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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 22 March 2023

Notice of Meeting

Governance and Audit Committee

Thursday, 30th March, 2023 at 2.00 pm,
County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

***Please note that a 30 minute pre-meeting will take place at 1.30pm for
Committee Members and Audit Officers***

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Public Open Forum.	
4.	To note the Action List from the previous meeting.	1 - 2
5.	Audit Wales: Outline Plan 2023/24.	3 - 14
6.	Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update.	15 - 32
7.	Whole Authority Complaints Report April 2021 - March 2022.	33 - 64
8.	Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary.	65 - 72
9.	Overview of Performance Management Arrangements.	73 - 84
10.	Review of the Strategic Risk Register - 6 monthly.	85 - 94
11.	Implementation of Internal Audit agreed recommendations.	95 - 102
12.	Audit Wales Quarter 3 work programme and timetable.	103 - 136
13.	To note the Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan.	137 - 144

14.	To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th February 2023.	145 - 150
15.	To note the date of the next meeting as 15th June 2023.	

**Paul Matthews
Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Andrew Blackmore	<i>Lay Member</i>	
Colin Prosser	<i>Lay Member</i>	
Martin Veale	<i>Lay Member</i>	
Rhodri Guest	<i>Lay Member</i>	
County Councillor Ian Chandler	<i>Llantilio Crossenny;</i>	<i>Green Party</i>
County Councillor John Crook	<i>Magor East with Undy;</i>	<i>Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru</i>
County Councillor Tony Easson	<i>Dewstow;</i>	<i>Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru</i>
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	<i>Mardy;</i>	<i>Welsh Conservative Party</i>
County Councillor Phil Murphy	<i>Caerwent;</i>	<i>Welsh Conservative Party</i>
County Councillor Peter Strong	<i>Rogiet;</i>	<i>Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru</i>
County Councillor Laura Wright	<i>Grofield;</i>	<i>Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru</i>
County Councillor Tony Kear	<i>Llanbadoc & Usk;</i>	<i>Welsh Conservative Party</i>

Public Information

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Watch this meeting online

This meeting can be viewed online either live or following the meeting by visiting www.monmouthshire.gov.uk or by visiting our Youtube page by searching MonmouthshireCC.

Welsh Language

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

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

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

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**Governance and Audit Committee Action List
16th February 2023**

Agenda Item:	Subject/ Meeting	Officer	Outcome	By	Action Status	Recommended to close Action Yes/No
1	Action List 14 th July 2022	Richard Jones/ Peter Davies/ Andrew Wathan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Outcome of Internal Audit's review of effectiveness/trends. b) Add the annual TCBC audit plan for the SRS, the annual audit opinion, and any audit reports with an 'unsatisfactory' rating or equivalent to supplement the conclusions of the review of the adequacy of the TCBC audit function to the forward work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 30th March 2023 b) 30th March 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) OPEN b) OPEN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes b) Yes
2	Statement of Accounts 2021/22	Jon Davies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Report back on returning Finance Team to full capacity b) Provide response outside meeting to Colin Prosser on the difference between Council and market valuations for council tax bandings c) Trend analysis requested for value of the commercial investments year on year, and the income received that contributes to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 30th March 2023 b) 30th March 2023 c) TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) OPEN b) OPEN c) OPEN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Yes b) Yes c) TBC
3	Capacity and resources – internal audit team	Jon Davies/Peter Davies/ Andrew Wathan	Refer Governance and Audit Committee resolution regarding the proposed removal of FTE post from its structure to Council/Cabinet	Council/ Cabinet Agenda deadline	OPEN	Yes

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Monmouthshire County Council

Outline Audit Plan 2023

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Audit year: 2022-2023

Date issued: March 2023



This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. Further information can be found in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities each with their own legal functions. Audit Wales is not a legal entity and itself does not have any functions.

No responsibility is taken by the Auditor General, the staff of the Wales Audit Office or, where applicable, the appointed auditor in relation to any member, director, officer or other employee in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

About Audit Wales

Our aims:

Assure



the people of Wales
that public money is
well managed

Explain



how public money
is being used to
meet people's
needs

Inspire



and empower the
Welsh public sector
to improve

Our ambitions:



Fully exploit our
unique perspective,
expertise and
depth of insight



Strengthen our
position as an
authoritative,
trusted and
independent voice



Increase our
visibility,
influence and
relevance



Be a model
organisation for the
public sector in
Wales and beyond

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Introduction

This Outline Audit Plan specifies my statutory responsibilities as your external auditor and to fulfil my obligations under the Code of Audit Practice. It also sets out details of my audit team and key dates for delivering my audit team's activities and planned outputs. I intend sharing a Detailed Audit Plan later in the year following the completion of my planning work. It will set out my estimated audit fee and the work my team intends undertaking to address the audit risks identified and other key areas of audit focus during 2023.



Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for
Wales

My audit responsibilities

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complete work each year to meet the following duties:

- I audit the Authority's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.
- The Authority has to put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and I have to be satisfied that it has done this.
- The Authority needs to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.

Audit of financial statements

I am required to issue a certificate and report on your financial statements which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness' and an assessment as to whether the Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement is prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance and is consistent with your financial statements and my knowledge of the Authority.

In addition to my responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, I also have responsibility for:

- responding to questions and objections about the accounts from local electors (additional fees will be charged for this work, if necessary);
- the audit of two charities, the Welsh Church Act Fund and Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust; and
- the certification of a number of grant claims and returns as agreed with the funding bodies.

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I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and related notes but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material will be reported to you in my Detailed Audit Plan.

I will also report by exception on a number of matters which are set out in more detail in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

Performance audit work

I carry out a programme of performance audit work to discharge my duties as Auditor General in relation to value for money and sustainable development.

My local performance audit programme will continue to be delivered through a combination of an Assurance and Risk Assessment Project, bespoke local projects and thematic projects examining risks common to all councils.

Fees and audit team

In January 2023 I published the fee scheme for the year, approved by the Senedd Finance Committee. This sets out my fee rates and also highlights the impact of the revised auditing standard ISA 315 on my financial audit approach. More details of the revised auditing standard and what it means for the audit I undertake is set out in **Appendix 1**.

I will provide an estimate of your fee in my Detailed Audit Plan in May 2023, following completion of my detailed risk assessment.

Your engagement team:

Helen Goddard	Engagement Director & Audit Director (Financial Audit)
Rachel Freitag	Audit Manager (Financial Audit)
Colin Davies	Audit Manager (Performance Audit)
Julie Owens	Audit Lead (Financial Audit)
Charlotte Owen	Audit Lead (Performance Audit)

We confirm that our audit team members are all independent of the Authority and your officers.

Audit timeline

We set out below key dates for delivery of our audit work and planned outputs.

Planned output	Work undertaken	Report finalised
Outline Audit Plan 2023	February - March 2023	March 2023
Detailed Audit Plan 2023	March – May 2023	May 2023
Audit of financial statements work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of Financial Statements Report • Opinion on the Financial Statements. 	June – November 2023	November 2023
Performance audit work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance and Risk Assessment • Thematic review – commissioning and contract management • Thematic review – financial sustainability in local government • Local review - performance management arrangements 	Timescales for individual projects will be discussed with you and detailed within the specific project briefings produced for each audit.	

Audit quality

My commitment to audit quality in Audit Wales is absolute.

I believe that audit quality is about getting things right first-time.

We use a three lines of assurance model to demonstrate how we achieve this.

We have established an Audit Quality Committee to co-ordinate and oversee those arrangements. We subject our work to independent scrutiny by QAD¹ and our Chair acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2022](#).



Our People

The first line of assurance is formed by our staff and management who are individually and collectively responsible for achieving the standards of audit quality to which we aspire.

- Selection of right team
- Use of specialists
- Supervisions and review



Arrangements for achieving audit quality

The second line of assurance is formed by the policies, tools, learning & development, guidance, and leadership we provide to our staff to support them in achieving those standards of audit quality.

- Audit platform
- Ethics
- Guidance
- Culture
- Learning and development
- Leadership
- Technical support



Independent assurance

The third line of assurance is formed by those activities that provide independent assurance over the effectiveness of the first two lines of assurance.

- EQCRs
- Themed reviews
- Cold reviews
- Root cause analysis
- Peer review
- Audit Quality Committee
- External monitoring

¹ QAD is the Quality Assurance Department of ICAEW

Appendix 1 – the key changes to ISA315 and the potential impact on your organisation

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Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
<p>More detailed and extensive risk identification and assessment procedures</p>	<p>Your finance team and others in your organisation may receive a greater number of enquiries from our audit teams at the planning stage of the audit. Requests for information may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information on your organisation’s business model and how it integrates the use of information technology (IT); • information about your organisation’s risk assessment process and how your organisation monitors the system of internal control; • more detailed information on how transactions are initiated, recorded, processed, and reported. This may include access to supporting documentation such as policy and procedure manuals; and • more detailed discussions with your organisation to support the audit team’s assessment of inherent risk.
<p>Obtaining an enhanced understanding of your organisation’s environment, particularly in relation to IT</p>	<p>Your organisation may receive more enquiries to assist the audit team in understanding the IT environment. This may include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT applications relevant to financial reporting; • the supporting IT infrastructure (e.g. the network, databases); • IT processes (e.g. managing program changes, IT operations); and • the IT personnel involved in the IT processes.

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
	<p>Audit teams may need to test the general IT controls and this may require obtaining more detailed audit evidence on the operation of IT controls within your organisation.</p> <p>On some audits, our audit teams may involve IT audit specialists to assist with their work. Our IT auditors may need to engage with members of your IT team who have not previously been involved in the audit process.</p>
<p>Enhanced requirements relating to exercising professional scepticism</p>	<p>Our audit teams may make additional inquiries if they identify information which appears to contradict what they have already learned in the audit.</p>
<p>Risk assessments are scalable depending on the nature and complexity of the audited body</p>	<p>The audit team's expectations regarding the formality of your organisation's policies, procedures, processes, and systems will depend on the complexity of your organisation.</p>
<p>Audit teams may make greater use of technology in the performance of their audit</p>	<p>Our audit teams may make use of automated tools and techniques such as data analytics when performing their audit. Our teams may request different information or information in a different format from previous audits so that they can perform their audit procedures.</p>

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SUBJECT	Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update
MEETING:	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE:	30th March 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the council's progress against the Audit Wales Work Programme up to March 2023 so that the committee can assure itself of the progress of the council's response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members scrutinise the council's response to the Audit Wales work programme, seeking assurance that adequate progress is being made.
- 2.2 That members refer any issues contained within Audit Wales national studies to other committees for consideration where they identify there are findings of particular relevance to the council that need further scrutiny.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Each year, Audit Wales produces an Audit Plan, which sets out the work they intend to undertake to discharge their duties, and this is presented to Governance and Audit Committee upon publication. The performance audit work programme set by Audit Wales focusses on discharging duties in relation to value for money and sustainable development:
- Value for money - The Council has to put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses
 - Sustainable development principle - The Council needs to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.
- 3.2 This report provides an update on the progress being made by the council implementing the findings of Audit Wales reviews. This includes an update on progress against existing proposals for improvement/recommendations, followed by the latest local audit work carried out since the last review, with an accompanying management response. Recommendations that require further attention are marked as 'open'. Where a recommendation has been assessed as being adequately addressed, it is 'closed' and explanation why included. Some of the forward-looking actions committed to by the authority are likely to be reflected within other council strategic documents such as the Community and Corporate Plan, enabling strategies, the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.3 As well as local work at each council, Audit Wales carries out national studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money, and all of these reports are published on www.audit.wales/publications. Whilst the findings of these studies are not necessarily specific to Monmouthshire County Council, those of greatest relevance are shared with the most appropriate service area to consider their findings and recommendations and to respond accordingly. Appendix 2 identifies the studies most applicable to the council since the last iteration of this report, along with a management response outlining service area's actions in response to the study.
- 3.4 Governance and Audit Committee has a role in ensuring the council is responding to the findings from national Studies and can also refer them to another scrutiny committee if they feel the report requires further in-depth consideration beyond the response already

provided by the service area. The committee may also refer issues to Democratic Services Committee who are able to perform a coordinating function.

- 3.5 The council works closely with regulators and inspectors to quality-assure activities as this is vital to ensuring improvement. Their feedback is valued, and their assessments are used to help us focus on the things we need to improve. Their findings have informed the council's own self-assessment of its performance in 2021/22. Findings from Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales have their own monitoring arrangements in place. Consideration will be given to incorporating further oversight of these, where they relate to the council's performance arrangements, in future updates of this progress report to Governance & Audit Committee.
- 3.6 Audit Wales, as part of their ongoing annual audit work programme, may follow up progress in any of the open or recently closed proposal areas.

4. REASONS

To ensure the authority responds appropriately to Audit Wales proposals and recommendations to secure the improvements required.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Finance and any other resource implications of activity related to responses to the proposals will need to be considered by the relevant responsibility holders.

6. CONSULTEES

Individual Audit Report Responsible Officers
Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Officer, Resources

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Audit Wales Audit Plan 2022
Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2021

8. AUTHORS

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Appendix 1

Open Audit Wales Proposals for Improvement

Finance Proposals

Report	Financial Sustainability Assessment – June 2021		
Audit Wales Proposal	To ensure its Medium-Term Financial Plan predicts future funding requirements as accurately as possible, the Council should regularly review its future cost pressure estimates to ensure they are reasonable and reflect recent levels of cost pressures.	Status	Open
	To bridge its estimated future funding gap and contribute to strengthening its financial sustainability, the Council should develop and deliver a programme of sustainable planned savings over the medium-term.		
What progress have we made	<p>After several years of taking significant resource out of the budget, the means of achieving further savings is increasingly more challenging. Pressures on the budget have remained and continue to increase in terms of demographic growth, demand on services and expectations, and pay and pension increases. Specific areas with pressures include children with additional learning needs, children’s services and specifically looked after children, adult social care, homelessness passenger transport and MonLife activities.</p>		
	<p>Councils are facing financial challenges on an unprecedented scale. Costs and demand have increased significantly in recent years and local authority budgets have not kept pace. The size of the budget challenge for Monmouthshire, prior to any intervention for financial year 2023/24 was £26.642m. This grew by circa £3.5m between Cabinet’s November 2022 budget update and budget proposals in March 2023. The Council is accustomed to dealing with financial challenges in the order of £5m - £10m in an annual planning cycle. The size and speed of the 2023/24 challenge is out of all proportion to earlier years and is largely driven by factors that residents are experiencing in their domestic and employed lives. Price rises on goods and services, soaring energy costs, and increased borrowing costs predominate. Added to these are significant cost increases attributable to pay awards, and increased demand on service areas such as social care, homelessness, additional learning needs and home to school transport</p>		
	<p>The pandemic and the resultant Cost of Living Crisis has significantly affected the council’s medium-term financial planning. The most recent update to the MTFP model predicts a continuously increasing budget deficit as a result of updated budget assumptions, with a shortfall of over £23m predicted by 2026/27 and that will need to be addressed by way of savings and increased income.</p>		
<p>There is not a consistent picture of schools’ balances. There has been a fluctuating trend with some schools showing a continuing reduction in schools balances, which is of concern, and others a more stable trend. However, grants awarded to schools at 2020/21- and 2021/22-year ends have resulted in a large increase in overall school balances. Schools have developed investment plans and the balances are expected to reduce during 2022-23. The increase in school balances has resulted in a reduction in the number of schools in deficit. Inherent structural budget deficits that led to a situation of 17 schools being in deficit prior to the pandemic may in certain cases still remain, and the Authority will look to work with</p>			

	<p>those schools in particular to look to develop a sustainable medium term budget structure irrespective of the additional Welsh Government funding received.</p> <p>The 23/24 budget has recently been approved by Council, led by commitments set in the draft Community and Corporate Plan 2023-27. Contained within this budget is an updated MTFP model, which has been revised and updated to align with the new budget. Though the budget has been finalised, the Council still faces further financial risks that will need to be addressed throughout the year, including the depletion of reserve and capital receipt balances. Budgetary discipline will be paramount throughout this financial year and over the medium-term.</p>			
Further action planned	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer & Timescale	Progress so far
	<p>A medium-term financial plan which is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term in line with community and corporate plan priorities.</p>	<p>Develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan that is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios, to guide budget setting in line with agreed strategic objectives</p>	<p>Chief Officer Resources</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>The 2023/24 budget was recently approved by Council in March and that included an update of the Council's MTFP. The MTFP will be reviewed and updated and such as to inform the financial strategy that will be developed subsequent to the Community and Corporate Plan being approved by Council.</p>
	<p>In parallel with the above, to develop and deliver a programme of sustainable planned savings over the medium-term to allow a balanced budget to be set that delivers on agreed community and corporate plan priorities.</p>	<p>A robust and detailed review of planned savings brought forward that ensure that the impact on service delivery is mitigated where possible and that contributes to an overall sustainable budget position in the medium term.</p>	<p>Chief Officer Resources</p> <p>July 2023</p>	<p>The 2023/24 budget proposals were recently approved by Council in March. These proposals set out the savings that will be made over the next year and outlines how the budget deficit has been managed. A cumulative impact assessment of the budget has been completed, which describes the possible negative, and positive, impact on residents and service delivery and what actions have been put in place to mitigate any negative effects.</p> <p>Further to the savings plans for 2023/24 the aforementioned development of the financial strategy and update of the MTFP will require a more comprehensive assessment and review</p>

				of budget assumptions, pressures and savings plans over the medium term and to ensure that the Council has updated plans in place to ensure that the Council can continue to move forward on a sustainable financial footing and to allow it to deliver against its priorities and as outlined in the Community and Corporate Plan.
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Workforce & Asset Management proposals

Report	Audit Wales Springing Forward – August 2022		
Page 19 Audit Wales Recommendations	<p>In developing its new asset management and workforce strategies, the Council should build on its experience of the pandemic and place the sustainable development principle at the heart of its considerations, and specifically ensure it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes account of longer-term trends that may affect service provision and the efficient use of assets and workforce. • sets out its intended outcomes over the short, medium and longer term. • takes account of how the strategies impact on the objectives of other organisations in the county and regionally. • takes account of the views and needs of staff, service users and partners. In doing so the Council should seek to understand how, where and when users want to access services post-COVID-19 and how that might influence future asset needs and workforce planning. • collaborates with public sector partners across Gwent to evaluate the potential benefits of developing a strategic long-term approach to a single public estate 	Status	Open
	<p>As the Council begins to implement its new strategies, it should seek to build on existing examples of working with partners by developing a more systematic approach to considering opportunities for collaboration.</p>		
	<p>To support regular scrutiny and decision-making by elected members and help provide assurance over value for money, the Council should ensure that the outcomes set out in its workforce and asset management strategies are supported by SMART performance measures, and that benchmarking is used where appropriate.</p>		

	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer & Timescale	Progress so far
Further action planned	To place the sustainable development principle at the heart of considerations.	To develop a new set of wellbeing objectives for the Council, which will inform our enabling strategies.	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, People & Governance July 2023	<p>The Community and Corporate Plan will go to Council on April 20th. Once approved, our enabling strategies, the Asset Management Plan and People Strategy, will be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the revised Community and Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The development of the Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Plan and People Strategy will embed the contribution to the delivery of the seven national well-being goals and the five ways of working of the sustainable development principle (from the Future Generation Act) in its development.</p>
	To build on existing examples of working with partners by developing a more systematic approach to considering opportunities for collaboration.	To review the Asset Management Plan and People strategy, including considering opportunities for collaboration	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, People & Governance July 2023	The Asset Management Plan and People Strategy will be reviewed following the approval of the new Community and Corporate Plan. This will ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the new plan. This will consider any further opportunities for collaboration or partnership working.
	To support regular scrutiny and decision-making by elected members and help provide assurance over value for money.	To review the Asset Management Plan and People Strategy, including establishing mechanisms to evaluate delivery of the plans.	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, People & Governance July 2023	The Asset Management Plan and People Strategy will be reviewed following the approval of the Community and Corporate Plan. This will ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the

				revised plan. The development of the Asset Management Plan and People Strategy will set the outcomes planned and actions to deliver these. Mechanism to evaluate delivery of these outcomes will be established, including performance measures where relevant.
	Clarity over the Council's approach to the use of its assets to support robust decision making.	Replace the IT system with a system that incorporates the Financial Asset Register as well as providing a comprehensive solution for the effective management of property data	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services March 2024	Work in ongoing to replace the current IT system in place. A Project Team has been created to agree the specification for a new, more effective Asset Management System which will also incorporate a Financial Asset Register. Implementation is due to commence by March 2024.

Audit Wales national studies published since last update

Report	Time for Change - Poverty in Wales (November 2022)
Outline of the Review	Poverty is not a new phenomenon, and addressing and tackling poverty, especially child poverty, has been a longstanding priority for the Welsh Government and councils in Wales. The effect of poverty can be far reaching and can prevent a person from fully participating in society and from benefitting from education and life opportunities that most of us take for granted. Often people experiencing poverty will face a crisis, and it is in these times that they turn to government and council for assistance. However, the cost of living crisis means that more and more people are experiencing hardship; families who before could live comfortably are being plunged into poverty. The consequence of this is a need for government to do much more to help those struggling.

	<p>This report looks at poverty in Wales and how the government is responding. This is the first of three reviews on the challenge of alleviating and tackling poverty; the following two reports will focus on two different solutions, the first being growing and expanding social enterprises and the second being equipping people to be less reliant on the state. The full report can be found here.</p>	
<p>Audit Wales Summary</p>	<p>The first part of this report highlights how poverty is a complex, multidimensional and growing issue. People throughout Wales continue to live in poverty and the number is estimated to be rising. Our analysis shows that poverty is the single major challenge facing all tiers of government.</p> <p>The second part of this report finds that councils and work partners have prioritised work on poverty, but the mix of approaches and a complicated partnership landscape mean that ambitions, focus, actions and prioritisation vary widely. In particular, understanding need and drawing on a wide range of data to shape responses remain an area for improvement. Because the agenda is so broad, it is understandable that no council has a comprehensive anti-poverty team, and activity cuts across a range of services which can reinforce silo working. Given the complex nature of the issue, no council knows the full extent of its spending on tackling poverty. All councils are dependent on grant funding but the short-term nature of grant programmes, complex administration, weakness in guidance, grant restrictions and difficulties spending mean that funding is not having the impact it could. Also, councils find it harder to deliver preventative work because of the sheer scale of demand from people in crisis.</p> <p>Finally, this report found that only one council is formally undertaking experience mapping with service users to shape how they provide all services to help people in poverty. Despite this, councils are changing how they deliver services as a result of the pandemic and ongoing budget pressures. But the new models of delivery are not always helping people in poverty and those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. Digital exclusion remains a challenge and data shows that those in poverty find it difficult to access online services. Community hubs offer an opportunity for councils to help people at the point of crisis. Comprehensive and integrated publicity, advice and information services can significantly help people who are struggling. All councils undertake some form of assessment to determine the likely socio-economic impact of policy choices and decisions, but the approach varies and is not always effective, and most councils struggle to demonstrate the value of their work in alleviating and tackling poverty.</p>	
<p>Management Response</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>We recommend that councils use their Wellbeing Plans to provide a comprehensive focus on tackling poverty to co-ordinate their</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>The Council is currently in the process of reviewing its wellbeing objectives. These will include a focus on tackling poverty and inequality along with a measurement framework to track progress.</p>

	<p>efforts, meet local needs and support the revised national plan targets and actions. This should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include SMART local actions with a greater emphasis on prevention • include a detailed resourcing plan for the length of the strategy • be developed with involvement from other public sector partners, the third sector, and those with experience of poverty • include a robust set of consistent outcome indicators and measures to increase understanding of poverty locally • be subject to annual public reporting to enable a whole system view of poverty locally to help improve delivery and support. 	<p>In addition to the measurement framework contained within the draft Community and Corporate Plan, work is ongoing in developing a poverty dashboard to track and present up to date information on poverty and inequality in the county.</p> <p>There is a Cabinet approved tackling poverty and inequality plan in place which includes SMART local actions and preventative work currently ongoing. These actions also span across a number of different partners that the Council are working with to tackle poverty and inequality. Producing a fully costed plan was considered however, as noted in this report, it was found to be unrealistic given the complex nature of the issue and difficulties in setting a boundary to actions taken.</p> <p>The Council recognise the importance of involvement and listening to our residents; we have hosted a series of cabinet member led workshops and also hold an annual whole county poverty network event, where anyone in the community who has an interest can be involved.</p> <p>The evaluation of our progress on tackling poverty and inequality is included in our annual Well-being Assessment which can be found here.</p>
	<p>We recommend that each council designate a cabinet member as the council’s poverty champion and designate a senior officer to lead and be accountable for the anti-poverty agenda.</p>	<p>The Council has a designated equalities Cabinet member, Councillor Fookes, whose areas of responsibility include poverty and social inequality and the cost of living crisis. Further information can be found here. The Council also has already designated a senior officer, Ryan Coleman, who is accountable for the anti-poverty agenda.</p>
	<p>We recommend that councils improve their understanding of their residents’ ‘lived experience’ through meaningful involvement in decision-making using ‘experience mapping’ and/or ‘Poverty Truth Commissions’ to review and improve accessibility to and use of council services.</p>	<p>A cost of living citizens panel is currently being established as part of our draft Community and Corporate Plan. Research has previously been conducted on the lived experience of our citizens including data analysis to improve our understanding of poverty in Monmouthshire and also experience mapping to show areas of poverty. As a Council we recognise the importance of research and</p>

		data analysis however this must be done only where it can add value and actions are taken as a result of information collected.
	<p>To ensure people are able to get the information and advice they need, we recommend that councils optimise their digital services by creating a single landing page on their website that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is directly accessible on the home page • provides links to all services provided by the council that relate to poverty • provides information on the work of partners that can assist people in poverty. 	All information regarding services provided by the Council that relates to poverty and information on the work of partners that can assist people in poverty can be found here .
	<p>We recommend that councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish corporate data standards and coding that all services use for their core data • undertake an audit to determine what data is held by services and identify any duplicated records and information requests • create a central integrated customer account as a gateway to services • undertake a data audit to provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share • review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities. 	We recognise the value of this work and have tested the feasibility within our Council however given budget pressures and limited resources we are not in a position to be a market leader at this time. We will continue to watch with interest to see how others undertake this task and will consider the possibility of replicating with our available resources.
	<p>We recommend that councils review their integrated impact assessments or equivalent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that they draw on relevant, comprehensive and current data (nothing over 12 months old) to support analysis • ensure integrated impact assessments capture information on: 	<p>The poverty dashboard will provide up to date and relevant information on poverty and inequality in the county. A census dashboard has been developed which provides recently collected and published information at a county level.</p> <p>The Council's integrated impact assessments have recently been reviewed and updated to incorporate the effect on social justice</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement activity setting out those the service has engaged with in determining its strategic policy such as partners, service users and those it is co-producing with - the cumulative impact/mitigation to ensure the assessment considers issues in the round and how it links across services provided across the council - how the council will monitor and evaluate impact and will take corrective action - an action plan setting out the activities the Council will take as a result of the Integrated Impact Assessment. 	<p>and the socio-economic effect. Relevant data is also used within these assessments when appropriate.</p> <p>As a council we recognise the importance of strengthening our integrated impact assessment to ensure that challenges on actions that will have a negative socio-economic effect are brought sooner. We also recognise a need to improve how we monitor any impact on those with protected characteristics or those experiencing the effects of poverty or inequality. Better monitoring would allow us to ensure any negative effect has been successfully mitigating or that any positive actions have had the desired effect.</p>
<p>Report</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">‘A Missed Opportunity’ – Social Enterprises (December 2022)</p>	
<p>Outline of the Review</p>	<p>Overall, local authorities are not effectively working with Social Enterprises to maximise their impact, make better use of resources and improve services for people and communities. The first part of the report found that, while local authorities claim they value Social Enterprises, few have mapped their activity. Less than a third of local authorities consider themselves to have a proactive and supportive relationship with Social Enterprises and none have a dedicated strategy or policy that charts how they intend to promote and grow the sector. The report also found that Local Authorities have adopted a passive approach to Social Enterprises, responding to those that approach them but not proactively seeking to work with or help stimulate new ones.</p> <p>The second part of this report found that, while most local authorities provide grants for businesses and the third sector, they are not using them to specifically support Social Enterprises. Overly bureaucratic approaches and a lack of capacity and resources within local government limits the potential to grow the role of Social Enterprises in delivering services. Social value – the added value that commissioning processes can deliver – does not feature as a key driver for many local authorities.</p> <p>The final part of this report finds that most local authorities are not delivering their responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and effectively promoting Social Enterprises. No Director of Social Services Annual Report sets out how their authority is delivering the Section 16 duty and the majority of reports make little reference to Social Enterprises. Positively, a number of authorities are working to develop micro social enterprise businesses and Regional Partnership Boards have a growing role to drive positive change. Taken together, these represent good opportunities for the future. Despite this, over three-quarters of local authorities do not have robust performance management, reporting and evaluation systems in place to be able to judge the impact and value of the work of Social Enterprises. The full report can be found here.</p>	
	<p>Overall, local authorities are not effectively working with Social Enterprises to maximise their impact, make better use of resources and improve services for people and communities. The first part of the report found that, while local authorities claim they value Social</p>	

<p>Audit Wales Summary</p>	<p>Enterprises, few have mapped their activity. Less than a third of local authorities consider themselves to have a proactive and supportive relationship with Social Enterprises and none have a dedicated strategy or policy that charts how they intend to promote and grow the sector. The report also found that Local Authorities have adopted a passive approach to Social Enterprises, responding to those that approach them but not proactively seeking to work with or help stimulate new ones.</p> <p>The second part of this report found that, while most local authorities provide grants for businesses and the third sector, they are not using them to specifically support Social Enterprises. Overly bureaucratic approaches and a lack of capacity and resources within local government limits the potential to grow the role of Social Enterprises in delivering services. Social value – the added value that commissioning processes can deliver – does not feature as a key driver for many local authorities.</p> <p>The final part of this report finds that most local authorities are not delivering their responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and effectively promoting Social Enterprises. No Director of Social Services Annual Report sets out how their authority is delivering the Section 16 duty and the majority of reports make little reference to Social Enterprises. Positively, a number of authorities are working to develop micro social enterprise businesses and Regional Partnership Boards have a growing role to drive positive change. Taken together, these represent good opportunities for the future. Despite this, over three-quarters of local authorities do not have robust performance management, reporting and evaluation systems in place to be able to judge the impact and value of the work of Social Enterprises.</p>	
<p>Management Response</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>To get the best from their work with and funding of Social Enterprises, local authorities need to ensure they have the right arrangements and systems in place. We recommend that local authority officers use the checklist in Appendix 2 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluate current Social Enterprise engagement, management, performance and practice • identify opportunities to improve joint working • jointly draft and implement an action plan with timeframes and responsibilities clearly set out to address the gaps and weaknesses identified through the self-evaluation. <p>To drive improvement, we recommend that the local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formally approve the completed Action Plan • regularly report, monitor and evaluate performance at relevant scrutiny committees • revise actions and targets in light of the authority's evaluation and assessment of its performance. 	<p>Response</p> <p>A light touch self-evaluation will be undertaken during 2023/24 (using the checklist in Appendix 2) to identify opportunities for working more closely with social enterprises. Actions which can be progressed within current organisational capacity will be incorporated into an action plan that includes timeframes and responsibilities for implementation.</p> <p>The above action plan will be incorporated within the Service Business Plan for Economy, Employment & Skills. Performance will be monitored and reported quarterly, and actions and targets will be revised accordingly.</p>

	To ensure the local authority delivers its S.16 responsibilities to promote Social Enterprises we recommend that it reports on current activity and future priorities following the evaluation of its Action Plan including the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.	To be completed by Social Services/Performance team.
Report	A picture of flood risk management (December 2022)	
Outline of the Review	<p>In recent years, Wales has suffered devastating impacts from flooding. Despite continued investment, flooding continues to present significant risk and management costs, both of which are likely to increase as the effects of climate change become more prevalent. Extreme weather events like the storms in winter 2019-20 are likely to become more frequent but it is impossible to predict exactly where and when they will occur.</p> <p>This Picture of Flood Risk Management report explains how flood risk management works in Wales, including expenditure trends. Flood risk management is a complex area, and this report is not intended to be comprehensive. It also focuses on the management of flood risk rather than the emergency response when floods do happen. It sets out what Audit Wales consider to be some of the key issues, recognising that other commentators and review bodies will have their own perspective. The full report can be found here.</p>	
Audit Wales Summary	<p>This report found five key issues affecting flood risk management in Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant long-term investment will likely be needed to tackle the increasing flood risks associated with climate change. Tough decisions on funding will need to be made around how to invest finite resources, especially in the face of rising costs. • Increasing workforce capacity is the most immediate priority for the flooding sector. Without investment in the future flood risk management workforce, it will be difficult to achieve the ambitions in the National Strategy. A long-term, system-wide approach is needed. • There are gaps in collective leadership and policy integration. There is no Wales-wide forum for senior leaders to discuss flood risk management and drive strategic change. There are also opportunities to better integrate policy and funding arrangements across public services to improve flood risk management. • There are gaps in flood risk data and the risks themselves keep changing with climate change. Understanding the impact of flood risk management activity is difficult. Firstly, the condition of Wales's flood defences is not clear because there is currently no complete single source of information on the condition of defences owned by all parties. Secondly, climate change is changing the risks. Building developments or new flood defences can also move flood risk from one place to another. • Building development in high flood risk areas could be exposing households and businesses to avoidable flood risk. National data on planning consents shows significantly higher levels of development in high flood risk areas in 2016-17 to 2018-19 compared to 2015-16. However, beyond 2018-19 there is no national data to judge new risks resulting from development. 	
Management Response	We at Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) welcome this report and its findings. We agree with the statement that significant long-term investment will be needed, and have recently welcomed a significant increase in our revenue grant, which funds our core and	

statutory Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) duties. The increase in the revenue grant from £65k in 2018/19 to £225k in 23/24 recognises the investment needed to deliver effective flood risk management and is also in response to additional statutory duties being placed upon local authorities following the establishment of SuDS Approving Bodies in 2019. Work is currently underway to identify the work schedule for the next year, and an opportunity assessment is currently being undertaken to identify future projects to ensure that when funding becomes available, we are able to implement projects quickly and efficiently. Though this report focuses on investment in existing and new flood defences, significant investment in aging and failing highway surface water drainage infrastructure, culverts and bridges will also be needed. The decline in these assets will overtime increase flood risk.

With the effects of climate change likely to result in wetter winters and more intensive rainfall, MCC's response to flooding and our work as the LLFA will certainly increase. We have seen emergency responses to main river flooding become an annual event in recent years. In 2020 alone, 185 residential properties and over 50 commercial properties are known to have flooded internally in Monmouthshire. This followed devastating flooding just months before in October 2019 which badly affected areas such as Skenfrith and Forge Road, Monmouth. In response to those events hundreds of flood inspections have been undertaken by the LLFA team, along with the publication of twelve flood reports in line with Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Community meetings were also held in the worst affected areas such as Skenfrith, Monmouth, Caldicot, Llanbadoc, Llanwenarth and Magor, with further community level discussions held as required. In addition, specific multi-agency flood response plans have been developed for the highest risk areas of Skenfrith and Forge Road, Monmouth and an existing plan updated for Riverside Park, Monmouth. Since the aforementioned, further flood events have occurred during the subsequent winters and most recently in January 2023 when emergency arrangements were again activated for the evacuation of Riverside Park, Monmouth.

We at MCC agree that increasing workforce capacity is vital but recognise the difficulty in doing so. It is currently very challenging to recruit suitable candidates to vacancies and to create the time and resource to train new members of the team as there is currently very limited industry experience relating to flood risk management. In addition to this, there has been immense pressure on resources due to local authorities taking on new statutory duties and becoming the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) approving body. This has been detrimental to our operation of other schemes and projects. In MCC, we have had to advertise vacant posts numerous times during recent years but have been successful in recruiting two new members of staff in the past 12 months (part funded through the increased revenue grant) and are currently fully staffed. Resourcing is regular discussed at a national level and within regional flood groups made up of LLFA's & NRW etc. It is a recognised issue with key focus points being around promoting new university courses and training in-house and junior staff to develop the necessary skill set within flood risk management.

Much of Monmouthshire's flood risk comes from the main rivers, Usk, Monnow and Wye, for which Natural Resources Wales are the Risk Management Authority. Their own limited resource impacts on the deliverability of schemes within our county which are of significant importance to local communities. The Section 19 flood reports contain many recommendations for NRW to consider, progress of which has been very limited to date, partly due to their limited resource and partly due to there being greater risks that they need to consider to other more densely populated communities across Wales.

Current governance of flood risk management is set out in Welsh Government’s National Flood Strategy 2020. MCC sits on various local and national groups including the Severn Estuary Coastal Group, South East Wales Flood Risk Management Group, National SuDS Implementation Group, Gwent Internal Drainage District Advisory Group and meets regularly with the WLGA and other LLFA’s. We also feed into various consultations on flood risk policies, studies and reports, such as the work undertaken on resourcing and legislation by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee in May 2022 and September 2022 respectively. Following publication of the National Flood Strategy in October 2020, Monmouthshire’s own Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2013) and Flood Risk Management Plan (2016) are due to be updated, with a draft due by October 2023 and publication in March 2024. The relative consultation process will give elected members and senior officers with MCC opportunities to feed into MCC’s new Strategy and Plan. In addition to MCC’s Local Flood Strategy and Flood Risk management Plan, flood risk and climate change impacts are also considered in various other policies and directives such as Motion for the Rivers and Ocean, Local Development Plan, Well-being Plan and the declaration of a climate emergency. A briefing session on our flood risk management activities for all members will be held soon.

As LLFA, MCC holds records of our own drainage and flood defence assets and well as 3rd party and privately owned assets. These records are held on a bespoke database with each asset mapped. Although records of highway drainage systems are still limited, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to develop the database and to record flood defence assets and culverts. This work will be ongoing over many years funded through the revenue grant. Significant asset information is supplied to Natural Resources Wales for inclusion on the National Flood Asset Database which can be found on their website.

In terms of planning decisions, the data referred to by Audit Wales reflects figures collated for a crude WG performance indicator that does not reflect decision making at MCC. Our data shows that 164 dwellings were approved for development in flood risk areas between 2015 and 2022, however 140 of those dwellings were not themselves in the flood plain, rather a corner of the development site or a small area of, for example, the garden, was. This is due to the way the performance indicator is measures. Moreover, an additional 20 dwellings were fully compliant with strict Welsh Government planning policy on development and flood risk. The remaining 4 were granted under individual circumstances, for example the individual had the ability to re-model land to reduce the risk of flooding. No new dwellings have been put at heightened risk of flooding. Clearly looking at crude figures does not explain the fuller picture.

Report

‘Together we can’ – Community resilience and self-reliance (January 2023)

Outline of the Review

The cost of living crisis has meant that local authorities are facing more significant challenges, and again are being challenged to support people where demand for services is likely to increase alongside a decrease in capacity. This is also set against a backdrop of public spending not keeping pace with inflation. Given this situation, local authorities are showing increasing interest in encouraging and growing community resilience, i.e. equipping people to do more for themselves and be less reliant on the state. Resilience is not a new concept and has been central to how local authorities have traditionally responded to local emergencies such as flooding, natural disasters and, indeed, the pandemic.

	<p>At a time of reductions in budgets and uncertainty in public finances, the idea of equipping people to do more for themselves on a more sustained basis, is increasingly appealing. The application of resilience thinking is not, however, without its risks and challenges. While promoting resilience can be seen as a pragmatic response by local authorities faced with difficult decisions about how to use their reducing resources, it is important to recognise the limits of what might be achieved; resilience might serve as a strategy for helping communities to cope with adversity, but it cannot overturn structural inequalities and deliver solutions to generational issues like poverty alone.</p> <p>This is the final report in a series of three looking at how local government is alleviating and tackling poverty. This report focuses on the priority placed on community resilience and self-reliance in local authority plans, and how local authorities are equipping people to be less reliant on often over stretched local authority services. The full report can be found here.</p>	
<p>Audit Wales Summary</p>	<p>Overall, the report finds that local authorities face a challenging and uncertain financial future but find it difficult to empower people and communities to be more self-reliant and less dependent on services. Part 1 of this report finds that much of the current narrative on community resilience is framed by the need to respond to emergencies and civil contingency requirements. This narrow focus can lead to local authorities missing opportunities to make a broader impact and, in some cases, even unintentionally encouraging dependency. Recent Welsh Parliament legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is mapping a new direction for public service delivery. However, the report found that this has not translated into the fundamental shift with people being encouraged to do more for themselves and being less reliant on local authority services. While 19 of the 22 local authorities are prioritising community resilience, too often the work is poorly defined and the actions that underpin plans are narrowly focussed.</p> <p>Part 2 of this report notes the need to scale and speed up activity around volunteering, community asset transfers, community hubs, community empowerment and community navigators. Audit Wales acknowledges that the shift in emphasis from local authorities doing less and requiring others to do more is not easy to achieve, and notes that there are also significant barriers to overcome, within both local authorities and communities. Capacity, resources and skills are scarce, people are facing tougher choices and struggling to cope with the cost-of-living crisis. Communities and local authorities themselves also have different abilities and are starting from different places with their own unique challenges to overcome. Positively, as a result of COVID-19, there is a huge amount of goodwill and commitment within communities that local authorities can build on and use. However, the view of partners and stakeholders spoken to for the report suggests that some local authority services are returning to their pre-pandemic ways of working and the opportunity to shift to being an ‘influencer’ and ‘enabler’ rather than ‘direct provider’ is potentially being wasted.</p>	
<p>Management Response</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>To strengthen community resilience and support people to be more self-reliant, local authorities need to ensure they have the right arrangements and systems in place. We recommend that local authorities use the evaluation tool in Appendix 2 to:</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>As a Council we recognise the importance of community resilience and self-reliance and encouraging it among communities. However, matters such as these are complex, and we are continually developing our understanding of these which will go beyond the use of the evaluation tool.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluate current engagement, management, performance and practice; • identify where improvement is needed; and • draft and implement an action plan with timeframes and responsibilities clearly set out to address the gaps and weaknesses identified in completing the evaluation tool. 	<p>A Communities and Social Justice Team action plan is currently being drafted and is due to be completed in April. This sets out the team’s purpose and how we work, from building and sharing knowledge to creating healthy conditions for communities to thrive. It will also set out our actions for the next financial year, with responsibility holders and timescales.</p>
	<p>To help local authorities address the gaps they identify following their self-evaluation, we recommend that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formally approve the completed Action Plan arising from the evaluation exercise; • regularly report, monitor and evaluate performance at relevant scrutiny committees; and • revise actions and targets in light of the authority’s evaluation and assessment of its performance. 	<p>The action plan will be clearly aligned with relevant council plans, e.g. the draft Community and Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan. This will form part of the council’s service business plan process for monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>The action plan will be updated quarterly with updates on planned actions, key performance indicators and a self-evaluation completed each financial year.</p>

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SUBJECT: WHOLE AUTHORITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

MEETING: Governance & Audit Committee

DATE: 30 March 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All Wards

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Governance and Audit committee with an overview on the number and types of complaints, comments and compliments received and dealt with from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2022 relating to our whole authority complaints procedure and the Social Services complaints procedure.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee use the reports in Appendix 1 and 2 to seek assurance about the effectiveness of the authority's processes for dealing with complaints and compliments.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Whole Authority Complaints and Compliments

- 3.1 Our Whole Authority Complaints and Compliments policy and procedure follows the Model that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales asked each local authority to adopt in 2011.
- 3.2 The whole authority procedure has two stages; **the informal resolution stage** and the **formal investigation stage**. The informal resolution stage aims to resolve the complaint locally wherever possible by means of discussion and problem solving. If it is not possible to resolve the concern, the matter is escalated to the formal investigation stage.
- 3.3 Where initial discussions have not achieved a resolution, complainants have the right to make a formal complaint. Investigations are undertaken and the complainant receives a full response detailing findings, conclusions and any recommendations made. This is the end of the internal process.
- 3.4 Complainants can contact the Public Services Ombudsman if they still remain dissatisfied. The Ombudsman provides an external independent service to consider complaints about all local authority services. The Ombudsman is concerned with maladministration causing injustice and will normally require complainants to have used their local council's procedures before accepting a complaint for investigation. This Committee received the

Ombudsman's annual letter for 2021-22 in January which showed that the number of complaints received about Monmouthshire was 0.21 per 1000 residents, below the average for Welsh local authorities of 0.25.

- 3.5 This report also covers comments received. This is feedback from members of the public about service quality which does not require formal resolution and therefore isn't counted as a stage one complaint but still requires a significant commitment of staff time and generates useful learning. The number of comments increased by 20% from 379 in 2020-21, to 455 in 2021-22.
- 3.6 The service areas receiving the largest number of complaints are waste and street services; development management and planning policy and highways. Services such as waste and highways are used by all households throughout the year and have the largest number of customer interactions so it is not surprising that this is where the largest volume of complaints arise. Further details are shown in Appendix 1 to this report along with a representative selection of comments and compliments.
- 3.7 Work is ongoing to improve processes in areas where officers have identified the highest volume of service requests relating to services, for example, missed refuse. This work is not about improving the complaints process itself but does give an indication of some of things being done to improve customer satisfaction.

Social Services Representations and Complaints

- 3.8 This report also includes social services complaints which are enclosed as Appendix 2. It is a statutory requirement that Local Authority Social Services are required to operate a complaints procedure that follows the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and The Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- 3.9 The guidance on handling complaints and representations by local authority social services state that we must publish an annual report on the handling and statistical information relating to the complaints and representations we've dealt with. The guidance also states that the Annual report should be discussed at the appropriate Committee.
- 3.10 There are two stages to the Social Services complaints procedure: **Stage One Local Resolution and Stage Two Formal Consideration**. The emphasis at stage one is to resolve the complaint by means of discussion and problem solving, whilst adhering to the 17 working days response time that has been imposed under the Regulations.
- 3.11 Stage Two the formal consideration stage is where the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, and they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by the external investigating officer appointed to the case. The timescale for dealing with Stage Two is 25 working days.
- 3.12 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

- 3.13 In Children's Services the number of stage 1 complaints are generally the same as last year with 3 complaints dealt with at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. The trend running through the complaints relates to staffing and communication issues which features in most of the complaints. Again, this remains consistent with previous years.
- 3.14 In Adult Services the numbers of Stage 1 complaints have stayed more or less the same as last year. However, stage 2 complaints have doubled. There's no particular trend of complaint, apart from issues with communication and quality of services.

Learning from Complaints

- 3.15 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 changes of the same problem occurring again. It's important that services use the findings from complaints investigations and customer feedback, alongside data and other evidence, to prioritise improvements. Managers receive action plans after formal complaints are investigated that outline the recommendations made and for them to respond and implement them as part of the resolution of the complaint.
- 3.16 The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales provides online training sessions for local authorities on communication skills, handling complaints and investigation skills. This ensures that our staff are trained to deal with complaints in line with the authority's policy and best practice identified nationally. 120 staff have attended the training sessions so far with more sessions programmed. However, as officer capacity becomes increasingly stretched it is becoming more difficult to identify people to conduct investigation which can affect the timeliness of this work.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 4.1 There are no alternative options associated with the recommendations in this report.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 5.1 The effectiveness of a complaints process is not always easy to assess. A low number of complaints may mean that an organisation has made it too difficult to complain or that customers see little point in doing so. A very high number of complaints could be a sign of real problems. For this reason, it is important to look at trends over time rather than any one year in isolation. One of the key metrics which does give a good indication of effectiveness is the number of complaints that cannot be resolved by the authority and which require determination by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.
- 5.2 The related issue of service quality sits alongside this and is inter-linked since, if we are learning from complaints, our systems and processes should improve and we should receive better feedback and see less issues being logged. Again, this needs to be

balanced against improvements in technology which have made it easier to report issues via app and chatbot as well as the traditional method of phone and e-mail.

6. REASONS:

To ensure that Members are aware of the types of complaints, comments and compliments received and dealt with.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Whole Authority Complaints and Compliments. There are no extra resource implications associated with the recommendations of the report. The management of the complaints process is done within existing budgets. Where officers from other departments are used to conduct investigations it will take them away from their regular roles but there is not a direct salary cost.

Social Services. The legislation requires that external independent investigating officers must be appointed for formal Stage 2 investigations. There is an existing budget for this work and we will endeavour to keep within the budget expenditure. However, we cannot forecast how many complaints will be made.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING and CORPORATE PARENTING):

There are no specific implications that have been identified in respect of this proposal.

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Heads of Service

10. AUTHOR:

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

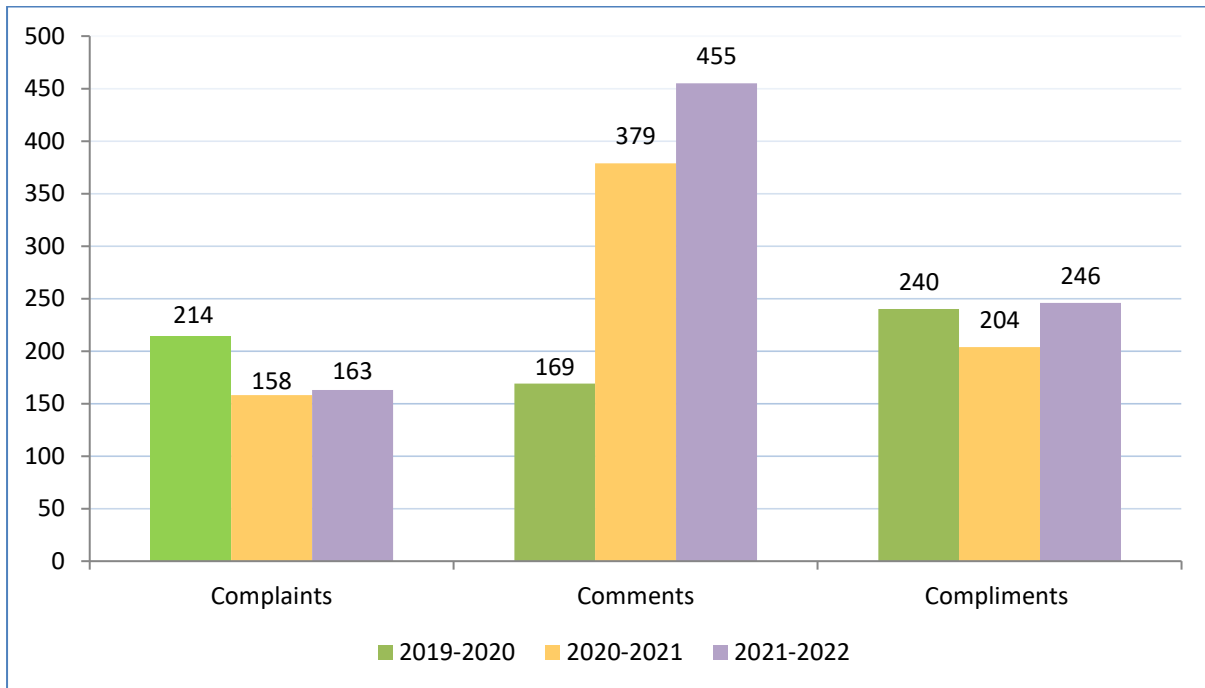
11. CONTACT DETAILS

Tel: 01633 644647

Email: annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Whole Authority Customer Feedback April 2021 – March 2022

The following table shows the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each of the three years to March 2022.



Each of these is covered in more detail below:

A. Complaints

163 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2022. This is 24% lower than 2019-2020 with the highest number being in the first quarter and the number declining each subsequent quarter.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
60	46	30	27	163

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

156 Complaints were started

Examples of the most common aspects of services complained about:

Waste & Street Services

- Repeated missed bin and food waste collections; irregularity of collections, non-delivery of garden waste bags, non-collection of garden waste
- Staff conduct

- Recycling Centres booking systems

Development Management & Planning Policy

- Lack of responses to communications
- Staff conduct
- Handling of planning application / Delay in planning permission
- Issues with enforcement procedures / lack of action
- Issues with new housing development

Highways

- Lack of responses to communications
- Problem with blocked drains / flooding issues
- Staff conduct
- Condition of lanes / roads
- Street lighting
- Speeding in lanes

Others

- Exclusion from Housing register
- Concerns with passenger transport permits
- Environmental issues e.g., vermin at properties
- Inconsistent use of Homelessness policy
- Council tax debts

A more detailed breakdown of the subject of stage one complaints by department is shown in the table below.

The directorate receiving the largest number of complaints is Communities and Place. This is understandable as it delivers the largest number of universal services that will be received by all households. In many cases these will have multiple contact points over the course of a year.

In highways and flood management the most common cause of complaints is communication making up 16% of stage one complaints in the directorate. The most common cause of complaints in Recycling and Waste relates to service quality accounting for 44% of complaints relating to the directorate.

Distribution of Stage 1 Complaints

	Informal received							Formal received			
	Total	Access to Service	Communication Issue	Discrimination	Quality of Service	Staff Conduct	Timescales	Total	Quality of Service	Staff Conduct	Result of Process
Overall Total	156	2	37	2	92	22	1	12	9	1	2
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	3				3						
Resources not allocated	2		1		1						
Total Resources	5		1		4						
Catering	1				1						
Development Management & Planning Policy	18		2		13	3		6	5		1
Highways Operations and SWTRA	11		10		1						
Highways and Flood Management	23		22			1					
Housing and Homelessness	5				3	2		1	1		
Passenger Transport Unit	6				6			3	2		1
Recycling and Waste	73	1	1		60	11		1	1		
Total Communities and Place	137	1	35		84	17		11	9		2
MonLife - Green Infrastructure and Countryside	1						1				
MonLife - Leisure	1				1						
MonLife	2				1		1				
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	1			1							
Total Chief Executive	1			1							
Local Democracy	1	1									
People and Governance	1	1									
Animal Health & Trading Standards								1		1	
Environmental Health - Public Health	4				3	1					
Total Social Care & Health	4				3	1		1		1	
Not allocated to any SIP	1		1								
External	5			1		4					
Total Other	6		1	1		4					

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

12 Formal complaints received

- 6 were escalated from stage 1
- 6 were new complaints that began at stage 2

Those investigations which have concluded are concerned matters relating to:

- The development of 130 houses over two large fields, the work started by the contractor and the alleged failure of the Planning department to take action against them when presented with evidence about the conduct of the developer.
There were 10 elements to the complaint and they were not upheld.
- The lack of provision of free transport to the complainant's child's chosen school and that no confirmation was provided by the Passenger Transport Unit that free transport would be provided to any alternative schools.
The complaint was not upheld.
- Enforcement duties in relation to alleged breach of planning rules concerning the conversion of a flat on farmland.
The complaint was not upheld.
- The complaint concerns a planning approval which the complainant believes the planning officers were misled in the presented.
The complainant did not continue with their complaint.
- Antagonistic inspections & damaging relationships concerning a breeding licence inspection.
The complaint was not upheld.
- That MCC Housing Options Team did not do all they could to assist the complainants throughout the process of a Possession Notice to remove the tenant from their property.
There were 6 elements to the complaint, 5 were not upheld and one was upheld.
- Passenger Transport unit - The use of S19 and S22 permits. Alleged that contracts are being run using the wrong licence, ultimately compromising public safety and having a detrimental effect on already correctly licenced operators in Monmouthshire.

There were 5 elements to the complaint, one was partially upheld and 5 were not upheld.

The majority of our complaints are in relation to recycling and waste and highways, the front facing services. Despite the legacy of the pandemic and that 44,000

households and 500 businesses are serviced by these teams each year, they have managed to provide a service during such challenging times and responded to the complaints and comments made as quickly as possible.

The complaints received were generally on a par with those in 2020-21, although the stage 2 formal investigations decreased slightly. Comments rose by 20% and pleasingly, so did the compliments with 246 received.

The PSOW provided 9 free online training sessions for us on communication skills, handling complaints and investigation skills. 120 staff have attended the training sessions so far with more sessions programmed for next year. Hopefully this training will equip staff to be complainant focused, fair and objective when dealing with our customers and endeavour to resolve issues in a timely, effective manner.

The lessons learned from complaints is very important and we always do our best to try and learn from what went wrong and improve services for the future. Managers receive action plans after formal complaints are investigated that outline the recommendations made and for them to respond and implement them as part of the resolution of the complaint. Some of the specific service improvements made are contained in section E of this report.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Of the above informal complaints, two complainants contacted the PSOW, whose decision was not to investigate.

One complaint was referred to us via the PSOW which we investigated at stage 1

A separate report containing the PSOW's findings in relation to complaints about Monmouthshire County Council was reported separately to both Cabinet and Governance and Audit Committee. It showed that Monmouthshire has one of the lowest levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.21 per 1,000 residents. This ranges from 0.20 to 0.72 with an average of 0.36

Social Services Complaints

Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. 40 complaints were received, 84 comments and 111 compliments were made about the service during April 2021 – March 2022.

B. Comments

455 comments were received in the year ending 31 March 2022 which is more than double the number received in 2019-20. These issues are important as they help

the authority understand where problems may be arising that do not meet the threshold of a complaint but where action may be necessary to prevent issues arising in future.

Compared to complaints, the numbers are more evenly distributed over the year

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
109	122	111	113	455

A selection of comments received concerned:

Waste and Street Services

- HWRC sites – difficulties with booking systems, staff conduct.
- Issues with website regarding purchasing garden bags
- Flytipping issues
- Assisted collections being missed
- Inconsistent collections
- Rubbish left after refuse collections
- Not receiving a collection service
- Maintenance of greens and verges / lack of grass cutting
- Not enough bins at markets
- Damaged bins

Highways

- No notification beforehand of works being carried out or road closures in Chepstow
- Issues with traffic lights in Usk
- Condition of roads
- Car parking tickets
- Road closures in Grosmont
- Parking of vehicles on pavements
- Lack of disabled kerbs on roads
- Moving of disabled parking spaces in car park at Chepstow Castle
- Issues regarding 20mph restrictions
- No traffic management where road closed and blocked
- Speed of traffic
- No signage regarding works in Tintern
- High street changes in Chepstow
- Proposed car park in Monmouth
- Trees being cut down
- Potholes not completed properly
- Blocked gulleys

MonLife

- Swimming lessons cancelled
- Asked to wait outside during inclement weather
- Website showing wrong details for family swimming
- Unable to cancel membership without penalties
- Restricted number on amount of people swimming
- Lack of single sex swimming changing facilities
- Dirty state of swimming changing areas
- Classes cancelled / rearranged from timetable

Other

- Query regarding food markets and Christmas markets in Monmouth town centre
- Council tax, issues with online portal
- Issues with automated telephone service for payments
- Issues with winter payments / isolation payments
- Issues with public toilets in Abergavenny / Tintern
- Comments on the Replacement Local Development plan and access to RLDP documents
- Concerns for an amusement arcade in the centre of Monmouth's historic town
- Not happy with planning processes
- Comments concerning the telephony system eg no queue number waiting system / waiting times to get through
- Issue with renewing library books online
- Concerns regarding MyMon booking system
- Absence of dog warden across Monmouthshire

The breakdown is as follows:

Overall Total	455
Landlord Services	3
Digital Design and Innovation	12
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	10
Total Resources	25
Building Control	13
Business and Enterprise	1
Cleaning	2
Communication, Engagement and Marketing	1
Development Management & Planning Policy	11
Highways and Flood Management	44
Highways Operations and SWTRA	22
Housing and Homelessness	3
Passenger Transport Unit	2
Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds)	258
Enterprise not allocated	5

Total Communities and Place	362
Caldicot Castle and Country Park	1
Leisure	13
Total MonLife	14
People and Governance not allocated	2
Total People and Governance	2
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	8
Policy & Performance	3
Total Chief Executive	11
Animal Health & Trading Standards	2
Licensing	1
Environmental Health - Public Health	6
Total Social Care & Health	9
Future Schools Teams	1
CYP Not allocated	1
Total Children & Young People	2
General – whole MCC	1
External	29
Total Other	30

C. Compliments

246 Compliments were received in the year to 31st March 2022 which is broadly consistent with the number received in 2019-20. The highest number were received in quarter 1

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
90	55	40	61	246

A selection of compliments received:

A range of compliments about the whole of the Council was received – staff thanked for their professionalism, their quick responses, their efficiency and helpful service.

Building Control send out a satisfaction feedback after providing a service and therefore a large number of compliments are received about their advice given and efficient service.

Waste & Street Services

Although we received a large amount of complaints and comments regarding this service, we also received compliments, a selection below:

- “Please may I take this opportunity to thank Monmouthshire council for the continued excellent service you provide.”
- “I have had several opportunities to experience the varied services you provide, and almost all have been dealt with professionally and in a timely manner.”
- “Please say a big thank you for removing the flytippinging.”
- “Weed removal and power washing in Cormeilles Square. They are very pleasant and polite and this has been noticed by many.”
- “Thanks and congratulations on the no-mow policy in Belgrave Park and Abergavenny generally. The new signage is excellent and the grassland looks fantastic despite the cold wet weather. I’m noticing a big increase in bird life feeding in the park itself now there is food and cover. A massive thanks to you and your team”.
- “Rubbish and overgrown weeds and growth on the lane behind Sycamore Avenue leading to the garages. All residents agree an excellent job has been done by the Council . They really appreciate it.”
- “Thank you for arranging to cut the grass on the riverbank it makes such a difference”.
- “Guys on the collection run resolved the issue quickly and with really good customer service”.
- “Thanks to those responsible with looking after the town centre, in particular green spaces. There has been a noticeable improvement over the last few years and the number and quality of planters and green space changes is much appreciated. I am sure this has had a direct result on the commerce and thriving nature of the town.”
- “Praise for the wild flower verges and areas down by Usk river and which has also seen footpaths artfully cut through the foliage and that includes mown circled areas within this for families to picnic.”
- “I always like to praise as well as criticise. So a bouquet to the council contractor who cut the verge. All the way to the end of the drive. Cleared the road that was getting overgrown. And cut back the hedge on the corner, it has not been trimmed for 3 or 4 years.”
- “Pleased with having my garden waste bin delivered one week after ordering it, and that the man who delivered also wheeled it up to the top of the drive for me.”
- “Outstanding member of staff at Llanfoist Cemetery. Thank you, he was so helpful today. Went out of his way to discover location of a grave.”

Highways

- “A grand job on the work on Walnut Lane. The workers were very accommodating for us when we had to access and egress.”
- “Thank you for your efforts and the team/supply chain, on Friday and over the weekend to get the A465 reopened at Llanguna following the lorry incident.
- “The tarmac repair job they are doing in School Road is excellent”.

- “Just to say a big thankyou to you and your highways team for filling in the holes on the road to my home”
- Thank your employees for the work they did last month on the landslide/drainage problem on Heol Gerrig, Ilanellen, above the canal bridge.
- “The team that came to do the work on our lane in both areas did an excellent job and were really friendly and helpful too.”
- “Pot holes Pentre Lane / Llanwenarth Breast Lane, can you please pass on my thanks to the team, for the above works.”
- “M4 J32 Incident 20.07.21. Please pass on our thanks to the team involved in undertaking these repairs in a very short period of time and during the current heat wave”
- “M186 - Bryn-y-Gwenin, thanks for the new road surface. Your workers were great, friendly, accommodating and helpful. New road is lovely.”
- “Many thanks for the prompt attention to mud slide on B4293 between Devauden and Itton reported yesterday afternoon. Possible accident averted.”
- “I would like to say thank you, to those who helped over the past few days with regards Storm Dudley and Eunice. It was a great effort by all and I certainly learnt a lot during the time.”
- “Reporting a fallen tree during Storm Eunice. Wanted to report how impressed with the team they were - turned up about 2 hours after reporting the tree fallen and very impressed with how quick they were in responding to that call.”

Mon Life / Youth Service / Green Infrastructure and Countryside

- So many praises for Youth Work week.
- “Thank you for everything you’ve done for me.”
- “Just wanted to thank you and all the team for making X’s day with you on Saturday so successful”
- “I wanted to thank you and the team. X had the best time on the expedition last week.”
- “My Daughter has spent that past two days with you completing her bronze DofE. I just wanted to thank you and all the volunteers.”
- “Thank you so much for organising the boys gold practice D of E over May Half term. I think with everything everyone has been through to spend time away with friends in the outdoors was exactly what he needed.”
- “Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic and when the restrictions were first lifted right through to now the leisure centre has worked tirelessly hard to make myself and others feel safe whilst acknowledging that the staff are kept safe too. All staff from those on reception, the house keeping, fitness instructors and the management have worked well and I feel it is very important that their hard work is acknowledged.”
- “We recently had two week's intensive swimming lessons for our Year 5 and 6 pupils. This was an amazing opportunity for a bit of normality for the children and the staff at the Leisure Centre followed all the COVID regulations to make this a successful two weeks for the children. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.”

- “I would like to take the time to share my experience of the combined MON Leisure and GP Referral Scheme as for me it has proved to be an excellent and extremely beneficial system for both my mental and physical wellbeing. Covid 19 has had a devastating impact on many people's lives and to have the facilities of the leisure centre and the support of its staff has been vital for me. All staff have made an incredible effort to ensure that the Leisure Centre facilities are immaculately clean and safe.”
- “Having spent three months over the summer of 2021 walking the whole of the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path self supported I felt compelled to write and thank you. From here we went north to Prestatyn where we picked up the coast path all the way to Chepstow. What an amazing journey! Thank you to everyone who worked to establish the path and all those who continue to promote and maintain it.”
- “Thank you for getting the footpath cleared. They did a wonderful job and left it not only looking better than I have ever seen it but their work was so tidy.”

Others

- Thanks for assistance / advice with planning applications
- “Using your online directory I was able to report some fly tipping near to my house, and this afternoon I get an e mail to say it has now been dealt with. Now that is impressive.”
- “I don't know if you have any way of recognising good performance within Trading Standards, if you have I would like to thank you for excellent customer service provided.”
- “Excellent solution from grumpy to positive situation. Friendly and found a solution to the situation, was really knowledgeable and helped as much as possible.”
- Many thanks for your quick response and for attending to this today, we really appreciate it.'
- “We appreciate that the years we've been working with you on this application have been a hectic time for the council, but whenever we have received advice, it has always been well thought out and helpful.”

A breakdown of compliments by directorate is shown below:

Overall Total	246
Digital Design and Innovation	1
Total Resources	1
Building Control	65
Development Management & Planning Policy	4
Highways and Flood Management	1
Highways Operations and SWTRA	18
Housing and Homelessness	1
Passenger Transport Unit	1
Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds)	61

Enterprise not allocated	2
Total Community and Place	153
Green Infrastructure & Countryside	2
Leisure	6
Youth Service	74
Total MonLife	82
Legal	1
Total People and Governance	1
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	6
Total Chief Executive	6
Animal Health & Trading Standards	1
SCH Not Allocated	1
Total Social Care & Health	2
External	1
Total Other	1

Requests for service

These are recorded and acted upon:

Overall Total	28
Development Management & Planning Policy	1
Highways and Flood Management	5
Highways Operations and SWTRA	3
Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds)	12
Enterprise not allocated	1
Total Enterprise	22
Green Infrastructure & Countryside	1
Total MonLife	1
Environmental Health – Public Health	3
Total Social Care & Health	3
External	2
Total Other	2

D. Response Timescales

Our policy for responding to complaints at stage 1 is **10 working days** and for stage 2 formal investigation is **20 working days** plus a further **10 working days** for Heads of Service to respond to the report's findings.

62% stage 1 complaints were responded to in this timescale compared to 72% in the previous year

42% of stage 2 complaints were responded to in this timescale compared with 41% in the previous year

Whole Authority Timescales	2020/21		2021/22	
	Stage 1	Stage2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	109	0	96	2
11 – 30 working days	36	7	48	3
30+ working days	6	10	12	7
Total	151	17	156	12

Analysis of Complaints / Comments

Year	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Comments	Compliments
2021-22	156	12	455	246
2020-21	151	17	379	204
2019-20	207	13	169	240
2018-19	132	14	187	180
2017-18	76	13	123	189

E. Service improvements

Complaints are generally resolved on an individual basis. Most formal investigation reports make recommendations for improvements to processes. These are followed up to ensure the recommendations are addressed.

Here are some examples where recommendations have been made for changes to practices / processes / procedures, as a result of people making complaints.

Apologies given where appropriate.

Officers to advise residents in a timely manner when something is not the responsibility of the local authority and direct the resident to the most appropriate avenue to deal with their issue e.g. Developer.

For large developments that are seen as controversial in the neighbouring communities, the Planning Authority will add an informative to its decisions to encourage the developer to engage with residents prior to and throughout the construction of the site

MCC to consider updating Transport Policy to clarify the definition of suitable school. The Rule Book and Transport Policy will be amended prior to the commencement of the school year 2022/23

Consideration is given to including a guidance note/FAQs on the Housing Options Team 'Information for Landlords' webpage setting out the Council's remit in relation to the private rented sector

An application has been made for the Section 19 large bus permit and as soon as this is received then the "O" licence will be relinquished.

Review the Transport Policy, stipulating the rules on transport to ensure it is up to date and in line with the new large bus permit. The drivers handbook to be reviewed to align with the H2S rule book and the wider Transport Policy.

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

November 2022



**SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH
CUSTOMER RELATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT
REPRESENTATION AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have in place a Representation and complaints procedure for Social Services under The Social Services Complaints Procedures (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- 1.2 All local authority social services are required to produce an annual report on the operation of handling and investigation of complaints and representations.
- 1.3 This report presents information relating to comments, compliments and complaints received during 2021-2022 for social services.

2 Listening to our Service Users

- 2.1 Everyone who makes a complaint about social services has a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively.
- 2.2 Despite our best intentions, things can go wrong. We recognise this and the representation and complaints procedure provides the opportunity for people to voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied so that the issue can be sorted to their satisfaction wherever possible; make compliments and suggest improvements.

3 Social Services Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 The complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage 1 Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage is to resolve the complaint locally wherever possible by means of discussion and problem solving.

This approach should allow for the quick and successful resolution of most complaints, to the satisfaction of the complainant. The emphasis is on achieving service user satisfaction rather than avoiding a formal investigation.

Stage 2 Formal Investigation - Where initial discussions have not achieved a resolution, complainants have the right to make a formal complaint. Investigations are undertaken and are subject to statutory time limits for completion of the investigation (25 working days). The complainant receives a full response detailing findings, conclusions and recommendations.

If the complaint or representation is not resolved at the Formal Investigation stage, the complainant has the right to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

3.2 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman provides an external independent service to consider complaints about all local authority services including social services. The Ombudsman is concerned with maladministration causing injustice and will normally require complainants to have used their local council's procedures before accepting a complaint for investigation.

4 Making a complaint

General advice about the procedure can be found in our complaints leaflet “How to be heard”. Alternatively, people can contact the Customer Relations team for help and advice about how to make a complaint.

Translations of the representation and complaints procedure can be provided on request and we can also arrange interpretation services where required.

We can arrange for advocacy services to be provided for complainants in some cases.

Our aim is to secure a better service for people and we are:

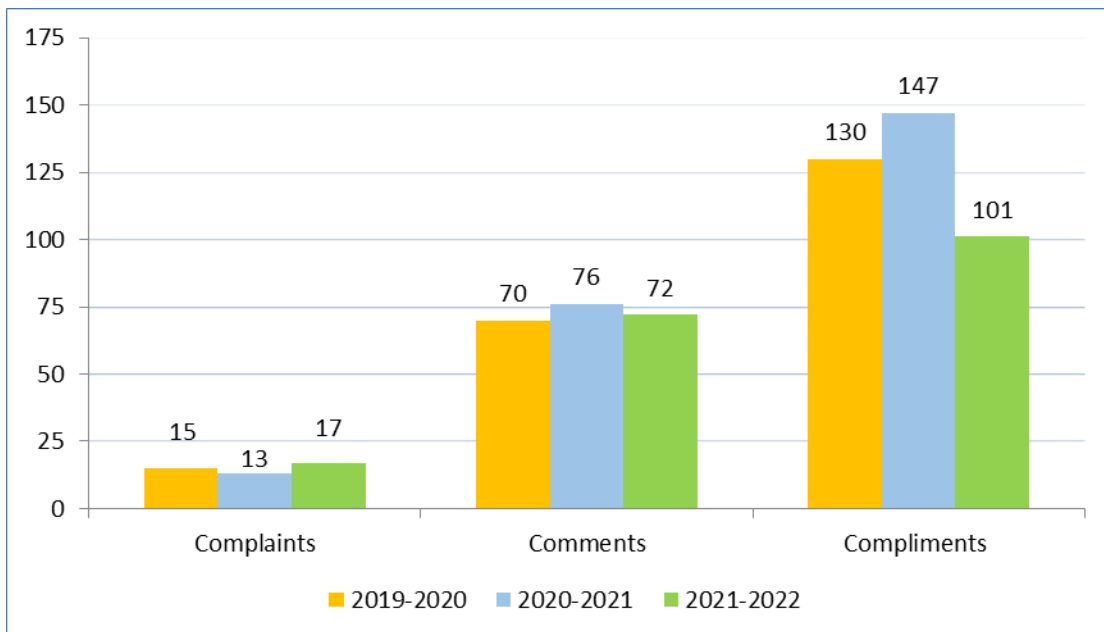
- Accessible and supportive to those with particular needs
- Prompt and responsive with resolution at the earliest possible time
- Operate without prejudice or discrimination

5 How many complaints / comments / compliments were made

The following table shows the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each of the three years to March 2022 concerning **Adult Services**.

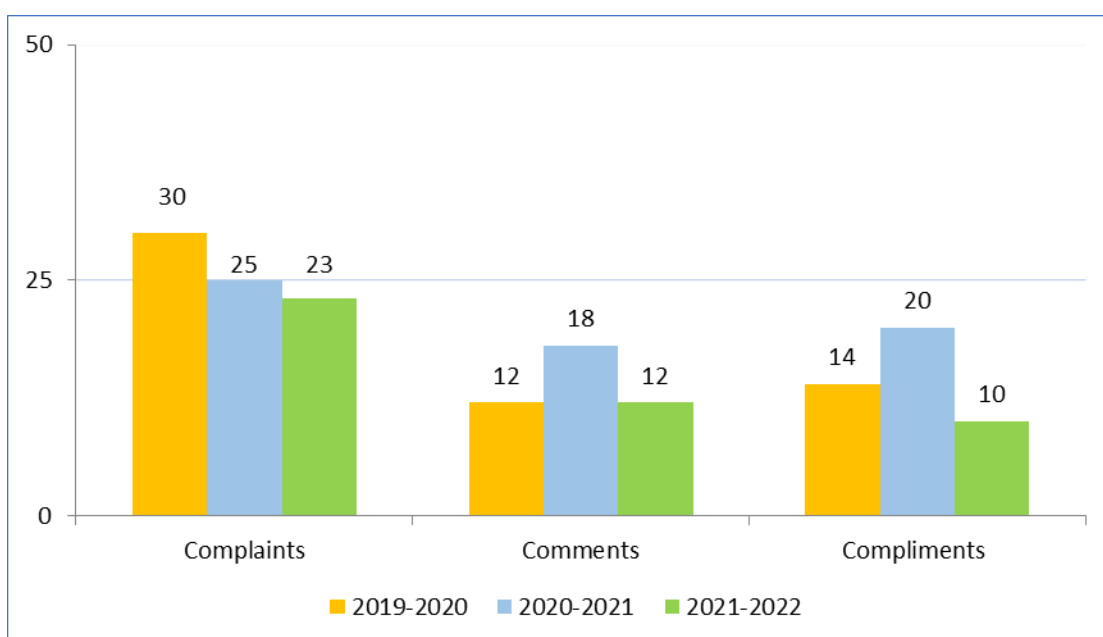
17 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2022.

This is slightly higher than 2019-2021 when 15 complaints were made.



The chart below covers the last three years up to March 2022 concerning **Children’s Services**.

23 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2022. This is lower than 2019-20 when 30 complaints were made.



6 Adult Services Complaints

6.1 17 complaints have been received about Adult's Services for this set period.

13 complaints were registered at Stage 1.

11 complaints were either resolved or no further contact made at Stage 1 the local resolution stage.

Below are examples of complaints about services:

- Communication issues
- Concerns regarding decision making
- Staff conduct
- Issues concerning respite care
- Handling of safeguarding issues
- Case handling
- Lack of service and support
- Concerns regarding financial assessment
- Quality of care received

A breakdown of Adult Services complaints by each section is shown in the table below.

Distribution YTD

	Informal					Formal				
	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Abergavenny Integrated Services	2	1		1		1	1			
Chepstow and Caldicot Integrated Services	3	2	1							
External Provider	1	1								
Finance	1				1					
MH Team North Over 65						2			2	
MH Team North Under 65	1		1							
MH Team South Over 65	2		1		1	2		1		1
Monmouth Integrated Service	1	1								
My Day My Life						1				1
Safeguarding	1		1							
Severn View Respite	1	1								
Total	13	6	4	1	2	6	1	1	2	2

7. Children Services Complaints

7.1 23 complaints have been received about Children's Services for this set period.

22 stage 1 complaints were started.

20 complaints were either resolved or no further contact made at Stage 1 the local resolution stage.

Some examples of the most common aspects of services complained about were:

- Concern with decisions made
- Staff conduct
- Lack of communication
- Alleged failure to adhere to process
- Alleged poor level of support
- Issues with contact arrangements
- Concerns regarding the actions taken
- Alleged inaccuracies in case recordings

A breakdown of Children's Social Services complaints by each section is shown in the table below.

Distribution YTD

	Informal					Formal				
	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Children with disabilities	6	2	2	1	1	1		1		
Early Help and Assessment Team	8	3	2	1	2	1	1			
Families Together Team	1	1								
Family Support and Protection Team	6	1	1	3	1	1				1
Long Term Support Team	1		1							
Total	22	7	6	5	4	3	1	1		1

8. Stage 2 Complaints relating to Adult Services

8.1 6 complaints were dealt with at the formal investigation stage.

Two complaints escalated from stage 1 and there were 4 complaints that proceeded directly to Stage 2.

- One complaint was raised regarding due process not being followed before appropriate hospital discharge arrangements were achieved and the lack of safeguards when a capacity and Best Interests assessment could not be undertaken. The complaint was upheld.
- One complaint was withdrawn by the complainant.
- One complaint concerned the prolonged delay in a copy of the needs assessment and care plan for their relative. Issues relating to the capital sale of relative's property for funding residential care. One element of the complaint was upheld and one element of the complaint was not upheld.
- One complaint concerned a complainant who had additional learning needs being excluded from the service. There were a number of elements to this complaint and they were not upheld.
- One complaint concerned barely existent communication, financial and contractual arrangements; not informed of best interest assessment and no carer's assessment. Two elements of the complaint were partially upheld and one element was upheld.
- One complaint concerned redressing omissions in the stage 1 report. Issues concerning the alleged lack of person-centred care. Issues concerning alternative care options and the quality of the mental health act assessment. The complaints were upheld.

9. Stage 2 Complaints relating to Children's Services

9.1 3 complaints were dealt with at the formal investigation stage.

- One complaint proceeded straight to stage 2

Social Services failed to adhere to process when conducting their safeguarding investigations. Complainant felt that the Child Protection report prepared by the Social Worker contained inaccuracies and bias.

There were many elements to the complaint, 6 points were not upheld, 9 points were partially upheld and 4 points were upheld.

- Two complaints progressed from stage 1 to stage 2

One related to the complainant who considered that the social worker's practice was unprofessional, and that the social worker had defamed the complainant's character by wilfully wrongly accusing her of being a safety risk to her grandson. The complainant considered that the team manager, had not provided the complainant with formal explanation as to why the complainant was deemed a risk to her grandchild's safety.

There were 22 elements to the complaint and they were not upheld.

Another complaint related to the complainant's concern that the outcome and recommendations made in a report were dismissed by the social worker. The complainant said his daughter was not informed by the social worker that she was entitled to a re-assessment with regard to the longer-term care of his granddaughter. The complainant felt that the practice and performance of staff has fallen below the standard expected.

4 elements of the complaint were not upheld and three were upheld.

9.2 Complaints made by children and young people

Most complaints concerning Children's Services are from parents/carers. There were no complaints received from children and young people.

10 Comments relating to Adult Services

- 10.1 72 comments were received in 2021-22, 2 more than in 2019-20. These include comments received from the Community Care questionnaire that is sent to regular and new users of social care and comments made to our Commissioning team.

The higher numbers of comments received related to Independent Domiciliary care providers which highlighted the continued pressure on those providers as a result of COVID and staff shortages.

Below are a selection of comments made:

- Need more access to the local Mencap Centre.
- I would like fewer changes in personnel and for them to come more often. I need more time to get time to get things done and to think about what I need. My eyesight

and hearing have gotten worse. I have lost most other visitors to my home so very reliant on the carer visit.

- Due to lack of staff when support worker is on leave provision can be challenging
- Some of the care is with a private provider. Most of the time it is the same people, but occasionally the care rota is changed without notice or any reason given.
- I need care during nights and at times during the day. No OT has visited to assess me
- Due to the pandemic has not attended day services and not received any information about when it is starting up again
- I was given set times for morning and evening care. Then without prior notice those times have now been changed. It is not too much of a problem but it would have been nice to be told of the changes.
- In respect of carers, I think local councils should issue them with some form of parking exemption, as I feel their jobs are demanding enough without the extra stress of trying to park near to clients without worry of being given a tickets.
- Uncertainty over my financial situation affects the level of care I would like to have.
- We stopped care as never knew when or if they would come which is not good enough as we were charged.
- Meals on Wheels are quite often delayed and not what I ordered giving me food I do not eat e.g. Vegetarian.
- I would like to be communicated with a little bit better.
- No care available on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. I have to rely on family.
- My Father is getting good support but sometimes care has not been available and short notice given. If he was totally on his own this would not be acceptable
- I am unable to do the things that are important to me, because support from social care has limited my options.
- Staff changes affect me, I am better with familiar staff, carers.

The breakdown of comments received for each Adult Services team is below.

Distribution YTD	Comments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Abergavenny Integrated Services		2		2	4
Chepstow and Caldicot Integrated Services		3			3
CLDT		2	2		4
Community Meals		1	2		3
Direct Payments		1			1
Domiciliary Care Central	1	1		1	3
Domiciliary Care External	5	8	9	4	26
Domiciliary Care North	1	1			2
Domiciliary Care South	1	1	1		3
External Provider	3		3	3	9
General		3	1	2	6
Individual Support Service				1	1
MH Team North Over 65		2			2
MH Team North Under 65	1				1

MH Team South Over 65		1			1
Monmouth Integrated Service	1			2	3
Total	13	26	18	15	72

11. Comments relating to Children Services

11.1 12 comments were received about Children's Services in 2021-2022, 6 less than in 2020-2021 and the same number for 2019-20.

Some examples of Comments made:

- Anti social behaviour of young people
- Issues regarding contact arrangements with family
- Concerns regarding independent social worker
- Attitude of staff
- Disagreement with decisions made
- Issues with casework
- Lack of information / communication

All the comments received are considered carefully and where appropriate, replies given and any necessary action taken.

The breakdown of comments received for Children's Services team are below.

Distribution YTD	Comments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children with disabilities	1				1
Early Help and Assessment Team	1	1		3	5
Long Term Support Team	1	2		1	4
External Provider		1			1
Multi section		1			1
Total	3	5		4	12

12. Compliments for Adult Services

12.1 101 compliments were received about Adult services for 2021-2022. This is 31% lower than in the previous year.

A range of compliments about the whole of the service was received with so many individual staff named for their kindness, help and professionalism. All staff were informed of the compliments received about them and their efforts commended.

People said things like:

- To the Lavender Team, Thanks for all of your help and support these past few months! You're the kindest, funniest, loveliest bunch of ladies I've ever had the fortune to work with!
- 'A little card for a big THANK YOU for the kindness, care and attention you all, as a team, gave X when he most needed it
- I want to thank everyone involved in X's care. The care she received was excellent and so thankful that she was able to die at home. So thank you to everyone.
- I just want to tell you how fantastic my reablement package was. The staff were so encouraging and I have made incredible progress. There were times when I felt I would never walk again, which was hard for me as I have lead such an active life. I miss their friendly calls and you are lucky to have such a good staff group. Many thanks
- So impressed with the quality of care we are giving her, that he's over the moon with us and so happy that we actually sit and talk with her
- Daughter said as a team you are doing an amazing job and really appreciates everything you do for her mum and encourage her mum to do things for herself
- Had a lovely comment off X this morning. She said she loves hearing the key in door when we arrive and that we brighten her day. And what a lovely team we all are.
- Thank you so much for your help it means so much and your support has been wonderful and touching. Being listened to.
- I just wanted to say thank you with all my heart for making Mum's life better. You made what was the most heart wrenching, scary, difficult time ever better, and there are no words for the way that impacts someone's life - not just mum's but mine. I'll always be eternally grateful and I hope you know what a difference you made
- X wishes us all well, and said the service we provide is fantastic.
- X said truly thankful for all what your team have done for her she thinks you are all amazing and very professional.
- All the staff are amazing.
- All the carers are very kind and understanding and always ready to help if they can.
- I am writing to thank all the members of your team who have supported me recently. The care I have had has been exceptional. Every single member of the team has been so kind as well as professional. The service has made such a difference to both myself and my husband as I rehabilitate after my operation
- X wanted to pass on her thanks to your team for the 'excellent service' she has received since her discharge from hospital and wanted you all to know how much she feels she has benefited from her time with reablement.
- I just wanted to say what a fantastic team you have. We've had a few minor teething problems at the start, but the ladies who have come in the last week or so have been amazing! Even I am getting used to it and leaving them to do what they do best lol
- The care I've received has been exceptional.
- The DP thing is going well. We are so lucky to be able to provide this level of care for our parents. So glad they live in Wales where the support from you and other people in the system is SO much better and much more caring. The thing you do so well is making it personal. I always feel I can reach out and you will help us out. And you talk to each other. It makes it all work so well and means we all feel very supported. So between us all we are making a real difference to the lives of two elderly people Thank you
- Thank you and the team so much for fitting a front door threshold step and rail so quickly. Most impressed with the efficient service and cannot praise you enough, it's most useful.

The breakdown of compliments for Adult Services teams are below.

Distribution YTD	Compliments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Abergavenny Integrated Services			1		1
Chepstow and Caldicot Integrated Services	2	4	3	2	11
CLDT			1		1
Community Meals			1		1
Direct Payments		1			1
Domiciliary Care Central	6	6	2		14
Domiciliary Care External	1	6	3	3	13
Domiciliary Care North	11		2	1	14
Domiciliary Care South	10	4	3	2	19
External Provider	1	2	4	1	8
Individual Support Service			1		1
MH Team North Over 65		1	2		3
MH Team North Under 65			1		1
MH Team South Over 65		1	1	1	3
Monmouth Day Services				1	1
Monmouth Integrated Service	1	1	2	2	6
Severn View Residential Services				3	3
Total	32	26	27	16	101

13. Compliments for Children's Services

13.1 10 compliments were received that related to Children's Services in 2021-22. This is half compared with those received in the previous year.

Compliments about staff in Children's services were received with individual staff named for their support, help and professionalism. All staff were informed of the compliments received about them.

Some examples of compliments received:

- "I don't think we would be where we are if not for T! I would like to be more like T, she is calm and amazing. She took our situation and looked at it from the outside. She helped us concentrate on how to move forward. She has worked so hard to get us all to the situation where we are. She got us to build bridges. We are moving forward. She is an amazing social worker!"
- "The amount of work that L has done to ensure that everything has been covered and that court has every single piece of information that they could need to inform the decision making. L has left no stone unturned and I can't think of anything else that could possibly be requested, L has provided it all".
- "I honestly wanna say thank u for everything u have done for me and my kids I know u said it's down to me but it is also down to u for understanding my issues understanding

that I have health problems and working along side me and getting me to where I wanted to be in life.”

- “I feel that every bit of my heart trusts my social worker.”
- “Thank you for all your help and encouragement through the whole 8 week course. I appreciate the time and effort you took explaining CoS to me in a friendly, caring and professional manner. “The one thing I can say now is " happy child, happy parent ".”
- “Wanted it put into a court order how well J worked the case and the quality of the work. He was insistent on this being in the order to ensure that good practise is recognised.”

The breakdown of compliments received for Children’s services teams are below.

Distribution YTD	Compliments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children with disabilities		1			1
Family Support and Protection Team	2	2	1	2	7
Long Term Support Team	1	1			2
Total	3	4	1	2	10

14 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Complaints

- 14.1 Regarding Adult Services - Of the 6 formal complaints received, one complainant contacted the Ombudsman and their decision was not to investigate.
- 14.2 Regarding Children’s Services - One complainant contacted the Ombudsman concerning their complaint. They did not investigate the complaint.

15 Analysis of Complaints

15.1 Adult Services

The numbers of Stage 1 complaints have stayed more or less the same as last year. However, stage 2 complaints have doubled. There’s no particular trend of complaint, apart from issues with communication and quality of services.

Year	Stage 1		Stage 2	
		External Providers		External Providers
2021-22	12	1	6	0
2020-21	13	0	3	0
2019-20	14	1	0	0
2018-19	14	1	4	0
2017-18	25	0	7	1

15.2 Children Services

The number of stage 1 complaints are generally the same as last year with 3 complaints dealt with at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. The trend running through the complaints relates to staffing and communication issues which features in most of the complaints. Again this remains consistent with previous years.

It is often the case that complaints in relation to lack of information are resolved following a discussion and an explanation of the situation/process. Advocacy services can assist to help parents work through and understand statutory interventions.

Year	Number of complaints	Number of Stage 2's
2021-2022	23	3
2020-2021	25	1
2019-2020	30	3
2018-2019	35	10
2017-2018	31	7

16 Response Timescales

There are statutory requirements established in respect of the timescales for responding to complaints. A full response should be provided in 17 working days for stage 1 complaints and for stage 2 complaints, a full response is required within 25 working days. Where we need to exceed these limits, we will obtain the service user/carer's agreement.

These tables shows the length of time it has taken to respond to complaints:

16.1 Adult Services

Social Services Timescales	2020-21		2021-22	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	8		8	1
18 - 25 working days	1		1	
26+ working days	4	3	4	5
Total	13	3	13	6

16.2 Children Services

Social Services Timescales	2020-2021		2021-2022	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	18		12	
18 - 25 working days			4	
26+ working days	6	1	6	3
Total	24	1	22	3

Where complaints go over 25 working days, this is often due to the complexity of the matter under investigation and the need to consult with others (who may not be available) before concluding matters.

17 Service Improvements

17.1 Our approach is based on getting it right first time, and if not, then putting it right as soon as possible. We always listen to what people say and ensure we make improvements where services have fallen short of our high standards.

When formal investigations have taken place we produce action plans to improve practice where required and always apologise when things have gone wrong. They are monitored to ensure that all actions are completed. Lessons learned from complaints can then be implemented across all teams where applicable to improve standards for service users.

We recognise that some people do not always want to complain but they may wish to make comments about the service they receive. We ensure that comments are noted and responded to.

Some examples below of improvements made resulting from complaints investigations.

- Apologies provided where complaints have been upheld.
- Independent advocacy services offered
- Improving the quality of complaint response at Stage 1 of the process.
- Service users Care plans are reviewed annually
- Review staff guidance on financial charges
- A spot sample of assessments are reviewed by the Team Manager to assist with on-going professional development.
- A peer review rota has been introduced where two Approved Mental Health Professionals will quality assure a selection of assessments each month

17.2 The most commonly mentioned reasons for making a complaint are that:

- A genuine grievance is recognised and acknowledged
- An apology is provided
- Practical action to remedy an injustice is undertaken
- Where it has been identified as having failed, departmental policy, procedure and practice is reviewed
- Action is pursued against staff and managers

17.3 It's important to acknowledge that an increase or decrease in the number of complaints does not necessarily reflect a change in the standard of service provided. An increase may indicate the positive view that is taken towards complaints, and that people are more well informed about how to make a complaint.

17.4 The Ombudsman's Complaints Standards Authority has provided free online training and extended this into the coming year on investigation skills. This training will help services to respond more consistently to complaints and in line with best practice recognised by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

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Monmouthshire County Council Annual Audit Summary 2022

This is our audit summary for Monmouthshire County Council. It shows the work completed since the last Annual Audit Summary, which was issued in February 2022. Our audit summary forms part of the Auditor General for Wales' duties.



More information about these duties can be found on our [website](#).

About the Council

Some of the services the Council provides



Key facts

The Council is made up of 46 councillors who represent the following political parties:

- Labour 22
- Conservative 18
- Independent Group 5
- Green Party 1

The Council spent £170.1 million on providing services¹ during 2021-22².

¹ We define spending on services as the cost of services charged to the general fund from the Expenditure Funding Analysis, less any Housing Revenue Account cost of services, plus precepts, levies and debt interest.

² Source: 2021-22 Statement of Accounts

Key facts

As at 31 March 2022, the Council had £33.6 million of useable financial reserves³. This is equivalent to 19.7% of the Council's annual spending on services⁴.

Monmouthshire has 0% of its 56 areas considered to be within the most deprived 10% of areas in Wales⁵, this is the lowest of the 22 unitary councils in Wales⁶.

The population of Monmouthshire is projected to increase by 6% between 2020 and 2040 from 94,700 to 100,500, including a 5% decrease in the number of children, a 4% decrease in the number of the working-age population and a 36% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over⁷.

The Auditor General's duties

We completed work during 2021-22 to meet the following duties

- **Audit of Accounts**

Each year the Auditor General audits the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.

- **Value for money**

The Auditor General examines whether the Council has put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and he has to be satisfied that it has done this.

- **Sustainable development principle**

Public bodies need to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.

³ We define useable financial reserves as reserves usable for revenue costs, where the purpose is not protected by law. This is the total of the general fund, earmarked reserves and schools' balances. It excludes Housing Revenue Account reserves, capital receipts and capital grants unapplied.

⁴ Source: 2021-22 Statement of Accounts

⁵ An area in this context is defined as a 'Lower Super Output Area'. Source: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation data on Stats Wales. Further information on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found [here](#).

⁶ The Council considers that this measure of assessing deprivation has its limitations and it references [the Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment 2022](#) as a more detailed assessment of the issues associated with deprivation within Monmouthshire.

⁷ Source: Stats Wales

What we found

Audit of Monmouthshire County Council's 2021-22 Accounts



To meet the Auditor General's duties we complete specific projects, but we also rely on other audit work, and the work of regulators such as Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn (the education inspectorate). We take the findings of our audit work into account when assessing whether the Council has put in place arrangements to secure value for money. Our findings and conclusions are summarised below.

Each year we audit the Council's financial statements.

For 2021-22:

- the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements on 20 February 2023, 20 days after of the revised Welsh Government deadline of 31 January 2023.
- the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance. They were also consistent with the financial statements prepared by the Council and with our knowledge of the Council.
- the quality of the draft statements presented for audit on 9 August 2022 was generally good.
- a number of changes were made to the Council's financial statements arising from our audit work, which were reported to the Audit Committee in our Audit of Financial Statements Report in February 2023.
- in addition to the Auditor General's responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, he also has responsibility for the certification of a number of grant claims and returns. Our work to date has not identified any significant issues.
- the Auditor General issued the certificate confirming that the audit of accounts for 2020-21 has been completed.

Assurance and risk assessment review

We reviewed the arrangements the Council has put in place to secure value for money in the use of its resources. Our work focused on the following aspects of the Council's arrangements:

- The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021
- Carbon reduction plans
- Financial position

Our findings from this work are set out in our Assurance and Risk Assessment report, available [here](#).

Springing forward review – assets and workforce

During 2021-22, we examined how councils are strengthening their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services. Our work focused on the Council's strategic management of its assets and workforce. We found that the Council is actively considering future ways of working and the potential impact on its assets and workforce, and now needs to articulate its longer-term vision and plan in its new people and asset management strategies. The full report is available [here](#).

Shared Resource Service Follow-Up Review

The Gwent-based Shared Resource Service (SRS) is a collaborative technology provision to deliver shared Information Technology (IT) services between five partners. Our review sought to identify ways to strengthen the SRS collaboration to ensure it is sustainably delivering an effective, efficient and economic provision within this dynamic environment, for now and for the future. We found that partners consider that the collaboration has delivered effectively during the pandemic and, to be well placed for the future, it would benefit from improved communication, more effective sharing of digital aspirations and learning, addressing its workforce challenges, and being able to demonstrate value for money. More details are in the [full report](#), which was issued to all SRS partners.

Other inspectorates

We also took into account the reports of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn as well as any subsequent actions taken by the Council in response. CIW carried out a performance evaluation inspection of adult services in Monmouthshire County Council in July 2022. The full report can be found [here](#). Estyn did not undertake an inspection of Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire during 2020-21.

Local government studies

As well as local work at each council, each year we also carry out studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money. Since the last annual improvement report, we have published the following reports:

Joint working between Emergency Services (January 2022)

This report examines whether emergency services in Wales are working more closely together to make better use of resources. Joint working across emergency services to make best use of resources is not a new concept. Emergency services have been working closely together to provide a better service to the public for many years. Innovative partnership initiatives have saved money, reduced local response times and have contributed to protecting the public. Despite this, there are growing expectations from government policy and legislation that collaboration needs to happen more deeply and quickly to ensure front line services can meet the challenges facing 21st century Wales. Overall, we concluded that blue light emergency service collaboration is slowly growing but requires a step change in activity to maximise impact and make the best use of resources. The report can be found [here](#).

Direct Payments (April 2022)

Direct Payments are an alternative to local-authority-arranged care or support and can help meet an individual's or a carer's need. They aim to give people more choice, greater flexibility and more control over the support they get. Our report looked at how Direct Payments help sustain people's wellbeing and whether they are improving quality of life. We also looked at how local authorities manage and encourage take up of Direct Payments and whether these services present value for money. We found that Direct Payments are highly valued, with the people we surveyed acknowledging that they help them remain independent. But we also found that managing and supporting people to use Direct Payments varies widely resulting in service users and carers receiving different standards of service. The report can be found [here](#).

'Time for Change' – Poverty in Wales (November 2022)

Poverty in Wales is not a new phenomenon and tackling poverty, particularly child poverty, has been a priority for both the Welsh Government and councils in Wales. The current cost-of-living crisis means that more people are being affected and families who have been living comfortably are moving into poverty for the first time. Many of the levers that could be used to alleviate poverty are outside of Wales's control. The Welsh Government adopted a Child Poverty Strategy in 2011, but this is out of date and the target to eliminate child poverty by 2020 was dropped. Councils and partners are prioritising work on poverty, but the mix of approaches and a complicated partnership landscape mean that ambitions, focus, actions, and prioritisation vary widely. The Welsh Government makes significant revenue funding available but, due to the complexity and nature of the issues, the total level of spend is unknown, and no council knows the full extent of its spending on alleviating and tackling poverty. The short-term nature of grant programmes, overly complex administration, weaknesses in guidance and grant restrictions, and difficulties spending monies means that funding is not making the impact it could. Councils find it hard to deliver preventative work because of the sheer scale of demand from people in crisis. The report can be found [here](#).

'A missed Opportunity' – Social Enterprises (December 2022)

Social Enterprises sit between the public and private sectors. They apply commercial strategies to maximise improvements in financial, social and environmental well-being, often for individual groups in society, defined communities or geographical areas. Social enterprise work in every sector of the Welsh economy and in all parts of the country and are increasingly prominent in Welsh Parliament legislation. While local authorities claim they value Social Enterprises, few have mapped their activity and most authorities do not know the scale of provision within their area. Less than a third of local authorities consider themselves to have a proactive and supportive relationship with Social Enterprises and none have a dedicated strategy or policy that charts how they intend to promote and grow the sector. As a result, local authorities are missing out on the potential for Social Enterprises to help deliver services that can improve people's quality of life. Current procurement and commissioning arrangements often unintentionally discourage Social Enterprises to engage because they are overly bureaucratic. Social value – the added value that commissioning processes can deliver – does not feature as a key driver for many local authorities. Most local authorities are not delivering their responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and effectively promoting Social Enterprises. The report can be found [here](#).

‘Together we can’ – Community resilience and self-reliance (January 2023)

At a time when there is likely to be further reductions in public spending, local authorities are showing an increasing interest in encouraging and growing community resilience; equipping people to do more for themselves and be less reliant on the state. While 19 of the 22 local authorities are prioritising community resilience, too often the work is poorly defined and the actions that underpin plans are narrowly focussed. Given the societal, financial and demographic challenges facing Wales there is a need to scale and speed up activity. Capacity, resources and skills are scarce, people are facing tougher choices and struggling to cope with the cost-of-living crisis. Communities and local authorities themselves also have different abilities and are starting from different places with their own unique challenges to overcome. We highlight positive practice and examples of how others are seeking to address the challenge of enabling people to be less reliant on local authority services and how they are supporting and enabling this transition. The report can be found [here](#).

Planned work for 2022-23

We also looked at the key challenges and opportunities facing the Council. These could have an effect on the Council’s ability to meet its legal obligations in relation to the sustainable development principle and the use of its resources.

Our planned work for 2022-23 includes:

- Assurance and risk assessment including a focus on:
 - Capital programme management
 - Use of performance information – with a focus on service user feedback and outcomes
 - Setting of well-being objectives
- Thematic review – unscheduled care. This review covers the health and local government sectors
- Thematic review – digital

The Auditor General is independent of government and was appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the Senedd.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, fire and rescue authorities, national parks, and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies, assesses compliance with the remaining requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and may undertake special inspections under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Senedd Commission, and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities with their own legal functions, as described above. Audit Wales is not a legal entity.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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SUBJECT: Overview of Performance Management Arrangements

MEETING: Governance and Audit Committee

DATE: 30th March 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To ensure that members of the committee have an understanding of the council's performance framework.
- 1.2 To present an update on the current effectiveness of the authority's performance management arrangements.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members use the update provided to inform their understanding of the effectiveness of the operation of the authority's performance management arrangements and identify any areas where they feel action needs to be taken or further information provided.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Performance management is about establishing a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved and making sure that it happens. The council currently has an established performance framework; this is the way in which we translate our purpose into action and ensure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes. This components of the framework are shown visually in appendix 2.
- 3.2 Our performance framework:
 - Translates our purpose into the council's own well-being objectives
 - Places an expectation on teams to translate these objectives into specific, measurable actions in their service business plans
 - Contains a broad range of data to monitor impact and measure the performance of services

Other key processes that are part of and/or facilitate aspects of the framework include the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment and self-evaluation arrangements.

- 3.3 There have been considerable adjustments to the council's performance framework in the last few years due to the need to adapt arrangements to support the organisation's response to the coronavirus pandemic and to meet requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 3.4 The pandemic caused unprecedented disruption to service delivery, and many planned activities and embedded processes were adjusted, reduced or stopped altogether to make capacity available to safeguard lives and livelihoods. To provide clarity and ensure accountability throughout the pandemic, we established a series (five in total) of revised purposes and strategic aims, known as the plan on a page, that reflected and adapted to the latest evidence and circumstances. The council's performance management arrangements were adjusted throughout to facilitate

service planning, performance management and risk management that focused on what needed to happen and ensure progress could be monitored in a robust and transparent way.

- 3.5 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides 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.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 provides an appraisal of the arrangements that make up the current performance framework to ensure that Governance and Audit Committee are able to take an overview of their effectiveness. This includes a statement of purpose and the policy that should be followed, how and if this has been implemented and what evidence we have to show this. It also includes a list of key actions that we will take moving forward.
- 3.7 This report on the continued effectiveness of the council's strategic planning framework is presented annually to Governance and Audit Committee and is important in ensuring the necessary checks and balances are in place around monitoring, evaluation, and policymaking.
- 3.8 The council also places reliance on regulatory assessments as a vital part of our framework. These are Audit Wales, who examine the authority's corporate arrangements; Estyn, in relation to education provision; and the Care Inspectorate Wales, in relation to social services. Where applicable, the most recent findings of regulatory work have been factored into the appraisal of arrangements.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. However, there may be resource implications in undertaking further actions as directed by Strategic Leadership Team or as recommended by Governance and Audit Committee.

5. AUTHOR:

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Appendix 1: Self-assessment of performance management arrangements

Well-being Objectives					
Purpose:	<p>The Council has a responsibility under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set well-being objectives. To achieve this, we must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set and publish well-being objectives • Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives • Publish a statement about well-being objectives • Detail arrangements to publish an annual report of progress <p>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 last of these plans ceased in the Summer of 2022.</p>				
How well are we doing?	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; vertical-align: top;">Policy</td> <td>The Council publishes a Corporate Plan every five years. This plan contains the wellbeing objectives of the Council, and sets out the actions it will take to achieve them over the following five years. Alongside these actions are measures and targets that the Council will use to track progress. An evaluation of the Council’s performance and progress in meeting these targets is published in our annual Self-Assessment Report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Implementation</td> <td> <p>The Council’s previous Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets a clear direction for the council and its well-being objectives. The plan met the council’s requirements under the previous Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (which has been superseded by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021) and Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p> <p>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. The self-assessment report 2021/22 evaluated progress under the key activity delivered as part of the interim Coronavirus strategies. Informed by the evidence gathered, they were given an evaluation rating of ‘very good’.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Following the elections in May 2022, the new Cabinet began to articulate the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the county. Through a series of collaborative workshops, and drawing on a wide range of evidence, including the well-being assessment, population needs assessment, research for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and the self-assessment report,</p> </td> </tr> </table>	Policy	The Council publishes a Corporate Plan every five years. This plan contains the wellbeing objectives of the Council, and sets out the actions it will take to achieve them over the following five years. Alongside these actions are measures and targets that the Council will use to track progress. An evaluation of the Council’s performance and progress in meeting these targets is published in our annual Self-Assessment Report.	Implementation	<p>The Council’s previous Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets a clear direction for the council and its well-being objectives. The plan met the council’s requirements under the previous Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (which has been superseded by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021) and Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p> <p>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. The self-assessment report 2021/22 evaluated progress under the key activity delivered as part of the interim Coronavirus strategies. Informed by the evidence gathered, they were given an evaluation rating of ‘very good’.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Following the elections in May 2022, the new Cabinet began to articulate the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the county. Through a series of collaborative workshops, and drawing on a wide range of evidence, including the well-being assessment, population needs assessment, research for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and the self-assessment report,</p>
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		<p>has informed the development of the Council’s draft Community and Corporate Plan to set the direction for the organisation for the period 2022-27.</p> <p>The Community and Corporate Plan has been endorsed by Cabinet although it has not yet been agreed by Council. This means the Council does not have agreed revised well-being objectives. This impacts on the Councils ability to provide clarity of policy direction to inform the development of other plans that align to deliver the objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. These include the high-level enabling strategies that form the council’s policy framework and the strategic plans, including service business plans, that deliver the detailed commitments in the plan.</p> <p>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 Corporate Plan sits at the heart of our performance management framework. This ensures there is a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved and makes sure that it happens. Once approved, we will need to ensure the commitments, actions and measures in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-27 are embedded in the Council’s performance management framework.</p> <p>We self-assess our progress against our well-being objectives through an annual self-assessment report. This will clearly identify How well are we doing, how do we know? (The evidence we have used) and what and how can we do better?. The structure of the report will be developed subject to approval of the revised well-being objectives.</p>
	Reporting	<p>We have implemented a self-assessment process, which has facilitated an assessment of performance of the 2021/22 financial year in the annual self-assessment report that meets the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act. 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. The self-assessment report evaluated progress under each of the five priority goals in the Council Corporate Plan 2017-22, which also served as the council’s well-being objectives, and the programmes of work, twenty-two in total, that support their delivery. Informed by the evidence gathered, three goals were given an evaluation rating of ‘good’ and two an ‘adequate’ rating using the Council’s self-assessment mechanism described in the report on a scale of 1 to 6, unsatisfactory to excellent. An action in the report was identified to address areas for development and actions, identified through the self-assessment report.</p>
How do we know this?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment report 2021/22 • Corporate Plan 2017-22 • Coronavirus strategic aims • Draft Corporate and Community Plan 2022-27
Key actions moving forward		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to approval, embed the commitments, actions and measures in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-27 into the Council’s performance management framework. • Produce an annual self-assessment report 2022/23

Service Business Plans	
Purpose:	A Service Business Plan is a planning tool which all service areas are required to complete. It allows services to set a plan for the next three years, assess what went well, learn from what didn't and measure the impact the service has made on people and places of Monmouthshire. Service Plans ensure clear alignment between the council's priorities and objectives, and detail the actions the service will be undertaking, performance measures to assess progress and risks facing the service and mitigating actions. Service business planning and regular evaluation of our performance is fundamental to how we operate.
How well are we doing?	<p>Policy</p> <p>Service Business Plans should be completed using the service business planning principles, which are things that should be applied within all plans. These include a plan on a page to give an overview of the service area; actions that the service will take over the next three years; evaluate the performance of the service; measures to track performance; alignment with organisational goals including corporate plan goals and the Future Generations act; and key risks facing the service.</p> <p>A template is available to all staff who complete service business plans. This template was designed to ensure plans meet the planning principles. Plans should be updated every quarter, and a self-evaluation should be done at the end of the financial year.</p> <p>A new quality assurance template was recently developed to assess whether the plans are meeting the planning principles and whether they are being regularly updated. This quality assurance report assesses against the key areas of the service business plans, namely plan on a page; action plan; measures; alignment; risks; finances; and evaluation (completed annually). This template was used to assess the quality of each plan. A traffic light system was used to indicate how well a section had been completed, where green meant a section was completed well, amber meant the section needed improvement and red meant the section was either not complete or completed incorrectly. Comments were also provided for each section, with advice on how to improve if a section was labelled as amber or red. This facilitated officers to easily identify which areas of their plan needed improvement, helping them to focus on key aspects.</p>
Implementation	<p>The most recent of quality assurance of service business plans was completed during Q2 of 2022/23 using the developed template. We found that most plans required improvement. At this time nearly half were updated to Q1 with some still in draft form.</p> <p>The outcome of the quality assurance showed that some sections were consistently not completed robustly. These include progress updates on actions, alignment with the Future Generations act, actions not being specific enough, resources not identified, and the risk section being incomplete. The performance measurement section was also not used effectively in many plans. This limits the ability of services to use their service business plans to robustly plan, manage, and evaluate their performance and their role in delivering and informing the Council strategic objectives and risks.</p>

	Reporting	<p>The quality assurance reports were sent to all chief officers, managers and officers completing service plans in October 2022, identifying the key feedback on the plans. Further guidance and feedback were also offered to all, and any managers who needed any assistance in completing or updating their service business plans were encouraged to contact the performance team.</p> <p>Further training and guidance on completing service plans is needed to ensure plans are completed correctly and are utilised by managers. Further support will continue to be provided on completing plans, and managers will be made aware of guidance available.</p>
How do we know this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Business Plans • Completion status of service business plans: total of 47 plans, 16 updated to Q2, 7 updated to Q1, 3 completed plans and 21 draft plans • Feedback from managers completing the plans • Quality assurance reports 	
Key actions moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consistent in checking the completion status of the service business plans and reminding managers to keep plans up to date; as we approach the end of Q3 a reminder will be sent to all managers to update their plans • Remind managers of the available guidance and assistance to ensure that plans are being completed correctly 	

Self-evaluation		
Purpose:	<p>Self-evaluation is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the 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</p> <p>Self-evaluation allows us to assess our actions openly and honestly, and to consider whether the actions taken helped to reach our desired goals and objectives. This process helps us to learn what went well and what didn't, informing our future actions.</p>	
How well are we doing?	Policy	<p>The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires each local authority in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements'. 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.</p> <p>A process to complete the council's first self-assessment report, as required by the new legislation, was developed. This included directorate workshops, which provided the opportunity for heads of service to reflect on their service area and assess activity against the Corporate Plan priority goals. The draft self-assessment was informed by a range of evidence including the output from the workshops along with other elements of the performance framework, such as Chief Officer reports, scrutiny, external regulation and the Annual Governance Statement.</p>

	Implementation	<p>Self-assessment and evaluation have been embedded in all aspects of work as part of the council’s performance management framework to meet these requirements. Initially the Service Business Plans were reviewed to provide a better platform for self-assessment of performance. The process requires plan holders to continue to update on progress quarterly and has introduced a new annual ‘self-assessment’ section. By the end of the financial year, all service plans should contain a section evaluating their performance. The completion of these will aid the collation of evidence for the Council’s self-assessment report. It will also help services to assess what worked well and what did not and should play a vital role in forward planning.</p> <p>The self-assessment process and report provided a clear assessment of the council’s performance. This has informed the Council’s ongoing planning as part of the performance management framework and the development of the draft Community and Corporate Plan. The process also identified 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.</p> <p>The next self-assessment report, due to be completed by the summer 2023, will evaluate the Council’s performance against its wellbeing objectives. The self-assessment process to inform this will be reviewed applying the learning from the first process. The assessment will also assess whether the Council successfully implemented the actions identified as necessary in the previous self-assessment report.</p>
	Reporting	<p>There was effective scrutiny and oversight of the draft report. The report was presented to Governance and Audit Committee and Performance and Overview scrutiny committee to review, scrutinise and make any recommendations for changes. The committee found it was comfortable with the contents of the report and recommended its consideration by Council.</p> <p>The self-assessment report was agreed by Council and published in September 2022 meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The report provides a clear assessment of the extent the council met its wellbeing goals, which were set out in the Corporate Plan 2017-22, the evidence to show this and identified areas of improvement. It also provided a clear evaluation of the key activity delivered as part of the interim Coronavirus strategies and the ‘enabling functions’ that support council services to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability including financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, digital and data.</p>
How do we know this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment Report 2021/22 • Monmouthshire Wellbeing Assessment 	
Key actions moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the annual self-evaluation section of service plans is completed • Complete the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 	

Performance Data and Information

Purpose:	<p>Data and information are essential to our performance framework. This comprises of nationally and locally set indicators that services have developed to measure the impact of their service. As well as maximising the use of data we hold to inform how we plan, manage, and deliver services.</p> <p>All staff and members need to regularly access and use performance data and analysis of performance to evaluate the progress and impact of services</p>	
How well are we doing?	Policy	<p>The Council’s Corporate Plan goals set out a range of measures that are used to evaluate progress and these have been used to evaluate performance in the 2021/22 self-assessment report. Performance metrics have also been developed and used to evaluate progress against the Council’s coronavirus strategic aims. This has ensured evaluations of progress have been informed by a range of evidence for accountability. Summaries and infographics have also been developed to help communicate performance data and information to residents.</p> <p>Each objective in the draft Community and Corporate Plan 2022-27 will be monitored using a mix of measures and milestones to evaluate our progress and enable accountability. Some targets have been proposed while others will need to more clearly defined aligned to the budget process or following further analysis of data. These measures and milestones will be used inform the self-assessment of progress against the well-being objectives through the annual self-assessment report.</p>
	Implementation	<p>Service business plans principles requires services to use appropriate performance data and measures to monitor and evaluate performance. Quality assurance of service business plans shows there remains variability in the use, overall quality and completeness of performance indicators within services to assess performance. This can limit the ability of services to robustly assess their performance. Feedback and assistance are being provided to services, where required, to strengthen their planning.</p> <p>The data capacity and capability roadmap to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity is being implemented. The first focus has been on growing data capability across the organisation through training and development opportunities for existing staff in all teams. Training sessions have been procured and the ‘data hub’ pages updated to include data related updates and training opportunities.</p> <p>The second focus has been on generating better insight from existing datasets. The Performance and data insights teams progress in this area has been reduced, as ensuring statutory and legal data duties are met is the primary priority which is an increasing demand for the team. The budget proposals for 2023/24 include the proposal to remove the vacant data scientist post. Further development is needed in the Council’s data maturity. Without development in the Councils in data maturity it would be challenging to gain maximum return on investment from a data scientist post. The use of data to inform the council’s decision-making needs to be developed further. There needs to be a continued focus on facilitating and supporting the development of the council’s data maturity within service areas.</p>

	Reporting	The “data hub” the council’s performance measurement area hosted on the Council’s intranet site has been refreshed and updated. A new interactive dashboard has been developed that can be used track progress of the measures set in the Community and Corporate Plan once approved. Further dashboards will be developed to track performance against the Councils’ priorities and provide further data insights to inform the Council’s planning and decisions making, for example using Census 2021 data.
How do we know this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment report 2021/22 • Corporate Plan 2017-22 • Coronavirus strategic aims • Draft Corporate and Community Plan 2022-27 • Monmouthshire Council intranet ‘data hub’ performance measurements area • Service Business plan quality assurance 	
Key actions moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once approved, embed the commitments, actions and measures in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-27 into the Council’s performance management framework. • Produce an annual self-assessment report 2022/23 • Develop the “data hub” the council’s performance measurement area • Support services to develop data maturity to inform service planning and transformation including: data visualisation, data analysis and data insights. 	

Strategic Risk Management	
Purpose:	<p>The strategic risk register captures the high and medium level strategic risks that face the council in line with the council’s risk management policy. This ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority • Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate • Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority <p>The strategic risk register will summarise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the risk, the consequences and impact with appropriate evidence • The overall risk levels (high & medium only) for the current year • Estimated risk levels for the following two years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned/existing actions in place to mitigate the risks • Relevant timescales for actions and the officers responsible (the risk owner) • Update information – direction of travel in controlling the risk and evidence 	
<p>How well are we doing?</p>	<p>Policy</p>	<p>The Council has a strategic risk management policy and guidance that is available on The Hub for members and officers to view. This defines the risk appetite of the council, and also provides guidance on rating and recording risks. This policy and guidance is used to inform the content and structure of the strategic risk register, which records all strategic risks facing the council, and should also be used by service managers when completing service business plans.</p> <p>The strategic risk register is a live document, available to all members and officers and is updated as necessary. It is located on the council’s Hub, which ensures it is available at any point and can be used by committees at any point in the year to prioritise their work plan, as appropriate. The strategic risk register is informed by a wide range of evidence. The starting point for identifying risks are often service business plans, where heads of service and service managers identify the risks their service faces or will face over the next three years, as per the risk management policy. The strategic risk register is also informed by other evidence including performance data, regulatory reports, scrutiny findings and recent risk information.</p> <p>The register is updated regularly by assessing a wide range of evidence, including service business plans. Proposed updates are collated, and a report is presented to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) for discussion and agreement. During these updates, new risks may be added, mitigating actions may be changed or updated, risk levels may change, or risks may be removed. Reviewing and updating the register regularly ensures that the risks listed are the most relevant and that the mitigating actions in place are both appropriate and proportionate.</p>
	<p>Implementation</p>	<p>The strategic risk register ensures high and medium level strategic risks are identified, assessed and mitigation action identified to reduce or mitigate the risks, where possible. Regular updates to the strategic risk ensure it remains focussed on the most significant strategic risks facing the council and ensures risks are escalated and deescalated accordingly.</p> <p>In the most recent audit of service business plans, our quality assurance reports identified that the completion of service-based risk registers was often not robust enough or fully completed. This impacts the effectiveness of service risk identification and management, which also subsequently informs the strategic risk register. Feedback and further support are being provided to service business plan manager to strengthen the application of the risk management process. This will ensure that risks that should be captured in the strategic risk register can be easily identified within service plans, along with current mitigating actions, and will strengthen the process of risk escalation.</p> <p>We are a member of the recently formed WLGA Risk Management Network. We are using the network to share knowledge of emerging risks for local</p>

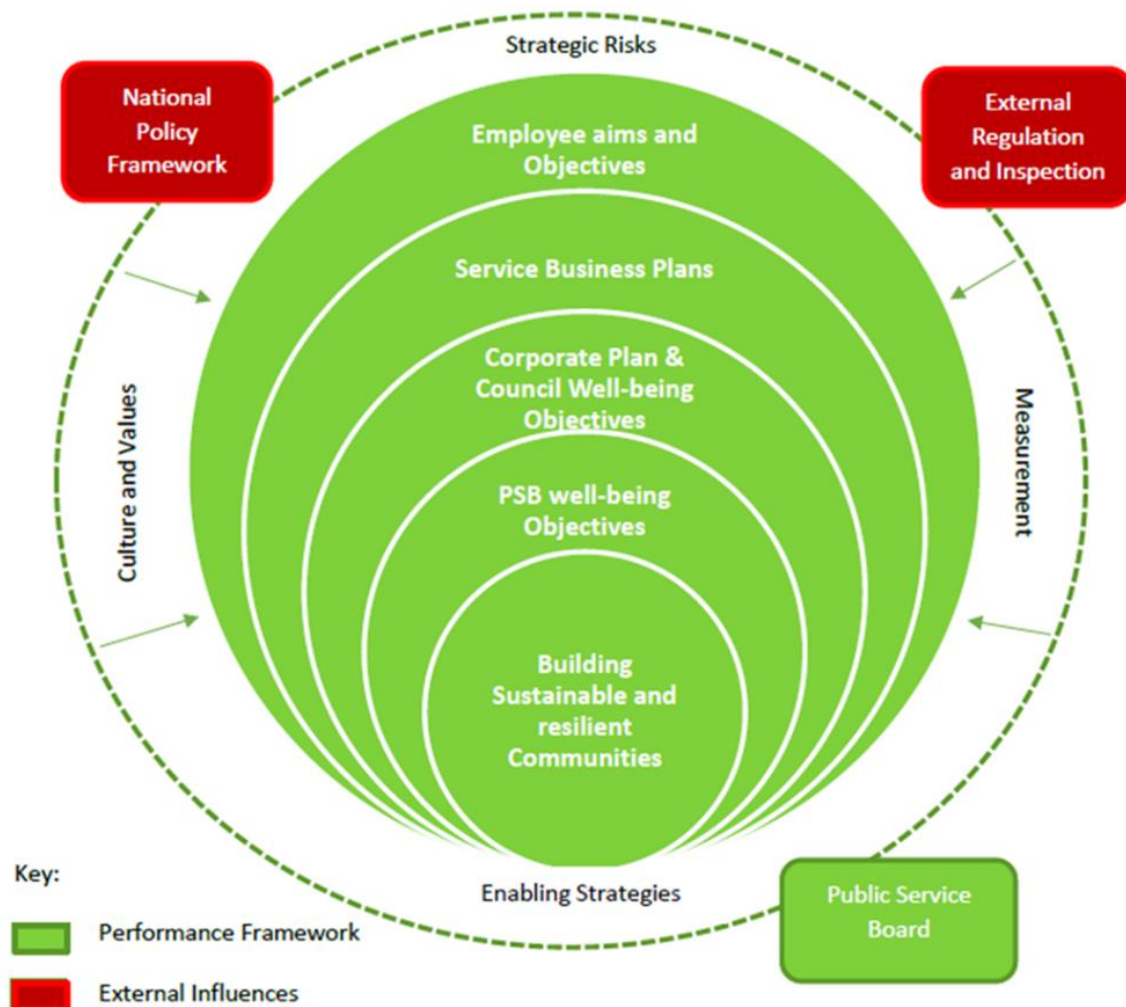
		<p>authorities in Wales and practice for risk management. This will be used to inform the development of our risk register and risk management process.</p>
	<p>Reporting</p>	<p>The strategic risk register is reported regularly to Governance and Audit Committee enabling the committee to consider the effectiveness of the authority’s risk management arrangements, and to scrutinise whether risk is being appropriately managed.</p> <p>The risk register was presented to Governance and Audit committee in September 2022, where committee challenged risk identification and provided feedback on information required in future reports to enable the committee to fulfil their role effectively. As a result, there was a specific change to the risk register to identify the risk of climate shocks, with the climate change risk, risk 11, being split into two parts, with the second part being the risk of climate shocks. Also, the structure of the report has been amended in consideration of this feedback and a full presentation on the process of risk identification, management, and the role of committees in assessing the risk framework has been developed to be presented to the committee. This is important in ensuring that members are fully aware of their roles and what exactly is expected of them.</p> <p>The risk register is also presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, enabling the committee to scrutinise the risks and risk owners to ensure that the correct risks have been identified and that they are being mitigated appropriately. A full presentation on the process of risk identification, management, and the role of committees in assessing the risk framework was presented to the committee to inform their role in the risk management process. The committee challenged risk identification and the impact of risk mitigation, particularly given some post mitigation risk levels were not assessed to change. The report also facilitated members to select particular risks to undergo further scrutiny if they felt necessary.</p>
<p>How do we know this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic risk register • Service business plans and service business plans quality assurance • Feedback from members at Governance and Audit Committee • Feedback from members at Performance and Overview Committee • Discussions with colleagues at WLGA risk management network 	
<p>Key actions moving forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to update the risk register regularly to ensure that the appropriate risks are captured and are being proportionately managed • Work with heads of service and service managers to improve the completion and quality of risk identification and management within service plans • Update the risk management policy and guidance 	

Appendix 2

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 the Council based on the same well-being assessment as the PSB objectives and, form the backbone of our Five Organisational Goals in the corporate plan. Each of our teams has a 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.



SUBJECT:	Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework
MEETING:	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE:	30th March 2023
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Governance and Audit Committee with an assessment of the adequacy of the council's risk management framework which is an integral part of the authority's corporate governance arrangements.
- 1.2 To provide members with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members use the assessment to seek assurance about the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements.
- 2.2 That the Monmouthshire Programme Board, which sits under the Gwent Public Services Board, is tasked with examining the benefits of, and developing, a community risk register that looks beyond the strategic risks affecting the local authority.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Governance and Audit Committee has a specific role in providing independent assurance of the adequacy of the council's risk management framework. The committee also has a role in assessing the authority's corporate governance arrangements, of which risk management is an important part. An integral part of the risk management arrangements is the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register. The strategic risk assessment ensures that:
 - Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority
 - Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate
 - Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority.
- 3.2 The assessment helps ensure strategic risks are identified and assessed robustly, risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate, and risks are supported by effective activity to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management. The report is made up of three parts:
 - Part 1 provides a self-assessment of the effectiveness of the operation of strategic risk management arrangements in line with the council's strategic risk management policy. This also forms part of the assessment of the effectiveness of the 'enabling functions' which includes performance and risk management under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2022.
 - Part 2 provides an overview of the strategic risk register and key amendments, including the strategic risks, the risk levels pre and post mitigation, the risk owner and any key changes, such as adjustments to risk levels or mitigating action updates.
 - The appendix provides a summary of the council's strategic risk management policy. The full policy and guidance can be viewed on the council's intranet site, also known as The Hub.

- 3.3 This report does not include the full risk register or an update of progress against mitigating actions. Scrutiny of that aspect of the work rests with Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. Members of Governance and Audit Committee have access to the papers of other committees should they wish to familiarise themselves with the wider work. All councillors can also access a live version of the risk register on the authority's intranet site.
- 3.4 The council's Strategic Leadership Team have discussed the potential benefit of developing a community risk register. The purpose of this would be to identify events or conditions which are not within the control of the organisation but, if they were to occur, would have a significant negative impact Monmouthshire's economy, population or natural resources. It would draw on research such as the Global Risks Report published by the World Economic Forum to highlight issues which are beyond the control of the organisation and would not normally feature on the strategic risk register.
- 3.5 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on the Gwent Local Resilience Forum to produce a community risk register for the police force area. It is based on the UK Government's national risk register and identifies and plans for a series of malicious and non-malicious events such as transport accidents, terrorism and extreme weather. The register enables partners including the local authority, police and ambulance services to identify ways of reducing the risks where possible and identifying potential responses if these were to occur.
- 3.6 The additional work would look to dovetail with, rather than replicate the work of the Local Resilience Forum and could potentially benefit the strategic planning and resource prioritisation of the organisation. To give an example of how this could add value, The World Economic Forum highlights issues based on a two and ten year time horizon and includes things such as a failure of climate change adaptation; large scale involuntary migration and the erosion of social cohesion. These are issues which would have huge significance for public service partners but would not be covered by the strategic risk register or Local Resilience Forum work.

4. REASONS:

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

5. AUTHORS:

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Hannah Carter, Graduate Performance Analyst

6. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Part 1- Self-assessment of the effectiveness of the risk management framework

Strategic Risk Management		
Purpose:	<p>The strategic risk register captures the high and medium level strategic risks that face the council in line with the council’s risk management policy. This ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority • Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate • Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority <p>The strategic risk register will summarise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the risk, the consequences and impact with appropriate evidence • The overall risk levels (high & medium only) for the current year • Estimated risk levels for the following two years • Planned/existing actions in place to mitigate the risks • Relevant timescales for actions and the officers responsible (the risk owner) • Update information – direction of travel in controlling the risk and evidence 	
How well are we doing?	Policy	<p>The Council has a strategic risk management policy and guidance that is available on The Hub for members and officers to view. This defines the risk appetite of the council, and also provides guidance on rating and recording risks. This policy and guidance is used to inform the content and structure of the strategic risk register, which records all strategic risks facing the council, and should also be used by service managers when completing service business plans.</p> <p>The strategic risk register is a live document, available to all members and officers and is updated as necessary. It is located on the council’s Hub, which ensures it is available at any point and can be used by committees at any point in the year to prioritise their work plan, as appropriate. The strategic risk register is informed by a wide range of evidence. The starting point for identifying risks are often service business plans, where heads of service and service managers identify the risks their service faces or will face over the next three years, as per the risk management policy. The strategic risk register is also informed by other evidence including performance data, regulatory reports, scrutiny findings and recent risk information.</p> <p>The register is updated regularly by assessing a wide range of evidence, including service business plans. Proposed updates are collated, and a report is presented to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) for discussion and agreement. During these updates, new risks may be added, mitigating actions may be changed or updated, risk levels may change, or risks may be removed. Reviewing and updating the register regularly ensures that the risks listed are the most relevant and that the mitigating actions in place are both appropriate and proportionate.</p>
	Implementation	<p>The risk register ensures high and medium level strategic risks are identified, assessed and mitigation action identified to reduce or mitigate the risks, where possible. Regular updates ensure it remains focussed on the most significant strategic risks facing the council and ensures risks are escalated and deescalated accordingly. The risk register was presented to SLT for discussion</p>

		<p>in March, where risk levels and risks themselves were discussed and adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>In the most recent audit of service business plans, our quality assurance reports identified that the completion of service-based risk registers was often not robust enough or fully completed. This impacts the effectiveness of service risk identification and management, which also subsequently informs the strategic risk register. Feedback and further support are being provided to service business plan managers to strengthen the application of the risk management process. This will ensure that risks that should be captured in the strategic risk register can be easily identified within service plans, along with current mitigating actions, and will strengthen the process of risk escalation.</p> <p>We are a member of the recently formed WLGA Risk Management Network. We are using the network to share knowledge of emerging risks for local authorities in Wales and practice for risk management. This will be used to inform the development of our risk register and risk management process.</p>
	Reporting	<p>The strategic risk register is reported regularly to Governance and Audit Committee enabling the committee to consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, and to scrutinise whether risk is being appropriately managed.</p> <p>The risk register was presented to Governance and Audit Committee in September 2022, where committee challenged risk identification and provided feedback on information required in future reports to enable the committee to fulfil their role effectively. As a result, there was a specific change to the risk register to identify the risk of climate shocks, with the climate change risk, risk 11, being split into two parts, with the second part being the risk of climate shocks. Also, the structure of the report has been amended in consideration of this feedback and a full presentation on the process of risk identification, management, and the role of committees in assessing the risk framework has been developed to be presented to the committee. This is important in ensuring that members are fully aware of their roles and what exactly is expected of them.</p> <p>The risk register is also presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, enabling the committee to scrutinise the risks and risk owners to ensure that the correct risks have been identified and that they are being mitigated appropriately. A full presentation on the process of risk identification, management, and the role of committees in assessing the risk framework was provided to the committee to inform their role in the risk management process. The committee challenged risk identification and the impact of risk mitigation, particularly given some post mitigation risk levels were not assessed to change. The report also facilitated members to select particular risks to undergo further scrutiny if they felt necessary.</p>
How do we know this?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic risk register • Service business plans and service business plans quality assurance • Feedback from members at Governance and Audit Committee • Feedback from members at Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee • Discussions with colleagues at WLGA risk management network

**Key actions
moving
forward**

- Continue to update the risk register regularly to ensure that the appropriate risks are captured and are being proportionately managed
- Work with heads of service and service managers to improve the completion and quality of risk identification and management within service plans
- Update the risk management policy and guidance

Part 1 - Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment Overview – March 2023

Ref	Potential Risk	Risk Level – Pre mitigation	Risk Level – Post mitigation	Key changes	Risk owner
Risks to resources					
1	The authority does not have clearly articulated organisational priorities informing a sustainable delivery model	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Low 2025/26 – Low	<p>A first iteration of the new Community and Corporate Plan was presented to Cabinet and Council in October. The direction of the plan was agreed however the plan in its then format was not agreed by Council. Following feedback and through work with Council members, a new, more detailed plan was taken to Council in January, having been previously agreed by Cabinet. Again, the plan in its current format was not agreed. The plan will be developed using feedback from members and presented to Council again in April.</p> <p>The risk levels for this risk have decreased from high to medium for 24/25 and 25/26 pre-mitigation, and from medium to low for 24/25 and 25/26 post-mitigation.</p>	Paul Matthews
2	Some services may become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	<p>The size of the budget challenge for Monmouthshire for 2023/24, prior to any intervention, was over £26m with the cost of delivering existing services increasing by 14%. The Council looked to accommodate these cost pressures primarily through increases in Welsh Government funding and council tax income of £14.3m and savings proposals of £11.4m. This still left a budget shortfall of £230k to be found at that time.</p> <p>Budget proposals were issued for a four-week public consultation and scrutiny period in January before being taken to Council in March. The budget was first not passed by Council, but following feedback and slight adjustment, it was passed on the 9th March. Though the budget for 23/24 has been approved, the Council still faces further financial risks that will need to be addressed throughout the year, including the use of reserve and capital receipts.</p> <p>The MTFP has recently been revised and updated in line with the 23/24 budget. It has also been revised to ensure it reflects the current pressure facing local authorities, and to incorporate changes in the Welsh Government funding settlement where Monmouthshire was provided with a funding increase of 9.3%, higher than expected and previously modelled.</p>	Peter Davies
3	The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	<p>The total planned use of earmarked reserves in support of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budget is £3.61m. This adds to the currently forecast use of earmarked reserves for 2022/23 of £6.15m, nearly £10m over a two-year period. This means that by the end of 2022/23 the balance of earmarked reserves is likely to be £9.96m. The further call in 2023/24 means that the earmarked reserves will then fall to £6.35m, with the useable balance down to £4.99m. The low level of revenue reserves now requires the reserves policy to adapt such that revenue reserves are very much protected to provide cover for foreseen or unforeseen risks that might result. Improved budget management and discipline going forward will need to ensure that in-year over spends are quickly identified and to the extent they cannot be mitigated for in-year savings to be found.</p>	Peter Davies
4	Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	<p>An e-recruitment system has been procured and is being implemented to support the development of recruitment as a genuine talent acquisition process. This will benefit recruiting managers who want speed, simplicity and agility.</p> <p>A report was presented to Cabinet in September 2022 requesting the release of £219,824 from reserves in order to mitigate the workforce impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Proposed actions included increasing mileage paid to workers using their personal vehicles for work-related travel from 45p per mile to 50p; updating the pay system and upskill colleagues to ensure a swifter expense payment; and to increase payments for commissioned care by £1 per hour for a 6-month period. The proposal was approved and implemented at the end of October and will run until the end of March.</p>	Matt Phillips

5	Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium		Sian Hayward
Risks to service delivery					
6	Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	The Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2022. The report evaluates the progress of Monmouthshire County Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2021/2022, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2022 - 2023. This evaluation report forms an integral part of the improvement of safeguarding practice across the Council and drives the work of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group.	Will Mclean & Jane Rodgers
7	Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand, complexity of cases and insufficiency of registered placements	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/25 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/25 – High	The Month 9 forecast identified £4.4m of pressures from Children's social care. Children's services is a volatile area with risks associated with insufficiency of children's placements, demand levels, the complexity of demand, inflationary pressures, and staff shortages. There are increasing numbers of high-cost placements, including emergency arrangements for children where there is no regulated placement available.	Jane Rodgers
8	Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/25 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/25 – High	The Month 9 forecast identified £1.49m of pressures in adult social care that recognises the challenges of an ageing population, combined with delayed presentations to health and social care during the pandemic resulting in increased numbers of individuals who have higher dependency needs. The pressure to avoid delayed discharge from hospital is also driving increased demand.	Jane Rodgers
9	Failure to implement the new national curriculum and other reforms alongside strong delivery of teaching and examinations following disruptions during the pandemic meaning that some children, including vulnerable learners, are unable able to achieve their full potential.	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	The Council and EAS continue to work with schools in ensuring that they are successfully implementing the new curriculum and meeting the needs of students. The authority has commissions from the EAS a county wide review of teaching of learning in all schools. Around 50% has been completed but progress has slowed due to industrial action. EAS and MCC continue to monitor the progress schools are making towards the implementation of the curriculum and identify those who may need additional support. Two Monmouthshire schools are currently in a statutory category, one requiring Special Measures, and the other Significant Improvement. These schools will now be subject to an extensive monitoring process to ensure that its recovery is robust and sustainable.	Will Mclean
Risks to policy priorities					
10	a) Delays to the adoption of a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) inhibits our ability to take forward key policy objectives such as job creation and affordable housing development b) High phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye limit development opportunities within a significant proportion of the county	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	Following the endorsement of the progression of the RLDP by Council in September, an amended Preferred Strategy was taken to Council in December. The amended Preferred Strategy 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. This Strategy was approved by Council and will now be issued for statutory consultation/engagement and stakeholder involvement. This risk has been divided into parts a and b to ensure the risk of high phosphate levels to development is clearly represented.	Mark Hand
11	a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 due to the scale and complexity of the challenge b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	Following feedback from Governance and Audit Committee, this risk was divided into two parts to ensure that the risk of climate shocks have been fully incorporated and are represented clearly in the register.	Strategic Leadership Team

	demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities				
12	The rising cost of living could tip some families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 - Medium	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Low	<p>The Council is delivering a range of activities to support residents including the Money Matters campaign which signposts to sources of support and further delivery of the campaign to staff in schools and other projects related to the costs of the school day. The Council have recently teamed up with Mind Monmouthshire and Citizens Advice Monmouthshire to set up cost of living support drop-in sessions at schools and leisure centres across the county. These sessions are available to all, including residents and colleagues, and will offer advice on ensuring people are getting all the money and benefits they are entitled to, making money go further and guidance on managing energy bills. There will also be help and advice on getting back into work or more secure employment as well as emotional and wellbeing support.</p> <p>Given that the rate of inflation in the UK has started to fall and is expected to significantly decrease by the end of 2023, the risk levels for this risk have changed from high to medium for 25/26 pre-mitigation, high to medium for 24/25 post-mitigation, and medium to low for 25/26 post-mitigation.</p>	Frances O'Brien
13	Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	2023/24 – High 2024/25 – High 2025/26 – High	In November 2022, Cabinet agreed a proposal for Monmouthshire to become a County of Sanctuary for those fleeing persecution. We have also welcomed a significant number of Ukrainian's fleeing the war in Eastern Europe. Coupled with a continued shortage of affordable private leased accommodation and growing waiting lists for social housing, the pressures on the housing market remain significant.	Frances O'Brien & Matthew Gatehouse
14	Limited funding for public transport and more stringent tests for new roadbuilding make it harder for people to travel around the county	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	2023/24 – Medium 2024/25 – Medium 2025/26 – Medium	<p>Monmouthshire is a rural county where isolation can be exacerbated when people have limited access to affordable transport. The county suffers from infrequent bus services. The Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) has kept vital bus services running throughout the pandemic. However, this is due to come to an end which may affect the viability of some services.</p> <p>An effective is also key to reducing the county's carbon emissions, which are relatively high per person, and becoming a greener place to live. This was also at the heart of the Welsh Governments Road review. This looks to deliver long term benefits but also presents some short-term challenges as construction of new roads will need to satisfy more rigorous criteria before getting the go-ahead.</p>	Frances O'Brien, Mark Hand, Deb Hill-Howells

Appendix: Strategic Risk Management Policy – Summary

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

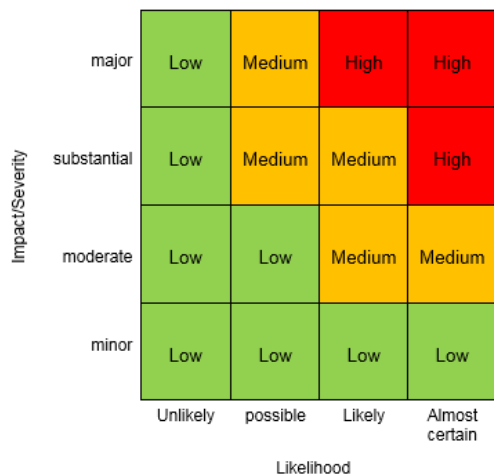
Risk Management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of controlling them or responding to them. Strategic risks are those which affect the council as a whole. Typically, these will be key risks which could significantly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

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

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

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

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



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

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SUBJECT:	INTERNAL AUDIT Implementation of Agreed Internal Audit Recommendations 2021/22
DIRECTORATE:	Resources
MEETING:	Governance & Audit Committee
DATE:	30th March 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE

To receive and consider the progress operational managers have made against implementing Internal Audit Recommendations made in final reports issued in relation to the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan. Reported previously to the former Audit Committee in November 2021. Implementation of Internal Audit recommendations strengthens good governance.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) came into force in April 2013 (updated March 2017) which the Internal Audit team needs to demonstrate it is compliant with; these replaced the former Code of Practice for Internal Audit within Local Government.

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

- 3.3 Each audit opinion is based on the strengths and weaknesses identified during the course of each audit; definitions of which are shown at Appendix 2. Where weaknesses in control have been identified an audit recommendation is made in order to improve the internal control environment which should lead to an overall improvement of service provision or the financial stewardship of the area audited. The recommendation is categorised as a level of risk.
- 3.4 Generally operational management agree with the audit recommendations made and agree to implement the action required to make the improvements; for reports finalised in 2021/22 98% of Internal Audit recommendations were agreed by operational managers.
- 3.5 Another requirement of the PSIAS is for the Chief Internal Auditor to verify that agreed IA recommendations have been implemented by operational managers. This is to verify that improvements have been made in the financial stewardship within services which have been audited. The Team therefore undertake follow up audit reviews to ensure this is done within 6 to 12 months after the final audit report has been issued.
- 3.6 Where a Limited Assurance opinion has been given a full follow up audit is undertaken and these are reported into Governance an Audit Committee separately. This report provides data on recommendations made in audit reports all audit opinions.
- 3.7 Due to limited resources within the Internal Audit Team not all audit recommendations can be physically followed up, so this was previously undertaken on a sample basis. Although some audits were followed up by the Internal Audit team and evidence tested to ensure that agreed actions had been implemented, for the majority there was significant reliance on the operational managers' honesty in providing an update on the progress of the implementation of agreed actions back to the Internal Audit Team.
- 3.8 This review has only taken account of audit reports started in 2021/22 and finalised in either 2021/22 or 2022/23. Recommendations made in previous years which had not been implemented have not been included within this report due to limited resources within the team.
- 3.9 As at 31-3-21, 114 recommendations were due to be implemented (includes recommendations made within Limited Assurance opinion audits); 7 were no longer relevant as the programme had ceased, leaving 107 recommendations to be implemented.
- 3.10 In summary:

Measure	Performance
Number of recommendations accepted by managers	98%
Recommendations Implemented	60%
Recommendations Partially Implemented	16%
Intention to Implement by 31-3-23	7%
Intention to Implement post 31-3-23	17%

- 3.11 The percentage of audit recommendations implemented or partially implemented was 76%.
- 3.12 The details of the recommendations made per audit job in 2021/22 are shown at Appendix 1 where the majority of opinions issued were favourable and supportive of positive assurance. The 2 Limited opinions have subsequently received a follow up audit which have resulted in a more positive audit opinion as the recommendations stated as significant have been implemented.
- 3.13 Previously the Internal Audit Team undertook a more in depth review of the implementation of recommendations on a sample basis by doing a mini follow up review. The implementation status of previous Internal Audit recommendations is shown below.

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

- 3.14 The combined percentage of recommendations implemented and partially implemented for 2020/21 amounts to 55%. This shows that there has been an improvement during 2021/22, although not all recommendations agreed have been implemented by operational managers.

- 3.15 This data on the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations has been reported into SLT along with the details of the individual audit reports in which the recommendations were made.
- 3.16 The definitions of the audit opinions and with the risk rating of the weakness identified currently used by the Internal Audit team are shown at Appendix 2.

4. REASONS

- 4.1 Part of Internal Audit's responsibility is to provide assurances to senior management and the Governance & Audit Committee that there are sound processes in place across all service areas to ensure effective, efficient and economic use of public money and to safeguard the assets of the Council. Audit reviews are undertaken to check what controls are actually in place to ensure this against what are expected to be in place.
- 4.2 The Internal Audit Team's work helps to ensure appropriate internal controls, governance arrangements and risk management processes are in place.
- 4.3 Where weaknesses in process or procedure are identified an audit recommendation is made in order to improve the financial stewardship of public money or governance arrangements to enable the Council to better meet its objectives and service delivery.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 CONSULTTEES

Deputy Chief Executive

Results of Consultation:

N/A

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Internal Audit Management Information 2021/22 & 2022/23

10. AUTHORS AND CONTACT DETAILS

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Governance & Audit Committee March 2023

APPENDIX 1

Internal Audit Services - Management Information for 2021-22 & 2022-23

Job number	Directorate	Service	Job Name	Risk Rating / Priority	Date of issue of FINAL report	Opinion given	No' of Recs made by Auditor	No' of Recs accepted by Client	No' of Recs implemented at 31-12-22	No' of Recs Partially implemented at 31-12-22	No' of Recs not implemented at 31-12-22 but assurance provided that they will be implemented by 31-3-23	No' of Recs not implemented at 31-12-22	no longer relevant
P2122/23	Corporate	Cross Cutting	Compliance with the Bribery Act	Medium	24/03/22	Reasonable	4.0	4.0	1	3	0	0	
P2122/25	Corporate	Cross Cutting	National Fraud Initiative	High	24/09/21	Considerable	2.0	2.0	2	0	0	0	
P2122/30	Enterprise	Enterprise & Community Animation	Rural Programmes	Medium	07/04/22	Reasonable	7.0	7.0	1	0	0	0	6
P2122/33	Enterprise	Neighbourhood Services	Stores	Medium	31/03/22	Considerable	4.0	4.0	1	1	1	1	
P2122/35	Enterprise	Placemaking, Housing, Highways & Flood	Civil Enforcement	Medium	22/12/21	Considerable	11.0	11.0	6	0	1	4	
P2122/36	Enterprise	Placemaking, Housing, Highways & Flood	Local Development Plan	Medium	03/12/21	Substantial	1.0	1.0	1	0	0	0	
P2122/45	Mon Life	Mon Life	Shire Hall Follow-up	Medium	31/03/22	Considerable	4.0	4.0	3	0	1	0	
P2122/50	Resources	Commercial, Property, Facilities & Fleet	Fleet - Health & Safety and Driver Management	Medium	14/12/21	Limited	7.0	7.0	5	1	1	0	
P2122/57	Resources	Finance	Benefits	High	24/11/21	Substantial	2.0	2.0	2	0	0	0	
P2122/59	Resources	Finance	Control, Suspense & Holding Accounts	Medium	14/01/22	Substantial	1	1	1	0	0	0	
P2122/80	Resources	Commercial, Property, Facilities & Fleet	Investments	High	11/02/22	Reasonable	6.0	6.0	4	0	0	2	
P2122/81	Enterprise	Enterprise & Community Animation	Disabled Facilities Grants	Medium	25/08/21	Reasonable	11.0	11.0	5	2	3	1	
							60.0	60.0	32.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	6.0

Finalisation work from 2021/22 undertaken in 2022/23

Job number	Directorate	Service	Job Name	Risk Rating / Priority	Date of issue of FINAL report	Opinion given	No' of Recs made by Auditor	No' of Recs accepted by Client	No' of Recs implemented at 31-12-22	No' of Recs Partially implemented at 31-12-22	No' of Recs not implemented at 31-12-22 but assurance provided that they will be implemented by 31-3-23	No' of Recs not implemented at 31-12-22	no longer relevant
F2223-01	Resources	Finance	Budgetary Control (Revenue)	High	19/05/22	Substantial	3	2	1	0	1	0	
F2223-02	Resources	Finance	Fixed Assets	Medium	19/05/22	Substantial	1	1	0	0	0	1	
F2223-03	Resources	Finance	Replacement BACS	High	19/05/22	Considerable	3	3	1	1	0	1	
F2223-04	Children & Young People	Achievement & Extended Services	Early Years		18/05/22	Considerable	7	7	7	0	0	0	
F2223-05	Social Care & Health	Integrated Services	Direct Payment - Follow Up	Medium	17/06/22	Reasonable	11	11	4	4	0	3	
F2223-06	Social Care & Health	Integrated Services	Internal Domiciliary Care	Medium	23/06/22	Reasonable	9	8	4	3	0	1	
F2223-07	Enterprise	Strategic Projects	Concessionary Travel	Medium	27/05/22	Limited	10	10	3	2		4	1
F2223-08	Corporate	Cross Cutting	Agency Staff	High	27/09/22	Reasonable	12	12	12				
							56	54	32	10	1	10	1

TOTAL 116.0 114.0 64.0

Governance & Audit Committee March 2023

		IMPLEMENTED	PARTIAL	INTENTION TO COMPLETE BY YEAR END	INTENTION TO COMPLETE AFTER YEAR END	No longer relevant	
TOTAL	114.0	64.0	17.0	8.0	18.0	7.0	
		56%	15%	7%	16%	6%	
(Exclude no longer relevant)	107.0	64	17	8	18		107
		60%	16%	7%	17%		100%

Internal Audit Opinions

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

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

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

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

For grant claim audits:

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

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

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Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – Monmouthshire County Council

Quarterly Update: 31 December 2022

Annual Audit Summary

Description	Timetable	Status
A report summarising completed audit work since the last Annual Audit Summary, which was issued in January 2022.	February 2023	Drafting

Financial Audit work

Description	Scope	Timetable	Status
Audit of the Council's 2021-22 statement of accounts	Statutory audit of the Council's annual statement of accounts.	Draft accounts provided August 2022.	Audit work ongoing. To be presented at the February Governance and Audit Committee.
Audit of the Monmouthshire County Council Welsh Church Act Fund's 2021-22 accounts	External audit of the Fund's annual accounts.	Audit work to be completed by end of January.	To be reported at the January Governance and Audit Committee.

Description	Scope	Timetable	Status
Independent examination of the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund's 2021-22 accounts	External independent examination of the Fund's annual accounts.	Audit work to be completed by end of January.	To be reported at the January Governance and Audit Committee.
Certification of 2021-22 Grant Claims and Returns	Certify each claim according to Certifying Instructions agreed with the awarding body.	Audit work to be completed in January and February.	Audit work ongoing.

Performance Audit work

2021-22 Performance audit work	Scope	Timetable	Status
<p>Local risk-based project</p>	<p>Options for local risk-based work were presented to the Council's SLT in early 2021. The 2021-22 Audit Plan included this work as to be confirmed and we agreed with officers that we would conclude our local risk-based projects still in progress from previous years before agreeing the scope of any new projects.</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>

2022-23 Performance audit work	Scope	Timetable	Status
Assurance and Risk Assessment	<p>Project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources and acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle. The project is likely to focus in particular on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital programme management • Use of performance information – with a focus on service user feedback and outcomes • Setting of well-being objectives 	<p>Fieldwork: September 2022 – May 2023</p> <p>Feedback workshop on proper arrangements work: February 2023</p> <p>Summary Report: June 2023</p>	<p>Audit assurance on proper arrangements: work underway.</p> <p>Setting of well-being objectives: project brief issued.</p> <p>Use of performance information: Project brief to be issued February 2023.</p> <p>Capital programme management: scoping.</p>

2022-23 Performance audit work	Scope	Timetable	Status
Thematic Review – Unscheduled Care	A cross-sector review focusing on the flow of patients out of hospital. This review will consider how the Council is working with its partners to address the risks associated with the provision of social care to support hospital discharge, as well as prevent hospital admission. The work will also consider what steps are being taken to provide medium to longer-term solutions.	November 2022 – March 2023	Fieldwork
Thematic review – Digital	This project is being scoped with further details of the specific focus of the review to be confirmed.	To be confirmed.	Scoping.
Local risk-based project	To be confirmed.	To be confirmed.	To be confirmed.

Local government national studies planned/in progress

Study	Scope	Timetable	Status	Fieldwork planned at Monmouthshire County Council
Building safety	Review of how well local authorities are delivering their responsibilities for building safety	September 2022 – August 2023	Evidence Gathering – fieldwork planned for January – March 2023	Yes – interview with nominated officer at the Council and survey.
Planning for sustainable development – Brownfield regeneration	Review of how local authorities are promoting and enabling better use of vacant non-domestic dwellings and brownfield sites	October 2022 – September 2023	Evidence gathering – fieldwork being set up for January – March 2023	Yes – interview with nominated officer at the Council and survey.
Governance of special purpose authorities – National Parks	Review of systems and effectiveness of governance	November 2022 – September 2023	Planning	No

Study	Scope	Timetable	Status	Fieldwork planned at Monmouthshire County Council
Corporate Joint Committees	Assessing CJsCs' progress in developing their arrangements to meet their statutory obligations and the Welsh Government's aim of strengthening regional collaboration.	September 2022 – January 2023	Fieldwork complete	Yes – We are exploring the Council's perspective via our routine liaison meetings. Fieldwork includes interviews with the chief executive, director of finance and chair of each of the four CJsCs.

Estyn

Estyn planned work 2022-23	Scope	Timetable	Status
Local Government Education Services Inspections	<p>Estyn carried out a post-inspection improvement conference in Torfaen in September as part of our follow-up process for an authority causing significant concern. Pembrokeshire was removed from our follow-up category following our monitoring visit in early October. Wrexham local authority is still in a causing concern category and we convened a progress conference in December to look specifically at the school improvement recommendation. We are proposing to re-visit Wrexham in the summer term. We inspected Blaenau Gwent in December and we will be inspecting RCT in early spring.</p>	<p>RCT inspection week beginning 23 January</p>	<p>N/A</p>
Education Other than at School (EOTAS) thematic review	<p>Field work being carried out in late autumn/early spring term across all local authorities.</p>	<p>Report published on 30 June</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW planned work 2022-23	Scope	Timetable	Status
Programme 2022-23	Following our testing phase we are making the final amendments to our approach and code of practice. This will result in a revised code of practice. We will consult on this early 2023 with implementation from 01 April 2023.	April 2022 – March 2023	In progress
Joint work	<p>We continue to work with partners, sharing information and intelligence including completing joint reviews.</p> <p>We currently are working in collaboration with HIW for a national review of the stroke pathway and CMHT inspections.</p>	Current	In progress
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Annual Monitoring Report for Health and Social Care 2021-22	Following the publication of the 2020-21 report planning is underway for the next report: publication date to be confirmed.	Publication to be confirmed	Pre-publication
Annual meeting with Statutory Directors of Social Services	CIW will meet with all Directors of Social Services.	December 2022 and January 2023	Delivery

CIW planned work 2022-23	Scope	Timetable	Status
<p>National review of Care Planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline pre-proceedings</p>	<p>Purpose of the review</p> <p>To provide external scrutiny, assurance and to promote improvement regarding the quality of practice in relation to the care planning for children and young people subject to the public law outline pre-proceedings.</p> <p>To consider the extent to which practice has progressed since the publication of both the CIW 'National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to public law outline pre proceedings' and the publication of the PLO working group report 2021 including best practice guidance.</p>	<p>September 2022 – Spring 2023</p>	<p>Delivery</p>
<p>Joint Inspection Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA)</p>	<p>Cross-inspectorate approach. Areas to be determined. We will complete a further four multi-agency joint inspections.</p> <p>We will publish a national report in late 2023.</p>	<p>Autumn 2022 – Spring 2023</p>	<p>Planning</p>

Audit Wales national reports and other outputs published since January 2022

Report title	Publication date and link to report
'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-reliance	January 2023
A Picture of Flood Risk Management	December 2022
'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises	December 2022
Poverty Data Tool	November 2022
'Time for change' – Poverty in Wales	November 2022
Learning from cyber-attacks	October 2022 (distributed privately to audited bodies)
National Fraud Initiative 2020-21	October 2022
COVID-19 business support in 2020-21 – Memorandum for the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee	October 2022
Payment to the Welsh Government's Former Permanent Secretary on Termination of Employment	September 2022
Equality Impact Assessments: More than a Tick Box Exercise?	September 2022

Report title	Publication date and link to report
Welsh Government – setting of well-being objectives	September 2022
Welsh Government workforce planning and management	September 2022
NHS Wales Finances Data Tool – up to March 2022	August 2022
Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030: Evidence Report	August 2022
Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030	July 2022
Sustainable Tourism in Wales’ National Parks	July 2022
Third Sector COVID-19 Response Fund – Memorandum for the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee	July 2022
The Welsh Community Care Information System – update	July 2022
Tackling the Planned Care Backlog in Wales – and waiting times data tool	May 2022
The new Curriculum for Wales	May 2022
Unscheduled care – data tool and commentary	April 2022

Report title	Publication date and link to report
Direct Payments for Adult Social Care	April 2022
Local Government Financial Sustainability data tool	February 2022
Joint Working Between Emergency Services (including data tool)	January 2022

Audit Wales national reports and other outputs (work in progress/planned)¹

Title	Anticipated publication date
The Welsh Government's purchase of Gilestone Farm – letter to the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee	January 2023
Quality governance in the NHS	February 2023
Orthopaedic services	February 2023
Digital inclusion	February 2023
NHS workforce planning data briefing	March 2023

¹ We will continue to keep our plans under constant review, taking account of the evolving external environment, our audit priorities, the context of our own resourcing and the capacity of audited bodies to engage with us. Since the previous update we have progressed planning work on several new topics although the scope and timetable for some of these pieces of work are still to be confirmed.

Title	Anticipated publication date
Maximising EU funding	May 2023
Covering teachers' absence – follow-up	July 2023
Affordable housing	To be confirmed
Ukrainian refugee response	To be confirmed
Active travel	To be confirmed
Cancer services	To be confirmed

Good Practice Exchange events and resources

Title	Link to resource
<p>Tackling poverty in Wales: responding to the challenge – this shared learning event brought people together from across public services to share ideas, learning and knowledge on how organisations can respond to the challenges caused by poverty. We shared examples of approaches being taken by organisations within Wales and across the UK.</p>	<p>Tackling poverty resources</p>

Title	Link to resource
<p>Making Equality Impact Assessments more than a tick box exercise: This shared learning event aims to assist public bodies to improve use and application of EIAs beyond an exercise in compliance by bringing people together from across public services to share ideas, learning and knowledge.</p>	<p>Making EIAs more than a tick box exercise: Online event registration</p>
<p>'A missed opportunity': Social Enterprises: Following on from our Tackling Poverty in Wales: responding to the challenge event held in October, we will be holding another shared learning event on our themed work looking at social enterprises in the new year. This event will bring people together from across public services to share ideas, learning and knowledge to lessen the challenges caused by poverty.</p>	<p>Further detail will be available on our event page shortly.</p>

Recent Audit Wales blogs

Title	Publication date
<p>A perfect storm – the cost of living crisis and domestic abuse</p>	<p>21 November 2022</p>
<p>Tackling poverty means tackling poverty data</p>	<p>11 November 2022</p>
<p>Cost of living and putting away the bayonet</p>	<p>21 September 2022</p>
<p>Heat is on to tackle Climate Change</p>	<p>18 August 2022</p>

Title	Publication date
<u>Direct Payments in Wales</u>	15 June 2022
<u>Unscheduled Care in Wales – a system under real pressure</u>	21 April 2022
<u>Skills Competition Wales</u>	18 February 2022
<u>Cyber resilience – one year on</u>	9 February 2022
<u>Helping to tell the story through numbers</u> (Local government financial sustainability data tool)	3 February 2022
<u>Call for clearer information on climate change spending</u>	2 February 2022
<u>Actions speak louder than words</u> (Building social resilience and self-reliance in citizens and communities)	14 January 2022

Rhaglen Waith ac Amserlen Archwilio Cymru – Cyngor Sir Fynwy

Diweddariad Chwarterol: 31 Rhagfyr 2022

Crynodeb Archwilio Blynyddol

Disgrifiad	Amserlen	Statws
Adroddiad yn crynhoi'r gwaith archwilio a gwblhawyd ers y Crynodeb Archwilio Blynyddol diwethaf, a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Ionawr 2022.	Chwefror 2023	Drafftio

Gwaith Archwilio Ariannol

Disgrifiad	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
Archwilio datganiad o gyfrifon 2021-22 y Cyngor	Archwiliad statudol o ddatganiad cyfrifon blynyddol y Cyngor.	Darparwyd cyfrifon drafft ym mis Awst 2022.	Gwaith archwilio yn mynd rhagddo. I'w gyflwyno ym Mhwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio mis Chwefror.

Disgrifiad	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
Archwiliad o gyfrifon Cronfa Deddf Eglwys Cymru Cyngor Sir Fynwy 2021-22	Archwiliad allanol o gyfrifon blynyddol y Gronfa.	Gwaith archwilio i'w gwblhau erbyn diwedd mis Ionawr.	I'w adrodd ym Mhwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio mis Ionawr.
Archwiliad annibynnol o gyfrifon 2021-22 Cronfa Ymddiriedolaeth Gwaddol Ysgol Fferm Sir Fynwy	Archwiliad annibynnol allanol o gyfrifon blynyddol y Gronfa.	Gwaith archwilio i'w gwblhau erbyn diwedd mis Ionawr.	I'w adrodd ym Mhwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio mis Ionawr.
Ardystio Hawliadau Grant a Ffurflenni 2021-22	Ardystio pob hawliad yn unol â Chyfarwyddiadau Ardystio y cytunwyd arnynt gyda'r corff dyfarnu.	Gwaith archwilio i'w gwblhau ym mis Ionawr a mis Chwefror.	Gwaith archwilio yn mynd rhagddo.

Gwaith Archwilio Perfformiad

Gwaith archwilio perfformiad 2021-22	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
Prosiect lleol sy'n seiliedig ar risg	Cyflwynwyd opsiynau ar gyfer gwaith lleol sy'n seiliedig ar risg i'r Uwch Dîm Arweinyddiaeth y Cyngor yn gynnar yn 2021. Roedd Cynllun Archwilio 2021-22 yn cynnwys y gwaith hwn i'w gadarnhau eto a chytunwyd â swyddogion y byddem yn cwblhau ein prosiectau lleol sy'n seiliedig ar risg o hyd o flynyddoedd blaenorol cyn cytuno ar gwmpas unrhyw brosiectau newydd.	I'w gadarnhau	I'w gadarnhau

Gwaith archwilio perfformiad 2022-23	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
<p>Sicrwydd as Aseu Risg</p>	<p>Prosiect i ganfod lefel sicrwydd archwilio a/neu lle bo angen gwaith archwilio ychwanegol yn ystod y blynyddoedd i'w dod o ran y risgiau i'r Cyngor roi trefniadau priodol ar waith i sicrhau gwerth am arian yn ei ddefnydd o adnoddau a gweithredu yn unol â'r egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy.</p> <p>Mae'r prosiect yn debygol o ganolbwyntio'n benodol ar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rheoli rhaglenni cyfalaf • Defnyddio gwybodaeth am berfformiad – gan ganolbwyntio ar adborth a chanlyniadau defnyddwyr gwasanaethau • Pennu amcanion llesiant 	<p>Gwaith maes Medi 2022 – Mai 2023</p> <p>Gweithdy adborth ar waith trefniadau priodol: Chwefror 2023</p> <p>Adroddiad Cryno: Mehefin 2023</p>	<p>Sicrwydd archwilio ar drefniadau priodol: gwaith ar y gweill.</p> <p>Pennu amcanion llesiant: briff y prosiect wedi'i gyhoeddi.</p> <p>Defnydd o wybodaeth perfformiad: Briff y prosiect i'w gyhoeddi Chwefror 2023.</p> <p>Rheoli rhaglenni cyfalaf: cwmpasu.</p>

Gwaith archwilio perfformiad 2022-23	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
Adolygiad Thematig – Gofal heb ei Gynllunio	Adolygiad traws-sector sy'n canolbwyntio ar lif cleifion allan o'r ysbyty. Bydd yr adolygiad hwn yn ystyried sut mae'r Cyngor yn gweithio gyda'i bartneriaid i ymdrin â'r risgiau sy'n gysylltiedig â darparu gofal cymdeithasol i fod o gymorth i ryddhau cleifion, yn ogystal ag atal mynd i mewn i'r ysbyty. Bydd y gwaith yn ystyried hefyd pa gamau a gymerir i ddarparu datrysiadau tymor canol i hir.	Tachwedd 2022 – Mawrth 2023	Gwaith maes
Adolygiad thematig – Digidol	Mae'r prosiect hwn yn cael ei gwmpasu ac mae manylion ychwanegol am bwyslais penodol yr adolygiad i'w cadarnhau.	I'w gadarnhau.	Cwmpasu
Prosiect lleol sy'n seiliedig ar risg	I'w gadarnhau.	I'w gadarnhau.	I'w gadarnhau.

Astudiaethau cenedlaethol llywodraeth leol sydd wedi eu cynllunio/ar y gweill

Astudiaeth	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws	Gwaith maes wedi'i gynllunio yng Nghyngor Sir Fynwy
Diogelwch adeiladau	Adolygiad o ba mor dda y mae awdurdodau lleol yn cyflawni eu cyfrifoldebau dros ddiogelwch adeiladau	Medi 2022 – Awst 2023	Casglu Tystiolaeth – gwaith maes wedi'i gynllunio ar gyfer Ionawr – Mawrth 2023	Do – cyfweiliad gyda swyddog a enwebwyd yn y Cyngor
Cynllunio ar gyfer datblygu cynaliadwy– Adfywio Tir Llwyd	Adolygu sut mae awdurdodau lleol yn hybu ac yn galluogi gwell defnydd o anheddau annomestig gwag a safleoedd tir llwyd	Hydref 2022 – Medi 2023	Casglu tystiolaeth – gwaith maes yn cael ei sefydlu ar gyfer Ionawr – Mawrth 2023	Do – cyfweiliad gyda swyddog a enwebwyd yn y Cyngor
Llywodraethu awdurdodau diben arbennig – Parciau Cenedlaethol	Adolygu systemau ac effeithiolrwydd llywodraethu	Tachwedd 2022 – Medi 2023	Cynllunio	Naddo

Astudiaeth	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws	Gwaith maes wedi'i gynllunio yng Nghyngor Sir Fynwy
<p>Cyd-bwyllgorau Corfforedig</p>	<p>Asesu cynnydd Cyd-bwyllgorau Corfforedig wrth ddatblygu eu trefniadau i gyflawni eu rhwymedigaethau statudol a nod Llywodraeth Cymru o gryfhau cydweithio rhanbarthol.</p>	<p>Medi 2022 – Ionawr 2023</p>	<p>Mae'r gwaith maes wedi'i gwblhau</p>	<p>Do – Rydym yn archwilio safbwynt y Cyngor trwy ein cyfarfodydd cyswllt arferol. Mae'r gwaith maes yn cynnwys cyfweiliadau gyda'r prif weithredwr, cyfarwyddwr cyllid a chadeirydd pob un o'r pedwar Cyd-bwyllgor Corfforedig.</p>

Estyn

Gwaith arfaethedig Estyn 2022-23	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
Arolygiadau Gwasanaethau Addysg Llywodraeth Leol	Cynhaliodd Estyn gynhadledd wella ôl-arolygu yn Nhorfaen ym mis Medi fel rhan o'n proses ddilynol ar gyfer awdurdod sy'n achosi pryder sylweddol. Cafodd Sir Benfro ei symud o'n categori dilynol yn dilyn ein hymweliad monitro ddechrau mis Hydref. Mae awdurdod lleol Wrecsam yn dal i fod mewn categori achosi pryder ac gwnaethom gynnull cynhadledd cynnydd ym mis Rhagfyr i edrych yn benodol ar yr argymhelliad ar wella ysgolion. Rydym yn bwriadu ail-ymweld â Wrecsam yn nhymer yr haf. Gwnaethom archwilio Blaenau Gwent ym mis Rhagfyr ac byddwn yn arolygu RhCT ddechrau'r gwanwyn.	Arolygiad yn Rhondda Cynon Taf yn yr wythnos sy'n dechrau 23 Ionawr	Amh.
Addysg Heblaw yn yr Ysgol (EOTAS) adolygiad thematig	Cynnal gwaith maes ddiwedd tymor yr hydref/ddechrau tymor y gwanwyn ym mhob awdurdod lleol.	Cyhoeddi adroddiad ar 30 Mehefin	Amh.

Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru (AGC)

Gwaith Cynlluniedig AGC 2022-23	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
Rhaglen 2022-23	Yn dilyn ein cyfnod profi, rydym yn gwneud y diwygiadau terfynol i'n dull gweithredu a'n cod ymarfer. Bydd hyn yn arwain at god ymarfer diwygiedig. Byddwn yn ymgynghori ar hyn yn gynnar yn 2023 i'w weithredu o 01 Ebrill 2023.	Ebrill 2022 – Mawrth 2023	Ar waith
Gwaith ar y cyd	Rydym yn parhau i weithio gyda phartneriaid, gan rannu gwybodaeth a deallusrwydd gan gynnwys cwblhau adolygiadau ar y cyd. Ar hyn o bryd rydym yn gweithio ar y cyd ag AGIC ar adolygiad cenedlaethol o'r llwybr strôc ac archwiliadau CMHT.	Cyfredol	Ar waith
Trefniadau Diogelu rhag Colli Rhyddid Adroddiad Monitro Blynyddol ar gyfer Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol 2021-22	Yn dilyn cyhoeddi adroddiad 2020-21, mae cynllunio ar y gweill ar gyfer dyddiad cyhoeddi'r adroddiad nesaf sydd i'w gadarnhau.	Cyhoeddi i'w gadarnhau	Cyn-gyhoeddi
Cyfarfod blynyddol gyda Chyfarwyddwyr Statudol y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol	Bydd AGC yn cyfarfod â'r holl Gyfarwyddwyr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol	Rhagfyr 2022 ac Ionawr 2023	Cyflawni

Gwaith Cynlluniedig AGC 2022-23	Cwmpas	Amserlen	Statws
<p>Adolygiad cenedlaethol o Gynllunio Gofal i blant a phobl ifanc sy'n ddarostyngedig i rag-achosion Amlinelliad Cyfraith Gyhoeddus</p>	<p>Diben yr adolygiad</p> <p>Darparu gwaith craffu allanol, sicrwydd a hyrwyddo gwelliant o ran ansawdd ymarfer mewn perthynas â chynllunio gofal ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc sy'n ddarostyngedig i rag-achosion amlinelliad cyfraith cyhoeddus.</p> <p>Ystyried i ba raddau mae ymarfer wedi symud ymlaen ers cyhoeddi 'Adolygiad cenedlaethol o gynllunio gofal i blant a phobl ifanc sy'n ddarostyngedig i rag-achosion Amlinelliad Cyfraith Gyhoeddus' gan AGC a chyhoeddi Adroddiad gweithgor Amlinelliad Cyfraith Gyhoeddus 2021 gan gynnwys arweiniad i arfer gorau.</p>	<p>Medi 2022 – Gwanwyn 2023</p>	<p>Cyflawni</p>
<p>Trefniadau Cyd-arolygu Diogelu Plant (JICPA)</p>	<p>Dull traws-arolygiaeth. Meysydd i'w penderfynu. Byddwn yn cwblhau pedwar arolygiad ar y cyd aml-asiantaeth arall.</p> <p>Byddwn yn cyhoeddi adroddiad cenedlaethol tuag at ddiwedd 2023.</p>	<p>Hydref 2022 – Gwanwyn 2023</p>	<p>Cynllunio</p>

Adroddiadau cenedlaethol Archwilio Cymru ac allbynnau eraill a gyhoeddwyd ers Ionawr 2022

Teitl yr adroddiad	Dyddiad cyhoeddi a dolen i'r adroddiad
'Gyda'n gilydd fe allwn ni' – Cydnerthedd a hunanddibyniaeth cymunedau	Ionawr 2023
Darlun o Reoli Perygl Llifogydd	Rhagfyr 2022
'Cyfle wedi'i gollu' – Mentrau Cymdeithasol	Rhagfyr 2022
Offeryn Data Tlodi	Tachwedd 2022
'Amser am newid' – Tlodi yng Nghymru	Tachwedd 2022
Dysgu o ymosodiadau seibr	Hydref 2022 (dosbarthwyd yn breifat i gyrff archwilio)
Y Fenter Twyll Genedlaethol 2020-21	Hydref 2022
Cymorth busnes COVID-19 yn 2020-21 – Memorandwm ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus	Hydref 2022
Taliad i Gyn-Ysgrifennydd Parhaol Llywodraeth Cymru pan Derfynwyd ei Chyflogaeth	Medi 2022
Asesiadau o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb: Mwy nag Ymarfer Blwch Ticio?	Medi 2022

Teitl yr adroddiad	Dyddiad cyhoeddi a dolenn i'r adroddiad
Llywodraeth Cymru – pennu amcanion llesiant	Medi 2022
Cynllunio a rheoli'r gweithlu gan Lywodraeth Cymru	Medi 2022
Offeryn Data Cyllid GIG Cymru – hyd at Fawrth 2022	Awst 2022
Parodrwydd y Sector Cyhoeddus ar gyfer Net Zero Carbon erbyn 2030: Adroddiad Tystiolaeth	Awst 2022
Parodrwydd y Sector Cyhoeddus ar gyfer Carbon Sero Net erbyn 2030	Gorffennaf 2022
Twristiaeth Gynaliadwy ym Mharciau Cenedlaethol Cymru	Gorffennaf 2022
Cronfa Ymateb COVID-19 Trydydd Sector – Memorandwm ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus	Gorffennaf 2022
System Wybodaeth Gofal yn y Gymuned Cymru – diweddariad – diweddariad	Gorffennaf 2022
Mynd i'r afael â'r Ôl-groniad Gofal Arfaethedig yng Nghymru – ac offeryn data amseroedd aros	Mai 2022

Teitl yr adroddiad	Dyddiad cyhoeddi a doleri'r adroddiad
Y Cwricwlwm newydd i Gymru	Mai 2022
Gofal heb ei drefnu – offeryn data a sylwebaeth	Ebrill 2022
Taliadau Uniongyrchol ar gyfer Gofal Cymdeithasol i Oedolion	Ebrill 2022
Offeryn Data Cynaliadwyedd Ariannol Llywodraeth Leol	Chwefror 2022
Cydweithio rhwng y Gwasanaethau Brys (gan gynnwys offeryn data)	Ionawr 2022

Adroddiadau cenedlaethol Archwilio Cymru ac allbynnau eraill (gwaith ar y gweill/cynlluniedig)¹

Teitl	Dyddiad cyhoeddi disgwylidig
Pryniant Llywodraeth Cymru o Fferm Gilestone – llythyr at y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus	Ionawr 2023
Llywodraethu ansawdd yn y GIG	Chwefror 2023

¹ Byddwn yn parhau i adolygu ein cynlluniau'n gyson, gan ystyried yr amgylchedd allanol sy'n esblygu, ein blaenoriaethau archwilio, cyd-destun ein hadnoddau ein hunain a gallu cyrff archwiliedig i gyfathrebu â ni. Ers y diweddariad blaenorol rydym wedi datblygu gwaith cynllunio ar sawl pwnc newydd er bod cwmpas ac amserlen rhai o'r darnau hyn o waith i'w cadarnhau o hyd.

Teitl	Dyddiad cyhoeddi disgwylidig
Gwasanaethau orthopedig	Chwefror 2023
Cynhwysiant digidol	Chwefror 2023
Briffio data cynllunio gweithlu'r GIG	Mawrth 2023
Gwneud y gorau o arian gan yr UE	Mai 2023
Cyflenwi ar gyfer absenoldeb athrawon – dilyniant	Gorffennaf 2023
Tai fforddiadwy	I'w gadarnhau
Ymateb i ffoaduriaid o'r Wcráin	I'w gadarnhau
Teithio llesol	I'w gadarnhau
Gwasanaethau canser	I'w gadarnhau

Digwyddiadau ac adnoddau Cyfnewid Arfer Da

Teitl	Dolen i'r adnodd
<p>Mynd i'r afael â thlodi yng Nghymru: ymateb i'r her – daeth y digwyddiad dysgu ar y cyd hwn â phobl ynghyd o bob rhan o wasanaethau cyhoeddus i rannu syniadau, dysgu a gwybodaeth am sut y gall sefydliadau ymateb i'r heriau a achosir gan dlodi. Gwnaethon rannu enghreifftiau o ddulliau gweithredu gan sefydliadau yng Nghymru ac ar draws y DU.</p>	<p>Adnoddau ar fynd i'r afael â thlodi</p>
<p>Asesiadau o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb: mwy nag ymarfer blwch ticio? Nod y digwyddiad dysgu a rennir hwn yw cynorthwyo cyrff cyhoeddus i wella defnydd a chymhwyso Asesiadau o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb y tu hwnt i ymarfer cydymffurfio drwy ddod â phobl ynghyd o bob rhan o wasanaethau cyhoeddus i rannu syniadau, dysgu a gwybodaeth.</p>	<p>Asesiadau o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb: mwy nag ymarfer blwch ticio? Digwyddiad ar-lein: cofrestru</p>
<p>'Cyfle a gollwyd': Mentrau Cymdeithasol: Yn dilyn ein digwyddiad Mynd i'r Afael â Thlodi yng Nghymru: ymateb i'r her a gynhaliwyd ym mis Hydref, byddwn yn cynnal digwyddiad dysgu ar y cyd arall ar ein gwaith thematig yn edrych ar fentrau cymdeithasol yn y flwyddyn newydd. Bydd y digwyddiad hwn yn dod â phobl ynghyd o bob rhan o wasanaethau cyhoeddus i rannu syniadau, dysgu a gwybodaeth er mwyn lleihau'r heriau a achosir gan dlodi.</p>	<p>Bydd rhagor o fanylion ar gael ar ein tudalen digwyddiadau yn fuan.</p>

Blogiau Diweddar Archwilio Cymru

Teitl	Cyhoeddiad
<u>Storm berffaith – yr argyfwng costau byw a cham-drin domestig</u>	21 Tachwedd 2022
<u>Mae mynd i'r afael â thlodi yn golygu mynd i'r afael â'r data ar dlodi</u>	11 Tachwedd 2022
<u>Costau byw a rhoi'r fidog i gadw</u>	21 Medi 2022
<u>Mae pethau'n poethi i fynd i'r afael â Newid Hinsawdd</u>	18 Awst 2022
<u>Taliadau Uniongyrchol yng Nghymru</u>	15 Mehefin 2022
<u>Gofal Heb ei Drefnu yng Nghymru – System o dan bwysau gwirioneddol.</u>	21 Ebrill 2022
<u>Cystadleuaeth Sgiliau Cymru</u>	18 Chwefror 2022
<u>Seibergadernid – blwyddyn ymlaen</u>	9 Chwefror 2022
<u>Helpu i adrodd y stori drwy gyfrwng rifau (Offeryn data cynaliadwyedd ariannol llywodraeth leol)</u>	3 Chwefror 2022
<u>Galwad am wybodaeth gliriach ynglŷn â gwariant ar newid yn yr hinsawdd</u>	2 Chwefror 2022
<u>Y gweithredoedd tu ôl i'r geiriau (adeiladu gwytnwch cymdeithasol a hunanddibyniaeth mewn dinasyddion a chymunedau)</u>	14 Ionawr 2022

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GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME IN LINE WITH ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review and scrutinise the authority's financial affairs and make reports and recommendations in relation to them

- Review the financial statements prepared by the authority
- To receive and approve the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations

	20 June 22	14 July 22	8 Sept 22	13 Oct 22	24 Nov 22	26 Jan 23	16 Feb 23	30 Mar 23
2021/22 MCC Statement of Accounts Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies		✓	✓ Draft			✓ Final		
Statement of Accounts 2021/22 - Charitable Trust Funds Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies		✓ Draft				✓ Final		
Treasury Report Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies		✓ 21/22 Outturn			✓ Mid year			
Capital & Treasury Strategy Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies						✓		
Assessment of the Robustness of the budget process and adequacy of reserves Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies							✓	

Review and assess the risk management, internal control, performance assessment and corporate governance arrangements of the authority and make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements

- To consider the draft annual self-assessment performance and recommend changes as required ahead of it being considered by Council.
- To consider the report of the (independent) panel performance assessment is also to be made available to the Governance & Audit Committee. A panel performance assessment is to take place at least once during the period between two consecutive ordinary elections of councillors to the Council

	20 June 22	14 July 22	8 Sept 22	13 Oct 22	24 Nov 22	26 Jan 23	16 Feb 23	30 Mar 23
Annual Governance Statement Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan	✓ Draft							
Freedom of Information (FOI) & Data Protection Act (DPA) Breaches & Data Subject Access Request (DSARs) Head of Information Security & Technology – Sian Hayward	✓					✓		
Self Assessment Process Performance & Data Insight Manager – Richard Jones	✓	✓ Draft Report						
Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report Chair of Governance & Audit Committee – Andrew Blackmore		✓						
Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment Performance & Data Insight Manager – Richard Jones			✓					

Anti Bribery Risk Assessment Deputy Chief Executive – Peter Davies				✓				
Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag				✓				✓
Annual Performance Review of Investment Committee Development Manager - Nick Keyse					✓			✓
Cyber security Head of Information Security & Technology – Sian Hayward						✓		
Review of the Committees Terms of Reference aligned to the Work Programme Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan						✓		
Feedback on Collaboration & Partnership arrangements Performance & Data Insight Manager – Richard Jones / Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan						✓		
Overview of Performance Management arrangements Performance & Data Insight Manager – Richard Jones							✓	

Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework Performance & Data Insight Manager – Richard Jones							✓	

Review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively

	20 June 22	14 July 22	8 Sept 22	13 Oct 22	24 Nov 22	26 Jan 23	16 Feb 23	30 Mar 23
The Ombudsman's Annual Letter (2021/22) Customer Relations Manager – Annette Evans					✓			
Whole Authority annual complaints report Customer Relations Manager – Annette Evans							✓	

Oversee the authority's internal audit arrangements

	20 June 22	14 July 22	8 Sept 22	13 Oct 22	24 Nov 22	26 Jan 23	16 Feb 23	30 Mar 23
6 month update on unfavourable opinions Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan	✓				✓			
Internal Audit Operational Plan 2022/23	✓	✓						

Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan	Draft	Final						
Internal Audit Annual Report Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan		✓						
Internal Audit quarterly progress reports Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan			✓		✓		✓	
Head of Service Call-ins following IA reports Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan			✓					
Implementation of Internal Audit agreed recommendations Chief Internal Auditor – Andrew Wathan								✓
Internal Audit Plan for Shared Resource Service (SRS) – Torfaen CBC IA Team	✓							
Internal Audit Annual Report for Shared Resource Service (SRS) – Torfaen CBC IA Team	✓							
Internal Audit for Shared Resource Service (SRS) – Torfaen CBC IA Team – Unfavourable IA opinions								

Oversee the authority's external audit arrangements

	20 June 22	14 July 22	8 Sept 22	13 Oct 22	24 Nov 22	26 Jan 23	16 Feb 23	30 Mar 23
Audit Wales Work Programme Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag	✓				✓			

Annual Audit Plan 22-23 Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag	✓							✓
Annual Audit Plan 22-23 - Welsh Church Funds Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag		✓						
Quarterly update and timetable Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag			✓		✓			
Audit Wales Springing forward & Councils Management Response Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag / Performance & Data Insight Manager – Richard Jones			✓					
Assurance and Risk assessment review Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag				✓				
Annual Grants report Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag				✓				
ISA260 Response to Accounts Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag / Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies						✓		
ISA 260 or equivalent for Trust Funds Audit Wales Manager – Rachel Freitag /						✓		

Head of Finance – Jonathan Davies								
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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 14

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held
at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Thursday, 16th February, 2023 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Andrew Blackmore (Chairman)
County Councillor Peter Strong (Vice Chairman)

Lay Members: Martin Veale, Colin Prosser, and Rhodri Guest

County Councillors: Ian Chandler, John Crook, Malcolm Lane,
Phil Murphy, Peter Strong, Laura Wright and Tony Kear

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrew Wathan	Chief Internal Auditor
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
Rachel Freitag	Audit Wales Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor Tony Easson

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No requests were submitted.

3. To note the Action List from the previous meeting

The Action List from the previous meeting was noted:

1. Key collaborations and partnerships – 14th July 2022
 - a) Outcome of Internal Audit's review of effectiveness/trends: The Chief Internal Auditor reported that work is ongoing, and outcomes will be reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 30th March: ONGOING
 - b) Add Job title of lead officers, nature of authority's role and most appropriate scrutiny committee: CLOSED
2. Amend the final version of the Statement of Accounts to reference significant occurrences nationally and globally and to explain abbreviations: CLOSED
3. 2021/22 Welsh Church Fund /Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust
 - a) Consider disclosure of the types of grants awarded being published in the Welsh Church Fund (WCF) accounts: CLOSED
 - b) Next annual set of accounts (WCF) - trustees to provide affirmation to the Governance and Audit Committee that grants have been made in accordance with

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the rules of the trust: Agreed that Jon Davies would own this action and look to address in the next annual accounts - CLOSED

4. Work Programme
Reprioritise agenda items for February and March 2023 meetings: CLOSED
5. Cyber security
 - a) Review arrangements for Members to access confidential agenda items: CLOSED
 - b) Add the annual TCBC audit plan for the SRS, the annual audit opinion, and any audit reports with an 'unsatisfactory' rating or equivalent to supplement the conclusions of the review of the adequacy of the TCBC audit function to the forward work programme: The Chief Internal Auditor confirmed that the opinions and plan from the Torfaen Internal Audit Team will be included in the work programme. Members were reminded that the outcome of the plan in previous years was included in the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report (July 2022) and these will be included in the Annual Plan going forward – OPEN

4. 2021/22 Monmouthshire County Council Statement of Accounts (Final)

Items 5 and 6 were considered together.

The Head of Finance presented the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts for Monmouthshire County Council and thanked the various teams for their contribution to the final document, and Audit Wales for its constructive and helpful approach. The Committee was reminded that the main reason for the delay was due to the technicality regarding the valuation and disposal of infrastructure assets.

The Audit Wales Officer presented the ISA260 response to the accounts and thanked the Finance Team welcoming the good working relationship.

Following presentation of the report, questions from Committee Members were invited:

- A Member asked if similar problems with deadlines are anticipated for this year. The Head of Finance stated that initial discussions suggest that draft accounts will be earlier this year. The Audit Wales Officer added that the delays had a subsequent effect with other sector audits. Discussions with Welsh Government are in progress and it is hoped that the deadlines will be brought forward from January incrementally year on year to return to original timescales.
- The Chair questioned the reference to reduced Finance Team capacity and changes in personnel across departments and queried how this is being addressed. The Head of Finance confirmed that it is planned to build resourcing to make permanent appointments in the Finance Team to improve capacity for future years. Discussions have started early with other departments to prepare for year-end information. It was requested that the Head of Finance reports back on work to return the Finance Team to full capacity in the summer. The Deputy Chief Executive referred to the vast amount of work involved in the budget setting process this year. There are issues that will draw on the Finance Teams in terms of budget and cost monitoring e.g. social care is a significant overspend. It was confirmed that the savings proposals aim for a more sustainable footing. Capacity issues are likely to continue.
- The Member queried the overstatement of creditors of £361,000. The Head of Finance suggested that this situation reflected the lateness in receiving grant funding from Welsh Government that caused significant administrative issues. In discussion with Audit

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Wales, it is planned to treat the late award of grants appropriately in future to avoid a recurrence.

- A Member expressed concern about the changes to timescales combined with capacity issues were likely to cause problems with scheduling. It was suggested that, in the ISA260 response, there should be commentary about why there was a missed deadline and the consequences. It was suggested and agreed by Audit Wales that there should be reference that there was understanding of the reasons why adjustments weren't made to uncorrected misstatements. In terms of the timetable, it is anticipated that there will be correspondence with authorities to confirm future deadlines.
- A Member referred to Council Tax increases and queried the difference in Council and market valuations for Council Tax bandings. The Head of Finance was requested to provide a response outside the meeting.
- The Chair referred to the statement that from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025 a temporary relief to the CIPFA code is allowed not to report gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets. He queried the level of confidence in meeting requirements post March 2025. The Head of Finance explained that detailed work was carried out four years ago to determine infrastructure assets e.g. meterage and condition of roads. The assets were componentised in preparation for the proposed Highways Network Assets legislation and subsequently shelved by CIPFA. These records will form the base data for post March 2025.

The Deputy Chief Executive wished to thank the Head of Finance and Finance Team, and Audit Wales Officers for the work in closing the accounts in difficult circumstances. The thanks were echoed by the Committee.

Referring to the report recommendations, the Committee noted that the accounts have been amended since the draft version was published to reflect the outcomes of the external audit process, and as noted within the Audit Wales ISA260 Audit of accounts report.

The Governance and Audit Committee approved the final audited Monmouthshire County Council statement of accounts for 2021/22.

5. ISA260 Response to Accounts: Audit Wales

This item was considered with item 5 above.

6. 2023/24 Capital Strategy and Treasury Strategy

The Head of Finance presented a report on the 2023/24 Capital Strategy and Treasury Strategy. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

- A Member, noting the fall in capital receipts and possibility of more borrowing, asked if the authority was close to the authorised limit on borrowing. The Head of Finance responded that the authority is not close to the authorised limit for debt because of the internal borrowing strategy. It will be necessary to monitor borrowing costs against net budget as capital investment plans are developed over the medium term. The authority has been successful in attracting grant funding for the capital programme and hopefully more will follow to allow further capital investment.
- A Member sought clarification about the projections for assets on the medium term financial plan and referred to the decline in capital investment over 5

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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years. It was asked if this reflected the existing plan or if the council's ability to identify new areas for significant capital investment is limited. The Head of Finance, reflecting on the core programme, noted that prior years were significantly impacted by the investment in the 3-19 School in Abergavenny and the Crick Rd replacement care home. The authority must be mindful of what is an affordable budget based on the revenue budget and the amount of affordable borrowing. The core programme is supported by the settlement from Welsh Government, a small amount of capital receipts and reliance on external grants. The level of borrowing detailed is the amount considered to be affordable and sustainable for the Council.

- A Member asked if the Capital Strategy and the medium-term financial plan are considered at the same time. The Head of Finance explained that the medium-term financial strategy is based on the development and approval of the Community and Corporate Plan. The Capital Strategy and medium-term financial strategy will wholly align. The capital and revenue budgets are closely aligned.
- Regarding commercial assets, a Member asked for a breakdown of investments revenue as the figure provided was consolidated. It was noted that the format of the strategy is heavily prescribed by the Code.
- A Member asked how often the value of assets for yield is reviewed and where the outcomes are reported. The Head of Finance explained that the Investment Committee explores options and the exit strategy at each meeting. Additionally, the Estates and Finance teams liaise regularly about the positioning of the investments and returns to ensure returns justify risk. Commercial investments continue to provide a net income stream that would have to be replaced with an alternative if a decision was taken not to continue. Exit strategies have been explored to consider the consequences of disposal. In response to a question, it was explained that the purpose of the table is to demonstrate that the authority is not overly reliant on commercial investments income as a proportion of the budget. Net income is reported in monitoring reports.
- A Member asked about the environmental and social elements of the policies and asked when a framework will be developed. The Head of Finance reported that discussions with the Treasury advisers have taken place and the current position is that the information available is immature and frameworks are developing. It was agreed that the developing position will be reported quarterly. It was explained that time and resources will be required to monitor this aspect. The authority has a commitment to the prioritisation of responsible, sustainable, and ethical investments. In response to a question, it was confirmed that there are regular meetings with the advisers to develop the policy into a framework.
- The Chair asked about the status of the Investment Committee and was advised by the Deputy Chief Executive that it is planned to bring a report to Governance and Audit Committee, Scrutiny then to Full Council regarding Investment Committee. A meeting of the Investment Committee will be convened soon to review performance and to receive the report. All usual arrangements regarding overseeing the investments portfolio will continue and an interim update will be provided to Investment Committee Members via e

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mail and to Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 15th June 2023.

- A Member asked for a trend analysis of the value of the commercial investments year on year, also for the income received that contributes to services.
- Referring to the Solar Farm, a Member asked if the Council is looking to increase capacity at Oak Grove and/or increase sites especially in view of e.g. sustainability and Greener Gwent. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that if either suggestion delivered policy objectives, and generated a return to the Council, it would be a good outcome. Moreover, there are sites in the replacement Local Development Plan brought forward by the Council and other landowners.
- A Member referred to the Newport Leisure Park and the restraints on e.g. Public Works Loan Board borrowing and asked if there is an exit strategy. It was explained that the exit strategy is reviewed at each meeting of the Investment Committee. It is not considered a good time to sell and there is good interest in the site so the focus is on filling the current voids. It was confirmed that under the code guidelines, the Council is not limited in its ability to access PWLB loan funding nor its ability to make improvements to the site.

As per the report recommendations, the Governance & Audit Committee considered the draft Capital strategy for 2023/24 and endorsed it for onward circulation and approval by full Council.

Additionally, the Governance & Audit Committee considered the draft Treasury management strategy for 2023/24 and endorsed it for onward circulation and approval by full Council. This includes the:

- 2023/24 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement
- 2023/24 Investment & Borrowing Strategies

The Governance & Audit Committee noted the requirement to review the Council's treasury management activities on behalf of the Council by receiving quarterly treasury management activity updates during 2023/24 as per the requirements of the updated CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice.

7. Assessment of Internal Audit Team Capacity and Resource

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated the Chief Internal Auditor on his new appointment.

The Chair referred to the "Assessment of Internal Audit Team Capacity and Resource" report noting the proposal to remove of one FTE Senior Auditors from the current Internal Audit Team structure.

In response to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that the post of Chief Internal Auditor is shared with and hosted by Newport City Council and discussions are in progress. Options for collaboration are under consideration to provide resilience and sustainability. The Audit Manager post is currently under provisional offer.

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The Chief Internal Auditor presented the report on the Assessment of Internal Audit Team Capacity and Resource. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

- Members noted that the Committee has accepted that capacity issues in the Internal Audit Team. It was suggested that the removal of a Senior Auditor post would pose an unacceptable risk.

Considering the report recommendations, the Committee considered the points made in the report and felt it was appropriate to express their comments or concerns formally to the Deputy Chief Executive and Cabinet as part of the Council's formal budget consultation process.

Therefore, due to the concerns expressed, the Committee resolved as follows:

Whilst recognising the budgetary challenges facing the Council, this Committee views the proposed removal of 1 FTE from the audit function (representing c18% reduction in resourcing) as having a disproportionately adverse impact on the function's ability to provide necessary levels of independent controls assurance. Further, the Committee notes the resignation of the Chief Internal Auditor which when considered alongside the proposed headcount reduction is likely to result in an unacceptable level of discontinuity and adverse impact on the audit work programme. Consequently, this Committee recommends that the Cabinet/Council does not proceed with this proposed reduction in headcount at the current time.

8. Internal Audit Progress Report - Quarter 3

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the Internal Audit Progress Report for Quarter 3. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

- A Member asked for an analysis covering what the team proposed to complete in a year, what has been finished and what wouldn't be completed by the end of the year.

As per the report recommendations, the Committee noted the audit opinions issued and noted the progress made by the Section towards meeting the 2022/23 Operational Audit Plan and the Section's performance indicators at the 9-month stage of the financial year.

9. To note the Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Programme

The Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan was noted.

10. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th January 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as an accurate record subject to an amendment to the format of the list of those present.

11. To note the date of the next meeting as 30th March 2023 at 2.00pm

Meeting ended at 4.02 pm