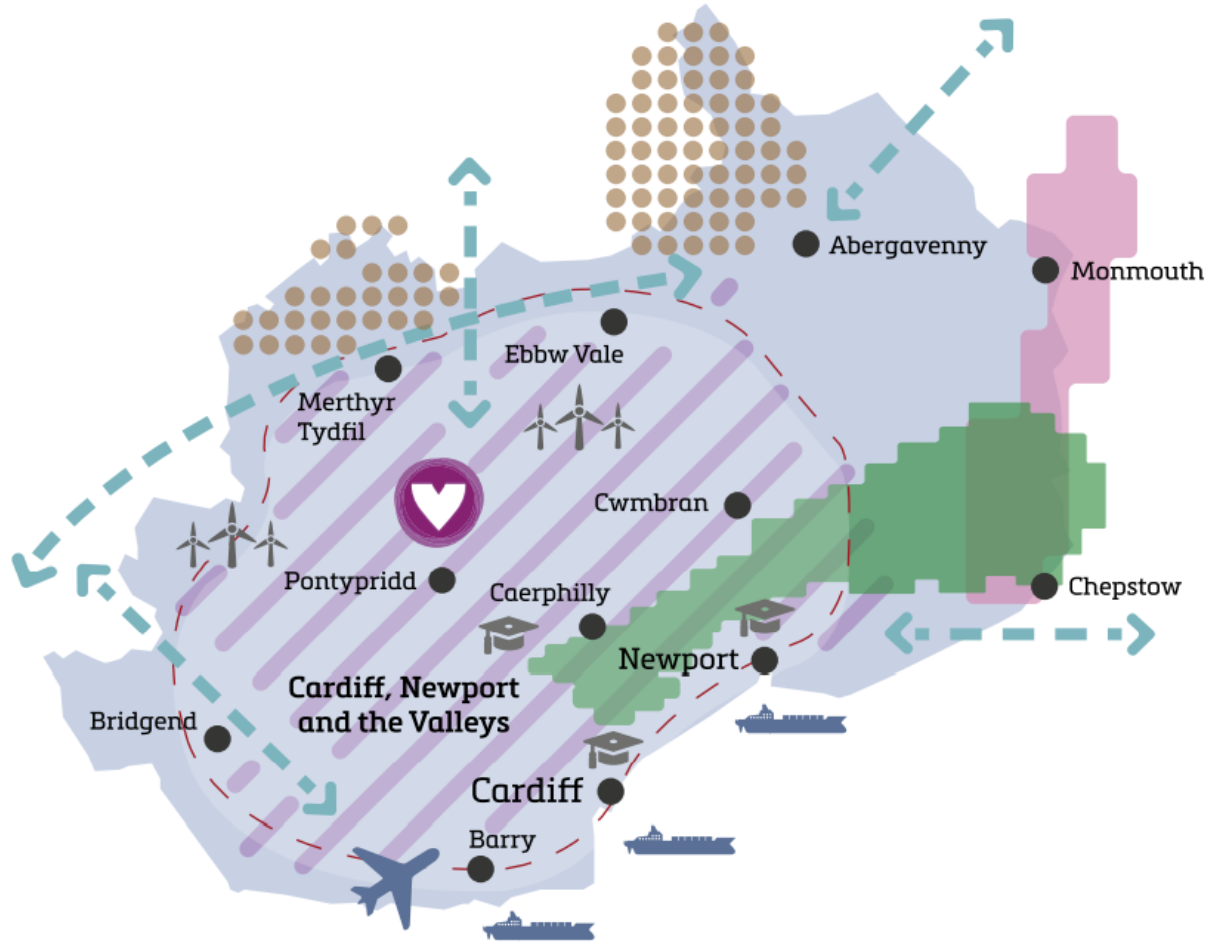
The Welsh Government will work with regional bodies and local authorities in the region and in neighbouring regions of England to promote and enhance Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys’ strategic role and ensure key investment decisions support places in the National Growth Area and the wider region.


The Welsh Government supports Cardiff’s status as an internationally competitive city and a core city on the UK stage. Cardiff will retain and extend its role as the primary national centre for culture, sport, leisure, media, the night time economy and finance.


The Welsh Government supports an increased strategic role for Newport as a focus for sustainable, long-term growth and investment. The Welsh Government will work with authorities within the region and in England to promote Newport’s strategic role and ensure key investment decisions in Wales and England support Newport.


The Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys area to improve well-being, increase prosperity and address social inequalities. The Welsh Government will work with regional bodies, local authorities, businesses, the third sector, agencies and stakeholders to support investment, including in the manufacturing sector, and to ensure a regional approach is taken to addressing socio-economic issues in the Valleys. The Welsh Government supports development in the wider region which addresses the opportunities and challenges arising from the region’s geographic location and its functions as a Capital Region.


Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 – South East Wales Regional Strategic Diagram





- National Growth Area 


- National Connectivity 


- Ports 


- Green Belt - Areas for Consideration 


- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 


- National Parks 

- Valleys Regional Park 

- South East Metro 

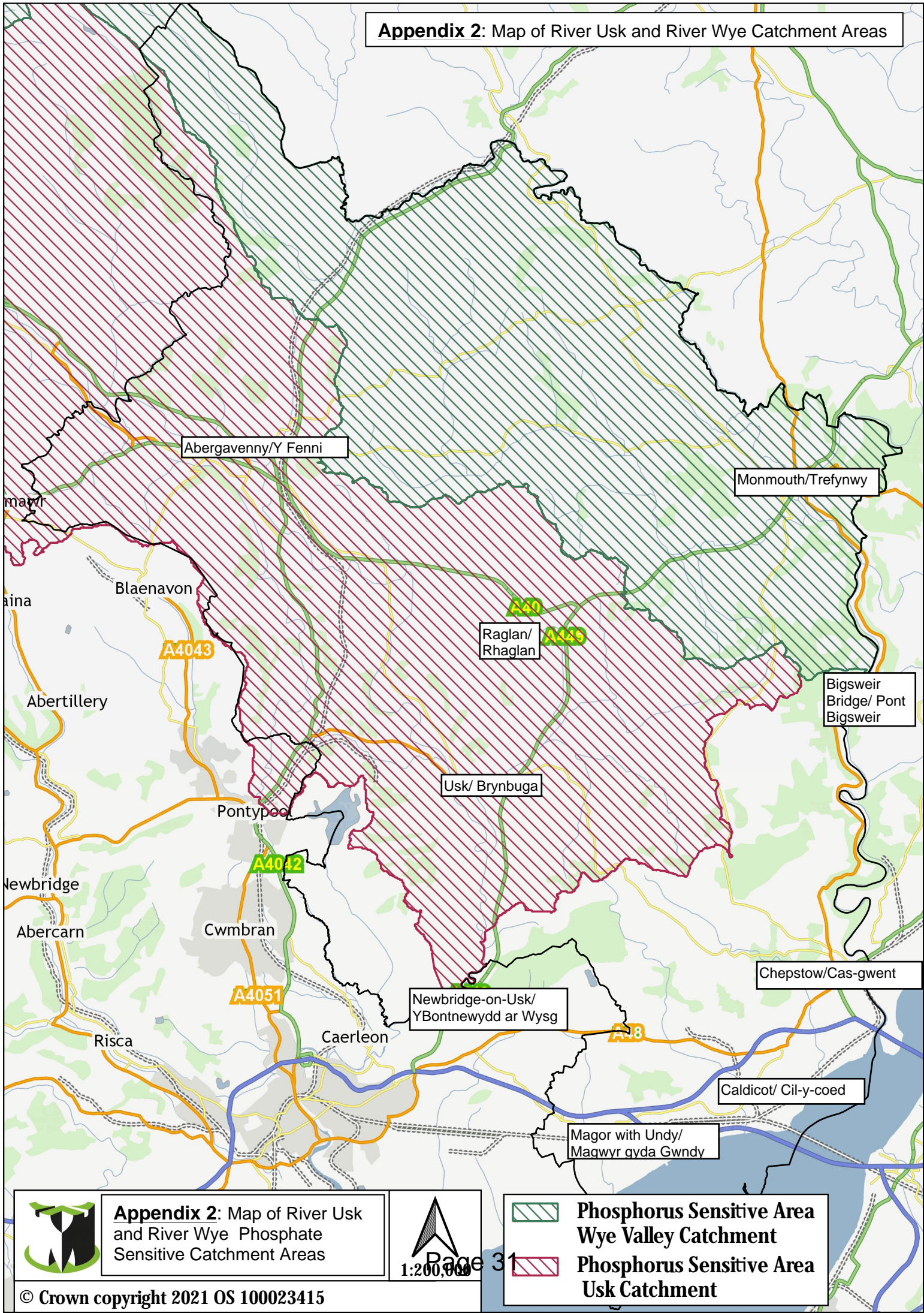
- Cardiff Airport 

- Pre-assessed Areas for Wind Energy 

- Universities 

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Appendix 2: Map of River Usk and River Wye Catchment Areas



Appendix 2: Map of River Usk and River Wye Phosphate Sensitive Catchment Areas

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1:200,000

 **Phosphorus Sensitive Area Wye Valley Catchment**
 **Phosphorus Sensitive Area Usk Catchment**

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<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Mark Hand</p> <p>Phone no: 07773478579 E-mail: markhand@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To seek Council's endorsement of the proposed way of progressing the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses key local issues, in particular affordable housing, demographic balance and the climate and nature emergency.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Planning (Planning Policy)</p>	<p>Date 27/09/2022</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<p>The Proposal aims to have a positive impact on people of all ages, particularly through increasing opportunities for the younger population to both live and work within Monmouthshire to assist in ensuring a balanced demography whilst also supporting the needs of the older population socially, economically and by ensuring an appropriate housing mix to meet different needs. This would benefit younger people but not to the detriment of older age groups.</p>	<p>Opportunities to deliver on these objectives, in particular delivering affordable homes and job opportunities, are limited in the upper Wye catchment due to the need for the Spatial Strategy to respond to the environmental constraint of water quality in the River Wye, for which no deliverable strategic solution has yet been identified.</p>	<p>The Proposal seeks to provide a more balanced demographic profile for Monmouthshire. This will inform the RLDP Preferred Strategy which will set out the Plan's growth and spatial strategy for Monmouthshire up to 2033. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of sustainable communities and a balanced demography to support the older age groups.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to how currently stalled sites in Monmouth and the Upper Wye catchment could come forward in the future should a water quality solution be identified and implemented.</p> <p>Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.</p>

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?
Disability	<p>The Proposal recognises the need to ensure the provision of a wide-ranging choice of homes including meeting affordable and accessible housing needs as far as possible. It also recognises the importance of the health and well-being of people and aims to create attractive, safe and accessible places to live, work and visit. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of place-making and Green Infrastructure for the provision of open spaces in close proximity to homes for physical and mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Opportunities to deliver on these objectives, in particular delivering a wide-ranging choice of homes including affordable and accessible homes and job opportunities, are limited in the upper Wye catchment due to the need for the Spatial Strategy to respond to the environmental constraint of water quality in the River Wye, for which no deliverable strategic solution has yet been identified.</p>	<p>The Proposal aims to support the well-being of current and future generations that are more inclusive, cohesive, prosperous and vibrant. This will inform the RLDP Preferred Strategy which will set out the Plan's growth and spatial strategy for Monmouthshire up to 2033.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to how currently stalled sites in Monmouth and the Upper Wye catchment could come forward in the future should a water quality solution be identified and implemented.</p> <p>Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.</p>
Gender reassignment	None.	None.	<p>Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Marriage or civil partnership	None.	None.	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	None.	None.	Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.
Race	None.	None.	Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.
Religion or Belief	None.	None.	Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.

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?
Sex	<p>One of the challenges facing the County is the imbalance between male and female earnings, although this situation is improving. The Proposal aims to provide economic growth and employment provision, which could indirectly impact on wage equality and therefore access to housing and quality of life.</p>	<p>The jobs in the foundation economy are disproportionately occupied by females. This sector is vital to support our communities, as are jobs in tourism. Neither sectors are generally well-paid, although they often offer flexible working conditions that can assist work-life balance. Wage levels are not within the remit of planning policy and policies to try to seek only high paid jobs could be to the detriment of this vital economic sector.</p> <p>Opportunities to deliver on these objectives, including delivering job opportunities, are limited in the upper Wye catchment due to the need for the Spatial Strategy to respond to the environmental constraint of water quality in the River Wye, for which no deliverable strategic solution has yet been identified.</p>	<p>The Proposal aims to support economic growth and prosperity. This will inform the RLDP Preferred Strategy which will set out the Plan's growth and spatial strategy for Monmouthshire up to 2033. Other policy tools beyond the RLDP are available to the Council could assist with securing well-paid employment opportunities within the County.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to how currently stalled sites in Monmouth and the Upper Wye catchment could come forward in the future should a water quality solution be identified and implemented.</p> <p>Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.</p>
Sexual Orientation	None.	None.	<p>Placemaking will be embedded throughout the Plan, with masterplanning and design policies ensuring that quality places are created that are safe, accessible and pleasant for all.</p>

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?
<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>The Social Justice strategy focuses on three main areas: tackling loneliness and isolation; tackling poverty and promoting equitable economic prosperity; and giving children the best start in life. The Proposal seeks to tackle house price unaffordability, which currently prevents some of our communities accessing suitable housing within the County, by maximising affordable housing delivery on new housing allocations, reflecting the Administration’s manifesto commitment to deliver 50% affordable homes on new housing sites. This is likely to benefit younger people in particular, which in turn will make our ageing communities more socially sustainable. Good quality and affordable housing is important in achieving poverty reduction and equitable prosperity, and supporting the best start in life. Good spatial planning helps to build cohesive communities. The provision of affordable housing combined with policy interventions in relation to the requirement of a mix of market housing will increase opportunities for those in poverty to access</p>	<p>People in poverty or on low incomes might not be able to access digital opportunities to work from home and/or are more likely to be employed in roles that cannot work from home.</p> <p>Opportunities to deliver on the evidence-based objectives, in particular delivering affordable homes and job opportunities, are limited in the upper Wye catchment due to the need for the Spatial Strategy to respond to the environmental constraint of water quality in the River Wye, for which no deliverable strategic solution has yet been identified.</p>	<p>Future stages of the RLDP (Preferred Strategy and Deposit) will set out the planning policy framework to assist in addressing these key issues. The Preferred Strategy will set out our commitment to maximise the provision of affordable homes on new housing allocations and to deliver zero carbon ready new homes.</p> <p>We will consider the need for planning policies in the Deposit Plan to control the housing mix of the market housing on development sites, to ensure it helps create mixed communities and supports the retention of younger people who can afford an open market home were there sufficient supply of 2 and 3 bedroom homes.</p> <p>We will consider the need for small affordable housing schemes in rural settlements similar to the current LDP’s 60/40 sites in the Deposit RLDP.</p> <p>We will consider a range of policies in the</p>

safe, secure and suitable housing. Requiring new homes to be zero carbon ready will improve energy efficiency for new build properties which will reduce the cost of living. The provision of suitable employment land, planning policy tools to support business and the use of other (non-planning) tools to stimulate economic activity will increase employment opportunities within the County. In accordance with the WFGA, the RLDP also seeks to prevent future problems and will therefore continue to avoid new development in flood risk areas and will seek zero carbon ready development to help address the climate emergency and also tackle issues such as fuel poverty.

Deposit RLDP around the climate change theme to minimise the carbon footprint of new development, and therefore mitigate negative impacts associated with the proposed growth.

A policy requirement for broadband infrastructure provision will maximise opportunities for all to access the technology to work from home where possible, reducing commuting and associated costs.

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

<p>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:</p>	<p>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</p>
<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 Welsh language is a material planning consideration and is included within the RLDP Objective relating to Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language to ensure there is no negative impact. Any level of growth for the County relies on in-migration, some of which, whether English or Welsh or other nationality, will choose Welsh Medium education for their children. Also in-migration to Monmouthshire comes from other areas in Wales (including rural Welsh speaking areas e.g. Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Ynys Môn, Denbighshire). This is in the main due to the significantly increased employment opportunities offered in Cardiff, Newport and in adjacent areas of England e.g. Bristol, Gloucester etc. Monmouthshire with its border location and transport links is accessible to all of these areas. This in-migration, together with the ambition to retain and attract younger families, will expose more children to Welsh curriculum education in all schools, increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the County. Future stages of the RLDP process (Preferred Strategy and Deposit) will be</p>	<p>Any level of growth for the County relies on in-migration, being a border County a proportion of this is likely to be from England.</p>	<p>The Proposal aims to support culture and the Welsh language.</p> <p>We will liaise with the Local Education Authority to understand if the proposed growth necessitates additional Welsh medium school provision.</p> <p>There are already significant plans and proposals in place in terms of expanding Welsh Medium education in Monmouthshire. This is due to a number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the increased popularity of the Welsh Language. - the opportunity for children to be become bilingual - the increased employment opportunities that this affords them in Wales.

	subject to a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Reports (ISAR).		
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	An expansion of the provision of Welsh Medium education in the County will increase the opportunities for Welsh speakers to apply for vacancies within the Council thus increasing the Council's Welsh speaking capacity.	None of the current Planning Policy Team are fluent Welsh speakers, however, there are robust systems in place to deal with phone calls and correspondence without delaying the provision of the service.	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	All statutory documentation on the RLDP and associated consultation along with notices, social media and general correspondence will be bilingual. A document will be in English only if it comes from an external source that is not subject to compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. Emails/letters etc will make it clear that correspondence in Welsh is welcome and will not lead to a delay in response or a lesser standard of service . When requests are made for people to be added to the RLDP consultation database we will record language choice and communicate accordingly.	None of the Planning Policy team are Welsh speakers, however, there are robust systems in place to deal with phone calls and correspondence without delaying the provision of the service.	The Welsh language is a material planning consideration and is included within the RLDP Objective relating to Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language to ensure there is no negative impact. Future stages of the RLDP process will be subject to a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Reports (ISAR). We will review this further if any additional assessment is required as we go through the RLDP process.

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?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal identifies the preferred level of growth over the RLDP period and broad spatial distribution of this growth. As well as housing growth, the Proposal aims to provide economic growth and employment provision in both urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Negative: Careful site selection is required to minimise loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and mineral resource.</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives relating to economic growth/employment and retail centres, which have been set in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a prosperous Wales.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including the impact of development on the natural environment in already constrained areas. It is, however, recognised that developments could improve connectivity through opportunities to create new linkages. The limited supply of brownfield land within the County is a recognised issue. The Proposal has been assessed against a climate change objective which recognises that we are in a climate emergency. The RLDP will set out a commitment to deliver zero carbon ready new homes. Resilience of new development to aspects of climate change can be achieved via the design and location of new developments. All developments can provide opportunities to minimise carbon by providing opportunities for renewable energy generation, seeking to reduce commuting,</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives relating to Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape, Flood Risk, Minerals and Waste, Land and Natural Resources which have been set in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a resilient Wales.</p> <p>There are water quality issues in the River Usk and River Wye SACs. There is a legal and national policy requirement to maintain and enhance ecology. This is reflected in the Proposal which avoids new allocations in the River Wye catchment area given the inability to deliver a strategic solution to phosphate mitigation in the Monmouth WWTW at this time.</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>supporting use of ultra-low emission vehicles and public transport, and the provision of quality Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>There are phosphate water quality issues in the River Usk and River Wye SACs. There is a legal and national policy requirement to maintain and enhance ecology. This is reflected in the Proposal which avoids new allocations in the Upper Wye catchment area given the inability to deliver a strategic solution to phosphate mitigation in the Monmouth WWTW at this time.</p> <p>The recent pandemic has emphasised the need to enable such responses in delivering sustainable and resilient communities. It has also emphasised the importance of placemaking and Green Infrastructure for the provision of open spaces in close proximity to homes for physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Negative: Higher levels of growth would likely result in further pressure on the natural environment. New developments could nevertheless improve Green Infrastructure and ecological connectivity through opportunities to create new linkages. The value and importance of having access to locally accessible open/green spaces to assist in recreation and health and well-being has been heightened during the recent pandemic.</p> <p>The environmental benefit of avoiding new site allocations in the upper Wye catchment is countered</p>	



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	by the impact this has on achieving the social, economic and cultural objectives. However, without a deliverable strategic solution to water quality issues in the upper Wye catchment, this environmental constraint needs to take priority.	
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal identifies the preferred level of growth over the RLDP period and broad spatial distribution of this growth (including avoiding new allocations in the River Wye catchment due to phosphate water quality issues). It is recognised that any developments will be encouraged to support healthier lifestyles and provide sufficient open space. The RLDP will encourage Active Travel and will reflect the Integrated Network Maps. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the vulnerability of those in our communities with underlying health conditions, as well as the importance of placemaking and Green Infrastructure for the provision of open spaces in close proximity to homes for physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>The need for affordable housing, both in terms of purchase/rent and living costs, is being exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis. The Proposal seeks to maximise affordable housing delivery and provide net-zero ready homes.</p> <p>Negative: Higher levels of growth have the potential to increase commuting which could affect areas with air quality problems, however, the RLDP seeks to provide for jobs within the County. Moreover, the recent pandemic has demonstrated that a significant</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including Health and Well-being in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a healthier Wales. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the vulnerability of those in our communities with underlying health conditions, as well as the importance of place-making and green infrastructure for the provision of open spaces in close proximity to homes for physical and mental wellbeing.</p>


Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	proportion of our communities can work from home which is likely to continue over the longer term.	
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal identifies the preferred level of growth over the RLDP period and broad spatial distribution of this growth (including avoiding new allocations in the River Wye catchment due to phosphate water quality issues), and considers the balance of housing, employment and infrastructure in both urban and rural areas. The recent pandemic has emphasised the importance of socially sustainable communities and ensuring a balanced demography.</p> <p>Negative: Lower growth levels would result in communities that are not socially /economically sustainable.</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including housing, place-making, communities, rural communities, infrastructure and accessibility in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a Wales of cohesive communities.</p> <p>Policies included in the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan will consider design and placemaking in more detail.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal identifies the preferred level of growth over the RLDP period and broad spatial distribution of this growth (including avoiding new allocations in the River Wye catchment due to water quality issues). It has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including the impact of options on climate change. The climate change objective recognises that we are in a climate emergency and has committed to strive to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C. The RLDP will set out a commitment to deliver net zero carbon ready new homes reflecting our commitment to respond to the climate emergency. In addition, the recent pandemic</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including climate change which has been set in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a globally responsible Wales. Climate change considerations will inform the RLDP's planning policy framework which will include policies, proposals and land use allocations.</p> <p>Section 6 of the Environment Act already requires biodiversity enhancement, which will help address the nature emergency.</p>


Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>has demonstrated that a significant proportion of our communities can work from home which is likely to continue over the longer term. The RLDP seeks to reduce the commuting ratio and to enable home-working, reflective of recent trends. The RLDP will also include a specific policies relating to climate change.</p> <p>The Proposal has been drafted in tandem with the Motions for Rivers and the Ocean, also being presented to this Council meeting.</p> <p>Negative: None.</p>	
<p>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</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal identifies the preferred level of growth over the RLDP period and broad spatial distribution of this growth (including avoiding new allocations in the River Wye catchment due to phosphate water quality issues). It has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including the impact on Culture, Heritage and the Welsh language.</p> <p>Negative: Any level of growth for the County relies on in-migration, being a border County a proportion of this is likely to be from England.</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives including including including Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language which has been set in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language. We will liaise with the Local Education Authority to understand if the proposed growth necessitates additional Welsh medium school provision.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive: The Proposal identifies the preferred level of growth over the RLDP period and broad spatial distribution of this growth (including avoiding new allocations in the River Wye catchment due to phosphate water quality issues). Housing and</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objective relating to demography which has been set in order to address the identified issues relating to creating a more equal Wales. The recent pandemic has highlighted the links between poverty</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>economic growth in both urban and rural areas will assist in balancing the demography across the County and in addressing the County's affordability challenges. The Proposal aims to readdress the higher proportion of older age groups and lower proportion of young adults compared to the Welsh average. One of the key objectives of the RLDP is to deliver much needed affordable housing, having a safe secure and suitable home gives people the best start in life.</p> <p>Negative: None.</p>	<p>and resilience, as well as the higher level of homelessness. The Proposal seeks to take action to enable younger people who are currently priced-out of the County an opportunity to remain living here by striving to maximise affordable housing delivery to help tackle this. It also seeks to provide additional jobs.</p>

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>The Proposal will inform the RLDP revised Preferred Strategy which will set out the level of growth for housing/employment and the spatial distribution of this growth across the County. The revised Preferred Strategy will also set out the RLDP vision, the role of which is to clarify the core purpose of the RLDP and provide a framework for developing the Plan and future detailed policies. The Vision will set the overarching context for Monmouthshire for the period up to 2033.</p>	<p>The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives in order to address the issues, challenges, opportunities and drivers facing the County.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The Proposal has been informed by a range of evidence. We have engaged with consultees at key stages from the outset of the RLDP process to build consensus including on the issues, vision and objectives, and the growth and spatial options.</p> <p>Pre-deposit plan preparation and engagement has also included: collaborative working with neighbouring local authorities; Member involvement; discussions with key stakeholders including internal departments and external organisations including key infrastructure providers.</p> <p>We will continue to engage/consult on future key stages of the RLDP process, including the next key stage - the Preferred Strategy. We have met with the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement to discuss how this area can be strengthened.</p>	<p>The RLDP Delivery Agreement ensures full stakeholder /community's involvement to shape the RLDP.</p> <p>Future key stages of the RLDP process will be subject to engagement/consultation with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. The next key stage of the RLDP process is the Preferred Strategy.</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>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The Proposal has been informed by a range of evidence. We have engaged with consultees at key stages from the outset of the RLDP process to build consensus including on the issues, vision and objectives, and the growth and spatial options.</p> <p>Pre-deposit plan preparation and engagement has also included: collaborative working with neighbouring local authorities; Member involvement; discussions with key stakeholders including internal departments and external organisations including key infrastructure providers.</p> <p>The RLDP Delivery Agreement Community Involvement Scheme sets out the way in which the Council proposes to involve the local community and other stakeholders in the preparation of the RLDP. We have met with the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement to discuss how this area can be strengthened.</p>	<p>The Revised Delivery Agreement ensures full stakeholder /community's involvement to shape the RLDP.</p> <p>Future key stages of the RLDP process will be subject to engagement/consultation with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. The next key stage of the RLDP process is the Preferred Strategy.</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>The Proposal will inform the RLDP revised Preferred Strategy which will set out the level of growth for housing/employment and the spatial distribution of this growth across the County to address the core issues of delivering much needed affordable housing at pace and scale, responding to the climate and nature emergency by delivering net zero carbon ready new homes for our communities, and ensuring our communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic.</p> <p>The Spatial Strategy avoids new site allocations in the upper Wye catchment due to the absence of a strategic solution to water quality issues at this time. The Proposal has been prepared in tandem with the Motion for Rivers and Ocean report also on this Council agenda.</p>	<p>The Proposal will inform the RLDP revised Preferred Strategy which will seek to address our key issues/challenges/opportunities (in a land use context) and support delivery of the Council's vision for the future of the County and its communities.</p> <p>The RLDP Delivery Agreement seeks to ensure that the Plan will be delivered in accordance with the project timetable and ensures full stakeholder /community involvement to shape the RLDP. A revised Delivery Agreement which will amend the project timetable for Plan preparation, will be reported to Council alongside the revised Preferred Strategy.</p>



Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies

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>The Proposal will inform the RLDP revised Preferred Strategy which will set out the level of growth for housing/employment and the spatial distribution of this growth across the County. The Proposal has been assessed against the RLDP Objectives which seek to address the issues/challenges/opportunities identified (in a land use context) and support delivery of the Council's vision/objectives for the future of the County and its communities. The RLDP will be subject to an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Well-being of Future Generations Assessment (WBFG), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA)), whose findings will be used to inform the development of the RLDP strategy, policies and site allocations in order to ensure that the Plan will be promoting sustainable development.</p> <p>The RLDP will also set out the Vision which will set the overarching context for Monmouthshire for the period up to 2033. MCC recognises that we are in a climate emergency and nature emergency and has committed addressing these. The RLDP will have a key role in addressing these issues.</p>	<p>The Proposal will inform the RLDP revised Preferred Strategy which will be subject to statutory consultation in December 2022-January 2023. The RLDP will be subject to an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Well-being of Future Generations Assessment (WBFG), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA)), whose findings will be used to inform the development of the RLDP strategy, policies and site allocations in order to ensure that the Plan will be promoting sustainable development.</p> <p>We will continue to work closely with our neighbours, both in Wales and England, including the joint procurement of evidence as applicable.</p> <p>The RLDP will align with the new Integrated Network Maps for Active Travel, and will be accompanied by an Infrastructure Plan, revised Local Transport Plan and Economic Development Strategy.</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	None.	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	The RLDP has the potential to provide affordable housing, the delivery and allocation of which should be cognisant of the needs of children leaving care	None.	N/A

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

<p>PS9052</p>	<p>A range of background evidence and data has been used to inform the Proposal, from a wide range of sources both internal and external to the Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper (Updated June 2019) Draft-Issues-Vision-and-Objectives-Paper-June-2019.pdf (monmouthshire.gov.uk) • Review of RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives and Evidence Base in light of Covid-19 (September 2020) Monmouthshire-RLDP-Review-of-Issues-Vision-Objectives-and-Evidence-Base-in-Light-of-Covid.pdf • Monmouthshire Local Development Plan Review Report (March 2018) https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/03/Final-Review-Report-1.pdf • Monmouthshire Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Reports (2015- 2021) https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/annual-monitoring/ldp-annual-monitoring-report • RLDP Preferred Strategy (Consultation Draft, June 2021) Preferred-Strategy-June-2021.pdf (monmouthshire.gov.uk) • Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report (AECOM, June 2021) https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Monmouthshire-Initial-ISA-Report-June-2021-1.pdf • HRA of the Monmouthshire RLDP Preferred Strategy (AECOM, June 2021) https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Monmouthshire-Development-Plan-HRA_FINAL_280621.pdf • Preferred Strategy June 2021 consultation responses • RLDP Delivery Agreement (Second Revision, October 2020) https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Revised-DA-October-2020-Final.pdf • Updating the RLDP Demographic Evidence, Edge Analytics (November 2021)
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- Monmouthshire RLDP Candidate Sites Register (February 2022) [Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan Candidate Sites Register \(Electoral Wards 2022\) - Monmouthshire](#)

External sources of data include Welsh Government, Cadw, Natural Resources Wales, Hometrack, Office for National Statistics and Stats Wales.

- *Equalities dashboard link.* [Equality data dashboard for EQIA's 2020.xlsx](#)

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?

Positive -

The Proposal will inform the RLDP revised Preferred Strategy which will set out the level of growth for housing/employment and the spatial distribution of this growth across the County to address the core issues of delivering much needed affordable homes, responding to the climate and nature emergency by delivering zero carbon ready new homes for our communities, and ensuring our communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic. This is a positive impact for social justice.

The revised Preferred Strategy will be the subject of further engagement/consultation and political reporting as the RLDP is progressed.

Negative –

People in poverty or on low incomes might not be able to access digital opportunities to work from home and/or are more likely to be employed in roles that cannot work from home.

Opportunities to deliver on the evidence-based objectives, in particular delivering affordable homes and job opportunities, are limited in the upper Wye catchment due to the need for the Spatial Strategy to respond to the environmental constraint of water quality in the River Wye, for which no deliverable strategic solution has yet been identified.

There are no negative implications for corporate parenting or safeguarding.

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 Place Scutiny Committee of the proposed way of progressing the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses key local issues, in	Place Scutiny Committee 26 th September 2022.	Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning

particular affordable housing, demographic balance and the climate and nature emergency.		Planning Policy Team
Seek Council's endorsement of the proposed way of progressing the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses key local issues, in particular affordable housing, demographic balance and the climate and nature emergency.	Council 27 th September 2022. If Council endorses the proposed way of progressing the RLDP, a revised Preferred Strategy based on this strategy option will be reported to Council in December 2022 for endorsement to be issued for statutory consultation/engagement in December 2022 - January 2023. A Revised Delivery Agreement, which will amend the project timetable for Plan preparation, will be reported to the same Council meeting for agreement and endorsement to submit to the Welsh Government for Ministerial approval.	Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning Planning Policy Team

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
0.0	LDP Review Report and Delivery Agreement	20/04/2018	Draft for Council 10 th May 2018
1.0	Issues, Vision and Objectives scrutiny	01/02/2019	Draft for Economy & Development Select Committee 14 th February 2019

1.1	Issues, Vision and Objectives endorsement following consultation	09/04/2019	Draft for Cabinet 5 th June 2019
1.2	Issues, Vision and Objectives endorsement following consultation	14/06/2019	Amended for Cabinet 3 rd July 2019 to reflect 16 th May 2019's Climate Emergency declaration by Council
2.0	Growth and Spatial Options endorsement to consult	07/06/2019	Draft for Cabinet 3 rd July 2019
2.1	Growth and Spatial Options scrutiny	09/07/2019	Draft for Economy & Development Select Committee 17 th July 2019
3.0	Preferred Strategy endorsement to consult	11/12/2019	Draft for Council report 5 th March 2020
3.1	Preferred Strategy endorsement to consult	17/02/2020	Social Justice Strategy reviewed with Judith Langdon
4.0	Revised Delivery Agreement	05/03/2020	Timetable amended further to account for slippage as a result of the pre-election period preceding the December 2019 General Election, the additional time and work needed to inform the Preferred Strategy and delays associated with joint working with neighbouring local authorities on joint evidence base work.
4.1	Revised Delivery Agreement and review of Issues, Vision and Objectives and of evidence base in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.	07/10/2020	Timetable amended further to account for Covid-19 pandemic and revised Welsh Government population and household projections.
5.0	Revised Growth and Spatial Options scrutiny	17/11//2020	Draft for Economic Development Select Committee 10 th December 2020
5.1	Revised Growth and Spatial Options endorsement to consult, including identifying growth option 5 and spatial option 2 as the proposals at this stage of the process.	03/12/2020	Draft for Cabinet report 16 th December 2020
6.0	Preferred Strategy Consultation endorsement to consult.	24/06/2021	Draft for Council Report 24 th June 2021
7.0	Pre-decision scrutiny by Place Scrutiny Committee of the proposal to progress the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) prior to it being reported to Council on 27 th September 2022.	02/09/2022	Draft for Scrutiny Committee and Council reports

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APPENDIX 4

RLDP Options Appraisal

Options	Population, Dwellings and Jobs Growth over the Plan Period 2018-2033	Benefits	Risks
<p>1. Proceed with the existing Preferred Strategy (as consulted on July-August 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth: 12,443 (+13.2%) • Net Migration: 18,345 • Dwellings: Total provision approx. 7,605-8,366* homes, including 2,170 - 2,450 affordable homes • Existing Landbank: approx. 4,710 homes** • New Allocations: approx. 2,900 - 3,660 homes, including 1,210 - 1,490 affordable homes. • Jobs: Policy support to provide for 7,215 jobs*** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option would deliver key outcomes. • Based on robust and credible local evidence • Address key RLDP local evidence-based issues & objectives across the County, including in relation to the delivery of affordable homes, balancing our demography and supporting sustainable economic development. • Momentum on finding solutions to Phosphates • Would be no need to re-consult on the Preferred Strategy which would save time in the Plan preparation process, with earlier Plan adoption and less time without an up-to-date RLDP and associated impacts. • Sufficient level of growth to enable the Council to consider alternative mechanisms for delivering affordable homes for our communities. • Aligns with Policies 4, 5 and 7 of Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 by supporting rural communities and delivering affordable homes. • Would meet key tests of soundness, including Test 2¹ • Evidence base would inform the emerging SE Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding an evidenced strategic solution for phosphate mitigation in the River Wye catchment highly improbable during the Plan period, meaning that the strategy could not be delivered. • Without an identified strategic phosphate solution for the River Wye catchment, the strategy would be at odds with the Council’s Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration and the emerging Motion for Oceans and Rivers, and would likely result in an NRW objection • WG objection letter would need to be addressed – level of growth considerably higher than prescribed WG level of growth. • The housing trajectory would be questionable given level of growth and Plan period remaining.

¹ Development Plans Manual (WG, March 2020): Soundness Test 2 ‘Is the plan appropriate? (Is the plan appropriate for the area in the light of the evidence?) • Is it locally specific? • Does it address the key issues? • Is it supported by robust, proportionate and credible evidence? • Can the rationale behind the plan’s policies be demonstrated? • Does it seek to meet assessed needs and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? • Are the vision and the strategy positive and sufficiently aspirational? • Have the ‘real’ alternatives been properly considered? • Is it logical, reasonable and balanced? • Is it coherent and consistent? • Is it clear and focused?’

Options	Population, Dwellings and Jobs Growth over the Plan Period 2018-2033	Benefits	Risks
<p>2. Proceed with Demographic-led strategy² and an amended spatial strategy to take account of the phosphate constraint in the River Wye Catchment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth: 9,480 (+10.9%) • Net Migration: 13,950 • Dwellings: Total provision approx. 5,400 – 5,940* homes, including 1,500 - 1,770 affordable homes • Existing Landbank: approx. 3,940 homes**** • New Allocations: approx. 1,460 – 2,000 homes, including 730 – 1,000 new affordable homes***** • Jobs: Policy support to provide 6,240 jobs*** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would deliver growth (homes and jobs) that addresses our locally evidence-based issues and objectives in the south of the County and River Usk catchment area, including in relation to the delivery of affordable homes, rebalancing our demography and responding to the climate and nature emergencies, therefore delivering key outcomes. • Closer alignment between MCC’s preferred growth level and the level of growth prescribed by WG’s July 2021 letter. • All new dwelling allocations would be required to deliver 50% affordable housing, maximising the delivery of essential affordable homes and socially sustainable communities. • Sufficient level of growth to enable the Council to consider alternative mechanisms for delivering affordable homes for our communities. • Spatial strategy would avoid those areas affected by phosphates and without an identified feasible solution. • Aligns with Policies 4, 5 and 7 of Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 by supporting our rural communities and delivering affordable homes. • Would meet key tests of soundness, including Test 2³ • Evidence base would inform the emerging SE Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP). Simplified strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not deliver key outcomes/address local evidence-based issues in the River Wye catchment settlements, creating further inequality, however the environmental constraint makes this unavoidable at present. • No affordable housing delivery within Wye Catchment settlements, including Monmouth. • This option would require the Council to reconsult on an updated Preferred Strategy which would add time to the RLDP process, meaning a longer period without an up-to-date plan. • Limited Plan period left on adoption (approx. 8.5 years) which means there is less time to deliver the Plan’s growth, impacting on the housing trajectory. • Viability – would need to evidence that the provision of 50% affordable housing on new sites is viable. This could be challenging in view of our other policy requirements including in relation to zero carbon ready homes and associated infrastructure to support the development. Social Housing Grant (SHG) or other public funding may be required for some sites, requiring a change to current SHG rules.

² demographic-led option for the LPA area (i.e. excludes the BBNP area within Monmouthshire) using ONS 2020 MYE base and applying the same assumptions as the existing Preferred Strategy in relation to migration, household membership rates and commuting ratio.

³ As footnote 1 above.

<p>3. Proceed with a minimum growth option as per the July 2021 WG letters, combined with an amended spatial strategy which takes account of the phosphate constraint in the River Wye Catchment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth: 8,050 (+9.3%) • Net Migration: 12,450 • Dwellings: approx. 4,280 – 4,700, including 940 – 1,150 affordable homes • Existing Landbank: approx. 3,940 homes**** • New Allocations: approx. 330 – 760 homes, including 170-380 affordable homes***** • Jobs: Policy support to provide 4,290*** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses WG’s consultation response to the RLDP Preferred Strategy (August 2021). • Less environmental impact. • Spatial strategy would avoid those areas affected by phosphates and without an identified feasible solution. • Simplified strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This minimum level of growth is not based on robust and credible local evidence and would not meet our objectives or address our local evidence-based issues (including affordable housing delivery, balancing our demography and more generally supporting our communities) and as such would not meet key tests of soundness at Examination, including Test 2⁴. • Would not deliver the Administration’s manifesto commitment to maximise affordable housing delivery via 50% affordable housing provision on new housing sites as there would be very few new site allocations. This minimal level of provision would make minimal contribution towards addressing our affordable housing need in the County, as evidenced in the LHMA. • Lack of associated investment towards community infrastructure given limited new housing allocations. • This option would not support sustainable economic growth/prosperity and would exacerbate our existing key local issues including housing affordability, homelessness, ageing demographic and rural isolation. As such this option would not deliver on Council’s priority of addressing inequality. • Would not align with Policies 4, 5 and 7 of Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 as this level of growth would not support our rural communities (homes and jobs) or delivery much needed affordable housing. • This option would require the Council to reconsult on an updated Preferred Strategy which would add time to the RLDP process, meaning a longer period without an up-to-date adopted plan
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- Concern that the lack of ambition associated with the growth level and its negative implications for our local communities would be replicated in the emerging SDP. Local evidence-based issues, including affordability, demography and inequality, would be exacerbated over the longer term via the regional plan.

Options	Population, Dwellings and Jobs Growth over the Plan Period 2018-2033	Benefits	Risks
<p>4. Restart the RLDP process</p>	<p>N/A - would need to reconsider growth options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option would mean a review of the evidence base and the use of the most up-to-date evidence, including the 2021 Census which will inform updated national projections in 2023/24. • This option would enable more time to address phosphates issues with a view to identifying and implementing a strategic solution to phosphate mitigation in the River Wye catchment area. • The housing trajectory would be more achievable due to longer Plan period on adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would lead to a significant delay in the RLDP preparation process resulting in a longer period without an up-to-date RLDP for Monmouthshire. • The evidence base and policy framework in the extant adopted LDP would become increasingly outdated creating a local policy gap and reducing the Council’s ability to positively shape the future. • This option would result in a delay in addressing our key issues, during which time the issues would be exacerbated, including housing affordability, demographic balance and inequality. This would also impact on the delivery of sustainable economic growth. • Associated lack of certainty for our communities and investors. • This option would adversely affect momentum and undermine investment commitments to deliver phosphate solutions. • This option would necessitate re-starting the entire RLDP process, meaning that the issues, vision and objectives, and growth options stages of the RLDP would need to be revisited and evidence base work updated with revised base date and Plan period. This would have cost and resource implications for the Council, site promoters and other stakeholders engaged in the process. • The lack of leadership and direction would reflect poorly on the Council. • There would be a reduced opportunity to shape the SDP from the local level due to the timelines.

*includes 10% flexibility allowance

** The 2021 Preferred Strategy landbank figures included LDP Rollover applications, land supply commitments and allowances within the Wye Valley and the sites taken out due to non-delivery. It did not include completions for 2021/22.

*** Job figures are at a Unitary Authority level as small area data is not available. All other figures refer to the Local Planning Authority area, i.e. excluding Brecon Beacons National Park.

****The new 2022 option's landbank excludes existing land supply commitments and allowances within the River Wye catchment. Land bank also excludes LDP Rollover sites and sites taken out due to non-delivery. It includes completions for 2021/22.

***** Based on all RLDP site allocations being 50% affordable housing.



SUBJECT:	MOTION FOR THE RIVERS AND OCEAN
MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	27TH SEPTEMBER 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To outline the challenges facing our marine and river environments and set out how Monmouthshire County Council can play its part in realising clean, healthy and productive rivers and oceans, in order to see all the biodiversity, economic and health and wellbeing benefits that this will bring.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To agree to the actions outlined in the Motion for the Rivers and Oceans Action Plan (see Appendix 1).

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In Monmouthshire, rivers and the ocean are at the heart of our heritage and economy. From the rich maritime and ship building heritage of Chepstow to the thousands of visitors who come on holiday to enjoy the Wye Valley and follow in the footsteps of the historic Wye Tour, many come to experience the sight, sound and feel of our rivers and coast. They are popular routes for walking and cycling and have high ecological value as well as being the foci of historical settlements. However, pressure from development, increases in recreational use, changes in agricultural practice and climate change continue to affect these attractive landscapes.
- 3.2 The health of our ocean is inextricably linked with our climate and with human health, wellbeing and prosperity. A healthy ocean is fundamental in regulating the global climate system and is an essential ally in our fight against climate change. The ocean absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated by human activity.

- 3.3 However, decades of irresponsible marine exploitation and pollution have led to significant levels of degradation, and this together with the detrimental impacts of our changing climate on marine ecosystems has led to national and global recognition that the world ocean is in crisis. An unhealthy ocean does not absorb or store carbon as effectively as a healthy one, further worsening the impacts of the climate crisis. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, from rising water temperatures and changes in ocean chemistry, to sea level rise and increased storminess. This is increasing the risk to infrastructure and properties, and increasing the risk of flooding and storm damage both along the coast and in our riverside communities.
- 3.4 Likewise, Monmouthshire's rivers are in crisis, with water quality deteriorating as a result of pollution from sewage, agricultural practices and pressure from development. Phosphates and nitrates entering the river cause a process called eutrophication to occur, where toxic algal blooms feed on the excess nutrients and multiply and reduce light and oxygen levels, killing fish and other species. This effect has been exacerbated this year with extremely dry weather and high temperatures, which mean that the water levels in our rivers are very low.
- 3.5 Monmouthshire is a coastal community but its estuary location means that it is often not viewed as such. We recognise that our ocean, rivers and climate are in a state of emergency and we need to play our part in working towards nature recovery for our oceans and rivers.
- 3.6 First-hand experience of our rivers and ocean are essential if people are to be motivated to play their part in protecting it, whether that is through disposing of their litter responsibly, recycling what they can or volunteering in conservation or volunteer monitoring and data collection projects with local organisations. Helping individuals to develop their ocean literacy is an essential part of this motion, as is individual and collective river and marine citizenship.
- 3.7 There are many organisations and agencies who have an impact on how our oceans and rivers are managed. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have the most significant role. However, local government has an important role to play as well, in terms of participating in partnerships to look after rivers and coast. Local authorities cannot solve the ocean and river crises alone, but we can – and must – play our part.
- 3.8 Following discussion at Council in March 2022, a Motion for Rivers and Ocean was declared, and a commitment was made to bring an action plan

back to council within six months, outlining the steps the council will take to protect our rivers and ocean. There is much work going on within the council to address the nature emergency and protect water quality. However, there needs to be more of a co-ordinated focus on how we have an impact on our rivers and coasts. This action plan aims to pull together the work that is going on across many different council services in a co-ordinated way and to address areas where the council could be doing more to protect our rivers and coast.

4. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT EVALUATION:

- 4.1 The actions outlined in the action plan will have significant positive impacts on a Prosperous Wales (valuing the role rivers and coasts play in tourism and enabling development to happen in a way that does not have a negative impact on the environment), a Resilient Wales (helping with nature and ocean recovery), a Healthier Wales (by improving water quality, as well as encouraging more people to enjoy rivers and coasts for recreation). There are no negative impacts on the Wellbeing Goals.
- 4.2 The action plan will benefit everyone and will not negatively impact on people with any particular protected characteristic.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Doing nothing is not an option. Water quality is a key priority of the Cabinet and it is important that steps are taken by the Council to play their role in helping to tackle these challenges.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 It is anticipated that progress towards actions in the action plan will be monitored every six months and reported back to Council.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 As described above, our oceans and rivers are in crisis. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and our Climate Emergency Action Plan recognises the importance of managing green spaces to reduce energy use, absorb carbon and be resilient, but didn't include anything specific about oceans or rivers. When the plan was updated in 2021, the emphasis on nature recovery was strengthened, in recognition of the nature emergency, and an action on addressing water quality was added.

- 7.2 However, there needs to be more of a co-ordinated focus on how we have an impact on our rivers and coasts. The Motion for the Rivers and Ocean agreed by the Council in March 2022 was followed by further debate in Council in June 2022. Implementing the measures outlined in the action plan will ensure that we are playing our role in improving the health of our oceans and waterways and could yield new jobs and opportunities, more resilient coastal and riverside economies, and happier, healthier people; as well as a cleaner, healthier and more productive natural environment.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

It is anticipated that at present there will be no additional cost to implementing this decision as actions in the plan come within existing financial and officer resources.

9. CONSULTEES:

Officers who are responsible for actions within the plan have attended 2 workshops to shape the action plan

Cllr Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate and Environment

Senior Leadership Team

Cabinet members

Alys Morris, Severn Estuary Partnership

Dr Emma McKinley, Cardiff University (Diverse Values project)

Natural Resources Wales

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Motion for the Rivers and Ocean Draft Action Plan

For more background on the Motion for the Ocean see

<https://lgacoastalsig.com/motion-for-the-ocean/>

11. AUTHOR: Hazel Clatworthy, Sustainability Policy Officer

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Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Niamh Falconer / Hazel Clatworthy</p> <p>Phone no: : 0776 889 8587 E-mail: niamhfalconer@monmouthshire.gov.uk hazelclatworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To note the Motion for the Rivers and Oceans Action Plan and agree to the actions outlined in the plan (see Appendix 1).</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Policy and Performance</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>23/8/22</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Delivering the actions outlined in the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean action plan will benefit everyone, by making our environment cleaner and healthier for all. There are no specific impacts on any particular group.	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Disability	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable

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	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Race	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Religion or Belief	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Sex	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable
Sexual Orientation	As above	There are no negative impacts from the proposal on any particular group.	Not applicable

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	Monmouthshire has attractive river and coastal walks that are free to use, so improvements to the river and ocean environments along these routes will benefit everyone who can access them. The proposal highlights the importance of ocean literacy for all. Thus the proposal will ensure people from all backgrounds are engaged with the oceans and recognise the importance of oceans and rivers.	No negative impacts.	Not applicable

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>Any publicity, signage, leaflets or resources developed as part of the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean action plan will be bilingual in line with the Welsh Language Measure</p>	<p>This may be harder with cross border working with England with partners along the River Wye and across the Severn Estuary.</p>	<p>Ensure that any shared resources that are produced in partnership with English partners are bilingual or have a Welsh version available.</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	<p>Any new roles that may be advertised (e.g. a Nutrient Management Officer in Planning) will have Welsh Language as desirable.</p>	<p>No negative impacts</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	<p>Services involved in delivering the actions in the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean action plan will comply with the Welsh Language measure.</p>	<p>No negative impacts</p>	<p>Not applicable</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?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Positive impacts: The ocean crisis not only affects our climate but also the fishing industry, aquaculture industry, tourism industry and the health, well being and prosperity of our communities. The proposal seeks to negate this. The proposal will be integral to ensure we protect our waterways for the benefit of tourism.</p> <p>Negative impacts: None</p>	<p>Maintain collaboration with existing partnerships to ensure resources are maximized and efforts are not duplicated.</p> <p>Ensure there is a significant opportunity for education and awareness about the importance of our rivers and coasts.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>Positive impacts: The ocean absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated by human activity. The proposal will help ocean health and increase the ocean's ability to reduce the effects of climate change. The actions work towards nature, river and ocean recovery and encourage partnership working to maintain and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Negative impacts: None</p>	<p>Continue to work in partnership and regionally to ensure statutory biodiversity responsibilities are met and biodiversity and ecosystems are enhanced.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive impacts: The proposal will seek to increase access to our rivers and coasts. Increased access to the Wales Coastal Path and riverside walks will improve wellbeing and improved active travel routes will maximise physical health. Water quality has deteriorated in the Rivers Wye and Usk and this can have negative impacts on health for people swimming and coming into contact with the water.</p>	<p>Working in partnership with others to improve water quality should have a positive impact on health.</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	Negative impacts: None	
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Positive impacts: The proposal provides an opportunity to engage with the waterways but also climate change issues more broadly. The proposal will allow people to have a more positive experience of the ocean and their local area.</p> <p>Negative impacts: None</p>	<p>Monmouthshire County Council will continue to support a range community groups working to look after the environment through the Community Climate Champions network.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Positive impacts: The proposal recognises the importance of rivers and oceans in negating the effects of climate change. Ocean health is a global issue and the action plan sets out measures to improve ocean health which will have positive impacts beyond Wales.</p> <p>Negative impacts: None</p>	<p>Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and when the Climate Emergency Action Plan was refreshed in 2021 it was decided that there needed to be an increased focus on addressing water quality and the nature emergency</p> <p>Motion for the Rivers and Ocean was declared in March 2022, and is the next step in addressing these issues.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Positive impacts: One of the actions, the Diverse Values project, focuses on the important role that rivers and coasts have played in local history, culture and heritage, and uses creative methods to involve communities.</p> <p>Negative impacts: None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive impacts: As described previously, the actions will benefit everyone living in, working in or visiting Monmouthshire. Our rivers and coasts provide free opportunities to enjoy our local environment.</p>	<p>Some work will focus on schools, so that young people will be involved in learning more about our rivers and oceans and understanding how what they do can have an impact on them.</p>

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>Although the actions in the plan are generally short to medium term actions, they aim to secure the long term health and vitality of our rivers and oceans. The plan recognizes the impact that oceans have on climate change, and aims to help restore ocean health in order to help mitigate the impact of future climate change.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Improving the state of rivers and oceans is a complex process and can only be delivered through collaboration with a wide range of partners. The proposal involves working with a number of partnerships in order to do this, as well as key stakeholders such as Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The Motion for the Rivers and Ocean has been discussed at Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions and the views expressed there have helped to inform the action plan. In addition, the views of partners such as Severn Estuary Partnership have also fed into the plan. Involving communities in taking action to protect rivers and oceans is a key part of the action plan.</p>	<p>Not applicable</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 data-bbox="152 496 291 523">Prevention</p> <p data-bbox="344 256 506 555">Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p data-bbox="546 256 1308 456">The action plan aims to prevent ocean and river health from getting worse and to prevent further negative impacts on water quality, the local economy and human health and wellbeing. It seeks to ensure that oceans and rivers are able to reduce the impact of climate change and be resilient to a changing climate.</p>	<p data-bbox="1352 256 1525 284">Not applicable</p>
 <p data-bbox="152 932 300 959">Integration</p> <p data-bbox="344 687 517 951">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p data-bbox="546 600 1294 1038">An ocean in crisis, and likewise rivers in crisis are not only bad news for our climate, but also for our fishing industry, aquaculture industry, tourism industry and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal and river communities. Delivering the pledges set out in the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean could yield new jobs and opportunities, more resilient coastal and riverside economies, and happier, healthier people; as well as a cleaner, healthier and more productive natural environment. It is essential that all of these impacts are considered in a joined up way and that actions are delivered in partnership with others.</p>	<p data-bbox="1352 600 1525 627">Not applicable</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	No impact	Not applicable	Any work involving schools or young people as part of the action plan will undertake appropriate safeguarding measures.
Corporate Parenting	No impact	Not applicable	Not applicable

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

Monmouthshire well-being assessment

There is detailed data on river water quality on NRW's website, specifically:

<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/water-reports/river-wye-compliance-report/>

<https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/media/693025/compliance-assessment-of-welsh-sacs-against-phosphorus-targets-final-v10.pdf>

Also from NRW research on potential for restoring marine and coastal habitats:

https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/media/694065/final_pdf_nrw-restoration-opportunities.pdf

NRW research on the carbon sink potential of the Welsh marine environment:

https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/media/692035/nrw-evidence-report-428_blue-carbon_v11-002.pdf

UNESCO State of the Ocean report 2022:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381921>

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?

The actions outlined in the action plan will have significant positive impacts on all the wellbeing goals, but in particular on a Prosperous Wales (valuing the role rivers and coasts play in tourism and enabling development to happen in a way that does not have a negative impact on the environment), a Resilient Wales (helping with nature and ocean recovery), a Healthier Wales (by improving water quality, as well as encouraging more people to enjoy rivers and coasts for recreation). There are no negative impacts on the Wellbeing Goals. The action plan will benefit everyone and will not negatively impact on people with any particular protected characteristic.

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
Plan a reporting framework to report progress against action plan back to Council every six months	As soon as report is agreed by Council	Sustainability Policy Officer

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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	Place Scrutiny	15 th September 2022	

Motion for Rivers and Ocean Draft Action Plan – September 2022

What is the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean?

Monmouthshire is a coastal community, but its estuary location means that it is often not viewed as such. Coastal local authorities around the UK are working hard to bring about a brighter future for the communities we serve. We work to boost local economies, improve community health and wellbeing, and to protect and enhance local biodiversity. We know that the health, wellbeing and prosperity of coastal communities is dependent on a clean, healthy and productive marine environment – yet too often we consider these issues separately, rather than thinking about it in a joined-up way.



The Motion for the Ocean was created to enable local authorities to tackle these potentially competing ambitions in a more holistic way. Developed by leading coastal and marine experts, Cllr Dr Pamela Buchan (former Plymouth City Councillor), Emily Cunningham (formerly Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group (LGA Coastal SIG)) and Nicola Bridge (Ocean Conservation Trust), at its core the motion aims to help councils and the communities we serve to “think ocean” and ensure the development of the blue economy is regenerative, delivering the recovery of our ocean and reducing socio-economic

inequality in our coastal communities. The motion aims to help councils embed this new way of thinking at the highest levels of local decision-making, so it is not the responsibility of one team, but of the whole council.

The LGA Coastal SIG who helped develop and promote the motion contacted Monmouthshire County Council to see whether we were interested in adopting the motion as the first local authority in Wales to do so. As well as having an estuary coastline, Monmouthshire also has the rivers Wye and Usk running through it, both of which are facing significant challenges in terms of water quality, with much publicity about pollution from sewage and agricultural run off hitting the local and national media. In light of this, in March 2022 elected members voted for not just a Motion for the Ocean, but Rivers and Ocean, recognising the importance of taking a catchment to coast approach to protecting water quality.

“This Council is proud to be a coastal county and the starting point of the Wales Coastal Path. We recognise the importance of the marine ecosystem and our role as a stakeholder and guardian of it. A report should be brought forward to Council within 6 months of this motion containing appropriate recommendations to ensure we play our part in ensuring realising clean, healthy and productive rivers and oceans alongside our existing commitment to tackle the climate emergency.” March 2022

Why is it needed now?

We recognise that our ocean, waterways, nature and climate are in a state of emergency and that the communities we serve are on the frontline. An ocean in crisis, and likewise rivers in crisis are not only bad news for our climate, but also for our fishing industry, aquaculture industry, tourism industry and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal and river communities. Delivering the pledges set out in the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean could yield new jobs and opportunities, more resilient coastal and riverside economies, and happier, healthier people; as well as a cleaner, healthier and more productive natural environment. Healthy oceans and rivers are essential allies in our fight against climate change and blue carbon could play an integral role in helping us meet our net zero targets.

The health of our ocean is inextricably linked with our climate and with human health, wellbeing and prosperity. A healthy ocean is fundamental in regulating the global climate system and is an essential ally in our fight against climate change. The ocean absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated by human activity.



However, decades of irresponsible marine exploitation and pollution have led to significant levels of degradation, and this together with the detrimental impacts of our changing climate on marine ecosystems has led to national and global recognition that the world ocean is in crisis. An unhealthy ocean does not absorb or store carbon as effectively as a healthy one, further worsening the impacts of the climate crisis.

Around the UK fish stocks continue to collapse from permitted and illegal overfishing and poor water quality is impacting seafood and safe bathing. The coastline and ocean are blighted with litter, much of it plastic. Marine microplastics have been found in all marine environments and in the bodies of many species, including humans and the species of fish we regularly eat.

Our residents are on the frontline of climate change. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, from rising water temperatures and changes in ocean chemistry, to sea level rise and increased storminess. This is increasing the risk to infrastructure and properties and increasing the risk of flooding and storm damage both along the coast and in our riverside communities.

Urgent action is needed to halt these devastating changes and recover the health of our ocean to enable it to deliver the full range of benefits, including climate regulation, carbon storage in coastal and marine habitats, coastal protection, a thriving local economy, clean safe recreation and happy, healthy coastal communities. We must play our part in recovering the health of the ocean.

Similarly, across the UK the health of our rivers is under threat, which is threatening wildlife and habitats, as well as potentially human health. Healthy rivers and good catchment management are essential for mitigating climate change and building resilience for a changing climate.



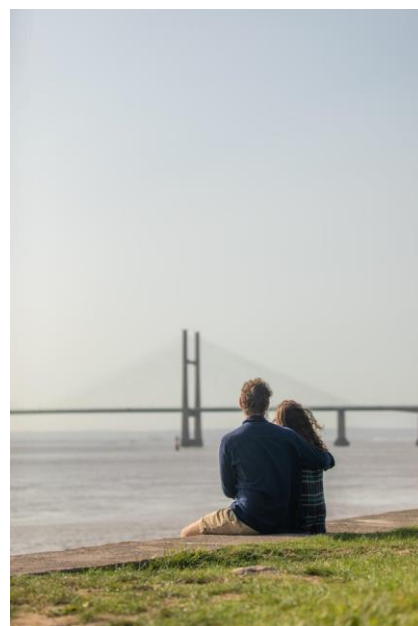
Rivers and water form some of the most attractive features of the Monmouthshire landscape, and are at the heart of our heritage and economy. They are popular routes for walking and cycling and have high ecological value as well as being the foci of historical settlements. From the rich maritime and ship building heritage of Chepstow to the thousands of visitors who come on holiday to enjoy the Wye Valley and follow in the footsteps of the historic Wye Tour, many come to experience the sight, sound and feel of our rivers and coast.

However, Monmouthshire's waterways are under threat from pressure from development, increases in recreational use, changes in agricultural practice and climate change. The Rivers Wye and Usk are both designated as Special Areas of Conservation for their water quality, but over recent years the water quality has deteriorated significantly. This is due to a complex range of issues, including sewage releases into the rivers and phosphates and nitrates entering the rivers due to agricultural activity. Phosphates and nitrates entering the river cause a process called eutrophication to occur, where toxic algal blooms feed on the excess nutrients and multiply and reduce light and oxygen levels, killing fish and other species. This effect has been exacerbated this year with extremely dry weather and high temperatures, which mean that the water levels in our rivers are very low. Because of the high levels of phosphates, both the Usk and Wye fail to comply with water quality standards, which means planning restrictions have been introduced in order to meet Habitat Regulations. The planning restrictions are impacting on the development of new homes.

The severity of the water quality problem is significant and has attracted much local and national publicity. A number of local campaign groups have formed and have organised marches and protests to raise the profile of the issue and try and make stakeholders take action. Work needs to happen both sides of the English and Welsh border, and the large river catchment means that collaboration with neighbouring authorities in both England and Wales is essential to protect waterways along the length of their catchments.

Rivers and oceans can play a vital role in our economic recovery and we must strive to develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers both river and ocean recovery and local prosperity. We must ensure that river and ocean recovery is embedded in our relevant strategic decision-making, policymaking and budget-setting; as well as being considered in future strategies and plans, including those seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

First-hand experience of our rivers and ocean are essential if people are to be motivated to play their part in protecting it, whether that is through disposing of their litter responsibly, recycling what they can or volunteering in conservation or monitoring and data collection projects with local organisations. Helping individuals develop their ocean literacy (understanding of the relationship between people and the ocean) is an important part of this motion, as is individual and collective river and marine citizenship (promoting and demanding blue recovery through local, national and international policy changes).



Monmouthshire Context

Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and our Climate Emergency Action Plan recognises the importance of managing green spaces to reduce energy use, absorb carbon and be resilient.

The importance of protecting our rivers and coasts has risen in profile over the last year. When the Climate Emergency Action Plan was updated in 2021, the emphasis on nature recovery was strengthened, in recognition of the nature emergency, and an action on addressing water quality was added.

The Motion for the Rivers and Ocean agreed by the Council in March 2022 was followed by further debate in Council in June 2022, which led to the following more detailed motion which relates specifically to rivers:

In addition, the Wye Valley Villages Plan which was adopted by MCC in July 2022 includes measures to tackle river water quality, and will include measures by partner organisations and landowners.

“This Council:

- *Notes the decision of full council in March to become the first in Wales to declare a water quality emergency and commission a strategy to improve our waterways.*
- *Has grave concerns about the declining state of the Wye and Usk rivers in Monmouthshire and the multiple sources of phosphate and other pollutants including those originating upstream outside of Monmouthshire, which are threatening biodiversity and wildlife as well as fish numbers.*
- *Commits the Leader and Cabinet Member to work with opposition groups and relevant authorities including Powys County Council and Herefordshire County Council to ensure action is being taken to improve the health of our rivers before it’s too late.”*

Preparation of this action plan has highlighted how complex the partnership landscape is that is working to protect our rivers and ocean. There are numerous partnerships, both in place and emerging, which are all aiming to tackle different aspects of how our rivers and coasts are managed and looked after.

Monmouthshire plays an important role in many of these partnerships. Likewise, there is much work going on within the council to address the nature emergency and protect water quality. However, there needs to

be more of a co-ordinated focus on how we have an impact on our rivers and coasts. This action plan aims to pull together the work that is going on across many different council services in a co-ordinated way and to address areas where the council could be doing more to protect our rivers and coast.



Local authorities cannot solve the ocean and river crises alone, but we can – and must – play our part.

Action	Officer	Timescales
Estuary and coastal management		
Continue participation in ASERA partnership to discharge statutory duties to protect European Marine site in line with EU Habitats Directive	Environment & Culture Manger (Matthew Lewis)	On going
Become members of the Severn Estuary Partnership in order to connect with, learn from and work in partnership with other estuary stakeholders	Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	Autumn 2022
Through membership of SEP, engage with the Welsh Government Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) on the development of a Blue Recovery Plan for Wales to support sustainable development actions to both help coastal communities to recover, and to achieve our vision of Welsh seas that are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse.	Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	Ongoing
Work with partners over the next 12 months to secure longer term funding for the Living Levels partnership. The Living Levels aims to re-connect people and communities to the Gwent levels landscape and provide a sustainable future for this historic and unique area.	Environment & Culture Manger (Matthew Lewis) Cllr Catrin Maby Cllr Frances Taylor	2022/2023
Participate in the Diverse Marine Values research project with Cardiff University and other research partners to help understand how diverse values can influence marine policy and decision making.	Hazel Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	2022/24
Continue as an active member of the Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) to be responsible for the implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan, to promote community and stakeholder engagement on the Shoreline Management Plan Actions, to encourage research into established problems and concern about current and future trends affecting the coastline and to ensure the dissemination of any information obtained.	Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)	Ongoing
Work with NRW to identify improvements to the Caldicot sea wall to reinstate its function as a defence against future tidal flooding.	Head of Placemaking, Regen, Highways & Flooding (Mark Hand)	2022/24
Through membership of SEP, work with the Blue Marine Foundation and cross-border partners to scope the potential for a National Marine Park for the Severn Estuary	Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) and colleagues	2023/24
Through membership of SEP work to explore options for the development of the Severn Vision work into a deliverable framework for action; one which maximises nature restoration, climate mitigation and adaptation benefits for the whole Severn Estuary and outer reaches area	Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) and colleagues	2022/23

Action	Officer	Timescales
Input to the development of the SEP Resilient Communities application to NRW to expand the Discover the Severn and Litter Free Coast and Seas projects across Monmouthshire and neighbouring LAs	Hazel Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	2022/23
Through membership of ASERA and SEP engage with coastal disturbance through behaviour change.	Environment & Culture Manger (Matthew Lewis)	2023/24
River catchment management		
Continue to participate and play a more active role in the Wye Nutrient Management Board in order to ensure the Lower Wye phosphate issues are addressed	Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor) Cllr Catrin Maby	On going
Continue involvement in the Wye Nutrient Management Board Technical Advice Group to identify and analyse options for delivering improvements for water quality	Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe)	On going
Play a key role in the development of the Usk Catchment Partnership in order to tackle nutrient management on the River Usk	Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor) Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe) Cllr Catrin Maby	Work commenced summer 2022
Continue involvement with the Wye Catchment Partnership in order to protect water quality, water quantity and biodiversity	Environment & Culture Manger (Matthew Lewis) Wye valley AONB	On going
Support catchment wide action, nature-based solutions and natural flood management and seek to develop partnerships and funding to deliver these.	Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)	2022/23
Clarify the arrangements for Internal Drainage Districts with Natural Resources Wales	Head of Placemaking, Regen, Highways & Flooding (Mark Hand)	Completed July 2022
Work with Welsh Water to provide a phosphate stripping facility at Llanfoist to improve water quality and facilitate new development in the Usk catchment.	Head of Placemaking, Regen, Highways & Flooding (Mark Hand)	2023
Continue to work with NRW, Welsh Water, neighbouring Councils and other partners to identify phosphate solutions including nature-based solutions for both the river Usk and Wye catchments.	Head of Placemaking, Regen, Highways & Flooding (Mark Hand)	2022/24

Action	Officer	Timescales
Review and amend the spatial strategy for sustainable growth in Monmouthshire within the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) to ensure that development does not have an adverse impact on the conversation status of the Rivers Wye and Usk. The amended spatial strategy has been developed following discussion with NRW and Welsh Water on future strategic solutions for phosphate mitigation within river catchment areas.	Head of Placemaking, Regen, Highways & Flooding (Mark Hand)	Autumn 2022
Use our powers as a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) approving body to ensure new developments manage on site surface water in a sustainable way	Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)	Ongoing
Use our powers as Land Drainage Authority to ensure works undertaken within ordinary watercourses do not have a negative impact on water quality or on the local environment.	Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)	Ongoing
Appoint a Nutrient Management Officer to sit within the Planning team	Head of Placemaking, Regen, Highways & Flooding (Mark Hand)	2022/23
Maintain regular officer liaison meetings with NRW and broaden their scope to cover river water quality issues, and suggest that Cabinet Member liaison meetings are introduced.	Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor) Cllr Catrin Maby	Autumn 2022 to broaden scope
Maintain good relationship and regular meetings with Welsh Water, with regular updates and information on sewage incidents and forward plans for improvements.	Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor)	Ongoing
Lobby Welsh Government to ensure Natural Resources Wales have the resources they need to protect our river and marine environment	Elected members	2022/23
Build and strengthen relationships with Natural Resources Wales at all levels.	Various MCC officers	On going
Take part in a new cross-border working group of agencies, local authorities, MPs and other key parties to develop the first five-year integrated plan to cut pollution in the River Wye.	Cllr Catrin Maby	2022/27
Nature recovery		
Continue involvement to lead the Gwent Green Grid and Resilient Greater Gwent partnership and explore ways to sustain the partnership beyond the end of current funding in 2023 in order to maintain a regional approach to green infrastructure and nature recovery, including river and ocean recovery	Green Infrastructure Manager (Colette Bosley) Environment & Culture Manger (Matthew Lewis)	2022/23
Continue to lead Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership to share best practice and resources to maximise benefits for people and wildlife	Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe)	On going

Action	Officer	Timescales
Develop the Monmouthshire and Newport Nature Recovery Action Plan with the Local Nature Partnership to include river and marine environments	Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe)	2023
Litter reduction		
Deliver litter campaigns with a focus on the impact of litter entering rivers and sea	Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson)	Ongoing
Work with community groups and Keep Wales Tidy to provide support for local litter picks and implement litter picking hubs.	Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson)	Ongoing
Continue support of plastic free towns in Monmouthshire	Head of Neighbourhood Services (Carl Touhig)	Ongoing
Work with schools to raise awareness of the impact litter has on Rivers and Oceans	Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson)	2022/23
Work with Keep Abergavenny Tidy on a litter campaign targeting business in Abergavenny	Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson)	2022/23
Engage with Welsh Government throughout the development of the Single Use Plastic Bill.	Head of Neighbourhood Services (Carl Touhig)	2022/23
Education and awareness		
Play a role in the development of an Ocean Literacy action plan in Wales	Decarbonisation Graduate (Niamh Falconer)	Autumn/ Winter 2022
Use the One Planet Centre as a focus for education about marine and river pollution	Bec	Ongoing
Deliver dog fouling campaign which will reduce water pollution	Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson)	Summer 2022

Action	Officer	Timescales
Facilitate ongoing discussion between MCC and community groups on river and coastal issues through Community Climate Champions network	Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	On going
Strengthen the guidance notes for integrated impact assessment to ensure that the Resilient Wales goal is understood to include rivers, coasts and ecosystem resilience, to ensure rivers and oceans are considered as part of council decision making	Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	Autumn 2022
Develop information and resources on rivers and oceans to put on MCC website.	Decarbonisation Graduate (Niamh Falconer) and Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)	Autumn/ Winter 2022
Promote the Visit Wales addo (promise to care for Wales' communities and environment)	Destination Manager (Nicola Edwards)	Ongoing
Target socially and environmentally responsible visitor segments in our destination marketing	Destination Manager (Nicola Edwards)	Ongoing
Encourage local action, community awareness initiatives, demonstration projects and encourage participation in volunteer monitoring and data collection	Environment & Culture Manger (Matthew Lewis) and Head of Neighbourhood Services (Carl Touhig)	Ongoing
Use the Space for Local Production Programme pilot of 4 farms to understand how the farms look now and how they could look in the future if certain measures were taken, and use this learning to understand how land management can better protect waterways.	Sustainable Food Projects Manager (Deserie Mansfield)	2022/23

Glossary

A “Blue Economy” is one which uses ocean resources sustainably or even regeneratively whilst improving community wellbeing and social equity. It is not simply marine or maritime economic activity or “blue growth”.

“Ocean literacy” is where a person understands the ocean's influence on them and their influence on the ocean. For example, an understanding that the ocean stores carbon and an understanding that what they put down the drain can impact on ocean health. It can also include learning how to be an active marine citizen.

“Marine citizenship” is exercising the right to participate in the transformation of the human-ocean relationship for sustainability. This means taking individual and collective responsibility to consider one’s

own and society's impacts on the ocean; and exercising rights as a marine citizen, e.g. writing to a local Councillor to ask them to take action for ocean recovery; or promoting or making local, national or international policy changes.



SUBJECT:	MONLIFE TACKLING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY SUMMER PROGRAMMES 2022 REPORT
MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	22ND SEPTEMBER 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide an update to Council on programmes and interventions delivered by Monlife through the summer, aimed towards tackling poverty, inequality and access to doorstep services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note the Summer of Fun investment of £140,000 from Welsh Government, a one-off payment that enabled collaboration across partners and contributed to the bespoke opportunities made available through the summer holidays. The service also received funding from Town and Community Councils, the Welsh Museums Federation and annual Welsh Government funding a total of £338,563.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 MonLife Summer Term Campaign

- 3.1.1 MonLife provides doorstep, free or low-cost opportunities and activities to children and young people. The summer campaign, 'extraordinary summer', was delivered collaboratively throughout Monmouthshire by internal and external providers.
- 3.1.2 In addition to departmental budgets, MonLife secured £140,000 from Welsh Government to deliver the Summer of Fun. The main outcome of the project was to engage children, young people and families, through cultural, social and physical activities. Sixteen projects worked independently under the Summer of Fun umbrella to achieve the set outcomes of the campaign.
- 3.1.3 This additional funding enabled project providers to leverage more funding to add value and extend their projects, due to the timing of this report final submissions and evaluations have not been completed, a more detailed report will follow. More consultation and meetings will be arranged with town and community councils to recognise their significant contributions.
- 3.1.4 As part of a comprehensive delivery programme, including safe recruitment, training and extensive support of the workforce, more than 90 staff were employed. It is anticipated that some of recruited staff could continue employment with us, however, the majority will return to FE and University studies.

3.1.5 Volunteers were actively engaged in all service areas and provided additional support to service delivery. The summer delivery programme presented more opportunities for our volunteers to engage, keep active and contribute to the values of Monmouthshire and our individual projects.

3.2 Targeted interventions

3.2.1 The Food and Fun scheme was a collaboration with MCC Education colleagues, based at five of our Primary schools across Monmouthshire and offered to those most vulnerable pupils. The scheme delivered a variety of fun activities as well as healthy hot meals and snacks, provided by our school catering team, for more than 200 participants a day. This scheme was funded by Welsh Government via the WLGA.

3.2.2 The Children services disabilities team, through Action for Children, continued to deliver their Summer Play Scheme supporting 60 children per day across four Monmouthshire venues, two days per week. The disability hubs are part of an annual programme of support.

3.2.3 In addition, and in collaboration with our partners, we created a wide range of accessible fun activities that promoted healthy outdoor activities, built confidence and brought children / siblings through shared experiences together.

3.2.3.1 Building Bridges supported young people with additional needs, aged 14 to 25 years through supported activities, transition and social experiences. Activities included residential camps, surfability, and skateboarding.

3.2.3.2 Quest Busters (QB) supported young people aged between 5 and 17 with additional needs and their siblings to access activities that may otherwise have been inaccessible. The summer project also supported families to attend activities together, therefore building sibling bonds and family resilience. Activities included, horse riding, surfability, and outdoor adventure days.

3.2.3.3 The Outdoor Partnership developed an inclusive adventure programme for Monmouthshire young people with mobility limitations, disabilities, and neurodiversity conditions. The focus of the programme was to provide a gateway into outdoor adventures and give Monmouthshire young people access to opportunities that support their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Activities included, climbing, canoeing, and outdoor adventure days.

3.2.3.4 There were 66 funded spaces to access the leisure centre Monmouthshire Games, where children enjoyed fun, games, access to daily swimming activities and meeting new friends in a safe space.

3.2.3.5 Many of these children identified will not access mainstream activities and are often not able to access activities with their siblings/families. The partnerships and programmes provided this year ensured that we were able to provide this unique experience, supporting the children, their siblings and their parents/carers. Supported by services and their fully qualified staff, who made the best use of our wonderful Monmouthshire and surrounding countryside and Gilwern outdoor adventure centre.

3.2.3.6 Monlife leisure services offer a variety of concession to assist access for all. These will all form part of our annual charging review.

- 25%-50% Discounted Passport to Leisure Scheme
- Family Swim (1 free child)
- Under 4's Swim for free
- Welsh Government free swim 60+ and under 16
- Armed Forces free swim
- DofE financial support
- DWP exercise referral financial support

3.2.3.7 Monlife sites including museums, attractions and countryside offer free access at the point of entry.

3.3 **Welsh Language in the Community**

3.3.1 Menter Iaith were a new partner to the summer programme this year delivering through the medium of Welsh. Complementing their summer programme, they promoted and offered a wide range of activities including textile workshops, giving children the opportunity to learn new skills by learning how to use a sewing machine and being able to design and create their own piece of clothing.

The finale of their summer programme, was a 'Gig', arranged and facilitated by Youth Forum members. Several Welsh language rock bands performed for members of the Youth Forum. The event provided an opportunity for young people to socialise – the Youth Forum is made-up of members who are currently at university as well as members from Coleg Gwent, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and Years 12 & 13 forms across Monmouthshire.

As well as a fantastic end to the summer programme, members of the youth forum gained valuable planning and event management skills by being responsible for the organisation and promotional aspects of the event.

3.4 **Refugee Support**

3.4.1 Monmouthshire has continued to support our refugee families throughout the summer, offering access to leisure centres and provided more than 60 spaces to the Monmouthshire Games, giving those families the opportunity to meet other people, stay active and in many cases, give parents some respite. Caldicot leisure centre linked with MCC passenger transport unit and

arranged transport for a large cohort of children and young people who are residing at Ty Magor, providing access to the Monmouthshire Games in the locality along with other activities in the surrounding areas.

3.5 Museum and Heritage Attractions

3.5.1 Our Heritage and Museum services have seen significant footfall post pandemic. We are keen to ensure we offer free access to our sites for those who are on limited budgets, elderly or those suffering from loneliness, and those families with extended siblings. Play audits carried out in spring 2022, enabled us to evaluate, review and inform our summer programme offering a wide range of free activities for our visitors and local communities. Offering activities as part of the summer programme has brought a new dimension to the breadth of provision within Monmouthshire.

Funding from Welsh Government Summer of Fun enabled us to purchase additional play resources which were recommendations of the Play Audits. This equipment will reflect where possible the collections held at each museum and will provide families with free opportunities for play. Throughout September the service is offering 'come and play weekend' at Abergavenny and Chepstow Museums. From the evaluation of these sessions, we will develop further opportunities. Learning will be applied across all our heritage sites.

3.5.2 Our Heritage Learning team were able to offer craft based make and take activities for 5–11-year-olds, inspired by the collections, themes and stories at Chepstow Museum, Abergavenny Museum and Castle, Caldicot Castle, Old Station, Tintern and Shire Hall, Monmouth.

3.5.3 The project delivered 10 separate sessions focusing on the themes of Medieval mayhem and Playtime through the ages. Craft activities include clay tile making, illuminated manuscripts, shield making and jointed knights, hobby horses, cup and ball, thaumatropes and peg dolls. In addition, 8 additional inclusive sessions were held and included games like boccia, ball games and balancing. The sessions had over 200+ children and families attend.

3.5.4 Caldicot Castle offered 'mini outdoor adventurers', which offered 3–7 year-olds an opportunity to have a guided tour around the grounds where they discovered bugs and creature that are native to the park and its woodlands; taking part in 'plant' eating challenges, bug and critter hunts. It concluded with controlled campfires with the children and parents enjoying toasted marshmallows.

3.5.5 We have engaged with a group of young people who are currently setting up a Youth Panel. This will be an ongoing piece of work, with the purpose to engage with other young people and inform how we can attract more young people into heritage/museums and provide suitable spaces for them to learn, meet and socialise. This follows on from Winter of Wellbeing Funding where we engaged with young people and put together their recommendations of how we reach out to this audience.

3.5.6 During all programmes we have engaged with participants, families and carers and will evaluate their responses to ensure their responses informs our future programmes and enables us to continue to provide free/low-cost activities in warm, safe environments throughout school holiday periods.

3.6 Countryside Access, Green Infrastructure and Outdoors.

3.6.1 The Countryside Access and Green Infrastructure Team removes barriers for those economically disadvantaged by promoting access to the natural environment and green space, beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to nature and heritage. By encouraging the use of countryside sites and the public rights of way network as a free-at-the-point-of-use resource for active travel, recreation and leisure use.

3.6.2 Free art activities and bug box building events were carried out over summer and an apprentice warden worked with the Countryside Access team learning new skills. Other Green Infrastructure projects supports orchard planting and community growing, new wild play areas and educational sessions and resources.

3.6.3 Visit Monmouthshire channels are developing new content promoting affordable experiences e.g. walking, leaf peeping/ autumn colours, picnics, views, stargazing, wildlife watching, play areas etc.

3.6.4 Our Gilwern outdoor centre became the hub for many opportunities, including residential stays for children with disabilities, team building visits and 1:1 support for vulnerable young people.

It is also the provider of our DofE Award, facilitating learners in achieving the skills, confidence and resilience required to be successful in this qualification, whilst providing the support and challenge that secures their progression across the bronze, silver and gold levels.

3.7 Active and Youth Engagement

3.7.1 Active play sessions were targeted at children where they can turn up and play, whilst in a supervised activity. Children were encouraged to use the safe surroundings of the outdoor space to create their own fun activities with qualified trained staff there to encourage and support games and activities. All 316 children who attended the sessions left with a healthy packed lunch provided by our on-site school catering team.

3.7.2 The 11years+ offer consisted of a diverse Programme, based upon feedback from the previous summer of activities. Our Youth Centres hosted a menu of opportunities for young people and acted as a base for a young person to access information and support when required.

In addition, the 11+ programme hosted targeted sessions for young people in year 6 only, to support transition from primary to secondary education, by means of offering events and trips within the school clusters. An opportunity for the young people to meet others who will be ential peers within school and

meet professionals working within the area and promote after school activities which will commence in September alongside the new academic year.

3.7.3 Building on our successful LGBTQ+ offer, young people had access to ongoing support and opportunities to meet other young people who are LGBT, campaign for social change and celebrate their identity.

3.7.4 MonLife's Youth Service and Sports Development worked in partnership with Gwent Police, County in the Community and Positive Futures to deliver a free six-a-side football tournament, held at Caldicot leisure centre to help reduce youth anti-social behaviour through diversionary activities and improving relationships between youths and various services like Gwent N-gage and Gwent Police.

The success of these initiatives has helped to secure Home Office, Safe Streets Funding targeting interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour in the Caldicot area.

3.7.5 Leisure centres, heritage attractions, museums, youth centres and our outdoor spaces all play a vital role in community participation, whether it be social, emotional, or physical activity, we continue to develop safe spaces where communities can gather. Through continued staff training and continuing to work closely with partners, we see these facilities as the front door to many opportunities beyond traditional delivery of programmes and sessions within.

3.7.6 Through Welsh Government exercise on prescription, our exercise referral scheme continues to offer individual centred support through partnership with our local clinicians and delivered at our leisure centres. The creation of further pathways for all through social prescribing schemes, for example: Active 60+, Free swimming and Department of Work and Pensions referral route, has helped us to target a wider population and engage with many more partners.

3.7.7 The leisure centres have targeted activities for children and young people ages 12+, throughout the summer months through initiatives such as come and play for £1, whether it be access to 3G pitches, table tennis, access to the fitness suite. The offer has been tailored from the feedback received by the young people.

3.8 Future policies, strategy and development

3.8.1 Within Monlife, the Council's heritage assets (museums, attractions and historic countryside sites) are a collective service group. In order to be successful in managing and developing these sites, the last three years has seen the development of a county-wide Heritage Strategy. A successful bid was made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and a full time Heritage Project Officer was appointed to address risks identified, bring our sites together and identify ways in which we can improve. The strategy identifies key areas of each asset and how we can manage them. This is our forward plan with strategic objectives and actions for the short, medium and long term. As a result, several projects are costed up and ready to go so that we can be

proactive and seek the funds to implement what we want instead of being reactive to funders.

As part of the Strategy, we have created a staff training programme, co-created with them, and produced a Monmouthshire Storybook for them to use as a reference guide. This will enable staff to cross-promote all our sites, provide a much richer visitor experience to those that visit as well as having more confidence to talk about Monmouthshire's wider heritage.

The strategy is due for competition in October and then implementation will begin.

3.8.2 The leisure service are in the early stage of developing a 'Leisure and Physical Activity Strategy for Monmouthshire'. The approach has been to set out and understand the wider outcomes that sport and physical activity can impact on particularly:

- health;
- rural poverty; and,
- social Justice – closing the gap

The 5 year Strategy will provide an audit of current sport and physical activity provision and activities across Monmouthshire. The strategy is for the whole of Monmouthshire but recognises the distinctiveness and characteristics of the different areas within the county.

The Strategy will also identify the gaps and needs for sport and physical activity facilities in the future. The implementation of the Strategy will help to ensure people have access to a network of accessible, quality-built sport and recreational facilities which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable.

Initial stage that have taken place include a community survey, stakeholder workshops, and further engagement will take place in the Autumn.

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

4.1. A completed integrated assessment accompanies this report. **Appendix 1.**

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Having the opportunity to review our programmes data to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet local need. To continue to extend our partnership working and ensure we are meeting key council and national priorities. Continue working closely with statutory and voluntary services to ensure we are maximising the circular economy.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

There will be individual project evaluations from those services who have delivered and received financial support from the WG grant, which will assist with the overall project evaluation that is reported to the funders. Additionally,

all measures, outcomes and impacts will be measured and monitored through service business plans and the corporate plan quarterly reporting.

In addition, qualitative data has been gathered through visitor feedback, testimonials and children and responses to surveys where more than 600 responses have been gathered.

The infographic in **appendix 2** gives a snapshot of the impact received so far. More detailed evaluation will follow.

7. REASONS:

To update Council on programmes and interventions delivered by Monlife through the summer, and aimed at tackling poverty, inequality and access to doorstep services.

The collaborative and targeted approach to delivering these interventions has the potential to bring significant benefits to those individuals, families and service users across Monmouthshire. This report has demonstrated the range of interventions available and the willingness to increase this offer, increase collaborative working and find ways of engaging with those groups of people or individuals who are harder to reach.

We will ensure that where appropriate our buildings this autumn and winter are open, welcoming and we provide a space for our community to come where we can provide support, low-cost warm drinks and snacks.

We acknowledge that there is more to be done and anticipating the predicted further hardship that many are likely to face from this autumn onward, that we are prepared and ready to face these challenges and provide support to those most vulnerable.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 MonLife venues are safe, warm accessible buildings that will make every opportunity available to welcome our community and encourage longer dwell times, providing low costs warm drinks and snacks where possible.
- 8.2 Our buildings, particularly swimming pools, museums and castle will significantly be affected by the rising energy costs, potentially jeopardising the financial recovery from the pandemic. Leisure, cultural and tourism sectors are bringing together information via consultation and collectively engaging with government on the issues.
- 8.3 The table below represents the funding secured for 2022/23, to deliver the interventions and programmes detailed in the report:

Programme (Source)	Amount
A number of Town and Community Council, varying amounts	£51,000

Food and Fun (WLGA)	£88,333
Holiday Playworks (WG)	£25,606
Summer of Fun (WG)	£140,831
Families First (MCC - CCG)	£20,037
Federation of Museums	£12,756
Total Funding	£338,563

8.4 Monlife has recruited a full time Play Development lead who will bring together the success of summer 2022 and build on the partnerships and ensure targeted activities are offered. The work plan will be captured through Monmouthshire Play Action Plan.

9. CONSULTEES:

SLT.
Monlife DMT.
Monmouthshire Tackling Poverty and Inequality Working Group.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A.

11. AUTHORS:

Nicholas John, Leisure Services Manager.

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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MonLife

Summer Headlines 2022



289

children were supported through our food and fun provision



2,005

attendances for our food and fun provision



4,010

free lunches and breakfasts were served to children



316

children were supported through our active play sessions



249

attendances for our active play sessions



249

packed lunches were provided through our active play sessions



65

children were supported with free access to The Monmouthshire Games (TMG), equivalent of **650** days

MonLife

Summer Headlines 2022



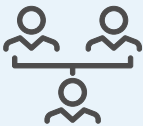
3,935

children attended TMG across our four leisure centres



65

visits for Parent Respite sessions at Monmouth Leisure Centre



863

children attended our 'School's Out' sessions across our leisure centres



678

individuals engaged with our youth services over the summer



237

young people took part in trips organised by our youth team



92

youth service sessions were held during the summer



2,408

contacts were made with the young people during the summer



530

hours of engagement via our youth workers took place over the summer



<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Nicholas John</p> <p>Phone no: 07768055408</p> <p>E-mail: Nicholasjohn@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal.</p> <p>MONLIFE TACKLING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY SUMMER 2022 REPORT.</p> <p>To update Council on programmes and interventions delivered by MonLife through the summer term, aimed towards tackling poverty. Inequalities and access to doorstep services.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>MonLife</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>05/09/2022</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The target ages for Summer of Fun programmes were 0-25 years, and we have seen a range of targeted programmes. However, these programmes were complemented with family engagement sessions, accompanying adults and family targeted sessions. Additionally, our wider provision of parks, open spaces, museums, leisure centres and attractions are open, and	The content of a few programmes are restricted to age, due to development and insurance, i.e outdoor adventurous activities.	Close integration between the play, sports development, youth, and social services children's teams to develop seamless pathways for all children and young people. The Summer of Fun expression of interest process this summer helped us to build on our networks and demonstrate a more impactful summer. The critical workplan of the incoming Play Development lead will be to

	welcoming for all. The events of the previous two years have given communities a greater insight to door step opportunities and walks, trails and community spaces.		strengthen these links and opportunities, through the MCC Play Strategic group using the Play Sufficiency Action Plan to capture journey travelled.
Disability	<p>The PSA and action plan addresses inclusivity and meeting specific needs including open access play which provides inclusive play opportunities and the range of accessible fixed play equipment available.</p> <p>Insport MonLife has been recognised as insport Silver accreditation by Disability Sport Wales as part of a National programme of insport facility. Improvements to facilities, equipment and programmes would create improved inclusive environments, reduce potential barriers to access and provide an improved offer and opportunity for all.</p>	Several mainstream activities are not suitable for children and young people with complex needs, due to the nature of the activity and sessions and support required.	<p>Actions in the PSA identified to sustain and enhance inclusivity.</p> <p>Proposed research with parents of children with disabilities or behavioural / specific needs around the accessibility and suitability of existing supervised play provision (both specific provision for children with disabilities and the wider integrated provision) to identify the barriers, and the required measures to overcome these, to assist in greater equality of provision.</p>
Gender reassignment	We have set up groups in each of the four towns to offer support and guidance to young people transitioning or identifying as non-binary. In addition to support we are offering a platform for young people to promote social action for change and acceptance within society based	None, but there is always room for improvement – this is an increasing area of work for us to address.	Continue to support young people and offer guidance and assistance with practical matters such as gender-neutral terminology, appropriate designated areas in schools and other public facilities.

	upon the views and needs of young people.		
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified at this stage.	None identified at this stage.	None identified at this stage.
Pregnancy or maternity	MonLife, through the National Exercise Referral Scheme has a direct referral pathway with clinicians for antenatal and post natal opportunities to participate in physical activity.	None identified at this stage.	More than ever there is a need for all people to exercise and exercise in the outdoors. MonLife will continue to offer support, interventions and look for new outdoor pathways.
Race	MonLife promotes diversity and inclusion and encourages all people to engage.	None identified at this stage.	None identified at this stage.
Religion or Belief	MonLife promotes diversity and inclusion and encourages all people to engage.	None identified at this stage.	The summer opportunities created more opportunities in safe, suitable spaces, more opportunity to segregate the different age groups and went some way to identify and close the gaps in participation, where possible.
Sex	MonLife promotes diversity and inclusion and encourages all children and young people to engage.	There is a gap in provision for grass route community sport opportunities for girls, especially teenage girls.	The flexibility of the funding enabled us to create more safe, suitable spaces, more opportunity to segregate the different sessions and working with partners looking at ways how we can positively close the gaps in participation. There are clear pathways for women and girls in our National

Sexual Orientation	We have set up LGBTQ+ groups in each of the four main towns and work with young people to promote equality and acceptance by working in partnership with young people to deliver a major pride event, that have been well attended. Additionally offer support to the family if requested by the young people when coming out.	None identified at this stage.	<p>MonLife will continue to promote diversity and inclusion and provide support for all children and young people. And work with community groups and organisations to identify any barriers to participation and engagement.</p> <p>Continue to work with young people so that they feel supported and confident.</p> <p>We are in the early stages of planning another Pride event in summer 2023, working in partnership with young people on the format, timing and location of that event, to be delivered via Equality Street.</p>
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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?
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<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>Play and physical wellbeing is important in children’s, young people and adult lives, for both its recreational value and for the important part that it plays in peoples physical and emotional health and well-being and in their personal development. Play and physical activity are common denominators that should be capable of being enjoyed by all irrespective of their social or cultural background or the ability of the individual or of their parents to pay for the opportunity to participate.</p>	<p>Sessions and activities are chargeable, albeit low cost.</p>	<p>Accessible play opportunities contribute to children’s lives and to the well-being of their families and communities, and helps address inequalities by contributing to developing child friendly communities, including prioritising investment in more income-deprived LSOAs.</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

<p>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council’s Welsh Language Standards:</p>	<p>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</p>	<p>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</p>
<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>We will continue to seek to employ Welsh speaking staff so that communities can have the opportunity to access the service in the language of their choice. And we will continue to support our partners to provide funding, where applicable and support to</p>	<p>None have been identified at this stage.</p>	<p>Will continue to explore the demand for Welsh language provision and work with partners to make suitable provision. In 2022/23 there will be three Welsh language projects delivered in partnership with Menter Iaith BGTM for Welsh language speaking children, consisting of 5</p>

	deliver the Welsh medium sessions.		sessions for 5-11 year olds, 5 shows for 12-18 year olds and a Welsh Language Youth Forum Gig in September 2022, primarily for the 19-25 years age group.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	MonLife would expect to recruit additional part time and seasonal staff, as the programmes and initiatives grow. All posts within MonLife sport, leisure and youth specifies the Welsh language as desirable, and there are schemes in place to support and promote the use of the Welsh language and Welsh language skills.	None identified at this stage.	Will seek when recruiting to increase the level of Welsh speaking staff. We will encourage and support existing staff to learn Welsh in the workplace.
Service Delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Bilingual staff will allow children to undertake activities in the language of their choice. All publicity is produced bilingually, and we will continue to do this. Our website has bilingual pages and all forms of communication are available in the medium of Welsh.	None identified at this stage.	MonLife promotes the opportunities to communicate through the Welsh language and positively displays literature in Welsh. All of our communication channels has equal priority and the opportunity to communicate in Welsh. And whilst face to face instant communication isn't always possible, the willingness and support is there to try and improve these areas. A number of MonLife channels has moved to digital, where it is much more

straight forward to communicate in Welsh.

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?
<p>A prosperous Wales</p> <p>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Positive – Access to good quality opportunities contributes to education, particularly the foundation phase, family engagement and wellbeing in the outdoors.</p> <p>Providing hot, healthy nutritious food inclusive of a number of programmes gives the young person essential growth and development.</p>	<p>The actions proposed to deliver the PSA through the Play Action Plan are intended to support the delivery of good quality play opportunities.</p> <p>The prescribed programmes we delivered are to give the individual vital support, whether it is a healthy meal, 1:1 peer support or giving knowledge to become a better citizen and improved life chances.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales</p> <p>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>By engaging partners to deliver a few of our programmes enables us to achieve much greater outcomes and importantly helps to sustain those organisations, mostly Charities, to function.</p>	<p>The impact of the Summer of Fun programme will give us vital feedback from our partners, and most importantly our service users. Robust data gives us the opportunity to continue to improve.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales</p> <p>People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive – Play and physical activity s essential for the growth of children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.</p> <p>The flexibility of the safe spaces we maintain, will enable increased outdoor, all year round sport, wellbeing and physical activity. The</p>	<p>Offering the same programmes and opportunites gives us the same results. Good is not good enough, and we know that through these projects, whilst maintaining the norm, we have a challenge, more than ever to increase regular weekly participation for all</p>





	<p>growth in opportunities projected will provide early opportunities and create healthy habits for children and young people to go on to lead an adherence to regular physical activity, engagement and better life choices.</p>	<p>will take something different, new facilities, programmes, attitudes and opportunities. Collectively, our stakeholders in the project has committed to work collaboratively to achieve the outcomes.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Our MonLife facilities are well used, safe spaces and offers choice, they are the hub of the community for many.</p> <p>Further developments to enhance outdoor spaces and programmes gives us more opportunity to build on this. There are barriers to access and participation and the challenge will be to identify these early and make new opportunities attractive.</p>	<p>The benefit of some of our facilities, particularly our dual use leisure centres, occupied by schools and the community are that they are based in the community, many barriers are overcome by children and young people accessing the school daily, and parents and carers are reassured of the site, facility and safe space.</p> <p>Many parents and carers also benefit from accessing services at the leisure centre which also presents more opportunities for community engagement and a sense of place.</p> <p>Similarly, our attractions and museums are centrally located and we can build on this space to provide a warm space through the autumn and winter months.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Positive - Children's right of play is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Welsh Government has formally adopted.</p>	<p>Door-step opportunities and the promotion of the individual's community, helps to support local, sustainable towns and villages and the amenities.</p> <p>The improvements being made to active travel routes, safe cycle parking, and the reduction in speeds all contribute to</p>

		wellbeing, confidence and a shift change, not only where sessions are delivered but continued through daily lives.
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p> <p>Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>Positive – recreational activities form part of play opportunities. We are blessed with such rich cultural and heritage assets, our opportunity to signpost communities to these assets, pathways and interventions is a critical part of our forward plans.</p>	<p>We will continue to explore with appropriate partners the demand for Welsh language provision.</p> <p>In 2022/23 there will be three Welsh language projects delivered in partnership with Menter Iaith.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales</p> <p>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Play is established as one of children’s rights, internationally and by the Welsh Government. Access to good quality play provision can be a way of reducing inequalities between children, thereby reducing poverty of experience for all children.</p>	<p>Significant improvements in data gathering will ensure the longer term support for those groups harder to reach, most in need and who are likely to benefit the most from these programmes.</p> <p>A critical factor will be working more closely with partners, whether that be other internal partners, third sector organisations or colleagues in preventative services.</p>

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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>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>Access to good quality play, engagement, support opportunities is a long term investment in children, families and communities. However short term pressures e.g. changes in the operating environment requiring changes in the delivery model require different approaches,</p>	<p>Defining priorities and shared goals. It is clear that we cannot do everything and being bold, switching something off, will inevitably give us the greatest opportunity to make a difference.</p>

		access to services and increase cost of living will all factor in the viability to sustain these initial programmes.	
 Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	The project is a collective project, identifying many stakeholders and agreed outcomes.	The project is mainly grant funded, with agreed partner mile stones, outcomes and reporting. The outcomes are also reported through MonLife service business plan, quarterly.
 Involvement	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	The project has identified challenges and barriers. The success of the project will be measured against engagement, participation and outcomes.	
 Prevention	Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	Making improvements now enables us to grow programmes. Committing resources of stakeholders to long term plans.	Service level agreements are in place and will be developed to ensure long term commitments are achieved.
 Integration	Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	Giving children the best start in life and lifelong well-being are core outcomes of this proposal.	The opportunity to collaborate with a number of stakeholders and agree shared goals improves our chances of success.

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	MonLife have stringent, monitored, training and reporting in place for safeguarding.	None identified at this stage.	<p>MonLife has in place a Safe Audit, protocols for booking facilities and measure stringent process for safeguarding.</p> <p>MonLife work with community sport clubs and the National Governeing Body criteria for keeping everyone safe are robust, regularly monitored and campaigns are regulary promoted through sport.</p> <p>Up to date training is readily available for staff and community volunteers.</p>
Corporate Parenting	MonLife commitments in place to support all children in their care.	None identified at this stage.	MonLife works closely with MCC departments to ensure there are opportunites for children and young people in the care of MCC.

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

Evidence generated, locally, regionally and nationally has been used to inform our decisions and develop the proposals. In the report and attached appendices to this report, references the work and strategies of our partners, and partner funding criteria to bring this project together.

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?

The exercise has helped us to demonstrate the need for the project, and the opportunity to seek funding now. Moreover, we have been able to detail our actions, helping to shape the outcomes, and stretch our outputs, specifically to identify any barriers and work collaboratively to overcome them, with partners support.

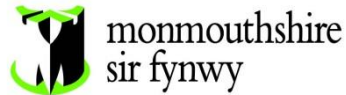
9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Develop accurate data sets	Autumn	Nick John

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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	Council	22 September 2022	N/A



SUBJECT: Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2021/22

MEETING: County Council

DATE: 22nd September 2022

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the Self-Assessment report 2021/22 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the Council's performance in 2021/22.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2021/22 be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The self-assessment report is a new requirement for Welsh local authorities and comes at the start of a new Council term, allowing members to evaluate our recent history and use this to inform the direction we will chart, and the way we will work over the next five years. The requirement is created as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Under the Act, the mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year.
- 3.2 The past five years have been a challenging time for public services throughout the UK and Monmouthshire has been no exception. The self-assessment evaluates what we have done during this time and how we have done it. Our direction was set in 2017 by a five-year Corporate Plan, which identified a clear purpose and a series of objectives to achieve it. These were underpinned by our core values of teamwork, openness, fairness and flexibility and kindness. During the past two and a half years, some of our plans had to take a back-seat while we adjusted to the challenges of the pandemic. This period was covered by five interim strategies, covering different phases from full lockdowns, through re-openings and finally learning to live with the virus.
- 3.3 The self-assessment report demonstrates the progress the council has made and further areas for development. These include:
- Continuation of strong collaborative working between health and social care. We've developed approaches which are focused on keeping people well in their communities, reducing the demand on costly one-size-fits-all statutory services and instead focused on the needs and well-being of individuals. There remain challenges, such as an absence of private care providers, meaning some needs go unmet.
 - Substantial investment in new schools with the £40 million Monmouth Comprehensive opening in 2019. While we still have some areas for development, including the attainment of pupils in receipt of free school meals, Estyn's most recent inspection concluded that the authority has a clear vision for education, strong standards of well-being and a good track record of improvement.
 - Rising levels of homelessness, exacerbated by a shortage of affordable homes.
 - Good progress has been made reducing our carbon emissions by retrofitting our buildings with solar panels and introducing more electric vehicles but we still have some way to go before we can achieve our ambition of being a net zero organisation

- We have delivered financial savings and operated within the financial budget set by Council during each of the past five years.

3.4 During the past two and a half years we adjusted to the challenges of the pandemic. Arrangements we established, and support we provided, include:

- Our culture, values and use of digital technology meant we were able to transition rapidly to remote working when the country went into lockdown in March 2020 and were one of the first councils in the UK to introduce online Cabinet and Council meetings.
- Early in the pandemic, we set a goal of ensuring that every person or family in crisis that we were aware of received support. This meant redeploying staff into front-line roles and drawing on an army of volunteers, many of whom were already working with us as a result of many years developing the A County That Serves approach, to provide services such as shopping and prescription deliveries.
- We provided support to businesses throughout the year to help them through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic issuing over 6,500 grant payments amounting to almost £40 million.
- We also worked with the NHS to deliver contact tracing, redeploying public health professionals to provide an efficient and cost-effective solution to slow the spread of the virus.

In the latter stages of the pandemic our purpose evolved as we began to focus on re-opening and learning to live with the virus and the next phase in the evolution of our council and our county.

3.5 Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, our current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It needs to be embedded across the organisation to help the council continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. The council needs to have an evaluative culture and mindset embedded in all it does, rather than see the self-assessment as a standalone process to be completed once a year. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework (appendix 1).

3.6 The self-assessment report evaluates progress under each of the five priority goals in the Corporate Plan, which also serve as the council's well-being objectives, and the programmes of work, twenty-two in total, that support their delivery. It also evaluates the key activity delivered as part of the interim Coronavirus strategies. To support the delivery of the goals, the council must ensure all of its areas are working efficiently and effectively. The report assesses the effectiveness of the 'enabling functions' that support front-line services to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability. These include corporate planning, performance and risk management, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, digital and data. The report also provides an evaluation of the council's arrangements over this period in line with requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

3.7 A draft of the self-assessment report was provided to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee which used the report to scrutinise the council's performance during 2021/22. The report provided valuable context for new members and assisting the committee in the development of its forward work programme.

3.8 The draft self-assessment report was also presented to Governance and Audit Committee, which has a statutory role reviewing the self-assessment, and was used by the Committee to seek assurance on the effectiveness of the council's governance and performance management arrangements. Governance and Audit Committee can also make any recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take as set out in paragraph 2.40 of the statutory guidance. The Committee reviewed the report and did not make any recommendations for change and the committee was broadly comfortable with its findings and conclusions and recommended its consideration by Council.

- 3.9 The self-assessment is a public document and should be accessible to a wide audience. Once approved the assessment will be published on the council's website and shared with key partners in accordance with paragraph 2.42 of the statutory guidance.
- 3.10 The areas for development identified through the assessment will be used to inform the Community and Corporate Plan being developed by Cabinet. This plan will also form the basis of the assessment of performance against the Council's outcomes in the next self-assessment report.
- 3.11 The annual self-assessment report will be complemented by a panel performance assessment once in an electoral cycle, providing an opportunity to seek external insights (other than from auditors, regulators or inspectors) on how the council is meeting the performance requirements.

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

- 4.1 This report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on these areas. The progress the council has made on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, equalities and safeguarding is set out in the report. Any action the Council takes that requires further decision will be evaluated in line with the decision-making process.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The self-assessment report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision on a future policy direction. The report provides an analysis, using a range of information, on the council's performance in 2021/22. The structure of the report has been informed by the legislation it is required to meet.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of the council in 2021/22 using a range of performance information and evidence.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that the council can be held to account for performance and can demonstrate progress towards delivering better outcomes for citizens.
- 7.2 To comply with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 This report is a review of performance in 2021/22. Any resource implications of action the Council takes in response to the assessment will be assessed in line with processes in place.

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

The draft self-assessment report has been scrutinised by Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee and reviewed by Governance & Audit Committee. Neither committee recommended changes to the report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Performance and governance of local authorities: statutory guidance

Corporate Plan 2017/22

11. AUTHOR:

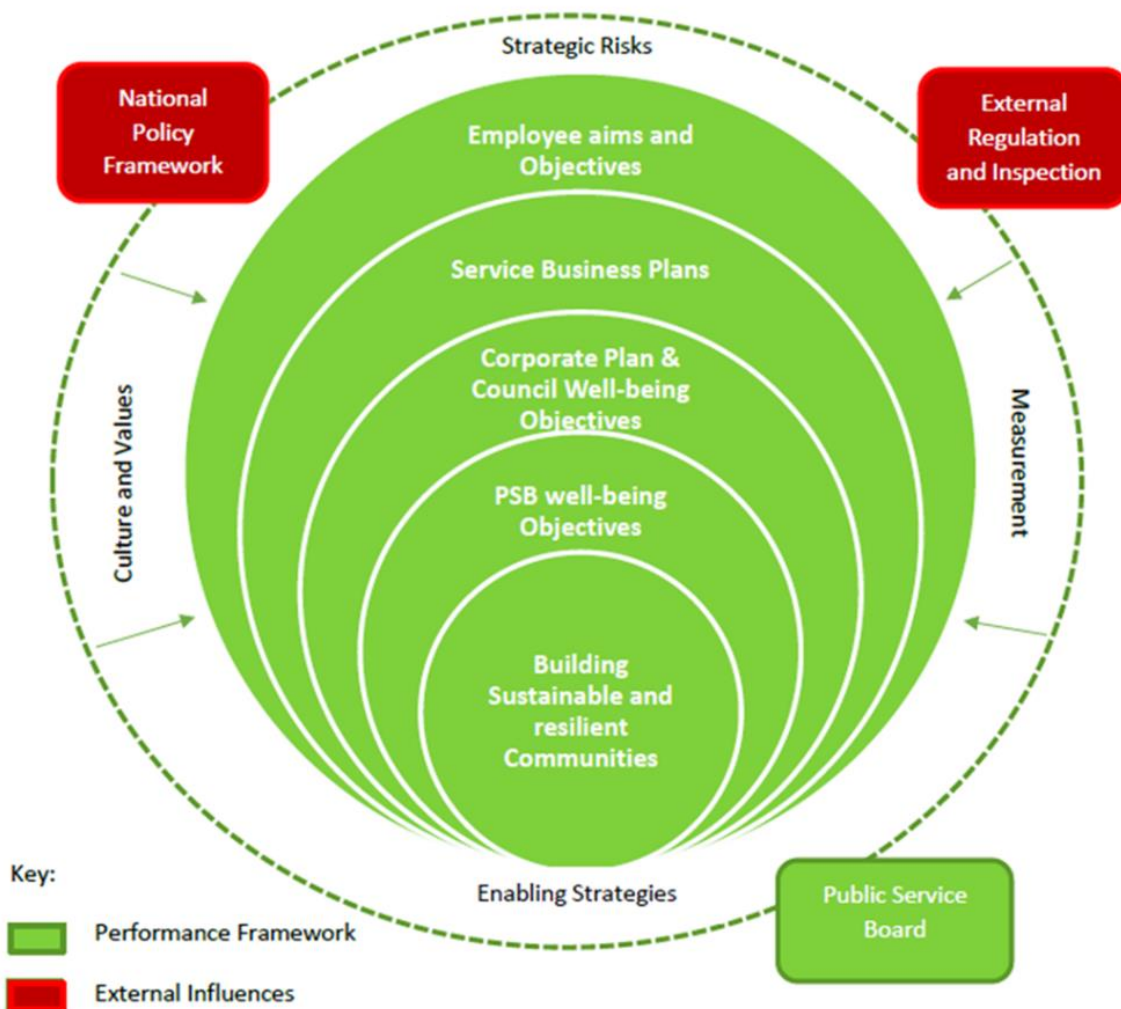
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Appendix 1

Performance Management Framework

Our performance management framework makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes.

Building sustainable and resilient communities is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The council's own well-being objectives are set by Council and form the backbone of our Corporate Plan. Each of our teams has a service business plan that aligns to these objectives. We have a range of performance measures that we use to keep track of our progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values.



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Self-Assessment Report 2021/22



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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Version Control

Title	Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2021/22
Purpose	To self-assess the council's goals and arrangements as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
Owner	Monmouthshire County Council
Approved by	Monmouthshire County Council
Date	September 2022
Version Number	3.0
Status	Draft
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	July 2023
Consultation	Strategic Leadership Team Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Governance and Audit Committee

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Introduction

The past five years have been challenging for public services throughout the UK. Monmouthshire has been no exception. The self-assessment which is the foundation of this report evaluates what we have done during this time and how we have done it.

Our direction was set by a corporate plan which covered the period 2017-22, setting a clear purpose and objectives to achieve this. The plan is available at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/improvement. The diagram shows the relationship between our goals and those we work with partners on. Our activity reflects the ways of working and national goals established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



These were underpinned by our core values of teamwork, openness, fairness and flexibility. We recently added a fifth value of kindness, which was central to how we, and the communities in our county, have worked over the recent period.

During this time we have continued on our path of integrated working between health, social care and wider partners. We have developed approaches that are focused on keeping people well in their communities, reducing the demand on costly one-size-fits-all statutory services and instead focused on the needs and well-being of individuals. There remain challenges within the provider markets meaning that it can sometimes be difficult to procure the care that we need to support people to achieve their individual outcomes.

We have continued to invest in new schools with the £40 million Monmouth Comprehensive opening in 2019. While we still need to raise the attainment of pupils in receipt of free school meals, Estyn's most recent inspection concluded

that the authority had a clear vision for education, strong standards of well-being and a good track record of improvement.

During this time there have also been challenges. We have seen rising levels of homelessness, exacerbated by a shortage of affordable homes. We have made good progress reducing our carbon emissions by retrofitting our buildings with solar panels and introducing more electric vehicles, but we still have some way to go before we can achieve our ambition of being a net zero organisation.

We have delivered financial savings and operated within the financial budget set by council during each of the past five years.

During the past two and a half years some of our plans had to take a back-seat while we adjusted to the challenges of the pandemic. This period was covered by five interim strategies, covering different phases in our recent history, from full lockdowns, through re-openings and finally learning to live with the virus.

Our culture, values and use of digital technology meant we were rapidly able to transition to remote working when the country went into lockdown in March 2020 and were one of the first councils in the UK to introduce online Cabinet and Council meetings.

Early in the pandemic, we set a goal of ensuring that every person or family in crisis that we were aware of received support. This meant redeploying staff into front-line roles and drawing on an army of volunteers, many of whom were already working with us as a result of many years developing the *A County That Serves* approach, to provide services such as shopping and prescription deliveries.

We provided support to businesses throughout the year to help them through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic and issued over 6,500 payments of grants amounting to almost £40 million. We also worked with the NHS to deliver contact tracing, redeploying public health professionals to provide an efficient and cost-effective solution to slow the spread of the virus. In the latter stages of the pandemic our purpose evolved as we began to focus on re-opening and learning to live with the virus and the next phase in the evolution of our council and our county.

Our Self-Assessment

New legislation in Wales, the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, requires councils to keep their performance under review through self-assessment, with the need to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once every financial year. This is the first self-assessment report of Monmouthshire County Council and looks back over the past five years with a particular focus on 2021-22

Effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and to achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. This is focused on three questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What and how can we do better


This is integrated with our annual reporting arrangements on the progress and impact we have made in meeting our well-being objectives, which is a requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Self-assessment is a new requirement for Welsh local authorities and helpfully, comes at the start of a new council term allowing newly elected councillors to evaluate our recent history and use this to inform the direction we will chart, and the way we will work over the next five years.

Further details on the process of the self-assessment are in Appendix 2.

We welcome your views on this assessment along with any areas of our work that you think should be considered by the scrutiny committees that hold decision-makers to account, please get in touch:

 improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk

 Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Usk, NP15 1GA

 @MonmouthshireCC

Our Conclusions

The self-assessment process has identified areas in which the council is progressing well and areas for development. In gathering the evidence, we have also identified some overall key conclusions to the question we asked through the self-assessment process:

- How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities?
- How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?
- How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities?
- How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes?

Place

We have a good understanding of our place and the people who live here, as evidenced by a wide range of assessments. This has informed our policy development and priorities and enables us to benefit from the incredible social capital that our county is blessed with, enabling place-based working that reduces the demand on statutory services. We have begun to develop more localised data in some areas of our work, such as poverty and inequality but we do not yet understand the lived experiences of all residents.

Outcomes

We have made good progress in delivering most of the outcomes set in the Corporate Plan 2017-22, which have contributed to the well-being of residents and communities. Over the past two years, some objectives were paused or scaled back as we re-purposed services to address the challenge of the pandemic. We successfully, and rapidly, adjusted our plans during this period, which helped us to meet our interim purpose of keeping residents safe and supporting those who needed our help. The contemporary policy challenges we face are complex and evolving, these include the rising cost-of- living, health inequalities and transition towards net- zero carbon. We have demonstrated an ability to adapt quickly but recognise that we need to do more to engage with our communities and ensure we can prioritise our interventions towards those in greatest need.

Enabling functions (Resources)

We have sound arrangements in place to enable and support service delivery. Officers have always delivered services within the budget set by Council, and we have not overspent in any of the last five years. Our estate has been rationalised to reduce the amount of money spent on buildings. We are implementing an extensive retrofit programme to lower our carbon footprint but recognise we have a long way to go to achieve our ambition to become a net zero organisation by 2030. We have adopted technology and flexible working approaches, that predated the pandemic. This has enabled us to evolve how we deliver services. The organisation has one of the lowest staff-to-resident ratios, which can create capacity challenges, particularly when we have to bid for external funding. Other challenges include developing a scenario based medium-term financial plan, although this will be aided by a three-year indicative budget settlement, and recruiting in sectors including social care, engineering and transport. We need to strengthen our use of data as one of the most important resources when planning our services.

Partnership

We have built and sustained valuable relationships with formal and informal partners across the UK to inform our thinking and learn from best practice. We have a legacy of effective partnership working across health and social care that dates back more than fifteen years and play a leading role in the Cardiff Capital Region. We are also becoming more involved in the Western Gateway. We were instrumental in the creation of a Gwent-wide Public Service Board and benefit from collaborations in key service areas such as ICT provision, procurement and education support. We need to develop our thinking and plan for the longer term working with Monmouthshire's community groups, residents and public service partners including capitalising on the potential to develop a closer relationship with Welsh Government.

Living our values

We are a values-based organisation. Long-standing values of teamwork, openness, fairness, and flexibility were recently supplemented by a fifth value of kindness, these values were evidenced throughout the pandemic. Supporting a workforce to act in accordance with these values is a vital part of our culture, promoting staff retention and recruitment.

The action plan details what and how the council will do better in response to the findings.

Understanding our local place

Public Services are facing a range of complex challenges including climate change, income and health inequalities, access to housing and transport. A clear and current understanding of the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being in Monmouthshire, is essential for the council to inform its purpose and priorities.

Local place

How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities?

We have a good understanding of our places and the people who live here through a range of assessments and research including the well-being assessment, population needs assessment, and research for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). We are also co-producing a range of place-based masterplans.

The contemporary policy challenges that we need to meet, working with our communities, are complex and evolving. These include transitioning to net zero, tackling the determinants of health inequality, making sure our children do well, and social care reform. We need to ensure that our understanding of these in the county remains up-to-date and current to inform our priorities.

The organisation is outward-looking, building relationships with formal and informal community groups enabling the council to progress its priorities in collaboration, where appropriate. The networked approach is also evidenced through a variety of projects including being the lead authority on the Cardiff Capital Region InFuSe programme, which builds skills and capacity for innovative future public services.

Building on the social capital in the county a range of place-based approaches have been developed and services focussed on the strengths and challenges in a place. Place-based approaches have been developed and continue to evolve, including in social care and supporting volunteering. The 'Community Action Network' is another example of a targeted place-based approach.

The council has a track record of understanding local communities through Area Committees which have provided an interface between local and strategic issues. They have helped to shape major proposals in the area based on the local context of the place.

Evidence has been used to inform the development of the council's purpose, Corporate Plan and well-being objectives. Through the Coronavirus pandemic the council set a series of strategic aims, on plans on a page, that evolved based on the evidence of challenges of the pandemic. This ensured that the council had clarity of purpose throughout the pandemic and accountability for delivery.

There is a need to develop our thinking and ideas as we plan for the longer term. The involvement and participation of and engagement with Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents will need to be strengthened to understand what matters, and to ensure programmes are bold and ambitious.

How do we know?	Area for development
Well-being Assessment Population Needs Assessment Replacement Local Development Plan research Cardiff Capital Region InFuSe programme Audit Wales Covid-19 learning project	Keep an up-to-date understanding of well-being, including participation of residents and service users. Develop thinking and ideas to plan longer term alongside Monmouthshire residents, community groups and public service partners.

Our Outcomes

The Corporate Plan 2017-22 contained five goals, the council’s well-being objectives, and 22 commitments, which focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act.

The long-term nature of some objectives means that the effects of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will have an impact over the longer term. In assessing each of our 5 goals, we have considered the extent to which:

- Our goals contribute to the achievement of the seven well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- We are taking all reasonable steps to meet them
- They remain consistent with the sustainable development principle, in particular, the five ways of working. More detail on the how the five ways of working are applied is provided in the progress on each goal later in this report.

It is important that the 22 commitments to action are not considered in isolation since they can affect each other and need to be considered in an integrated way. How they integrate with each other is shown in Appendix 1.

We have included the following icons in each commitment to action to illustrate their contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals:



Informed by the evidence gathered, we have assessed each of our goals and the aims we set in response to the Coronavirus pandemic on a scale of 1-6 based on the following principles:

Level	Definition	Description
6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding – all performance measures have achieved the target set and all actions have been delivered
5	Very Good	Major strengths – a significant majority of actions and measures are on track. No more than one or two falling short
4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – the majority of measures and actions have not been achieved
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weakness – in most areas, performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction and the vast majority of actions have not been delivered

Goal A: Best possible start in life

WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Research shows that improving outcomes for children and young people relies upon a ‘life course’ approach i.e. each stage of life builds to the next. We aim to work with children, their families and communities, recognising everyone has strengths as well as needs. We will work across professions and agencies and will be led by data and evidence from emerging good practice.

As an organisation, we recognise the importance of well-being, and people’s safety and security as a part of that. We will promote safeguarding and ensure that it is everyone’s business and encourage active lifestyles for children and young people through a broad range of activities.

We will work to ensure that children and young people choose to attend school in the county. We will invest in all of our children’s learning and development, ensuring they have the environment, skills and support to flourish and be prepared for the work of the future. We want our children and young people to be industry ready, able to contribute locally and globally, to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Evaluation rating: 4 - Good

THE COUNCIL INVESTS IN FUTURE SCHOOLS



	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?	Area for development
<p>The council has built a brand new, state-of-the-art school in Monmouth, along with a newly renovated leisure centre on site. We are developing plans for a new through school in Abergavenny, which will accommodate pupils aged 3-19. It will offer wider community provision including two nursery schools, a Special Needs Resource Base and adult education. The council has invested £1.1m in Chepstow school, which has improved the learning environment for pupils, and the shared site is receiving a further £1m investment from MonLife, which will improve leisure facilities.</p> <p>This demonstrates the council’s commitment to invest in future schools and provide learners and residents with contemporary learning environments and modern leisure facilities, supporting both education and well-being.</p>	<p>MonLife impact</p> <p>School buildings</p> <p>Plans for the development of Abergavenny school</p>	<p>Provide further Welsh medium school provision</p> <p>Review of primary and secondary education estate in Chepstow</p>	
<p>THE COUNCIL HAS A PLAN FOR RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS</p>	<p>Estyn’s report into Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire County Council concluded that the authority’s education service does not give cause for significant concern and identifies many strengths. No schools in Monmouthshire are</p>	<p>Estyn’s report into Local Government Education Services</p>	<p>Deliver improvements identified by Estyn.</p>



categorised in the lowest or red category by Estyn. The inspection did identify a requirement to improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals, and a strengthened focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards.

During the pandemic, the council implemented new ways of learning, including distance and blended learning approaches, which increased flexibility in provision and promoted collaboration between schools and other key partners. While there were challenges in consistently establishing this provision across all schools, it enabled learning to continue through periods when schools were closed to the majority of pupils. Attendance levels have been amongst the highest in Wales, particularly at primary level through the pandemic.

The council has increased well-being support for children and young people during the pandemic to try and mitigate the potentially negative impact of lockdowns and the disruption this caused. The longer-term effects on the well-being and mental health of children and young people needs ongoing support.

Monmouthshire schools have prepared well for the new secondary curriculum and schools will be ready to teach the requirements from September 2022.

The inability to provide school academic performance information in the last few years limits the ability to effectively evaluate progress and achievement in Monmouthshire schools.

The council has completed a review of school place allocations and secondary school catchment areas and as a result, the number of children choosing to attend school in the county has increased. Further reviews on catchment areas are needed to encourage more learners to gain their education within the county.

We have implemented a new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy, which is helping to build sustainable and resilient provision for pupils

School feedback during the pandemic

MCC Coronavirus strategic aims

School attendance data

School & Education Achievement Service (EAS) feedback

Respond to the longer-term effects of the pandemic on education and well-being of children and young people.

Evaluation of progress and achievement in Monmouthshire schools

THE COUNCIL CARRIES OUT A STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW



School Access data

ALN strategy

Chief Officer Children & Young People Annual Report

Catchment area reviews

Implementation of ALN strategy and meeting increasing demands for support.

Development and support for school leadership.

**THE COUNCIL
 IMPLEMENTS A MODEL
 OF EARLY
 INTERVENTION AND
 PREVENTION FOR
 CHILDREN AND
 FAMILIES**



with additional learning needs. There is an increasing demand for support for children with additional learning needs, and this needs to be met. The council’s proposal to delegate the school action plus funding allows schools more flexibility around the support and funding available for ALN pupils.

The council has supported and developed the resilience of school leadership throughout the pandemic to provide the leadership that schools required in such uncertain times. Challenges remain to support school leaders to guide schools through remaining challenges and longer-term direction.

Children’s Social Services have implemented a co-ordinated approach to early intervention and prevention providing support to children and families who need it as soon as possible, and to ensure that the right help is provided at the right level of intensity. Evaluation and feedback of family support services indicates clear and positive outcomes for families. For example, during 2021/22, out of 140 families, 84% reported a positive outcome from the ‘early help’ intervention.

The council has implemented services to manage early identification and pre- and post-statutory children services intervention with families. There has been a significant increase in demand for these services in the last year, particularly due to the impact of the pandemic. The number of contacts for children not already in receipt of care and support received by statutory Social Services during the year increased from 4,329 to 5,776. Services are under pressure trying meet this demand and providing appropriate and timely support is challenging.

Services have developed and increased the support available for children, young people and their families through the pandemic, including within the school setting. This has provided additional support for well-being and mental health at a time of great uncertainty. There is a significant need for mental health and emotional well-being support, which has been exacerbated by the challenges many have faced during

Children’s services performance data	Capacity and arrangements to meet increased demands for early help and preventive services.
Director of Social Services Annual Report	Meet demand for mental health and emotional well-being support
Chief Officer Children & Young People Annual Report	
MonLife ‘impact page’ and data	

THE COUNCIL ENSURES PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT FOR LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN



the pandemic, and this increased provision has contributed to dealing with the growing demand.

Despite disruptions due to the pandemic, MonLife has delivered sport and physical activity provision at leisure centres and schools across the county through a variety of schemes, such as the Monmouthshire Games. 899 children took part during 2021, and 99% said they would come back again. There has been a high level of participation within this programme, which has supported children and young people to be active, improving their well-being and contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

The council is supporting 208 children who are looked after (31st March 2022). The number has risen substantially in recent years but has recently stabilised, although it remains higher than the average of children who are looked after across Wales. Children’s Services have focused on working with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes. There are 74 children in the Achieving Change Together team; during 2021/22, 81% were supported to remain at home, 91.5% have improved school attendance, and 100% reported increased family resilience. Some of the support to families was adapted during the pandemic, although direct care and responding to safeguarding referrals remained in place.

Nevertheless, the impact of the lockdown has meant that some families may not have received the support they needed to reduce harmful behaviours, abuse and neglect at an early stage. The potential risk that child welfare concerns were not recognised or referred early enough continues to be a contributory factor in the increased complexity of support required from Children Services and is an on-going pressure on the service.

The council is working with Foster Wales to run active campaigns to increase the rates of in-house foster carers to provide accommodation and support to children requiring it, which launched in September 2021. To date, the transition from local to national campaigns has not had the anticipated impact in Monmouthshire and no new foster carers were

Director of Social Services Annual Report	Meeting demand and increased complexity of support required from children services
Whole authority strategic risk register	Suitable and safe placements to support children requiring them.
Rate of children who are looked after	Foster carer recruitment

recruited during 2021/22. Overall, the number of in-house foster carers has increased over the last 4 years from 24 to 40. There is also a critical shortage of specialist fostering and residential placements, with considerable instability within the provider market, which could result in adverse outcomes and reduced well-being for children requiring support.

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓		✓	✓		✓	

The long-term nature of this goal is intrinsic to its success. Working with and involving children and young people, as early as possible, to identify their needs will give them the best chance of achieving their maximum potential. Preventing problems before they start will provide our young people with the best chance to develop. By focusing on prevention, we will aim to reduce the number of children who rely on statutory services and should support them in a way that provides them with a better outcome. Using a collaborative approach and aligning services provides a rounded resource, with the right people in the right place at the right time. It also reduces duplication, avoids the need for multiple referrals and provides a complimentary methodology of care that works in harmony for the young person. Overall, this approach integrates the needs of our young people, ensuring they have the best opportunity to achieve their goals.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Percentage of children and young people at the end of KS2 in Monmouthshire primary schools who move to a secondary school in the county	82.3%	Not available	Increase	Latest is summer 2020 data
Percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational learning need who are educated in mainstream setting within the county	65.3%	66.9%	Increase	

Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) ⁱ	1.4%	2.0%	1.0%	
Percentage of children who are looked after that experience non-transitional school moves	10.9%	5.4%	<10%	
Percentage of families supported by early help services who report being helped with what matters to them: Pre statutory Services Statutory services	i) 84% ii) 87%	i) 84% ii) Not available	Increase Increase	Pre statutory is early intervention prior to receiving statutory children's social services Statutory services are early intervention through prevention into care
Percentage of children placed with generic/kinship foster carers	41.3%	41.3%	Increase	
Percentage of pupils who take part in sport on three or more occasions per week ⁱⁱ	45%	Next survey 2022	Next survey 2022	Previous data - 2018 survey, Sports Wales. Next survey postponed to Autumn 2022
Number of young people trained in the playmaker award	920	910	900	

Goal B: Thriving and well-connected county

WHY HAVE WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Monmouthshire has the second highest number of businesses per head of population in Wales. It has a relatively low business start-up rate compared to the Wales average and that of the Cardiff capital region, however, the business death rate is also below average, and the five-year survival rate is comparatively high. Nevertheless, between 2014 and 2020, Monmouthshire saw only an 8.4% increase in the number of active enterprises, compared to an increase of 16.7% for the Southeast Wales Region and 13% for Wales overall ^{vi}. As the closest point for business relocation from England and in particular Bristol, post cessation of the Severn bridge tolls, we need to seize the opportunity to boost research and development capacity. We will develop a clear strategy that articulates our distinct strengths and goals for enhancing competitiveness, innovation and productivity.

We want Monmouthshire to be a place to be – not just a place to be from – so we will review our local development plan to ensure it is meeting our needs. The delivery of quality, sustainable and affordable housing will help to enable the retention of young people, helping combat ‘brain drain’ and managing the social and economic challenges associated with a rapidly ageing population.

We will tackle the barriers to productivity and focus sustainable infrastructure and connectivity. Externally, developing such foundations will enable businesses and community enterprises to deliver employment, growth and prosperity. This will enable businesses to look beyond our shores for customers. Internally, we will unlock the value of our own procurement spend, developing data-driven, enterprise and commercial mindsets and more innovative approaches to local market creation.

Evaluation rating: 4 - Good

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS AND DELIVERS A NEW ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY



How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?

In 2019, we prepared the *Vision Monmouthshire 2040: Economic Growth and Ambition Statement*. This sets the economic ambition for the county and is supported by the Inward Investment Prospectus, which identifies and promotes suitable employment sites and premises.

We have established business support networks. These enabled better communication with the local business community and Chambers of Commerce. Attendees have benefitted from adoption of technology enabling more people to attend remotely. We have developed better knowledge of the county’s businesses from the work we did administering the COVID-19 business grants programme. This has enabled the council to work more closely and effectively with the local business community.

How do we know?

2019 Vision
Monmouthshire 2040:
Economic Growth and
Ambition Statement

Business support network participation

Businesses assisted by Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise Team and referrals to partners

Area for development

Build on the strong network and engagement platform to create a new business engagement model.

Enhance economic development services for businesses and build on the success of the Business Resilience Forum.

**THE COUNCIL
MAXIMISES ECONOMIC
POTENTIAL THROUGH
DELIVERING THE CARDIFF
CAPITAL REGION CITY
DEAL**



**THE COUNCIL DELIVERS
BETTER
INFRASTRUCTURE
CONNECTIVITY &
OPPORTUNITY**



We used the Business Resilience Forum to unite businesses in response to flood events and further developed these during the pandemic and there is potential to learn from this approach to improve how we engage with other groups. We established employment fayres to bring local employers together with those seeking employment opportunities.

We produced an Apprenticeship, Graduate and Internship strategy and appointed a coordinator to lead this work. They have promoted careers with the council resulting in ten apprentices being recruited, along with four graduates. Alongside this, we have used the Kickstart scheme to help 39 young people into employment.

Monmouthshire has secured investment and funding through the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) city deal. This includes Metro Plus funding for the Severn Tunnel junction car parks and £5m from the Housing Site Investment Fund. Investment in the Cardiff Capital Region will benefit the economy in the whole area, including Monmouthshire.

Generally, there is a lack of understanding around regional governance structures. Consequently, there is a risk that scrutiny of funding mechanisms and their associated benefits is not as effective as it could be; this is an area that requires development.

The council has invested in Severn Tunnel Junction, Abergavenny and Chepstow stations to improve transport links and accessibility to public transport for visitors, residents and businesses.

We used £3m of Welsh Government grant funding in 2021/22 to develop new active travel routes and enhance existing routes. It is anticipated that this will encourage residents and visitors to consider alternative forms of transport. We have submitted almost £8m of grant applications to continue the existing schemes in Abergavenny, Caldicot and Monmouth.

We have produced a Highways infrastructure plan. This includes a three-year forward programme for resurfacing, to improve the condition of roads, based on an evidence-based methodology.

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal reports
Improve communication on the benefit and impact of the CCR city deal, and other regional governance structures

Road condition performance indicators
Implement the Highways Infrastructure Plan

Digital deprivation rate
Use updated digital deprivation data to target solutions to areas suffering poor connectivity.

THE COUNCIL PROVIDES MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE



Digital infrastructure works have not been progressed at the pace intended because of the pandemic. The latest reported digital deprivation rate still stands at 12.5%. We are reviewing 5,600 premises with poor broadband, with the possibility of Altnets supplying services. However, 2,400 premises still have no potential suppliers available.

In 2018, we worked alongside the Cabinet Office to encourage technology companies to develop digital solutions to rural transport. Although, it has faced delays due to the pandemic, our partner, Transport Design International, has developed a digital transport platform, which includes a journey planner, provides access to demand responsive transport and community car scheme bookings, and a secure lift-share scheme.

All of the LDP strategic sites in the last LDP have planning permission, are under construction or complete, with the exception of part of the Wonastow Road site and part of the Vinegar Hill, Undy site which are yet to obtain planning permission. One site in Wyesham has also been held up by phosphate levels in the Wye.

We have reviewed The Local Development Plan and determined that Monmouthshire needs a replacement LDP. We started work but this has been delayed, largely because of the pandemic and publication of the updated/corrected WG population and household projections. The current LDP ran until 31st December 2021; it will remain the principal development plan for decision-making purposes until the adoption of the RLDP. This does not change the urgent need for the council to make timely progress on its RLDP and to adopt it as soon as realistically possible to address key issues and challenges, and to meet the future needs of the county.

We adopted the Usk Town Improvement in December 2021 and established a steering group to oversee its implementation. We are continuing to deliver projects identified in the 2018 Caldicot Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan and engaged residents on designs for the town centre and Newport Road West.

RLDP progress reports	Address the relationship between a shortage of business sites and low business start-up rates in the county.
Usk Town Improvement Plan	
Caldicot Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan	Address the need for affordable housing and the need to rebalance our demography to retain and attract an economically active population to support and attract business investment.
Wye Valley Villages Improvement Plan	
	Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the Rivers Usk and Wye that are currently preventing development.

THE COUNCIL UNLOCKS ECONOMIC VALUE OF ITS SPENDING POWER



Work began in early 2022 on the development of a Placemaking Plan in Chepstow (now known as the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan), with further engagement planned for later in the year.

The council has worked with residents and stakeholders on regeneration proposals for Monnow Street in Monmouth, and a Placemaking Plan for the town is expected to be developed in 2022/23.

We entered a collaboration with Cardiff Council to provide the council's procurement services. The focus is to keep the council's pound within the county boundaries and its neighbouring authorities, whilst ensuring compliance with the procurement rules and regulations. We have begun projects to encourage local businesses to compete for authority contracts. Our tender processes now focus on social value as well as cost.

The council is developing objectives for its Procurement Strategy from 2022 onwards. Additional resources are required to develop actions, performance indicators, and to establish ownership to increase the accessibility of procurement opportunities to SMEs and the third sector. The strategy needs to be disseminated throughout the organisation to ensure the measures and metrics are adopted.

Procurement strategy

Broaden the organisational understanding of the power of the local pound, and how it can benefit local businesses.

Training will be provided to inform technical officers of their role in understanding local markets and where possible, promote more local spend

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

This goal is aimed at the **long-term** viability of Monmouthshire as a thriving place to live, work and visit. The City Deal is one example where we work **collaboratively** with neighbouring authorities to maximise opportunity. Keeping Monmouthshire thriving and well-connected promotes **integration** and impacts on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the county. This requires **collaboration** with local businesses and other organisations, and **involvement** from the local community to maximise opportunities. Considering the global well-being of Wales is also important and this goal focuses on ensuring decisions are made with future generations in mind and takes a preventative approach to enable the retention of young people.

Measures of progress				
Measure	Previous	Current	Target	Comment
Gross Value Added (£ per head) ⁱⁱⁱ	£22,148	£21,458	Increase	Gross Value Added estimates the total output of an economy. Latest data is from 2020
Difference in average pay between men and women ^{iv} :	£53.00	£146.00	Reduce pay difference	Average weekly earnings for employees working in Monmouthshire. Current is 2021/22. Data for the previous two years, 2019/20 and 2020/21, shows a significantly lower difference in pay compared to long term trends.
Men	£583.50	£615.20		
Women	£530.50	£469.20		
Average weekly earnings of people who work in Monmouthshire ^v	£566.00	£556.60	Increase	Latest is 2021. Previous 2020 data has been revised
Number of active business enterprises in the county ^{vi}	4240	4200	Increase	Data is recorded on a calendar year basis; current is 2020 data
Number of businesses assisted by Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise Team and referrals to partners	6478*	88	75	* Previous year figure relates to total number of support payments made to businesses, including support grants during Covid-19
Total income generated from tourism ^{vii}	£81.16 million	£182.79 million	10% increase by 2020	Data is recorded on a calendar year basis; current is 2021 data. The original target set in the corporate plan has since been impacted by the pandemic.
Number of market and affordable housing units built	419 (of which 71 affordable)	361 (of which 35 affordable)	488	
Number of premises with access to high-speed broadband through the Superfast Cymru 2 scheme	549	618	2113 (over 3 years)	Current is from June 2021. (This is a cumulative figure and includes the 549 from 2020/21)
Number of white premises gaining access to high-speed broadband	970	1095	0 white premises	Includes the 618 premises provided with access to high-speed broadband through WG's Superfast Cymru 2 programme as of June 2021 (This is a cumulative figure)

Goal C: Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment

WHY HAVE WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Monmouthshire has a spectacular natural environment, a unique heritage value and a culturally rich identity. We believe that necessary growth, development, and expansion of our place need not compromise our distinctive offer – indeed, it should complement and enhance it. As an agricultural and food-producing county, we recognise the moral and economic impetus around reducing food waste and the impact on greenhouse gases. We support the principles of the ‘circular economy’ and the recycling and restoration of goods and want to work with businesses and organisations that subscribe to these too.

We have declared a climate emergency and are committed to delivering the strategy and action plan to reduce the council’s carbon emissions. We will maintain the internal corporate systems, policies and asset management plans that emphasis carbon reduction, energy resilience and a green council culture. Connected to this, we will safeguard the wider environmental interests of our rural communities through developing multi-agency approaches to road safety.

We will continue to recognise the value of our culture and heritage in enhancing the livability of our county. We will work with partners and communities to enhance our high quality recreational and cultural facilities to provide opportunities for people to learn, develop and enjoy themselves, and help to attract the talent which is key to driving a strong economy.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Evaluation rating: 3 - adequate

THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS & DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE PLAN FOR ENHANCING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT



How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?	Area for development
<p>The council has implemented nature recovery plans that enhance wildlife, insects and plant species in the county. These include Nature Isn’t Neat and the Local Places for Nature Programme, which encourages habitats for wildlife, and a tree planting programme, which has seen 6,274 trees planted during 2021/22, taking the total to 14,630 since 2019. Residents are encouraged to engage with these campaigns and feedback has been positive. A large number of trees infected with ash dieback are being removed. We are seeking the views of residents on the current projects underway to enhance the local environment.</p> <p>We work effectively in partnership to deliver programmes that support nature in the county. These include the Wye Valley AONB, Living Levels, Gwent Green Grid Partnership and the Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership. The council is leading the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, which is working with other Gwent Public Service Board partners to deliver its commitments. The partnership has planted trees, engaged local</p>	<p>Nature recovery plans</p> <p>Area of Managed Grassland plan</p> <p>Number of trees planted</p> <p>The Gwent Green Grid Partnership and the Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership</p>	<p>Explore public perception of the plans underway to enhance the local environment</p> <p>Integrate nature recovery and decarbonisation programmes for maximum impact</p>

THE COUNCIL WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CLEAR PLANS TO REDUCE ITS CARBON EMISSIONS TO NET ZERO BY 2030 AND WORK WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS ACROSS THE COUNTY AS A WHOLE



communities to promote a pollinator friendly approach to grassland management and delivered landscape and green infrastructure works in the local area supporting communities with the range of health and well-being benefits they bring.

We have implemented Green Infrastructure projects that deliver pollinator friendly management and access improvements. We have raised residents' awareness via nature learning events and activities, and provided grants for community groups to run projects, including barn owl nest boxes, help for hedgehogs, bat activity monitoring, and orchard biodiversity enhancement. The integration of nature recovery and decarbonisation needs to be strengthened at all scales to maximise the progress and impact they have on the local environment.

Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and has developed a climate emergency strategy and action plan to respond to this. The action plan was updated in 2021, informed by extensive community engagement and the latest evidence, including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring actions remain up to date. We have made good progress on some of the actions in the plan. We have baseline carbon emissions data for 2019/20 and 20/21, but there is not enough detailed understanding about the extent to which some of the actions in the plan reduce emissions to understand the precise impact some of the work we are undertaking is having. This makes it difficult to ensure activity and resources are focused in the right areas.

The council has developed or improved 15 active travel routes that allow residents and visitors to use walking or biking as a means of travel. £3.9m has been awarded for 11 strategic and 3 core active travel projects. A digital tracking system is being trialled to monitor active travel participation, and increased levels of public-facing information is being shared, such as an updated website and active travel maps, to support modal shift.

The authority has 26 ultra-low emission vehicles but does not yet have the infrastructure to fully decarbonise its fleet. Progress is limited by grid

Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan	Understanding carbon emission and focus of resources
Active travel funding and monitoring	Increasing amount of waste being generated in the county and move to net zero waste.
Playmaker Programme, Make Your Mark Surveys and Engage2Change	Better understanding of the sources and solution to river pollution, and how the council can contribute to addressing the river phosphate levels. Also need to understand the impact on development plans
Recycling rates	Incorporation of climate and decarbonisation into strategic procurement collaborations

capacity and the lack of availability of suitable electric vehicles for our rural county. An electric vehicle strategy and action plan is being developed.

We have established reuse shops and are effectively supporting the circular economy in the county and contributing to reducing waste. We are engaging and educating young people on climate change through projects such as the Playmaker Programme, Make Your Mark Surveys and Engage2Change, and enabling them to take positive action themselves.

The council is meeting Welsh Government recycling targets, due to resident participation in recycling and changes to support a move from the use of civic amenity sites to kerbside collections. 69.53% of waste was reused, recycled, or composted in 2021/22, which puts us in line with Welsh Government targets. The total amount of waste generated in the county has increased above 2020/21 pandemic figures but remains lower than pre-pandemic 2019/20 tonnage; this will need to be monitored. We have implemented changes to the garden waste collections process successfully and as a result, reduced the subsidy required by the service.

High levels of phosphates have been measured in two of the county's rivers associated with agricultural runoff and sewage affecting water quality in these areas. This could have significant implications for the progression and implementation of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

The council is developing its Procurement Strategy for 2022 onwards. We need to focus on the importance of making sustainable procurement decisions that have a positive impact on the environment as well as the economy, and this will have an important role to play in reducing the council's carbon impact.

**THE COUNCIL KEEPS
ROADS AND AREAS
SAFE**



The Council has implemented 12 20mph road schemes across the county to help make communities safer and to contribute to the implementation of the active travel initiative. Other road safety initiatives being implemented include pilot school street closures during drop off and pick up times, and the Green Cone Scheme, which is a Welsh Government initiative to help keep school children safe as they arrive at and leave the school grounds. Resident

20mph have been implemented

Communication with residents on the benefits of the 20mph scheme

THE COUNCIL ENHANCES LOCAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES



feedback suggests a mixed response to the new 20mph zoning scheme. We will need to engage further with road users and communities.

MonLife have focused on staff training to build knowledge and confidence of the different heritage sites across the county. Staff are now working together across sites to create a better experience for visitors by bringing consistency into the breadth and quality of information held about each heritage asset. Since MonLife’s inception in January 2020, 300,000 visits have been recorded to heritage attractions, and over 53,000 visitors have been welcomed to Monmouthshire museums.

We are developing an overarching five-year Heritage Strategy and action plan to bring structure and concise direction for development across all heritage assets and services. Audience Data Capture needs development, as an important tool in understanding how the heritage and arts are meeting the expectations of visitors, and in shaping the future provision.

We have invested in the Borough Theatre, including external funding, to ensure it is an accessible, professional, artistic amenity that, alongside the recently refurbished library, community learning space and market, provides an exciting and realistic cultural focus. The £1m refurbishment work has been a significant undertaking and is on schedule for completion in October 2022. It will enable the theatre to provide quality customer service and experience, whether presenting international performers, local community groups or a primary school celebration. It will be flexible to the needs of our audiences, visitors, and artists to enjoy performances, participatory arts sessions, and arts encounters in a number of different ways.

MonLife Impact webpage

Longer term planning and improved feedback loops to understand what visitors want.

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Monmouthshire is a beautiful place, with a stunning natural and built environment. We have a collective responsibility to ensure this is available for future generations to enjoy so our plans must be focused on the long-term and look to prevent problems from occurring in years to come. Involvement is required with partners and communities to maximise the potential of the environment within the county. Working in collaboration with organisations who can enhance our environment will provide expertise in all aspects of our work, for example this will allow us to trial the latest technologies in renewable energies and hydrogen. Creating a prosperous, healthy and resilient area for people to enjoy demands the integration of this objective as the environment within Monmouthshire forms such an important part of achieving a range of goals.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Current	Target	Comment
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	68.40%	69.53%	64.0%	Current is provisional 2021/22
Tonnage of waste collected	40,082	43,718	Decrease	Current is provisional 2021/22
Average number of days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	5.55	4.69	<5	
Percentage of streets that are clean	Not available	98.8%	97.5%	
Percentage reduction of council carbon dioxide emissions	Not available	Not available	Net zero by 2030	
Capacity of renewable energy in the county driven by the council	Not available	Not available	Increase	
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) pollution in the air (µg/m ³) ^{viii}	8	8	Decrease	Current is data from 2019
Number of trees planted	7790	6274	10,000 (by 2022)	Target exceeded
Number of new active travel routes	13	15	12	
Number of rural communities in which speed safety initiatives are supported	6	12	Increase	
Percentage of roads in poor condition:				
A roads	2.7%	Not available	<3%	
B roads	5.2%	Not available	<5%	
C roads	7.7%	Not available	<8%	
Total amount of Rural Development Plan funds committed to projects in Monmouthshire	£96,428	£124,506	£1,224,850 (Aug 2022)	Total RDP funds committed: £1,214,850

Goal D: Lifelong well-being

WHY DID WE FOCUS ON THIS?

Developing well-being and adopting community-focused approaches is about changing practice and lives. The Corporate Plan 2017-22 committed to the personalisation of care and true collaboration with people who had care and support needs and carers.

Making deep relationships the norm is challenging but we believed it was the right thing to do. Developing really effective partnerships and supporting individual family and community resilience was key to this.

Creating good social support systems relies on more than just the economic and wealth creation aspects of our work. We worked to create prosperity for all, which meant taking into account economic and social well-being.

The focus of this goal was social justice, addressing inequalities and improving outcomes for the county's people and communities. We set out to cultivate social capital and promote access to opportunity, and in so doing, work towards better physical and mental health and social care outcomes. Our approach took a strengths-based approach to encourage independence, self-care, support, learning, and engagement.

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COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Evaluation rating: 3 - adequate

THE COUNCIL ENABLES CONNECTED AND CARING COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY



How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?

The council is developing place-based approaches to support people's well-being. We work with partners across the health and voluntary sectors, including through the Integrated Services Partnership Board, to build networks that enable people to connect with groups and activities in their local community maintaining their well-being, reducing the likelihood of them requiring formal services. An example of this is the *Early Help Panel* within Children's Services or *Community Conversations* in Adult's Services, which help ensure people have access to the right help before needs and vulnerabilities escalate. We take the approach of prevention and de-escalation at all levels of need, for example, the Community Nights Service, which has reduced calls for ambulances and helps to support people living in their own homes and communities for longer.

How do we know?

Director of social services annual report
 Social Services service user questionnaire
 CIW Assurance Check (Feb 2021)

Area for development

Develop a sustainable care sector to meet ongoing demand and achieve people's personal outcomes.
 Build on the 'Turning the World Upside Down' model to increase place-based/locality approaches to care provision

Despite this, we have seen increased demand for services. Some of this is attributable to the effect of lockdown as people experiencing reduced confidence and physical frailty. This is compounded by the challenges we have experienced across social care in the last decade. These include reduced funding; difficulties recruiting; increasingly complex needs and on-going challenges at the interface of health and social care.

The demand and complexity of support in Adults’ Services has increased over recent years. Due to the fragility of the social care market, the number of providers leaving the market, and a lack of care staff, there are delays in provision. Access to care and support is not always timely, and at times, our weekly unmet need within home care has reached 2000 hours.

Social Services provided advice or assistance to 4,215 adults who were not already in receipt of care or support during 2021/22. This was over 250 more than the previous year indicating increasing levels of demand. Similarly, Social Services provided 3,379 children not already in receipt of care and support with advice or assistance, an increase of almost 680 on the previous year

87.9% of adult social care survey respondents who were asked about their care and support felt that it met their needs. During 2021/22, 240 packages of reablement were completed allowing people to live independently in their homes. Of those, over 50% did not require any further support indicating they had been successful in preventing higher levels of dependency, which is a reduction from the previous year.

THE COUNCIL WORKS COLLECTIVELY TO DELIVER ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENABLING PROSPERITY AND REDUCING INEQUALITY BETWEEN

The council has developed a Social Justice Strategy which includes action plans on Tackling Poverty and Inequality, Food Development and Homeless Transition. Despite our efforts, there will be points in people’s lives at which they experience financial hardship. We have undertaken extensive data analysis and qualitative research and now have a far better understanding of inequality at a local level and how the affects people’s lives. We have begun to develop interventions in response to this analysis and need to implement these and evaluate the impact.

Social Justice Strategy
MCC Coronavirus Strategic aims
‘Money Matters’ web resource

Develop interventions based on what our analysis is telling us and track the impact of these programmes of work

The requirement for suitable accommodation for homeless people, including specialist

COMMUNITIES AND WITHIN COMMUNITIES



Homelessness is a significant challenge in the county, with the number and type of homeless accommodation unsuitable to meet demand. We have worked with housing association partners to make additional social housing available for homeless households, and the proportion has increased from 38% in 2020/21 to 47% in 2021/22. We have remodelled housing support to include high-need accommodation for young people, dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement support. We have also expanded private sector accommodation under the Monmouthshire Lettings Service.

There remain challenges that need to be addressed including the lack of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation, and the need to introduce either new support schemes or expand existing schemes for homeless applicants, particularly in respect of young people and those with mental health and substance misuse needs. Support is needed for those households in temporary accommodation, which there are currently 191.

We have created The Community Action Network which is a targeted place-based approach with a new focus on 'Participatory Budgeting' and maximising the inclusivity of marginalised groups. These networks provide vital support to communities.

The council has established a 'Money Matters' web resource and associated campaign, in partnership with other providers across the county. This provides information and advice on the cost-of-living and in the first six months of the year, the site received over 1,600 visitors.

We have developed a network of community volunteers through the *A County That Serves* and Be.Community Programmes. This is built on a foundation of existing social capital and meant we were rapidly able to mobilise volunteers during the pandemic. They provided support such as connecting shielding people with others who could help with shopping or collection of prescriptions. There are currently 538 active

provision for those with additional needs

THE COUNCIL ENABLES BETTER LOCAL SERVICES THROUGH SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Be. Community programme

Connect Monmouthshire

Volunteer Kinetic system

Continue to work with volunteers to ensure social capital supports community well-being



THE COUNCIL BOOSTS LEISURE, RECREATION AND WELL-BEING



volunteers registered on the volunteer database, all actively linked to a volunteering opportunity within the county.

Our Monmouthshire

The Be.Community learning and development programme for volunteers has run 19 courses attended by 294 volunteers, with a further 10 bespoke courses provided to meet specific group needs.

The council has made significant investment to improve the leisure offer in Monmouth, Abergavenny and Chepstow. We have made a resubmission to the Levelling-Up fund, with plans to invest in Caldicot Leisure Centre. There have been 863,000 visits to the four Active leisure centres since MonLife’s inception in January 2020. Leisure services lost 40-45% of members through the pandemic, but this is recovering through ongoing targeted promotions and campaigns to encourage people back to our sites. In April 2022, memberships were around 85% of pre-pandemic levels.

MonLife ‘impact page’ and data

Use and participation in leisure facilities

Leisure services memberships

Monitor active travel usage to determine who uses it in order to make targeted improvements

Promotion of the outdoor education service, and its benefits for young people

MonLife has created a range of programmes to support active lifestyles for children and young people in the county, and to enhance the well-being benefits it brings. 423 children were supported through the Food and Fun Programme, which makes children more active, improves their diet, and helps parents meet the costs of school holidays. The Shift project has offered non-clinical support to 170 young people aged 11-25 in Monmouthshire who are experiencing issues which are impacting on their mental health and/or emotional wellbeing. 90% perceive an improvement in their mental health/emotional well-being.

Integrated approach to sport development, youth service and play to ensure a coordinated offer and support for children and young people’s wellbeing

MonLife recognises the importance of the outdoors in boosting leisure, recreation and well-being. We have improved active travel through the year with considerable investment, but we need to identify who uses our active travel routes in order to continue to improve them. Following the closure of outdoor education services during the pandemic, we have reopened all facilities to full capacity. During 2021/22, the service provided outdoor learning to elected home-educated young people and held disability-specific outdoor education sessions.

The National Exercise Referral scheme was impacted by the pandemic and the restriction on face-to-face meetings. We provided live stream classes online and pre-recorded classes on Monmouthshire's customised Fitness and Health app. The digital solutions have proved so successful that we have kept them for both consultations and classes, despite returning to face-to-face delivery. This has been most advantageous for clients who are reluctant to return to the leisure centres. Of the 2021/22 referrals, 70% reported an increase in fitness and 64% reported a lower BMI/weight loss.

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Adopting community-focused approaches promotes **collaboration** which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, we hope to **prevent** problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county, so it is vital that everyone is able to be **involved** to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a **long-term** benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an **integrated** benefit for many aspects of the act, promoting a prosperous Wales, a more resilient and a healthier Wales. They will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales. There is also strong integration with our responsibilities under the Social Services & Well-being Act.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Old measure: Percentage of people living independently at home 6 months after reablement			75%	
New measure: percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year which mitigated the need for support	58.8%	50.8%	Increase	
Percentage of adult services users who are happy with the care and support they have had	89%	87%	90%	
Percentage of adult services users who feel they are part of their community	52%	51%	Increase	

Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation ^{ix}	10%	Not available	Decrease	National survey for Wales indicator; data from 2019/20
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need ^x	Not available	88%	Increase	National survey for Wales indicator, 2020/21
Number of volunteers directly supporting Monmouthshire County Council	1072	538	Increase	Previous year not directly comparable to current. New methodology for data capture to improve accuracy and transparency
Percentage of people participating in sport 3 or more times a week ^{xi}	36%	Not available	Increase	National survey for Wales indicator; data from 2019/20
Percentage of people participating in the exercise referral scheme still active after 16 weeks	Not available	52%	>50%	

Goal E: Future-focused Council

WHY HAVE WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Our operating environment is a changing and challenging one. Demographic shifts, increasing demand and fiscal uncertainty all require an understanding that 'business as usual' is no more. We will continue to rapidly adapt, develop foresight capability and enable the service changes and countywide transformations that best meet the aspirations of our communities. This outward-facing approach will mean reducing the reliance on traditional public services and having more genuinely collaborative local relationships. Digital will feature strongly in this, allowing 'fit for future' service models and enabling the sharing of approaches and resources to addressing crosscutting problems.

Our goal is to continue to build an engaged, responsive and adaptive council, able to provide effective leadership, in collaboration with other local partners. We will develop and sustain a dynamic, healthy and rewarding work environment that develops, attracts and retains top talent and enables them to perform at their best.

Good governance will be at the heart of what we do, and we will ensure that the right information gets to the right people to inform decision-making. We will integrate a service focus into all dealings with customers and ensure they are well informed and engaged in decision-making. We understand the best public servants see themselves as not working for the council but for the county.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Evaluation rating: 4 - good

COUNCIL ENABLES AND PROVIDES GOOD SUSTAINABLE LOCAL SERVICES WHILST DELIVERING AN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACROSS ALL CHANNELS



How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?	Area for development
<p>The council has developed digital channels that have increased the ability for customer requests to be addressed. These include the development of a Welsh and English bilingual Chatbot that is enabling contact 24/7 on a broad range of subjects, the first council chatbot in the UK, which dealt with over 19,000 enquiries during the year. The My Monmouthshire app is enabling customers to arrange the services they need more easily at a time of their convenience, and during 2021/22, the app dealt with over 237,000 enquiries.</p> <p>The Council increased resource at the contact centre during the pandemic, which met the increasing demand for customer services, particularly while face-to-face service delivery was closed. The contact centre handled almost 55,000 calls during the year, which is a reduction on the previous year's figures, to reduce call volumes we need to encourage the use of self-service tools, such as the app and the chatbot.</p>	<p>Chatbot and My Monmouthshire App data</p>	<p>Improve self-service capabilities and reduce telephony reliance by customers</p>

COUNCIL OPENS UP DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT & COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING



A customer service review has been established to review how to meet customer service demand efficiently and effectively and the integration of the Councils' processes and systems to respond.

The Council has implemented live streaming of democratic meetings and provides all meeting papers on its website. This has increased the transparency of democratic arrangements for our residents. Arrangements were adapted quickly and effectively during the pandemic allowing all council meetings to operate remotely, allowing democratic scrutiny and decision making to continue. Learning from the arrangements during the pandemic, we have now implemented hybrid meeting technology, accommodating both remote and physical attendance at meetings.

We have recently reviewed our scrutiny arrangements following a self-evaluation and have established four new role-based scrutiny committees in place of the existing committees. Two of the new committees play a key role in engaging the public in developing policies, shaping services and reflecting the public voice to decision makers in advance of decisions being taken. In addition, we have revised our Public Open Forum process to enable the public to attend meetings in person or remotely, and to submit representations to scrutiny committees by video, audio or in writing. We have a Scrutiny website that provides clear accessible information to the public on the role of scrutiny and advises how to get involved.

More needs to be done to increase public participation in scrutiny. A wide-ranging piece of work has been commenced for a wholesale review of all engagement with a view to the production of the council's Public Participation Strategy as required by the Local Government and Elections Act 2021.

The council has carried out a range of engagement and consultation exercises to seek the views of local people, including on subjects such as financial arrangements, active travel routes, the Replacement Local Development Plan and well-being. The council must develop its thinking and ideas as it plans for the longer term. The involvement and participation of, and engagement with, Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents will need to be strengthened to understand what matters, and to ensure programmes that are agreed meet needs in the county.

Democratic meeting minutes and agendas website.

Public participation in scrutiny and decision making

Involving Monmouthshire residents, community groups and public service partners in longer term planning.

THE COUNCIL DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE AND

The Council's financial planning arrangements have enabled it to continue to resource services, monitor spend and agree budgets for forthcoming years. The pandemic has

Financial reports

Financial planning with the uncertainty of

RESILIENT ORGANISATION AND RELEVANT, VIABLE AND VALUED PUBLIC SERVICES



had a significant effect on the council’s finances, with additional costs and loss of income. The authority made claims to Welsh Government who have provided a significant level of funding through its COVID Hardship Fund to cover these costs. For 2021/22, the council has delivered a positive revenue outturn of £5.62m and that has been brought about significantly by specific WG grant funding. This in turn has allowed for a transfer to earmarked reserves of £4m that will allow for additional reserve cover to deal with budgetary risks in 2022/23 and beyond. A robust budget setting process enabled the Council to agree a balanced budget for the forthcoming year, 2022/23.

The pandemic has also significantly affected the council’s medium-term financial planning. This medium-term financial plan needs to be developed, reflecting realistic and accurate funding requirements, to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term, in line with corporate priorities and responsiveness to challenges, such as the cost-of-living.

We have worked hard to ensure help and support is provided to vulnerable households, whilst also working to ensure that council tax collection rates are maintained within expectations. The 2021/22 collection rate is 97.4% and was 97.8% prior to the pandemic. Examples of support include ensuring claims for benefits/Universal Credit were processed quickly; awarding Discretionary Housing Payments; ensuring households are claiming all eligible reliefs for their council tax; and agreeing flexible payment plans for any council tax arrears. We have developed or built systems and processes to ensure the timely payment of Welsh Government support including Winter Fuel Payments, Self-Isolation Payments and Business Support Grants.

The council has developed and is implementing a Commercial Strategy, which has generated income to support services and developed an approach to commercialising assets and creating a commercial culture and ethos. Through the strategy, an investment portfolio has been built on. We have adjusted our commercial risk appetite to take account of the pandemic and uncertainties in the investment and property markets at this time. Going forward, we will need to focus on a commercial approach being taken to enable the policy aims and ambitions of the council to be delivered.

Commercial strategy

pressures facing the council and residents

The rising cost-of-living and impact on residents.

THE COUNCIL PUTS PEOPLE AT HEART OF ALL IT DOES AND

The council has created networks and arrangements for staff feedback that are being used to shape the organisation’s focus, direction-setting and staff support. Arrangements have been adapted and maintained that were implemented through the

People strategy

Updated People strategy

**INSPIRES EXCELLENCE
IN WORKPLACE AND
EMPLOYEES**



pandemic to support staff communication and wellbeing, this includes the regular all staff forum the 'Digital Cwtch' and People Leader Question & Answer session, which hosts an average of 30 leaders on a weekly basis. The feedback from these sessions demonstrates they are valued support mechanisms for staff. People's Question & Answer sessions have been held, allowing people services colleagues to meet with over 500 members of staff across all directorates. There has been a reduction in casework because proactive mechanisms are being encouraged and facilitated throughout the organisation.

Throughout the pandemic, the workforce adapted quickly and effectively to continue to deliver services to residents, visitors and businesses in the county. We are reviewing and adjusting working arrangements, informed by the learning and feedback during this time. For office-based staff, we have established a desk-booking system and collaborative working areas enabling staff to choose to work where they feel most comfortable. The People Strategy needs to be updated incorporating the learning from the pandemic to set the direction and activity to support and develop staff.

We have adjusted recruitment arrangements, with a focus on flexibility and individualisation. This has led to successful recruitment campaigns in some service areas. Recruitment challenges remain, partly impacted by national skill shortages, and learning and arrangements need to be shared and developed consistently throughout the organisation.

The organisation's training offer needs development to meet the current and future skills required and support leadership and development. We are implementing a learning management system to support this.

Recruitment system and arrangements

Training and development system implementation and offer

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓			✓		✓

The long-term nature of our goal is evident – shaping our services to meet the needs of our communities now, and into the future, is essential if we are to remain relevant and viable. Utilising data more effectively to plan preventative approaches and enhancing our digital capabilities are just some of the ways we intend to do this. Involving people in decision-making and scrutiny will ensure our direction of travel is collaborative and fit for the generations to come. Integrating our approach will make sure that our resources are used in the places they are needed the most, and as efficiently as possible. Making our reducing financial resources stretch as far as possible is vital for future sustainability.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Over/underspend of council revenue budget (£)	£0	£5.62 million	£0	Latest is Revenue outturn 2021/22
Percentage of targeted budget reductions achieved	85%	93%	95%	Latest is outturn 2021/22. £4.4 million savings achieved of a budgeted £4.7 million.
Income generation from commercial investments (£)	£159,018	£614,882	£609,355	Actual outturn for the investment properties
Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area ^{xii}	Not available	33%	Increase	National Survey for Wales and National well-being indicator under the well-being of Future generations Act. Latest data is 2021/22
Number of open data sets published	9	9	10	
Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees	Not available	Not available	Baseline	
Average days lost to sickness absence per FTE employee	11.0	13.1	10.5	
Percentage of staff turnover	10.0%	14.4%	Track	Any significant variation in turnover will indicate a need to explore further.

Using Our Resources

The council needs to remain relevant and viable for the next generation, while continuing to meet the needs of residents, visitors and businesses in the here-and-now. To support the delivery of our goals, we have to make sure that all aspects of the council are working efficiently, effectively and in line with the sustainable development principle set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Act specifies core areas in an organisation that need to adapt in order to meet the changing demands on our services and ensure their longevity and sustainability. We have evaluated our arrangements for these areas and included digital and data as another important enabler of how we deliver the council's services. The areas we have assessed are:

- Corporate planning, performance and risk management
- Financial planning
- Workforce planning (people)
- Procurement
- Assets
- Digital & Data

Corporate Planning, Performance and Risk Management

How effectively are resources being used?

The council's performance management framework ensures planning is integrated and everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes. The application of the Well-being of Future Generations Act throughout the framework ensures application of the sustainable development principle and the ways of working within it.

The Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets a clear direction for the council and its well-being objectives. The plan has met the council's requirements under the previous Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Well-being of Future Generations Act. Annual reports demonstrate that the council has made good progress in delivering its objectives, and Audit Wales has issued certificates of compliance stating that the council has discharged its duties. The contemporary policy challenges required, working with communities, are complex and evolving. There is a need to ensure that the council's understanding of these remains up-to-date and strategic plans evolve to address them.

Through the pandemic, the council set a revised purpose and strategic aims that were updated in accordance with the changing situation. Arrangements were put in place to track and evaluate progress. This has provided clarity of direction and ensured accountability of delivery for the council through the uncertainty of the pandemic. In a review of arrangements through the pandemic, Audit Wales identified the development of the strategic aims as a key strength.

A new service business plan process has been implemented, focused on self-assessment and applying a 'Plan on a Page' approach, learning from the strategic aims implemented during the pandemic. This has facilitated services to set their direction, performance manage delivery, manage risk, and assess progress and impact. There is variation in the quality of service business plans and the timely setting and updating of them. There is also variability in the use, overall quality and completeness of performance indicators and service risk assessments. This limits the ability of services to robustly set a clear direction and assess their performance.

The council's Strategic Risk Management Policy and Strategic Risk Register have ensured that strategic risks are identified and monitored, regularly reviewed, and updated based on the latest information. This continued throughout the response to the Coronavirus pandemic, ensuring

emerging risks were considered and managed accordingly. In its review, Audit Wales noted the robust risk management arrangements implemented during the pandemic.

The council has implemented a self-assessment process, which has facilitated an assessment of performance in the 2021/22 financial year in this report. The process has been integrated within the council's existing performance management arrangements, ensuring that it is embedded as part of the council's arrangements. An evaluative mindset based on clear evidence is not consistently applied in the council's performance management arrangements to facilitate ongoing improvement. To ensure that self-assessment is embedded in practice, there is a need to further develop challenge and embed a more evaluative mindset.

How do we know?	Area for development
Overview of Performance Management arrangements report	Ensure strategic plans evolve to address challenges and opportunities in the county
Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance	
Coronavirus Strategic Aims and progress reports	Quality and completeness of service business plans
Audit Wales Covid-19 learning project	
Service Business Plans and appraisals	Develop self-assessment arrangements and embed an evaluative mindset
Whole authority strategic risk register	
Self-assessment report	

Financial Planning

How effectively are resources being used?

The council has a good understanding of its financial position and is seen to have effective financial arrangements in place. A well-established budget setting process has enabled Council to agree a budget for 2022/23. Controls are in place to monitor the budget position through the year and take action to produce a balanced budget. For 2021/22, the council has delivered a positive revenue outturn of £5.62m, which has been brought about significantly by specific WG grant funding. This in turn has allowed for a transfer to earmarked reserves of £4m that will allow for additional reserve cover to deal with budgetary risks in 2022/23 and beyond. Internal Audit opinions during 2021/22 have indicated a level of assurance on effective financial control arrangements in place in service areas. There is variability in financial planning and budget controls by responsible budget holders in service areas. This needs to be strengthened to ensure robust financial management arrangements are consistently applied across services.

The pandemic has had a significant effect on the council's finances, with additional costs and loss of income. To understand the full financial impact, detailed financial sustainability assessments have been undertaken. Welsh Government has provided a significant level of funding through its COVID-19 Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic. The budget outturn 2020/21 allowed the council to increase its earmarked reserve balances by £4m, to provide some one-off limited cover against the pressures to be faced over the medium term.

The authority has maximised the short-term grant funding opportunities available to full effect and secured significant short-term investment to support and re-design services, where available. There are significant challenges going into 2022/23, and investment will be needed to replace short-term funding to offset known and emerging post-COVID pressures and to allow the Council to deliver the new administration's Corporate Plan.

Prior to the pandemic, the council was already facing significant financial challenges heading into the 2020/21 financial year. The pandemic presented its own additional financial challenges and uncertainty both in terms of additional cost and significant loss of income. There remains short- and longer-term uncertainty, with some services having an improved financial position and others

having significant budget pressures. As well as the direct effects of the pandemic, the wider and longer lasting indirect impact on services needs to be assessed and planned for, such as on homelessness, Children’s Services and Adult Social Care, along with wider economic and social factors including increasing inflation and the rising cost of living.

The pandemic has significantly affected the council’s medium-term financial planning. This needs to be developed, reflecting realistic and accurate funding requirements, to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term, in line with corporate priorities.

How do we know?	Area for development
Audit Wales Financial sustainability review	Financial planning and budget control arrangements by responsibility holders in service areas.
Audit Wales Statement of accounts	
Council budget setting and out turn reporting	
Internal Audit opinions	
Strategic risk register	
	Ensure that the medium-term Financial Plan reflects realistic future cost pressures as accurately as possible, based on known information and informed by up-to-date and accurate service-based data, and facilitates a budget setting process over the medium term to allow a balanced budget to be set that delivers on agreed corporate priorities.

Workforce Planning

How effectively are resources being used?

National recruitment and skill shortages are affecting the ability of some council services to recruit the workforce and skills they need to deliver their services. Challenges that have been identified include salaries, the geography and demographic profile of the county, and skills.

The People team have put arrangements in place to strengthen recruitment procedures, such as adapting the recruitment process, whilst still maintaining safeguarding and safety requirements, promotion of opportunities and recruitment of graduates, apprentices and work experience. This has led to successful recruitment campaigns in some service areas. Recruitment arrangements need development to meet remaining challenges.

Many services are seeing an increase in demand. The workforce capacity to meet this and deliver the required services is limited in some areas, indirectly putting increasing pressure on other service areas. The ability of the organisation to plan the workforce it needs to meet current and future demands, and to implement this, requires development, especially given recruitment and national skill challenges.

The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning. The organisation’s training offer needs development to meet the current and future skills required, with capacity identified as a barrier to staff attending training. Some services have undertaken a skills audit, reviewing role profiles, the recruitment process and training. By delivering the right training, at the right time, in the right place, departments have been able to offer a meaningful learning pathway, ensuring better recruitment and retention in the long term. A team with a specific focus on workforce planning and development has been established, incorporating recruitment, retention, Apprenticeship, Graduate and Internship and training. It is too early to evaluate the effect that the development of these arrangements has had.

Throughout the pandemic, the workforce adapted quickly and effectively to continue to deliver services to residents, visitors and businesses in the county. Arrangements were implemented to

support clear communication to staff to support their well-being. These included the regular all-staff Digital 'Cwtch', People Leaders Q&A session, a dedicated staff website, 'SUPPORTALL', and People Leaders support site. Services were implemented for all colleagues to support their well-being via the Health, Welfare & Information group.

Staff well-being is affected by a range of factors, including additional work pressure and demand, personal factors and societal factors. Learning from, and building on, arrangements from the pandemic, staff well-being needs continual support. Developing and enabling a supportive approach to engagement and communication with staff has been effective in supporting clear communication on workforce matters. The use of networks and communication digitally, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce. This has also created the conditions for a wider system of self-supportive networks sharing practice, ideas and support.

The staff appraisal process, Check In-Check Out, needs to evolve to meet the varying needs of the organisation based on learning that a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective for the varying services the council delivers. Colleagues need to be given the 'right' to seek meaningful 1-1s on a regular basis, and there needs to be a focus on improving the skills of line managers to enable a variety of different approaches to the process so that performance development is realistically achieved. There is also a need to ensure feedback loops are in place to evaluate whether this is happening effectively, and to determine if they are informed by other enabling arrangements such as Service Business Plans, and staff training and development needs.

How do we know?	Area for development
People service plan Strategic risk register Coronavirus strategic aims	E-recruitment system and the recruitment process
Feedback loops – Digital 'Cwtch', surveys, exit interviews, People Q&A and People Leaders Q&A session Audit Wales Covid-19 learning project	Learning management system and subsequent wholesale training and development needs analysis and provision
People workforce data	Enable the improvement of workforce planning and develop workforce planning arrangements
	Support staff well-being
	Meaningful staff/line manager engagement and communication by right

Procurement

How effectively are resources being used?

The authority has entered into a collaboration with Cardiff Council, for mutual benefit, in the discharge and provision of the council's procurement services. The arrangements provide increased capacity and expertise to strengthen the council's procurement arrangements, such as in the use of data, to lead to better informed business decisions and business alignment. The effectiveness and impact of the arrangements will need to be assessed on an ongoing basis.

We are developing the Procurement Strategy objectives for 2022, which focus on contributing to the council's aim to be a carbon neutral county by 2030. We need to make procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and the third sector, improve fair work and safeguarding practices adopted by suppliers, and increase the community benefits delivered by suppliers. The strategy must also focus on securing value for money and managing demand, ensuring legal

compliance, and robust and transparent governance, and promoting innovative and best practice solutions.

There are local challenges, particularly centred around the availability of suppliers to meet the demand and requirements to provide certain services the council needs to deliver e.g. passenger transport and school catering.

Internal audit procedures demonstrated that there is overall good compliance with the council's contract procurement rules. However, there are limited skills and knowledge in the workforce to understand the technical specification and market knowledge required to embed the procurement process as robustly as needed. This must be supported and developed.

How do we know?	Area for development
Collaboration with Cardiff Council. Procurement strategy. Internal Audit contract procedure rules.	Ownership of the procurement strategy by all officers who have a role to play in delivery of the strategic objectives. Understanding how carbon emissions are produced, measured and ultimately reduced as part of the council's third party spend. Processes to ensure all tendered third party spend has a level of oversight and challenge.

Assets

How effectively are resources being used?
The council has a clear Asset Management strategy to manage its land and property portfolio. The Asset Management plan has been updated and is being implemented. The strategy needs to be reviewed to align with the new Corporate Plan, to assess progress and set the strategic focus.

An updated Capital Budget strategy has been agreed, alongside the Treasury strategy. In preparing the draft capital budget proposals for 2022/23, and the subsequent three years of the Capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), regard was given to the underlying principles of the previous strategy that remained fit for purpose. There are a considerable number of capital pressures, including property and highways infrastructure and public rights of way, that sit outside any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP; this has significant risk associated with it. These pressures are undergoing further review, and risks are being assessed to determine whether further funding is needed to mitigate any significant risks that require more immediate action. There is a balance between the need to maintain existing council assets alongside achieving the aims and objectives of the organisation. The impact of the pandemic, supply chain issues, rising inflation and cost pressures are affecting the progress of capital projects.

The property and facilities management needs are not clearly understood across the organisation, and the capacity and capabilities available within property services are not always recognised or fully utilised by council services. There are capacity and recruitment challenges when trying to meet project management demands elsewhere in the organisation, and these are not always considered when projects are planned and undertaken. The knowledge and skills within service areas to manage assets effectively also needs development and potential review; collaboration between departments and property services needs to be strengthened, and expectations managed to coordinate property and facilities management across council service areas.

The People Working Group is looking at the future operating model of the workforce and how this will affect the nature of the accommodation that is provided. It is considering how to use the space

in our buildings in a creative, collaborative and cost-effective way, how we can be even more agile and flexible, and how digital technology can help even more. This is ongoing and is working with different teams on how to best deliver services into the future. The effectiveness and impact of the arrangements will need to be assessed on an ongoing basis.

How do we know?	Area for development
Asset Management strategy and plan. Capital budget strategy and capital budget proposal. Landlord Services Service Business Plan. Changing Spaces project.	Revise and update the Asset Management strategy taking into account the council's priorities Review and assess Asset management risks. Understand property services and facilities management needs, strengthen collaboration and strengthen coordination across council service areas.

Digital & Data

How effectively are resources being used?
The Council has invested in the development of its digital and data capabilities and has clear roadmaps that are integrated and informed by service need, focused on Data, Digital design and innovation, and Information management and security. A range of examples demonstrate the impact of the development of arrangements on service delivery and service users' experience, including development of the My Monmouthshire App and Chat Bot.

In the coming years, the council will need to adjust its delivery to meet many challenges and opportunities. At the heart of this will be digital, information and data to meet customers' needs in ways which were unimaginable ten or fifteen years ago. There is a need to keep pace with the latest practice in these field, build on existing networks in place and ensure that capacity is in place to progress at the pace required and that residents expect. This includes recruiting skills needed to deliver the change required, which has been a challenge in these fields. Retaining, developing specialist skills and upskilling in the basics within the council is also essential. We are also working with partners to ensure that our residents are able to access and use the internet and engage with digital technology, confidently and safely, as and when needed or wanted.

The organisation has put effective mechanisms in place to support and enable the development of its digital and information capacity and capability, to raise awareness of its importance, and to communicate its developments. These include the well-established whole authority Digital Champions network (focused on sharing practice and supporting the development of digital capabilities in service areas) and newly formed system administrator network (focused on storing, retrieving, and managing information and data).

There is a risk of loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which would compromise the delivery of essential council services; this is an ever-evolving risk. To mitigate it, the council has raised staff awareness of the risk and how to manage data securely, along with ensuring the infrastructure is in place to help reduce the risk.

Through the pandemic, the council's rapid development of digital ways of working enabled services to function and make decisions. Examples include facilitating remote working for colleagues who could work from home, a booking system for appointments at household waste recycling sites when they were permitted to reopen, which has been implemented as a permanent change, and regular production and analysis of a range of Covid-19 data to inform decision making.

The use of data to inform the council’s decision-making needs to be developed further. There is a focus on growing data capacity and capability within service areas; this will include authority-wide training and development and assessing and developing data maturity.

How do we know?	Area for development
Self-assessment report – Goal E Coronavirus strategic aims reports Audit Wales Covid-19 learning project Data, Digital design and innovation and Information management and security plans Digital Service Standards for Wales	Prioritise digital initiatives that align with corporate and directorate priorities ensuring that we develop and/or procure modern, secure and interoperable systems which in turn deliver better services and outcomes for our residents Cyber security and data management arrangements Use of data to generate insight

Our work with others

To deliver the outcome required for the county we need to work together with a range of partners, stakeholders and our communities. The Council will not have all the answers and we will not be able to deliver the outcomes required on our own. Working efficiently and effectively collaboratively enables us to plan and provide the solutions required.

Stakeholders and partnership working

How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes?
 The council works effectively in collaboration to deliver a range of services. Some of the key service partnership collaborations are the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) on IT. The council is developing further collaborative arrangements, where it is assessed that there are benefits in doing so, for example implementing the collaboration agreement with Cardiff Council on the council’s Strategic Procurement services.

Partnership working has been integral in addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic to support residents’ well-being in Monmouthshire. The council established a variety of multidisciplinary projects to respond to the pandemic including Test, Trace, Protect, working in partnership with social care providers, and working with businesses to provide support and administer grants. Formal partnership arrangements to support the response and recovery from the pandemic were also effectively implemented.

Covid-19 has brought into a sharp focus the complex, longer-term challenges that communities and public service organisations face. The evidence and learning from the arrangements and relationships developed through the pandemic need to be maximised to support long-term well-being.

The council sits on the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and has contributed to the development of the area plan for health and social care services in Gwent. In line with the plan and the RPB priorities the Council has, through investment by the Integrated Care Fund, developed some innovative and creative services and approaches. Supporting social services and well-being requires effective partnership working, both with partner organisations and the community.

Monmouthshire is committed to working in partnership and has a good track record of delivering jointly with health, the police and voluntary sector, amongst others. Under the leadership of the Public Service Board (PSB), the partnership landscape in Monmouthshire fully embraces multi-

agency working, to improve outcomes for residents. The outcomes the PSB has been working towards are documented and illustrated in its annual reports.

Following a detailed assessment of options, the Monmouthshire PSB has merged with other local authorities to form a Gwent-wide PSB to strengthen the outcomes partnership working can deliver. Several elements of the delivery and governance arrangements of the Public Service Board need to be further developed. This includes considering the complex partnership landscape across Gwent and how it works together to deliver shared outcomes.

The formal establishment of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal as the Southeast Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) is underway, and transition has begun, with a completion date to be confirmed. The council needs to work with Welsh Government and the Cardiff Capital Region on the transition arrangements for services that will form part of the CJC to ensure effective governance arrangements are in place; an officer group has been formed for this. We are also becoming more involved in the Western Gateway.

The council has developed a range of place-based approaches, involving partners and stakeholders with an interest, skills, and knowledge, to support the social capital in the county and improve well-being. These approaches continue to evolve, particularly in the social care setting and in supporting volunteering. The 'Community Network' is one example of the targeted place-based approach.

The council must develop its thinking and ideas as it plans for the longer term. The involvement and participation of, and engagement with, Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents will need to be strengthened to understand what matters, and to ensure programmes are bold and ambitious.

Ensuring the council's workforce is supported, and that every employee is clear on their contributions to the council's outcomes, is essential. Workforce planning, corporate planning, along with performance and risk management processes, will assess these arrangements. Councillors play an integral role in shaping and delivering the council's agreed outcomes, and as representatives of their residents. Following the election in May 2022, an induction programme will be provided to support them in their development.

How do we know?	Area for development
Public Service Board Well-being Plan and annual report Regional Partnership Board Area Plan Coronavirus strategic aims Audit Wales Covid-19 learning project Gwent Public Service Board formation	Delivery and governance arrangements of the Public Service Board and local partnership arrangements. Develop thinking and ideas to plan longer term alongside Monmouthshire residents, community groups and public service partners. Effective governance arrangements through Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)

Our Actions

Through the self-assessment, we have identified how well we are doing and what we can do better. Identifying these is not the end of the self-assessment process. We will look to build on and learn from the areas that are going well and address areas that we can do better.

The action plan focuses specifically on what and how we can do better for the significant conclusions of the assessment. All of the findings will inform the development of the council's well-being objectives and delivery plans and inform how internal processes and procedures should change to support more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes, and innovative ways to better deliver the council's functions.

The actions will be monitored through the year as part of the council's performance management arrangements. The next self-assessment report will also include an assessment of the progress made on these actions.

What and how can we do better?

Section	What can we do better	How	Who	When
Place	Understand current well-being, including the impacts of the last few years, on people and our communities to keep an up-to-date understanding of well-being.	Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users	Strategic Leadership Team	March 2023
Outcomes	Address areas for development, including rising cost-of-living, health inequalities and transition towards net-zero carbon, identified through the assessment of our outcomes.	Use the areas for development identified in the self-assessment to inform new corporate plan and service plans	Strategic Leadership Team	March 2023
Resources	Develop self-assessment arrangements and embed an evaluative mindset	Review self-assessment process to inform service plans and the next self-assessment report	Head of Policy, Performance and Scrutiny	January 2023
Resources	Evaluate and consider medium-term finances of the council, including the impact of the pandemic and rising cost-of-living, including the direct impact on council services and the impacts on residents and businesses in the county.	Develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan that is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios, to guide our budget setting in line with agreed strategic objectives	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	January 2023
Resources	Robust workforce planning arrangements to ensure we can develop, attract, and retain the workforce with the skills and experience	Develop a robust workforce planning culture that is able to cope with the changing demands of the council and embed a	Chief Officer, People and Governance	March 2023

	we need to deliver services and achieve our outcomes.	recruitment ethos that works locally and independently to meet the needs of different service areas.		
Resources	Data is one of the most important resources when planning services and we currently do not have the infrastructure and skills to maximise its use.	Develop the platforms and skills to enable the use of data as an essential planning and performance tool throughout the organisation.	Head of Policy, Performance and Scrutiny	March 2023
Stakeholder and Partnership	We work well with partner organisations, we need to extend this to include better community engagement to find out what matters most to our residents, businesses and visitors and plan longer term, learning from best practice, alongside residents, community groups and public service partners.	Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users Improve the partnership working between the council, residents, businesses, community groups and other public sector organisations, including the Welsh Government, to maximise the impact of everyone's abilities when applied together	Strategic Leadership Team	March 2023
All	Address areas for development and actions, identified through the self-assessment report.	Embed actions in service plans and assess as part of next self-assessment report.	Strategic Leadership Team	March 2023

Our Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the past two and a half years some of our plans had to take a back-seat while we adjusted to the challenges of the pandemic. Throughout this period, our Corporate Plan has been supplemented by five shorter-term strategies, covering different phases from full lockdowns, through re-openings and finally learning to live with the virus. Sometimes referred to as the ‘plan on a page’ they contained a purpose, strategic aims and associated actions and ensured clarity and accountability during the different stages of the pandemic.

The council has adapted, innovated and established new ways of delivering services that supported residents and businesses, assisted community activity and supported staff well-being through the ever-changing environment of the pandemic. Safeguarding the most vulnerable residents, working alongside the incredible volunteers within the county, providing vital contact tracing services to minimise the spread of the vaccine, and supporting local businesses have been at the core of council activity. These, and other activities, have run concurrently with the Corporate Plan aspirations and, with limited resources, there has been a conscious trade-off between these two plans.

The pandemic has also resulted in a range of learning that needs to be evaluated to ensure it is embedded and built upon. We have assessed our delivery against some of the key themes from our coronavirus strategies.

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Theme	How well did we achieve our agreed outcomes?	Evaluation rating: 5 – very good
Decision Making and Civic leadership	<p>We rapidly implemented digital technology and held the first fully virtual meeting of Cabinet after six weeks of the first lockdown and established all scrutiny and Council meetings by July 2020. This enabled democratic decision making and accountability to continue. Learning from the arrangements during the pandemic, we have now implemented hybrid meeting technology, accommodating both remote and physical attendance at meetings.</p> <p>We established clear priorities, published these in an accessible format and ensured that Cabinet received regular evaluation reports to track progress</p> <p>We established an Emergency Response Team which also involved working with wider formal Gwent response structures and directly into Welsh and UK Government. This ensured our overall response to the emergency was coordinated and managed.</p> <p>We used our communication platforms to convey local and national messages, and timely and relevant service updates to residents, and became a trusted source of information. The council’s Twitter followers have increased from 17,000 in March 2020 to over 19,000, and Facebook followers have increased from 11,000 to 16,000 over the same period.</p>	
Childcare and education	<p>We provided childcare for vulnerable learners and the children of key workers via childcare hubs during the first lockdown which, at their peak, provided childcare for over 400 pupils a day. Special Needs Resources Bases remained open, and we established a weekly</p>	

multi-agency Stable Lives and Brighter Futures meeting to discuss and review support and provision for vulnerable pupils. MonLife provided 'Summer Hub' provision for children with a total of 4,170 attendances, an average of 166 children per day.

Schools adopted a remote learning approach for the majority of pupils during closures in Winter 2020, which was developed into a blended learning approach when restrictions allowed. We provided laptops and MiFi units for learners without access to IT equipment so they could continue to learn.

Schools prioritised the well-being of all their pupils, and this included the adoption of a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, and the availability of additional support to raise standards for priority groups. The Educational Psychology Service and Healthy Schools Team provided advice and support to schools to support the well-being of children and young people impacted by COVID-19.

Support for businesses and town centre re-opening

We issued over 6,500 payments of grants amounting to almost £40 million to provide support to businesses to help them through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic. We delivered an ongoing communications campaign, aligned to the changing legislation and requirements for businesses through the year, and we held livestream events to share support and guidance to local businesses.

We ran various tourism campaigns throughout the year, initially promoting the message to 'stay at home' and 'Visit Monmouthshire – later'. This developed into 'Visit Monmouthshire. Safely.' to make it as easy and safe as possible for visitors to the county. Finally, as restrictions eased, we promoted our Visit Monmouthshire campaign to highlight the services and attractions available for visitors. The latest tourism data, from STEAM, shows the economic impact of tourism was almost £183m in 2021, although this has increased from 2020, its still 28% lower than the pre-pandemic figures from 2019. Visitor numbers were 1.5m in 2021, which is a significant increase from 2020, although this remains 34% lower than visitors in 2019.

The 're-opening towns' projects was implemented to help make our high streets safer during the pandemic, via mechanisms such as one-way streets, widened pedestrianised areas and changing traffic flows. We consulted our residents to seek their opinions and to gather ideas about how Monmouthshire's town and village centres could look in the future. This informed the development and adjustment of schemes.

Support for vulnerable people

Very early in the pandemic, we set a goal of ensuring that every person or family in crisis that we were aware of received support. To achieve this, Social Care moved to a seven-day working week initially to support our frontline delivery in Adults Services, and we adapted our delivery of Children's Services. We also developed a redeployment strategy to ensure staff were available to provide support, where needed.

Front-door social services remained fully operational throughout to support children, young people and adults, and we established the therapeutic services advice line for families to access support, advice and guidance. We received an average of 117 contacts per week relating to supporting children and young people between May 2020 and September 2021, an average of 27 requests per week in Adult's Social Services between May 2020 and August 2021, and 556 families accessed the therapeutic services advice line for

support, advice and guidance between April 2020 - June 2021. As pressure on care at home services and reablement services increased, referrals were triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention.

To safeguard residents in care homes, a testing programme was established for all staff members, administered by the council. Staff worked with Public Health Wales and ABUHB to establish clear parameters for residents in care homes being discharged from hospital to minimise the risk of further cases. Residents and staff in care homes for older adults, along with front line health and social care workers, were in the top priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and, as such, were all offered vaccinations early in the rollout process.

We experienced unprecedented housing demand from some of the most vulnerable citizens in our county during the pandemic, at a time when identifying suitable and safe premises was challenging. We identified emergency accommodation and were supporting 161 households in temporary accommodation. We are still experiencing significant challenges and risks in relation to homelessness, with a need to provide suitable long-term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing, and for those with additional needs. We reconfigured our services at the start of the pandemic including increasing vehicles and facilitating social distancing for staff which ensured domestic waste and recycling collections continued. We stopped the collection of garden waste for a period, but work was quickly undertaken allowing collections to re-start. To assist our communities, we distributed recycling bags to supermarkets and to residents shielding, where possible. We gradually reopened Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) by introducing a booking system so that numbers attending sites could be managed to maintain social distancing, and this continues to operate effectively today. The recycling rate for 2020/21 was 68.88%, an increase from 65.57% in 2019/20. Data was reviewed to determine any learning to further improve recycling figures.

We reduced many of our grounds maintenance services in order to redeploy staff into waste and recycling roles. We kept our roads and cemeteries safe by retaining an essential grounds maintenance team operation. We prioritised activities based on public safety and road visibility requirements, ensuring areas such as grass verges, road junctions and roundabouts were kept clear and safe for road users and pedestrians. When grass mowing resumed, almost a third of areas within our parks and open spaces were left uncut, which saw a positive impact on the flora and fauna of our county. We are reviewing the learning from the changes to our grounds maintenance services to inform how we can enhance the biodiversity and ecology of our open spaces, whilst maintaining the standards expected by our residents.

As the first lockdown was implemented, we worked with our public sector partners to provide a joined-up response across our area. We also developed closer working relationships with other agencies who supported the social care system to ensure an efficient approach to care provision for some of our most vulnerable residents.

We worked with partners in Gwent to deliver a COVID-19 Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) service to try and help minimise the spread of the virus in the county. We redeployed staff to the TTP services ensure it was well supported and able to respond to the peaks in case numbers. We also supported the vaccination strategy, being delivered by Aneurin Bevan UHB, where required.

Safe and clean neighbourhoods

Trusted partners and collaborative working

Supporting our workforce and maintaining our capacity and capability to deliver.

Volunteers have been at the forefront of the effort to keep our communities safe. We established the Community Action Volunteer Team to help coordinate requests for help with the offers of support. We also provided access to emergency food parcels for shielded people who could not leave home and created a contact centre, who proactively called over 3,000 shielded vulnerable people in our communities to check on their well-being. The Connect Monmouthshire community networking platform has since been implemented to provide the digital tools for active citizens to support each other in their communities.

Throughout the pandemic response, staff embraced new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe while delivering the many services our communities rely on. We ensured staff had access to a range of support on wellbeing and had access to the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing, if they displayed symptoms. We ensured that staff and resources were allocated to priority services, and that staff being re-deployed had the necessary training, equipment and guidance for them to undertake their new roles in a safe manner. We implemented digital tools and remote working facilities to support services to continue, and quickly rolled out technology to improve how our 1875 office-based staff worked from home. We secured licences for 700 staff who previously did not have access to digital communications so our whole organisation could be kept up to date.

We provided a range of support services to all staff to support their wellbeing via the Health, Welfare & Information group. Communication and engagement with staff continued throughout including an internal staff information portal, weekly staff Digital 'Cwtch', along with a weekly Managers Q&A to answer any questions or discuss general workplace issues.

The pandemic has had a significant effect on the council's finances, with additional costs and loss of income. We undertook detailed financial sustainability assessments to help understand the full financial impact. Welsh Government has provided a significant level of funding through its COVID Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic. The budget outturn 2020/21 allowed the council to increase its earmarked reserve balances by £4m, to provide some one-off limited cover against the pressures to be faced over the medium term. Significant financial challenges remain.

Looking Ahead, Delivering Now

In the last 12 months our focus has been on continuing to deliver services that address the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 and progressing a range of priority areas for the County including decarbonisation, well-being, enterprise and active and healthy lifestyle for our residents and visitors.

Progress includes developing plans for a new through school in Abergavenny, which will accommodate pupils aged 3-19; planting over 6000 trees; developing or improving 15 active travel routes that support residents and visitors to use walking or biking as a means of travel; significant investment to improve the leisure offer in Abergavenny and Chepstow; and working with housing association partners to make additional social housing available for homeless households.

The 'Our Outcomes' section provides a full assessment of the delivery of our priorities.

Performance Measures

The use of performance measures is one of the important mechanisms we use to assess our performance. Each of our goals has specific performance measures set to monitor progress. Some further relevant performance indicators we use to assess our services' performance are set out in this section.

National indicators have been set as part of the Future Generations Act for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals in Wales as a whole. While the national indicators will not measure the performance of individual public bodies or public services boards, it is important that they are considered to track the progress being made to improve well-being in Monmouthshire. Some of the national indicators that are relevant to the priority goals we have set, where an update is available at a county level, are in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Selected national indicator set under the well-being of Future Generations Act

Well-being of Future Generations Act national indicators	Source	Link to Goal	Wales	Monmouthshire Previous	Monmouthshire Current
Average capped 9 points score of pupils (interim) <i>(This interim measure was introduced in 2019, and supersedes the old measure of capped 8 points score)</i>	Welsh Examination database	Goal A	354.4 (2019)	Unavailable	367.4 (2019)
Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (relative to the UK average)	ONS Regional Economic Analysis: Sub-regional productivity indicators	Goal B	84.1 (2019)	85.4 (2018 - Monmouthshire and Newport)	85.5 (2019 - Monmouthshire and Newport)
Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (£) <i>(Not a national indicator, included as further context to the "relative to the UK average" national indicator)</i>	ONS Regional Economic Analysis: Sub-regional productivity indicators	Goal B	£29.6 (2019)	£29.7 (2018 – Monmouthshire and Newport)	£30.1 (2019 – Monmouthshire and Newport)
Gross Disposable Household Income per head	ONS, gross disposable household income per head	Goal B & D	£17,263 (2019)	£21,707 (2018)	£21,392 (2019)
Percentage of people in employment.	ONS, Annual Population Survey	Goal B & D	72.2% (year ending 31 March 2021)	79.4% (year ending 31 March 2020)	78.3% (year ending 31 March 2021)
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	National Survey for Wales	Goal B & D	11% (2021/22)	10% (2019/20)	7% (2021/22)

Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air.	Department for Environment, food and rural affairs	Goal C	7 (2020)	8 (2019)	6 (2020)
Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Goal C	3,589.6 (2020)	85.4 (2019)	86.1 (2020)
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	National Survey for Wales	Goal B, D & E	86% (2021/22)	88% (2020/21)	86% (2021/22)
Percentage of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live.	National Survey for Wales	All goals	89% (2021/22)	84% (2020/21)	95% (2021/22)
Percentage of people who Volunteer.	National Survey for Wales	Goal D	29% (2021/22)	32% (2019/20)	Not available (2021/22)
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.	Adult – National Survey for Wales	Goal D	34% (2021/22)	36% (2019/20)	42% (2021/22)
	Children – Sport Wales, school sport survey	Goal A	47.6% (2018)	45.0% (2018)	Not available

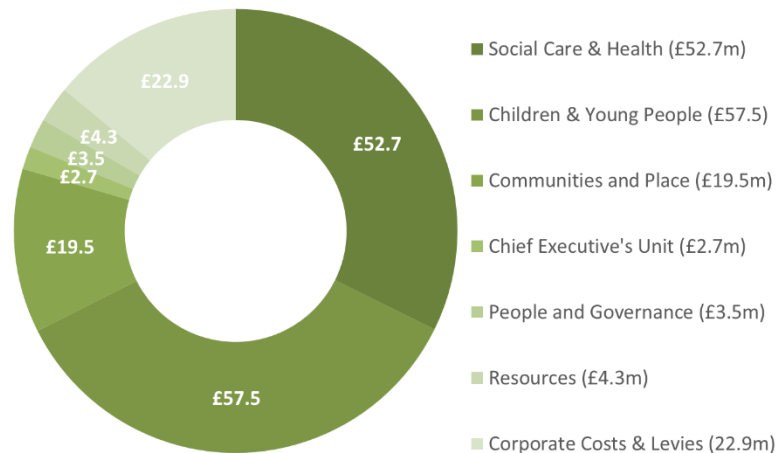
The use of mechanisms such as the Office of National Statistics' Measuring National Well-being programme (diagram 7 in What Citizens Said section below) are ways in which we are trying to broaden our understanding of well-being in Monmouthshire, in addition to service specific performance measurement.

What we spent in 2021/22

In 2021/22, the council spent £166.7 million providing services for Monmouthshire residents.

The proportion of our spending on different services in 2021/22 is shown in diagram 5. These services are paid for by a combination of central government grants, council tax, non-domestic rates and a contribution from the Council Fund.

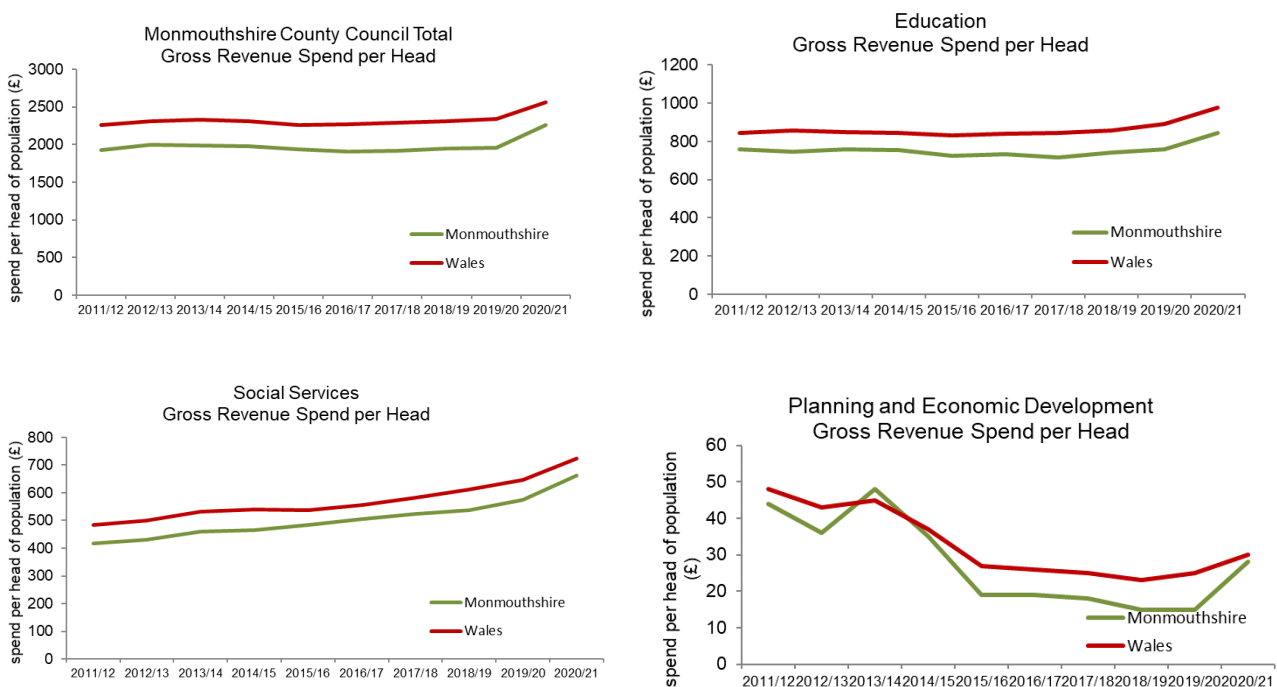
Diagram 5 2021/22 Revenue Spend (£million)



How our revenue spend compares with other areas

Diagram 6 below shows how much we spend per head of population in some of our priority areas. In 2020/21, we spent less on services per head of population than the average for local authorities in Wales and had the lowest gross revenue spend per head of all councils in Wales. However, we also work hard to make sure this money goes where it matters. For 2022/23 we received an increase in core funding, however our budget settlement from Welsh Government continues to be the lowest per head of population of councils in Wales.

Diagram 6



What citizens said

Involvement and working together with residents and communities in Monmouthshire is essential to develop and deliver solutions to achieve outcomes and ensure residents are involved in the decisions that affect them.

Some of the areas we have involved citizens this year include:

Budget engagement: Monmouthshire County Council launched its draft budget proposals for 2022-2023 in January 2022. Residents were invited to register for a special budget livestream. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the face-to-face budget engagement that would normally take place would not be appropriate at this time, so the process moved online. For those unable to join the livestream, the session was uploaded to the website to watch after the event. As part of the consultation process, residents were also asked to share their thoughts via a feedback survey on the budget proposals.



Youth Council, Engage 2 Change: Monmouthshire's Youth Council, Engage 2 Change, (E2C) is a group of young people aged 11-18 from across Monmouthshire who meet to represent the views of their peers, with a view to inform decisions that affect the county's young people. In 2021/22, representatives from E2C attended the Police and Commissions Youth Question Time as part of the Regional Youth Forum work. They decided the panellist's agenda and content based on last year's evaluations and the current years priorities, both regionally and locally, from the Make Your Mark consultation. Their involvement resulted in the services taking part having a better understanding of issues being faced in their local authority by young people. It also allowed the young people to understand the services better, and their role in improving the lives of young people.

Active travel: Legislation is in place requiring all local authorities in Wales to continuously improve their Active Travel routes, and plan how routes will join up to form networks so that people can more easily get around by cycle or as a pedestrian. The legislation requires that councils consult the public during the process of updating their Active Travel Network Map (ATNM), these maps show where walking and cycling routes are identified. The first Phase of the consultation exercise (Engagement Phase) is now complete. It was very successful with over 2,700 people participating. Around 370 routes were identified for consideration of improvement or inclusion in any new maps going forward. On 4th June, we started the formal 3-month consultation on the proposed ATNMs.

Customer Complaints and Compliments: We monitor and learn from feedback received from customers. These are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee. Issues included the length of time we can take to respond to people. Not only is it important to deal with complaints effectively, investigating and putting things right for the complainant where necessary, it is also vital to learn from them to minimise the chances of the same problem occurring twice. Twenty complaints were referred to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales in 2020-21, the last year for which data is available. This is lower than the average for Welsh local authorities. Only one report was upheld, which places the county in the lower quartile.

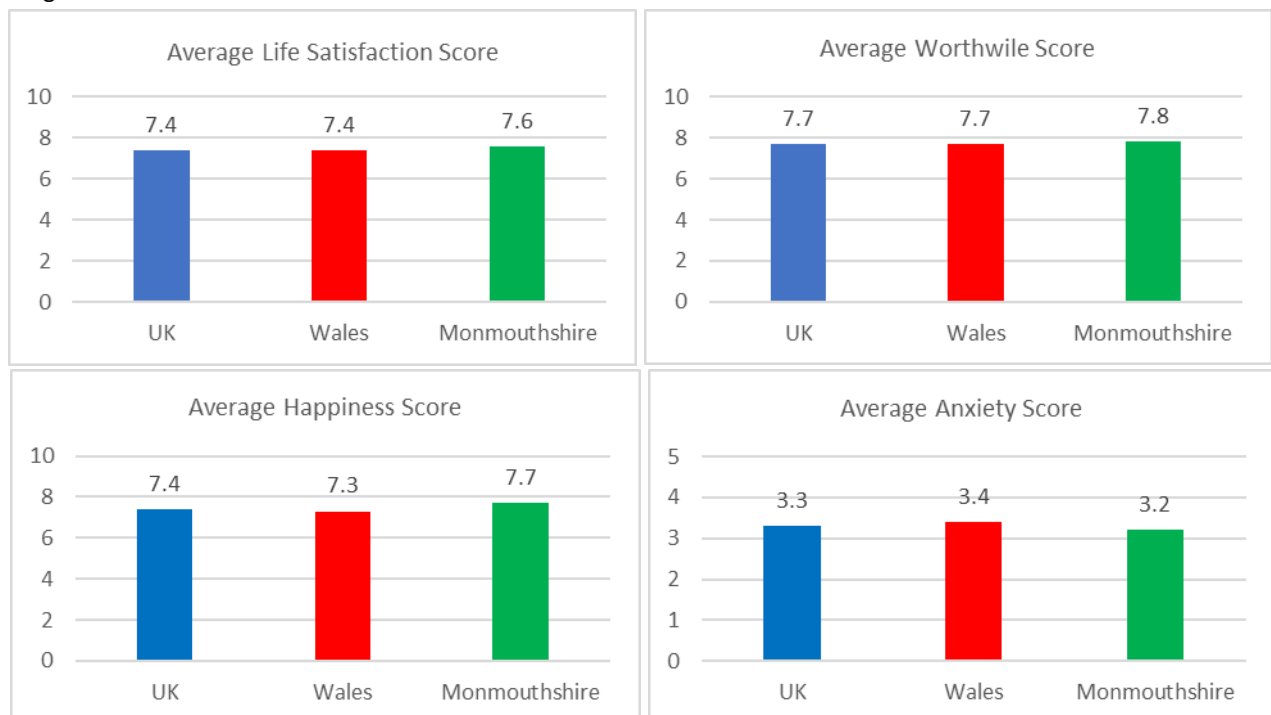
Measuring Individual well-being

The Office of National Statistic's Measuring National Well-being programme also assesses personal well-being as part of the Annual Population Survey. The survey asks the questions:

- **Life Satisfaction** – overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- **Worthwhile** – overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
- **Happiness** – overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
- **Anxiety** – on a scale where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious', overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

The latest full annual results for Monmouthshire (from 2020/21) for these questions are shown in diagram 7 below alongside the UK and Wales averages. This shows that the responses from Monmouthshire residents score slightly better than both the UK and Wales for all measures.

Diagram 7



Staff engagement

We have carried out staff awareness sessions and provided opportunities for staff to be involved in the self-assessment process. The Leader's Q&A is a weekly meeting, held remotely, for any leaders to join to discuss issues or share information. We have used this platform to share information on the new Act, the responsibilities it places on the council, and what this means for service areas. We have also attended Directorate Management Team meetings to share the same information, targeting heads of service and team leaders.

As part of our process to collate the self-assessment, we held directorate and enabling-service workshops to provide an opportunity for staff to directly feed into the self-assessment via identification of their own strengths and areas for development. Workshop attendees were presented with evidence packs, collated from existing information sources such as scrutiny reports, external regulator feedback, and service business plans, and were facilitated to self-assess their performance. We learned a great deal from the workshops, both in terms of

successes and areas for development associated with our strategic goals and our enabling functions, but also on how to improve the self-assessment process next year.

We altered the service business planning process at the start of 2021 to align more closely with the self-assessment process. Engagement took place with staff groups to assist in transitioning to the new way of working, with a particular focus on the outcomes of services, and identifying ways in which services could provide improved outcomes. This needs to be developed as completeness and quality of service business planning varies across the organisation.

Businesses

We have established stronger engagement networks with businesses in our area since the start of the pandemic and we are working to improve these connections. We have a better understanding of the types of businesses in our area, and the Business Resilience Forum presents a helpful 'two-way' platform for feedback and information sharing. We will build on this platform, and others, to improve the feedback we receive from business to make sure we are capitalising on the conversations that are taking place and can improve our service to businesses as a result.

Trade Unions

We engage well with Trade Unions to achieve our outcomes and will be further working with them to seek their views as part of our self-assessment process.

What Regulators and Inspectors Said

We work closely with our regulators and inspectors to quality-assure our activities as this is vital to ensuring improvement. Their feedback is valued, and we use their assessments to help us focus on the things we need to improve across the council.

Each year, Audit Wales publishes an Annual Audit Summary, which shows the work completed since the previous year's summary. The audit summary, published in December 2021, concluded:

"The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2020-21, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021."

Further reports produced by Audit Wales are available to download on the Audit Wales website (www.audit.wales/publications). This includes local government national reports produced by Audit Wales.

We underwent an Estyn Inspection into Local Government Education Services in February 2020. The inspection recognised the clear vision and strong focus on ensuring 'the best possible start in life' and also identified the commitment to partnership working that has resulted in a good track record of improvement. It also identified areas for development, such as the performance of children eligible for free school meals, and a lack of clarity in how services for learners with special educational needs will be strengthened. Work is underway address the recommendations. The report can be found on www.estyn.gov.wales

Care Inspectorate Wales carried out an assurance check in February 2021 to review how well Social Services were helping and supporting adults and children during the pandemic, with a focus on safety and well-being.

They found that we made our strategic intent clear in relation to responding to the pandemic, and leaders maintained a line of sight on the changing COVID-19 landscape, resulting in clear plans to address the issues presented. Inspection reports about social services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) can be found on www.careinspectorate.wales

Equality and Diversity

The council has a long-standing commitment to equality and diversity, with our Social Justice Strategy demonstrating our commitment to address inequalities and improve outcomes for the county's people and communities. This dovetails neatly with our third Strategic Equality Plan, produced under the Equality Act 2010. This latest plan was approved in March 2020 and sets the council's objectives to ensure we deliver better outcomes for people with protected characteristics. This is clearly aligned with the evidence provided by the Well-being Assessment, and also evidence provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report "Is Wales Fairer 2018".

As well as this, it is important to us as it is the right thing to do. Annual monitoring reports provide updates on progress on the action plans in the Strategic Equality Plan and evidence good practice being carried out across the council departments. These can be found [here](#).

The Welsh Language

The Welsh language is central to the goals introduced as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, particularly for our contribution to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It also makes an important contribution to the Welsh Government goal of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and accompanying Welsh Language standards, place a legal duty on councils to treat Welsh and English equally, to promote the Welsh Language and provide services to the public through the medium of Welsh. The council has been allocated 175 standards that we are required to comply with. This is a significant challenge, but systems have been put in place to ensure compliance. One of the standards set was to write a Welsh Language Strategy for 2017-2022, which identifies a vision of how the language will look in Monmouthshire in five years and is accompanied by targets to help achieve it. The annual monitoring reports reflect our progress against our Welsh language commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards. These can be found [here](#).

Appendix 1 – Integration of well-being objectives

Table illustrating how each of the 22 commitments in our five priority goals integrate with other commitments

	1.FUTURE SCHOOLS	2.RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS	3.STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW	4.CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	5.LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN	6.ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY	7. CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL	8.INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY	9.LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE	10. PROCUREMENT	11.PLAN FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	12. REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS	13. KEEPING ROADS AND AREAS SAFE	14.HERITAGE, ARTS AND CULTURE	15.INDEPENDENT LIVING	16.SOCIAL JUSTICE, PROSPERITY AND INEQUALITY	17. VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION	18.LEISURE, RECREATION AND WELL-BEING	19.LOCAL SERVICES AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	20.DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT	21.SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION	22.WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES	
1.FUTURE SCHOOLS	█																						
2.RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS		█																					
3.STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW			█																				
4. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES				█																			
5.LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN					█																		
6.ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY						█																	
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8.INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY								█															
9.LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE									█														
10. PROCUREMENT										█													
11.PLAN FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT											█												
12. REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS												█											
13.KEEPING ROADS AND AREAS SAFE													█										
14.HERITAGE, ARTS AND CULTURE														█									
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19.LOCAL SERVICES AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE																			█				
20.DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT																				█			
21.SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION																					█		
22.WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES																						█	

Appendix 2 – Self-assessment process

Legislation

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”) provides for a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. The Act replaces the previous improvement duty for councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the ‘performance requirements’, that is the extent to which it is exercising its functions effectively; it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; its governance is effective for securing these.

The performance and governance provisions in the Act are framed within the context of the well-being duty in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which sets out a legally binding common purpose for public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. Self-assessment will be complemented by a panel performance assessment once in an electoral cycle, providing an opportunity to seek external insights (other than from auditors, regulators or inspectors) on how the council is meeting the performance requirements.

Why

Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position in order to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It is about the council being self-aware, understanding whether it is delivering the right outcomes, and challenging itself to continuously improve. It needs to be embedded as effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce.

The WLGA have identified draft principles for self-assessment for councils to ensure that they have arrangements in place that:

- demonstrate self-awareness derived from evidence-based analysis that focuses on outcomes;
- are owned and led at a strategic level and are not an exercise in compliance;
- further develop a culture of challenge to facilitate improvement as part of an ongoing process;
- are integrated as part of the council’s corporate planning, performance and governance processes; and
- enable an organisation-wide assessment rather than an assessment of individual services.

Further developing this culture and embedding an evaluative mindset will be a key development point through the first few iterations of the self- assessment report.

Process

The council has developed a process to undertake its first self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2021/22 financial year. The main component parts of the process and timeline are:

Feb – April Desk-based evidence gathering	April - May Directorate self- assessment Workshops	May – June Council self- assessment report drafted	July Draft report to Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee	September Self-assessment agreed in line with council process.
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This timeline ensures that the self-assessment can inform and be informed by the policy direction of the council and how it uses its resources efficiently and effectively, particularly the budget setting process.

Evaluative evidence to inform the assessment has been compiled at a directorate level. Most of the evidence has been collated by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way; this includes, for example, the Annual Governance Statement, audit and inspection reports, and service level business plans.



The evidence gathered has been explored further, and challenged where necessary, at directorate and enabling function based self-assessment workshops, to determine if the objectives (outcomes) of the council are being achieved.

Self-assessment workshops

Directorate workshops	Enabling functions workshops
Children & Young People	Policy & Governance – Workforce planning
Social Care & Health	Resources – Financial planning
Communities & Place	Resources – Assets
	Communities & Place – Procurement
	Resources and Policy Performance & Scrutiny – Digital and Data
	Policy Performance & Scrutiny - Corporate planning, Performance and Risk Management

The workshops were facilitated through the following questions:

- How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities? (Need)
- How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? (From the Corporate Plan)
- How do we know? (Evidence)
- How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities? (Enablers)
- How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes? (Partnership working)
- What could we do better? (Actions)

The full evidence and conclusions from workshops have been collated and will be used by directorates and enabling functions to inform their services business plans.

Following the workshops, the evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. This has been integrated with the council's requirement to report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year (2021/22) under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report will be structured under these headings:

- Understanding our local place
- Outcomes (progress against Corporate Plan goals):
 - How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?
 - How do we know?
 - Areas for development
- Enabling functions
 - Corporate planning, performance and risk management
 - Financial planning
 - Workforce planning
 - Procurement
 - Assets
 - Digital and data
- Our work with partners
- Our Actions

The self-assessment report will be scrutinised by the council's Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. A draft of the self-assessment report will be made available to Governance and Audit committee, who must review the draft report and make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action the council intends to take. The self-assessment will be approved in accordance with the council's agreed processes at Council.

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- ⁱ Careers Wales, Annual Survey of School Leavers <http://destinations.careerswales.com>
- ⁱⁱ Sport Wales, School Sport Survey data <http://sport.wales/research--policy/surveys-and-statistics/statistics.aspx>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Stats Wales, Gross Value Added <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Regional-Accounts/Gross-Value-Added-GDP>
- ^{iv} Stats Wales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings>
- ^v Stats Wales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings>
- ^{vi} Stats Wales, Active Business Enterprises <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Businesses/Business-Demography>
- ^{vii} The total economic impact of tourism, STEAM data. The economic impact of Tourism is indexed each year.
- ^{viii} Professional, scientific and technical activities industry review, 2016, final report www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/methodologies/professionalscientificandtechnicalactivitiesindustryreview2016finalreport
- InfoBase Cymru: Monmouthshire Economy www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/employmentandbusiness/employment/profile?profileId=4569
- Future Monmouthshire – Economies of the Future, Economic Baseline Report (2018) <https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s19319/1b%20Appendix%20C%20-%20Economies%20of%20the%20Future%20Economic%20Baseline%20Report.pdf>
- Monmouthshire Business Counts 2021 www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157403/report.aspx?town=monmouthshire#tabidbr
- ^{viii} Stats Wales, Air quality <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Air-Quality>
- ^{ix} Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Well-being-and-Finances/percentageofpeoplelivinginhouseholdsinmaterialdeprivation-by-localauthority-year>
- ^x Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Local-Area-and-Environment/percentageofpeoplesatisfiedwithaccesstofacilitiesandservices>
- ^{xi} Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Sport-and-Recreation/percentageofpeoplewhoparticipateinsport3ormoretimesaweek-by-localauthority-year>
- ^{xii} Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales>