

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 20 November 2024

## Notice of Meeting

### Governance and Audit Committee

Thursday, 28th November, 2024 at 2.00 pm,  
County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA and remote attendance

***Please note that there will be an Extended Pre-meeting: Joint Corporate Insurance Briefing Session for Members of the Governance and Audit Committee and Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee (Training - 12.30-1.30pm). The usual pre-meeting will take place at 1.30pm for Governance and Audit Committee Members and Audit Officers***

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum  <b>Governance and Audit Committee Public Open Forum Guidance</b>  Our Governance and Audit Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council <a href="#">website</a>  If you would like to share your thoughts on any matters being discussed by Governance and Audit Committee, you may attend the meeting in person (or join remotely via Microsoft Teams), or submit written representations (via Microsoft Word, maximum of 500 words).  The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three clear working days in advance of the meeting. All representations received will be made available to the committee members prior to the meeting.  The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the	

Committee Chair's discretion. We ask that contributions are no longer than 4 minutes.

If you would like to attend one of our meetings to speak under the Public Open Forum at the meeting, you will need to give three working days' notice by contacting [GACRegistertoSpeak@monmouthshire.gov](mailto:GACRegistertoSpeak@monmouthshire.gov)

If you would like to suggest future topics for consideration by Governance and Audit Committee, please do so by emailing [GACRegistertoSpeak@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:GACRegistertoSpeak@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

<b>4.</b>	<b>To note the Action List from the previous meeting.</b>	<b>1 - 2</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>2024/25 Treasury Report</b>	<b>3 - 26</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>2023/24 MCC Statement of Accounts (Final)</b>	<b>27 - 160</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Audit of Accounts report - Audit Wales</b>	<b>161 - 188</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework and summary of wider arrangements</b>	<b>189 - 204</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Whole Authority Annual Complaints Report</b>	<b>205 - 212</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>The Ombudsman's Annual Letter</b>	<b>213 - 228</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>CPR Exemptions - 6 monthly update to 30th September 2024</b>	<b>229 - 242</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Internal Audit Quarterly Progress Report (Q2)</b>	<b>243 - 264</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan</b>	<b>265 - 270</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th October 2024</b>	<b>271 - 274</b>
<b>15.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting:</b>	

**Paul Matthews**  
**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Andrew Blackmore

Colin Prosser

Martin Veale

Rhodri Guest

County Councillor Sara Burch

*Cantref; Labour and Co-Operative  
Party*

County Councillor John Crook

*Magor East Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
with Undy;*

County Councillor Tony Easson

*Dewstow; Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru*

County Councillor David Jones

*Crucorney; Independent Group*

County Councillor Malcolm Lane

*Mardy; Welsh Conservative Party*

County Councillor Phil Murphy

*Caerwent; Welsh Conservative Party*

County Councillor Peter Strong

*Rogiet; Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru*

County Councillor Ann Webb

*St Arvans; Welsh Conservative Party*

## Public Information

### Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

### Watch this meeting online

This meeting can be viewed online either live or following the meeting by visiting [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk](http://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

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

## Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

## 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.

## *Monmouthshire Governance & Audit Committee Question/Consideration Guide*

### **Role of the Pre-meeting**

1. Why is the Committee considering this agenda item? (relevance and materiality)
  2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
  3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
  4. What are the confidential views of the auditors on relevant matters?
- Discuss members' views/ key concerns with the papers and agree priorities

### **Potential Questions/Considerations for the Meeting**

Internal Audit (IA)

1. What is the IA functional model and is it fit for purpose?
2. Does IA have sufficient authority and influence across the Authority?
3. Is IA suitably resourced and empowered? Is the annual IA plan appropriate? On what do we make this judgement?
4. Do Chief Officers demonstrably accept and champion the role of IA? How do they do this?
5. Are IA findings acted upon energetically by Officers? How is this demonstrated? Do we effectively challenge and hold officers to account for implementing IA findings?
6. How can we be confident that the internal control environment remains appropriate?
7. Do we have confidence in overall IA effectiveness? On what do we base this?
8. Is the annual/ periodic IA opinion plausible?
9. Do we have sufficient visibility over the work, output and effectiveness of allied IA teams, e.g. TCBC?

Governance

1. Is there a codified and cohesive description of MCC's overall governance arrangements? Is it fit for purpose?
2. Is there clarity over the governance of the various oversight and scrutiny arrangements for (and effectiveness

External Audit (EA)

1. Is the EA team (financial and performance) credible?
2. Are we confident over the arrangements for developing the EA annual work plan/ timetable and is it aligned to our understanding of key risks?
3. Do Chief/ senior officers engage appropriately with EA? How is this demonstrated?
4. Is there a constructive relationship between IA, EA (and other inspectorates)? How is this evidenced?
5. Have relevant officers demonstrably considered the results/ conclusions of EA national and specific reports?
6. Do we have good visibility over emerging issues identified by EA?
7. In respect of ISA260 and equivalent EA financial reports, do officers clearly demonstrate understanding of issues raised and have a credible plan to resolve issues for next financial year?
8. Does EA have confidence in MCC's Officers and governance arrangements?

Budgeting/ Financial Risk/ Reserves

1. Is there a clearly defined, governed and checkpointed process and timetable for developing the Authority's budget?
2. Is there an appropriate suite of financial risk related policies? Are they suitable?
3. Are the key financial/ operational

<p>of) material partnerships and collaborations?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Is there clarity over the apportionment of responsibilities and decision making authorities?</li> <li>4. How are governance/ control breaches identified and reported?</li> <li>5. Are we confident that the arrangements for material expenditure (tendering, contracting and capital procurement) are robust?</li> <li>6. Do we have confidence in whistleblowing (and similar arrangements) for raising concerns?</li> </ol> <p><u>Corporate Risks</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have key accountabilities for the identification, assessment, monitoring and management of risks been adequately defined and implemented?</li> <li>2. Has the approach to risk management been designed and implemented effectively?</li> <li>3. How can the Committee be confident that the Corporate Risk Register captures all significant risks facing the Authority?</li> <li>4. Are the risk mitigation action plans credible and sufficient so as to achieve the desired outcomes?</li> </ol>	<p>assumptions understood, credible, documented and stress tested?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Does the Finance function have suitable capabilities and capacity to manage financial risk/ meet statutory requirements and obligations to the Council?</li> <li>5. Do we have confidence that the budgetary process is likely to produce a plausible budget/ MTFP?</li> <li>6. Are there suitable arrangements in place to manage and report on overall financial performance?</li> </ol> <p><u>Financial Statements/ Misstatement Risk</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is there a shared understanding as to the purpose of the Committee in reviewing draft financial statements? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Are the Notes to the Accounts reasonable?</li> <li>b. Are the narrative reports, including the Annual Governance Statement reasonable and accord with the committee's view?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Are we comfortable with EA's work and audit opinion?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Questions for the Committee to conclude...</b></p>	
<p>Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations/ escalate matters to the executive, council, relevant scrutiny committee?</p> <p>Do we need to follow up? If so, how?</p>	





**Governance and Audit Committee Action List  
17<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Action	Subject/ Meeting	Officer	Outcome	Due date	Action Status	Recommended to close Action Yes/No
1	Council Progress Update: Audit Wales Work Programme	Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager – Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager	Relevant scrutiny committee to review the success of Active Travel schemes/ the expectations and aspirations of local residents.		OPEN	No

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## REPORT

**SUBJECT:** TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE - QUARTER 2 2024/25

**MEETING:** Governance & Audit Committee

**DATE:** 28th November 2024

**DIVISIONS/WARD AFFECTED:** All

### 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The Prudential Code and CIPFA treasury guidance require local authorities to produce annually a Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators on their likely financing and investment activity, and to ensure that the appropriate governance function that oversees the treasury management activities of the Authority is kept informed of activity quarterly.
- 1.2. The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2024/25 was approved by Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024. Over the first half of the year the Authority has borrowed and invest substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.
- 1.3. This report represents the second update of treasury management activity during 2024/25 following the Quarter 1 report being considered by this Committee on the 31<sup>th</sup> of July 2024.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Governance & Audit committee review the results of treasury management activities and the performance achieved in quarter 2 as part of their delegated responsibility to provide scrutiny of treasury policy, strategy and activity on behalf of Council.

### 3. KEY ISSUES:

#### 3.1. Key data metrics at quarter end:

Type	Metric	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25
External	Bank of England base rate	5.25%	5.25%	5.00%
External	UK Consumer Prices Index	3.2%	2.0%	1.7%
External	10-year UK gilt yield	3.94%	4.29%	4.01%
Internal	Council Borrowing	£173.9m	£177.7m	£175.3m
Internal	Borrowing Average rate	3.50%	3.62%	3.60%
Internal	Investments	£11.9m	£10.3m	£16.0m
Internal	Investment Average rate	5.16%	5.30%	5.13%
Internal	Credit score/rating	A+ / 4.51	AA-/4.3	AA-/4.1

#### 3.2. Key messages:

**Treasury management activities undertaken during the second quarter complied fully with the CIPFA code and the limits and indicators as set out in the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.**

**The Authorities average cost of borrowing has remained stable during the period.**

**Cash balances increased slightly over the quarter by 5.7m to £16m as part of the managed internal borrowing strategy. During the quarter, the authority's investment balances ranged from between £10.5m and £50.1m.**

**Investments in externally managed pooled funds generated £46k (5.68%) income return, together with an £87k (2.40%) unrealised capital gain during the quarter.**

**Unrealised capital losses over the lifetime of the investments stand at £290k, for which the Authority maintains a sufficient treasury risk reserve to mitigate against any required realisation.**

**The Authority continues to invest in a specific Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investment product and is prioritised for investment where returns remain competitive. During the quarter this product returned 4.88% compared to an average rate of 5.02% for all Money Market Funds.**

**Non-treasury investments, comprising the Authority's Solar farm and two strategic property assets, are forecast to generate £509k or 1.64% return during 2024/25 (1.06% in 2023/24).**

#### 4. **ECONOMIC SUMMARY**

- 4.1. **Economic background:** UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally to June to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices. Core and services price inflation remained higher at 3.6% and 5.6% respectively in August.
- 4.2. The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second.
- 4.3. With headline inflation lower, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%, with the lone dissenter preferring Bank Rate to be cut again to 4.75%. The meeting minutes and vote suggested a reasonably hawkish tilt to rates, with sticky inflation remaining a concern among policymakers.
- 4.4. The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years' energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025 and remaining there until early 2027.

#### 5. **BORROWING ACTIVITY**

- 5.1. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio and, where practicable, to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, known as internal borrowing.

- 5.2. Gilt yields were volatile over the 6-month period and have reduced slightly between April and September 2024. Much of the downward pressure from lower inflation figures was counteracted by upward pressure from positive economic data.
- 5.3. On 30th September 2024, the PWLB certainty rates for maturity loans were 4.79% for 10 year loans, 5.27% for 20-year loans and 5.13% for 50-year loans. Their equivalents on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were 4.96%, 5.37% and 5.18% respectively.
- 5.4. Whilst the cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities spiked to around 7% in late March 2024, primarily due a dearth of LA-LA lending/borrowing activity during the month, as expected shorter-term rates reverted to a more normal range and were generally around 5.00% - 5.25%.
- 5.5. The Authority's borrowing position at the end of the quarter is:

	<b>30.06.24 Balance</b>	<b>30.06.24 Weighted Average Rate</b>	<b>30.06.24 Weighted Average Maturity (years)</b>	<b>Balance Movement</b>	<b>30.9.24 Balance</b>	<b>30.9.24 Weighted Average Rate</b>	<b>31.9.24 Weighted Average Maturity (years)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>(years)</b>		<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>(years)</b>
Public Works Loan Board	125.1	3.3	19.8	2.2	127.3	3.4	19.6
Banks (LOBO)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Welsh Govt Interest Free	7.5	0.0	1.7	0.5	8.0	0.0	2.7
Local Authorities / Other	45.0	5.0	0.3	(5.0)	40.0	4.9	0.4
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>177.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>175.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>14.4</b>

- 5.6. The Authority's total borrowing has reduced slightly over the quarter by £2.4m due to timing differences between temporary borrowing maturing and being replaced.
- 5.7. The weighted average maturity has increased from Q1 due to a longer dated fixed rate loan of £5m being taken during the period, providing an increased level of budget certainty.

## 6. **INVESTMENT ACTIVITY**

- 6.1. During the year, the authority's investment balances ranged from between £10.5m and £50.1m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The movement in investments during the quarter was:

	<b>30.6.24 Balance</b>	<b>Net Movement</b>	<b>30.9.24 Balance</b>	<b>30.9.24 Income Return</b>	<b>30.9.24 Weighted Average Maturity Days</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>	
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	(2.0)	1.0	(1.0)	Average 5.02%	Up to 180 days

Government (incl. local authorities)	(3.0)	(5.0)	(8.0)		
Money Market Funds (MMFs)	(1.3)	(1.7)	(3.0)		
Multi asset income, Pooled funds	(4.0)	0.0	(4.0)	5.15%	N/A
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>(10.3)</b>	<b>(5.7)</b>	<b>(16.0)</b>	<b>5.13%</b>	

- 6.2. Bank Rate reduced from 5.25% 5.00% in August 2024 with short term interest rates largely being around these levels. The rates on DMADF deposits ranged between 4.94% and 5.19% and money market rates between 4.87% and 5.23%.
- 6.3. **Externally Managed Pooled Funds:** £4m of the Authority's investments are invested in externally managed strategic pooled multi-asset and property funds where short-term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue income and longer-term price stability.
- 6.4. These funds provide an important diversification for the Authority and generated £46k (5.68%) income return, together with a £87k (2.40%) unrealised capital gain in year.
- 6.5. Accumulated unrealised capital losses over the lifetime of the investment stand at £290k. The Authority maintains an adequate treasury risk reserve to mitigate against the risk that capital losses on pooled funds become realised and consequently result in a charge against the Council Fund.

## 7. Environmental, Social and Governance

- 7.1. Throughout the quarter the investment portfolio has been assessed against 3 charters that organisations can voluntarily sign up for to ensure that all are meeting minimum level of ESG responsibility.
- 7.2. The authority continues to hold an ESG specific Investment product. This fund aims to provide security of capital and liquidity while focussing on the performance of the underlying issuers on a range of environmental, social and governance.
- 7.3. At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 the Authorities ESG specific Money Market Fund returned 4.88% compared to an average rate of 5.02% for all Money Market Funds. The best and worst performing funds earned 4.88% and 5.03% respectively.

## 8. NON-TREASURY INVESTMENTS:

- 8.1. The authority continues to hold £31.08m of non-financial asset investments and their forecast performance can be seen in the table below:

	Budgeted net (income) / expenditure 2024/25 £000's	Carrying Value 31.03.24 £000's	Budgeted return 2024/25 %	Net return 2023/24 %
Oak Grove Solar Farm	(403)	5,611	7.17	9.45
Newport Leisure Park & service loan	(234)	18,819	1.24	0.15
Castlegate Business Park	128	6,654	-1.92	-3.46
<b>Overall portfolio</b>	<b>(509)</b>	<b>31,084</b>	<b>1.64</b>	<b>1.06</b>

\*Includes a one-off write-off of historic bad debt of £217k. Net return excluding this write-off would be 1.31% (overall portfolio 1.76%).

- 8.2. The investment at Oak Grove Solar Farm continues to provide a substantial return on investment. The forecast return for the year remains lower than 2023/24 due to some grid outages and prevailing weather conditions.
- 8.3. The investment at Newport leisure park continues to provide a net income stream for the Authority, although this is budgeted to remain slightly lower than the expected 2% return after borrowing until currently negotiated rent free concessions end.
- 8.4. The investment in Castlegate is still budgeting a net negative return on investment. Continued negotiations with interested parties should further improve the net return in 2024/25 and as rental concessions periods advance. The majority of anchor tenant space is now occupied. This continues to represent a significant improvement on the position since the anchor tenant vacated their space in Spring 2022.
- 8.5. A more detailed report on the performance of these investments was received by the Performance & Overview scrutiny committee in October 2024.

## 9. **Compliance with treasury limits and indicators**

- 9.1. The Section 151 officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA code and the limits and indicators as set out in the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

## 10. **CONSULTEES**

Cabinet Member - Resources

Arlingclose Limited – External Treasury management advisors to Monmouthshire CC

## 11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – 2024/25 Treasury Management Quarter 2 update

Glossary of treasury terms

## 12. **AUTHORS**

Daniel Francis

Finance Business Partner

Email: [danielfrancis@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:danielfrancis@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

Phone: (01633) 644895

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## 2024/25 Treasury Management Report – Quarter 2 update (as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024)

Section 1	External market conditions
Section 2	Movement in treasury balances
Section 3	Borrowing activity during the year
Section 4	Investment Activity during the year
Section 5	Environmental, Social and Governance
Section 6	Non-treasury investments
Section 7	Treasury budget performance.
Section 8	Compliance with prudential indicators and treasury limits

### 1. External market conditions

- 1.1. Economic background: UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally to June to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices. Core and services price inflation remained higher at 3.6% and 5.6% respectively in August.
- 1.2. The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.
- 1.3. Labour market data was slightly better from a policymaker perspective, showing an easing in the tightness of the job market, with inactivity rates and vacancies declining. However, a degree of uncertainty remains given ongoing issues around the data collected for the labour force survey by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for the three months to July showed the unemployment rate fell to 4.1% (3mth/year) from 4.4% in the previous three-month period while the employment rate rose to 74.8% from 74.3%.
- 1.4. Over the same period average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 5.1%, down from 5.4% in the earlier period, and total earnings (including bonuses) was 4.0% (this figure was impacted by one-off payments made to NHS staff and civil servants in June and July 2023). Adjusting for inflation, real regular pay rose by 2.2% in May to July and total pay by 1.1%.
- 1.5. With headline inflation lower, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%, with the lone dissenter preferring Bank Rate to be cut again to 4.75%. The meeting minutes and vote suggested a reasonably hawkish tilt to rates, with sticky inflation remaining a concern among policymakers.
- 1.6. The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years' energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025 and remaining there until early 2027.
- 1.7. Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with the first cut in August being followed by a series of

further cuts, with November 2024 the likely next one, taking Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025.

- 1.8. The US Federal Reserve (the Fed) also cut interest rates during the period, reducing the Federal Funds Rate by 0.50% to a range of 4.75%-5.00% at its policy meeting in September. The forecasts released at the same time by the central bank suggested a further 1.00% of easing is expected by the end of the calendar year, followed by the same amount in 2025 and then a final 0.50% of cuts during 2026.
- 1.9. Having first reduced interest rates in June, the European Central Bank (ECB) held steady in July before cutting again in September, reducing its main refinancing rate to 3.65% and its deposit rate to 3.50%. Unlike the Fed, the ECB has not outlined a likely future path of rates, but inflation projections remain in line with the central bank's previous forecasts where it will remain above its 2% target until 2026 on an annual basis.
- 1.10. **Financial markets:** Sentiment in financial markets continued to mostly improve over the period, but the ongoing trend of bond yield volatility remained. The general upward trend in yields in the early part of the period was reversed in the later part, and yields ended the half-year not too far from where they started. However, the volatility in response to economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant it was a bumpy ride for bond investors during that time.
- 1.11. Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00% but hit a high of 4.41% in May and a low of 3.76% in mid-September. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 4.51% but hit a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 5.12% over the period to 30th September.
- 1.12. **Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list at 100 days.
- 1.13. Having had its outlook increased by Fitch and ratings by S&P earlier in the period, Moody's upgraded Transport for London's rating to A2 from A3 in July.
- 1.14. Moody's also placed National Bank of Canada on Rating Watch for a possible upgrade, revising the outlook on Standard Chartered to Positive, the outlook to Negative on Toronto Dominion Bank, and downgrading the rating on Close Brothers to A1 from Aa3.
- 1.15. S&P upgraded the rating on National Bank of Canada to A+ from A, and together with Fitch, the two rating agencies assigned Lancashire County Council with a rating of AA- and A+ respectively.
- 1.16. Credit default swap prices were generally lower at the end of the period compared to the beginning for the vast majority of the names on UK and non-UK lists. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 1.17. Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

## 2. Movement in Treasury balances

- 2.1. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available to offset the CFR or for investment.

**Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary**

	31.3.24 £m	Movement from YE £m	30.06.24 £m	Movement from Q1 £m	30.09.24 £m
General Fund CFR	198.3	0.0	198.3	0.0	198.3
<b>Less: *Other debt liabilities</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>	0.0	<b>(2.3)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>
<b>Borrowing CFR</b>	<b>196.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>196.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>196.0</b>
<b>Less: External borrowing</b>	<b>(173.9)</b>	<b>(3.8)</b>	<b>(177.7)</b>	2.4	<b>(175.3)</b>
<b>Net External borrowing</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>(3.8)</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>20.7</b>
<b>Less: Usable reserves</b>	<b>(25.3)</b>	0.0	<b>(25.3)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>(25.3)</b>
<b>Less: Working capital</b>	<b>(8.8)</b>	5.5	<b>(3.3)</b>	<b>(8.0)</b>	<b>(11.3)</b>
<b>(Net Investments)</b>	<b>(11.9)</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>(10.3)</b>	<b>(5.7)</b>	<b>(16.0)</b>

\* finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

- 2.2. The Authority pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels for the quarter, known as internal borrowing. Table 1 above highlights that at the end of the quarter the Authority was internally borrowed by £20.7m, meaning that reserves and working capital were being used in lieu of external borrowing.
- 2.3. At the end of the quarter the Authority had net investments of £16.0m. Balances over the period ranged from between £10.5m and £50.1m due to timing differences between income and expenditure and borrowing activity.
- 2.4. The treasury management position at 30th September 2024 and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Borrowing and Investment Summary**

	30.6.24 Balance £m	30.6.24 Rate %	Movement	30.9.24 Balance £m	30.9.24 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	121.1	3.25	3.8	124.9	3.30
Short-term borrowing	56.6	4.39	<b>(6.2)</b>	50.4	4.35
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>177.7</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>175.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Long-term investments	0.0	N/A	0.0	0.0	N/A
Short-term investments	<b>(3.0)</b>	5.15	<b>(5.0)</b>	<b>(8.0)</b>	5.02
Pooled Funds	<b>(4.0)</b>	5.55	0.0	<b>(4.0)</b>	5.15
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>(3.3)</b>	Included in ST above	<b>(0.7)</b>	<b>(4.0)</b>	Included in ST above
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>(10.3)</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>(5.7)</b>	<b>(16.0)</b>	<b>5.13</b>
<b>Net Borrowing</b>	<b>167.4</b>		<b>(8.1)</b>	<b>159.3</b>	

- 2.5. The authorities net borrowing position has slightly decreased over the quarter. This is primarily due to timing differences in funding and expenditure increasing short term

investments.

### 3. Borrowing activity during the year

- 3.1. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio and, where practicable, to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, known as internal borrowing.
- 3.2. After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile over the 6-month period and have reduced slightly between April and September 2024. Much of the downward pressure from lower inflation figures was counteracted by upward pressure from positive economic data. Data from the US continues to impact global bond markets including UK gilt yields.
- 3.3. The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the half year and 4.79% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.18%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 5.57% during the half year, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.40%.
- 3.4. Whilst the cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities spiked to around 7% in late March 2024, primarily due a dearth of LA-LA lending/borrowing activity during the month, as expected shorter-term rates reverted to a more normal range and were generally around 5.00% - 5.25%.
- 3.5. At 30th September 2024 the Authority held £175.3m of loans, a decrease of £2.4m from 30th June 2024, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes.
- 3.6. Outstanding loans on 30th September are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Borrowing Position**

	<b>30.6.24 Balance</b>	<b>30.6.24 Weighted Average Rate</b>	<b>30.6.24 Weighted Average Maturity (years)</b>	<b>Balance Movement</b>	<b>30.9.24 Balance</b>	<b>30.9.24 Weighted Average Rate</b>	<b>30.9.24 Weighted Average Maturity (years)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>			<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>	
Public Works Loan Board	125.2	3.3	19.8	2.2	127.3	3.4	19.6
Banks (LOBO)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Welsh Gov Interest Free	7.5	0.0	1.7	0.5	8.0	0.0	2.7
Local authorities /Other	45.0	5.0	0.3	(5.0)	40.0	4.9	0.4
<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>177.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>175.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>14.4</b>

- 3.7. The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has always been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.

3.8. To that end, a long-term PWLB loan was taken during the period to achieve some cost certainty.

**Table 4: Long-dated Loans borrowed**

	Amount £m	Rate %	Period (years)
PWLB EIP Loan	5.0	4.71	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.0</b>		

### 3.9. Other borrowing activity

3.10. **LOBO Loans:** The Authority does not hold any LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans.

3.11. CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement, and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.

3.12. The Authority currently holds commercial investments that were purchased prior to the change in the CIPFA Prudential Code. The Authority is not planning to purchase any investment assets primarily for yield within the next three years and so is able to access PWLB borrowing if considered cost effective.

## 4. Investment activity during the quarter

4.1. The CIPFA Treasury Management Code now defines treasury management investments as those investments which arise from the Authority's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

4.2. The Authority holds significant invested funds during the year, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the quarter, the Authority's investment balances ranged from between £10.5m and £50.1m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position at the end of the quarter was:

**Table 5: Treasury Investment Position**

	30.6.24 Balance	Net Movement	30.9.24 Balance	30.9.24 Income Return	30.9.24 Weighted Average Maturity Days
	£m	£m	£m	%	
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	(2.0)	1.0	(1.0)	Average 5.02%	Up to 180 days
Government (incl. local authorities)	(3.0)	(5.0)	(8.0)		
Money Market Funds (MMFs)	(1.3)	(1.7)	(3.0)		
Multi asset income, Pooled funds	(4.0)	0.0	(4.0)	5.15%	N/A

<b>Total investments</b>	<b>(10.3)</b>	<b>(5.7)</b>	<b>(16.0)</b>	<b>5.13%</b>
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- 4.3. Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 4.4. The Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of strategic pooled funds will be maintained to diversify risk into different asset classes and boost investment income.
- 4.5. Bank Rate reduced from 5.25% to 5.00% in August 2024 with short term interest rates largely being around these levels. The rates on DMADF deposits ranged between 4.94% and 5.19% and money market rates between 4.87% and 5.23%.
- 4.6. The combination of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from the Arlingclose quarterly investment benchmarking in the table below.

**Table 6: Investment Benchmarking – Treasury investments managed in-house**

	<b>Credit Score</b>	<b>Credit Rating</b>	<b><u>Bail-in Exposure</u></b>	<b>Weighted Average Maturity (days)</b>	<b>Rate of Return</b>
					<b>%</b>
MCC 31.03.2024	A+	4.51	62%	4	5.01
MCC 30.06.2024	AA-	4.30	52%	4	5.15
MCC 30.09.2024	AA-	4.10	33%	59	4.81
Similar LAs	AA-	4.30	34%	97	4.93
All LAs	A+	4.60	61%	11	4.90

- 4.7. The weighted average maturity days have increased due to a £5 million DMO deposit over six months. This was linked to longer-term PWLB borrowing taken during the quarter which was subsequently invested at a favourable rate, ensuring cost-neutral borrowing over the investment period. The deposit is set to mature before the year-end at a time when short-term borrowing rates typically spike.
- 4.8. **Externally Managed Pooled Funds:** £4m of the Authority’s investments are invested in externally managed strategic pooled multi-asset and property funds where short-term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue income and longer-term price stability.
- 4.9. These funds provide an important diversification for the Authority and generated £46k (5.68%) income return, together with a £87k (2.40%) unrealised capital gain during the quarter.
- 4.10. Accumulated unrealised capital losses over the lifetime of the investment stand at £290k. The Authority maintains an adequate treasury risk reserve to mitigate against the risk that capital losses on pooled funds become realised and consequently result in a charge against the Council Fund.

4.11. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority’s medium to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over the longer term that total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

4.12. **Statutory override:** In April 2023 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the full outcome of the consultation on the extension of the statutory override on accounting for gains and losses on pooled investment funds. The override has been extended for two years until 31st March 2025 but no other changes have been made; whether the override will be extended beyond the new date is unknown but commentary to the consultation outcome suggests not. The Authority will discuss with Arlingclose the implications for the investment strategy and what action may need to be taken and currently holds a treasury equalisation reserve which could be used to mitigate the impact of the statutory override not being extended and unrealised losses on pooled investment funds are required to be recognised.

## 5. Environmental, Social and Governance

5.1. Throughout the year the investment portfolio has been assessed against 3 charters that organisations can voluntarily sign up for to ensure that all are meeting minimum level of ESG responsibility. These are shown in the table below:

**Table 7: ESG Charter Signatories**

	UN Principles for Responsible Investment	Uk Stewardship Code 2020	Net-Zero Asset Managers Initiative
Aberdeen Asset Liquidity	✓	✓	✓
Aegon	✓	✓	✓
CCLA Investment Management	✓	✓	✓
Federated (Prime Rate) Liquidity Fund	✓	✓	✓
HSBC Global Asset Management	✓	✓	✓
LEGAL AND GENERAL MMF	✓	✓	✓
Ninety-One	✓	✓	✓
STATE STREET	✓	✓	✓
Morgan Stanley - No Longer Used	✓	✓	x
Goldman Sachs - No Longer Used	✓	✓	x

5.2. An updated list of signatories to the three charters is provided by the Authority’s treasury advisors each quarter and will continue to be monitored. Any counterparties not signed up to all three charters will be removed from the Authorities investment portfolio.

5.3. At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 the Authorities ESG specific Money Market Fund returned 4.88% compared to an average rate of 5.02% for all Money Market Funds. The best and worst performing funds earned 4.88% and 5.03% respectively.

## 6. Non-Treasury Investments

- 6.1. The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised 2021 Treasury Management Code covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return.
- 6.2. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and/or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).
- 6.3. Investment Guidance issued by DLUHC and Welsh Government also broadens the definition of investments to include all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.
- 6.4. The Authority held a net book value of £31.08m of such non-financial asset investments at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (£32.2m as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023) made up of:

**Table 8: Budget performance**

	Forecast net (income) / expenditure 2024/25 £000's	Carrying Value 31.03.24 £000's	Budgeted Return 2024/25 %	Net return 2023/24 %
Oak Grove Solar Farm	(403)	5,611	7.17	9.45
Newport Leisure Park & service loan	(234)	18,819	1.24	0.15*
Castlegate Business Park	128	6,654	-1.92	-3.46
<b>Overall portfolio</b>	<b>(509)</b>	<b>31,084</b>	<b>1.64</b>	<b>1.06</b>

\*Includes a one-off write-off of historic bad debt of £217k. Net return excluding this write-off would be 1.31% (overall portfolio 1.76%).

- 6.5. These investments continue to represent an important income diversification for the Council and contributes towards the overall funding of Council services.
- 6.6. Returns on both the Newport Leisure park and Castlegate investments will improve as the profile of rental concessions advances. A more detailed report on the performance of these investments was included in a report to the Performance & Overview scrutiny committee on 7th October 2024.
- 6.7. The Authority also holds a portfolio of legacy non-financial asset investments that have been held for over a decade and are retained for income generation, capital gain or to support wider economic development or broader policy objectives. Income generation for these agricultural, retail and industrial assets are a secondary consideration and as such return against original investment would be considered negligible.



## 7. Treasury budget performance

7.1. The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 9 below.

**Table 9: Budget performance**

	Forecast 30.09.24 £000's	Budget £000's	Over / (under) Budget £000's
<b>Interest Payable</b>			
PWLB	4,428	4,046	383
Market loans	12	135	(123)
Short term loans	2,481	2,916	(435)
Other Activities (Internal Arrangements)	155	155	0
<b>Total Interest payable on borrowing</b>	<b>7,076</b>	<b>7,252</b>	<b>(176)</b>
<b>Interest Receivable</b>			
Invested cash short term	(993)	(1,176)	183
Pooled Funds	(198)	Included above	(198)
Finance lease income	(55)	Included above	(55)
<b>Total income from Investments</b>	<b>(1,246)</b>	<b>(1,176)</b>	<b>(70)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,077</b>	<b>6,077</b>	<b>(246)</b>

## 8. Compliance with treasury limits and indicators

8.1. The Section 151 officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA code and the limits and indicators as set out in the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

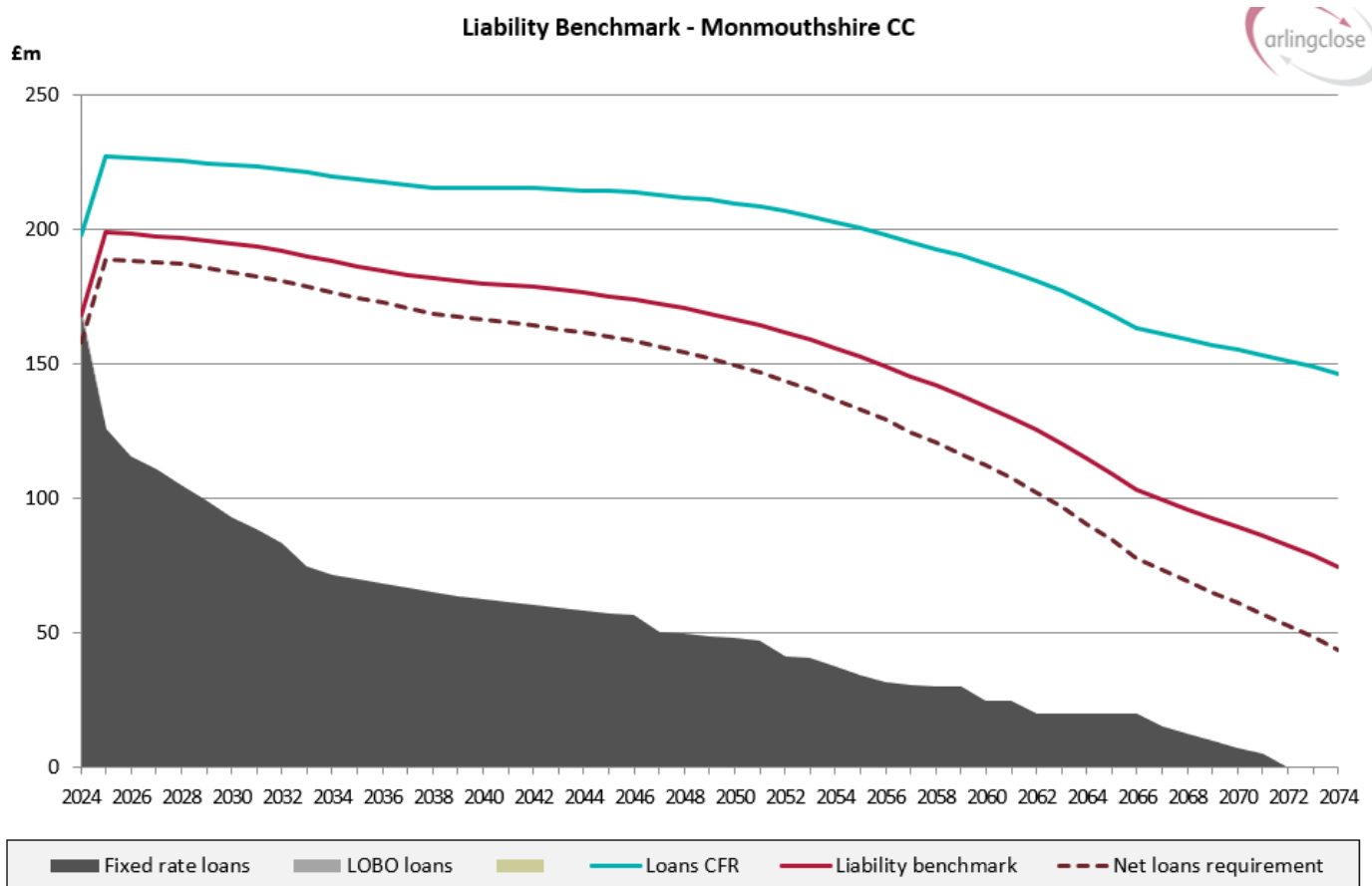
8.2. **Liability Benchmark:** This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

**Table 10: Liability Benchmark**

	31.3.24 Actual	31.3.25 Forecast	31.3.26 Forecast	31.3.27 Forecast	31.3.28 Forecast
Loans CFR	196.0	227.2	226.9	226.1	225.6

Less: Balance sheet resources	(34.1)	(38.2)	(38.2)	(38.2)	(38.2)
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	161.9	189.0	188.7	187.9	187.4
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>171.9</b>	<b>199.0</b>	<b>198.7</b>	<b>197.9</b>	<b>197.4</b>
<b>Current loan profile</b>	<b>(171.9)</b>	<b>(127.2)</b>	<b>(117.3)</b>	<b>(112.3)</b>	<b>(105.9)</b>
<b>Borrowing requirement</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>91.5</b>

8.3. Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing is in line with the medium-term financial plan, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure is based on the annuity method, and expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing.



8.4. The gap between the dotted red line and the grey shaded area of the chart represents the forecast difference between the estimated borrowing requirement and the Council's current loans profile. If capital expenditure plans remain accurate, this gap ultimately represents a borrowing requirement which will need be met by new and replacement loans over time.

8.5. **Borrowing limits:** Compliance with the [authorised limit](#) and [operational boundary](#) for external debt is demonstrated in the table below.

**Table 11: Borrowing Limits**

	<b>2024/25 Maximum</b>	<b>30.9.24 Actual</b>	<b>2024/25 Operational Boundary</b>	<b>2024/25 Authorised Limit</b>	<b>Complied?</b>
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	during the year £m	£m	£m	£m	Yes/No
Borrowing	187.7	175.3	252.6	268.0	Yes
PFI, Finance Leases & Other LT liabs	2.3	2.3	2.8	3.8	Yes
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>190.0</b>	<b>177.6</b>	<b>255.4</b>	<b>271.8</b>	<b>Yes</b>

8.6. **Note:** Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

8.7. **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

**Table 12: Maturity Structure of borrowing**

Maturity	30.9.24 Actual	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Complied?	31.3.24 Actual (For comparison)
Under 12 months	29%	0%	50%	Yes	29%
12 months and within 24 months	3%	0%	30%	Yes	3%
24 months and within 5 years	11%	0%	30%	Yes	10%
5 years and within 10 years	15%	0%	30%	Yes	16%
10 years and within 20 years	9%	0%	30%	Yes	10%
20 years and within 30 years	12%	0%	30%	Yes	12%
30 years and within 40 years	10%	0%	30%	Yes	10%
40 years and within 50 years	11%	0%	30%	Yes	12%
50 years and above	0%	0%	30%	Yes	0%

**Table 13: Investment Limits**

	Maximum in quarter	2024/25 Limit	Complied? Yes/No
The UK Government	£24.1m	Unlimited	Yes
Local Authorities per counterparty	£0m	£4m	Yes
Secured Investments	£0m	£4m	Yes
Banks per counterparty, rating A- or above	£2m (£3m total for the Councils operational bank)	£2m (£3m total for the Councils operational bank)	Yes
Building societies (unsecured)	£0m	£2m	Yes
Registered providers (e.g. Housing Associations (unsecured)	£0m	£2m	Yes
Money Market Funds	£4m	£4m	Yes
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£2m	£5m	Yes

Real estate investment trusts	£0m	£5m	Yes
Limit per non-UK country	£0m	£4m	Yes
Other Investments	£0m	£2m	Yes

8.8. **Security:** The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating and credit score of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

**Table 14: Credit Risk**

	30.9.24 Actual	2024/25 Target	Complied?
Portfolio average credit	AA-/4.10	A-/5.0	Yes

8.9. **Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

**Table 15: Principal invested for period longer than a year**

	During 2024/25
Actual principal invested for 365 days & beyond year end	£0m
Limit	£6m
Complied?	Yes

<b>Authorised Limit</b>	<p>The affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003 (English and Welsh authorities) and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This Prudential Indicator is a statutory limit for total external debt. It is set by the Authority and needs to be consistent with the Authority's plans for capital expenditure financing and funding. The Authorised Limit provides headroom over and above the <i>Operational Boundary</i> to accommodate expected cash movements. Affordability and prudence are matters which must be taken into account when setting this limit.</p> <p>(see also <i>Operational Boundary</i>, below)</p>
<b>Balances and Reserves</b>	<p>Accumulated sums that are maintained either earmarked for specific future costs or commitments or generally held to meet unforeseen or emergency expenditure.</p>
<b>Bail-in</b>	<p>Refers to the process which the banking regulatory authorities will use to restructure a financial institution which is failing or likely to fail. Unsecured creditors of and investors in that financial institution will participate in its restructure who will, as a consequence, incur a non-recoverable loss (commonly referred to as a 'haircut') on their obligation/investment. Local authority investments with banks and building societies such as term deposits, certificates of deposit, call accounts and non-collateralised bonds are unsecured investments and are therefore vulnerable to bail-in.</p>
<b>Bank Rate</b>	<p>The official interest rate set by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee and what is generally termed at the "base rate". This rate is also referred to as the 'repo rate'.</p>
<b>Bond</b>	<p>A certificate of debt issued by a company, government, or other institution. The bond holder receives interest at a rate stated at the time of issue of the bond. The price of a bond may vary during its life.</p>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<p>Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of capital assets</p>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)</b>	<p>The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes representing the cumulative capital expenditure of the local authority that has not been financed.</p>
<b>Capital growth</b>	<p>Increase in the value of the asset (in the context of a collective investment scheme, it will be the increase in the unit price of the fund)</p>
<b>Capital receipts</b>	<p>Money obtained on the sale of a capital asset.</p>
<b>CIPFA</b>	<p>Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy</p>
<b>Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV)</b>	<p>Also referred to as Stable Net Asset Value. A term used in relation to the valuation of 1 share in a fund. This means that at all times the value of 1 share is £1/€1/US\$1 (depending on the currency of the fund). The Constant NAV is maintained since dividend income (or interest) is either added to the shareholders' account by creating shares equal to the value of interest earned or paid to the shareholder's bank account, depending on which option is selected by the shareholder.</p>
<b>Collective Investment Schemes</b>	<p>Funds in which several investors collectively hold units or shares. The assets in the fund are not held directly by each investor, but as part of a pool (hence these funds are also referred to as 'Pooled Funds'). Unit Trusts and Open-Ended Investment Companies are types of collective investment schemes / pooled funds.</p>

<b>Corporate Bonds</b>	Corporate bonds are bonds issued by companies. The term is often used to cover all bonds other than those issued by governments in their own currencies and includes issues by companies, supranational organisations and government agencies.
<b>Corporate Bond Funds</b>	Collective Investment Schemes investing predominantly in bonds issued by companies and supranational organisations.
<b>CPI</b> <i>Also see RPI</i>	Consumer Price Index. (This measure is used as the Bank of England's inflation target.)
<b>Credit Default Swap (CDS)</b>	A Credit Default Swap is similar to an insurance policy against a credit default. Both the buyer and seller of a CDS are exposed to credit risk. Naked CDS, i.e. one which is not linked to an underlying security, can lead to speculative trading.
<b>Credit Rating</b>	Formal opinion by a registered rating agency of a counterparty's future ability to meet its financial liabilities; these are opinions only and not guarantees.
<b>Cost of carry</b>	When a loan is borrowed in advance of requirement, this is the difference between the interest rate and (other associated costs) on the loan and the income earned from investing the cash in the interim.
<b>Credit default swaps</b>	Financial instrument for swapping the risk of debt default; the buyer effectively pays a premium against the risk of default.
<b>Diversification / diversified exposure</b>	The spreading of investments among different types of assets or between markets in order to reduce risk.
<b>Derivatives</b>	Financial instruments whose value, and price, are dependent on one or more underlying assets. Derivatives can be used to gain exposure to, or to help protect against, expected changes in the value of the underlying investments. Derivatives may be traded on a regulated exchange or traded 'over the counter'.
<b>ECB</b>	European Central Bank
<b>Federal Reserve</b>	The US central bank. (Often referred to as "the Fed")
<b>Floating Rate Notes</b>	A bond issued by a company where the interest rate paid on the bond changes at set intervals (generally every 3 months). The rate of interest is linked to LIBOR and may therefore increase or decrease at each rate setting
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product – also termed as "growth" in the economy. The value of the national aggregate production of goods and services in the economy.
<b>General Fund</b>	This includes most of the day-to-day spending and income. (All spending and income related to the management and maintenance of the housing stock is kept separately in the HRA).
<b>Gilts (UK Govt)</b>	Gilts are bonds issued by the UK Government. They take their name from 'gilt-edged': being issued by the UK government, they are deemed to be very secure as the investor expects to receive the full face value of the bond to be repaid on maturity.
<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</b>	A ring-fenced account of all housing income and expenditure, required by statute

<b>IFRS</b>	International Financial Reporting Standards
<b>Income Distribution</b>	The payment made to investors from the income generated by a fund; such a payment can also be referred to as a 'dividend'
<b>Investments</b> - <b>Secured</b> - <b>unsecured</b>	Secured investments which have underlying collateral in the form of assets which can be called upon in the event of default  Unsecured investments do not have underlying collateral. Such investments made by local authorities with banks and building societies are at risk of bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail.
<b>Liability Benchmark</b>	Term in CIPFA's Risk Management Toolkit which refers to the minimum amount of borrowing required to keep investments at a minimum liquidity level (which may be zero).
<b>LOBOs</b>	LOBO stands for 'Lender's Option Borrower's Option'. The underlying loan facility is typically long term and the interest rate is fixed. However, in the LOBO facility the lender has the option to call on the facilities at predetermined future dates. On these call dates, the lender can propose or impose a new fixed rate for the remaining term of the facility and the borrower has the 'option' to either accept the new imposed fixed rate or repay the loan facility.
<b>LVNAV (Low Volatility Net Asset Value)</b>	From 2019 Money Market Funds will have to operate under a variable Net Value Structure with minimal volatility (fluctuations around £1 limited to between 99.8p to 100.2p)
<b>Maturity</b>	The date when an investment or borrowing is repaid.
<b>Maturity profile</b>	A table or graph showing the amount (or percentage) of debt or investments maturing over a time period. The amount or percent maturing could be shown on a year-by-year or quarter-by-quarter or month-by-month basis.
<b>MiFID II</b>	MiFID II replaced the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID I) from 3 January 2018. It is a legislative framework instituted by the European Union to regulate financial markets in the bloc and improve protections for investors.
<b>Money Market Funds (MMF)</b>	Pooled funds which invest in a range of short term assets providing high credit quality and high liquidity.
<b>Minimum Revenue Provision</b>	An annual provision that the Authority is statutorily required to set aside and charge to the Revenue Account for the repayment of debt associated with expenditure incurred on capital assets
<b>Non-Specified Investments</b>	Term used in the Communities and Local Government Guidance and Welsh Assembly Guidance for Local Authority Investments. It includes any investment for periods greater than one year or those with bodies that do not have a high credit rating, use of which must be justified.
<b>Net Asset Value (NAV)</b>	A fund's net asset value is calculated by taking the current value of the fund's assets and subtracting its liabilities.
<b>Operational Boundary</b>	This is the limit set by the Authority as its most likely, i.e. prudent, estimate level of external debt, but not the worst case scenario. This limit links directly to the Authority's plans for capital expenditure, the estimates of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and the estimate of cashflow requirements for the year.

<b>Permitted Investments</b>	Term used by Scottish Authorities as those the Authority has formally approved for use.
<b>Pooled funds</b>	See Collective Investment Schemes (above)
<b>Premiums and Discounts</b>	<p>In the context of local authority borrowing, (a) the premium is the penalty arising when a loan is redeemed prior to its maturity date and (b) the discount is the gain arising when a loan is redeemed prior to its maturity date. If on a £1 million loan, it is calculated* that a £100,000 premium is payable on premature redemption, then the amount paid by the borrower to redeem the loan is £1,100,000 plus accrued interest. If on a £1 million loan, it is calculated that a £100,000 discount receivable on premature redemption, then the amount paid by the borrower to redeem the loan is £900,000 plus accrued interest.</p> <p>PWLB premium/discount rates are calculated according to the length of time to maturity, current market rates (plus a margin), and the existing loan rate which then produces a premium/discount dependent on whether the discount rate is lower/higher than the coupon rate.</p> <p>*The calculation of the total amount payable to redeem a loan borrowed from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) is the present value of the remaining payments of principal and interest due in respect of the loan being repaid prematurely, calculated on normal actuarial principles. More details are contained in the PWLB's lending arrangements circular.</p>
<b>Private Finance Initiative (PFI)</b>	Private Finance Initiative (PFI) provides a way of funding major capital investments, without immediate recourse to the public purse. Private consortia, usually involving large construction firms, are contracted to design, build, and in some cases manage new projects. Contracts can typically last for 30 years, during which time the asset is leased by a public authority.
<b>Prudential Code</b>	Developed by CIPFA and introduced on 01/4/2004 as a professional code of practice to support local authority capital investment planning within a clear, affordable, prudent and sustainable framework and in accordance with good professional practice.
<b>Prudential Indicators</b>	Indicators determined by the local authority to define its capital expenditure and asset management framework. They are designed to support and record local decision making in a manner that is publicly accountable; they are not intended to be comparative performance indicators between authorities.
<b>PWLB</b>	Public Works Loans Board. It is a statutory body operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office, an Executive Agency of HM Treasury. The PWLB's function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities and other prescribed bodies, and to collect the repayments.
<b>Quantitative Easing</b>	In relation to the UK, it is the process used by the Bank of England to directly increase the quantity of money in the economy. It "does not involve printing more banknotes. Instead, the Bank buys assets from private sector institutions – that could be insurance companies, pension funds, banks or non-financial firms – and credits the seller's bank account. So the seller has more money in their bank account, while their bank holds a corresponding claim against the Bank of England (known as reserves). The end result is more money out in the wider economy". Source: Bank of England
<b>Registered Provider of Social Housing</b>	Formerly known as Housing Association



<b>Revenue Expenditure</b>	Expenditure to meet the continuing cost of delivery of services including salaries and wages, the purchase of materials and capital financing charges
<b>RPI</b>	Retail Prices Index. A monthly index demonstrating the movement in the cost of living as it tracks the prices of goods and services including mortgage interest and rent. Pensions and index-linked gilts are uprated using the CPI index.
<b>SORP</b>	Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting (Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom).
<b>Specified Investments</b>	Term used in the CLG Guidance and Welsh Assembly Guidance for Local Authority Investments. Investments that offer high security and high liquidity, in sterling and for no more than 1 year. UK government, local authorities and bodies that have a high credit rating.
<b>Supported Borrowing</b>	Borrowing for which the costs are supported by the government or third party.
<b>Supranational Bonds</b>	Instruments issued by supranational organisations created by governments through international treaties (often called multilateral development banks). The bonds carry an AAA rating in their own right. Examples of supranational organisations are those issued by the European Investment Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
<b>Treasury Management Code</b>	CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.
<b>Temporary Borrowing</b>	Borrowing to cover peaks and troughs of cash flow, not to fund spending.
<b>Term Deposits</b>	Deposits of cash with terms attached relating to maturity and rate of return (interest)
<b>Unsupported Borrowing</b>	Borrowing which is self-financed by the local authority. This is also sometimes referred to as Prudential Borrowing.
<b>Usable Reserves</b>	Resources available to finance future revenue and capital expenditure
<b>Variable Net Asset Value (VNAV)</b>	A term used in relation to the valuation of 1 share in a fund. This means that the net asset value (NAV) of these funds is calculated daily based on market prices.
<b>Working Capital</b>	Timing differences between income/expenditure and receipts/payments
<b>Yield</b>	The measure of the return on an investment instrument

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24 - MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Governance &amp; Audit Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>28th November 2024</b>
<b>DIVISIONS/WARD AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Governance & Audit Committee with the audited 2023/24 Statement of Accounts for Monmouthshire County Council for scrutiny and approval.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That the committee note that the accounts have been amended since the draft version was published to reflect the outcomes of the external audit process, as detailed within the Audit Wales ISA 260 Audit of Accounts Report.
- 2.2. That the Governance and Audit committee approve the final audited Monmouthshire County Council Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 as shown at **Appendix 1**.

## 3. KEY ISSUES

### The Accounts closure process

- 3.1. Legislation requires that the draft Statement of Accounts are produced each year by 31<sup>st</sup> May following the financial year they relate to, with audited accounts to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- 3.2. Welsh Government, in recognising the continued demands and pressures on public sector resources and capacity, continue to allow Councils the flexibility to publish the Statement of Accounts after the statutory deadline. This is subject to providing a statutory notice as per paragraph 10(4) of the regulations detailing the reasons for not meeting the deadline. This notice was made by the Council on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.
- 3.3. The draft Statement of Accounts was subsequently signed by the Responsible Finance Officer on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. The accounts were published on the Council's website and were considered by this committee on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.
- 3.4. The production of the draft accounts for 2023/24 was completed 19 days earlier than in 2022/23 and 40 days earlier than the accounts for 2021/22. Completion was in line with the timetable communicated to Audit Wales at the start of the closure process.
- 3.5. A public inspection period commenced from 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024. No requests for further information or questions were received.

- 3.6. The external audit process has been ongoing since July 2024 will conclude on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024, in line with the agreed timetable. This represents a significant improvement compared to the 2022/23 Audited Accounts, which were given final sign off in February 2024.

### **Audit conclusion**

- 3.7. It is pleasing to note that the auditors intend to once again provide an **unqualified audit opinion**. The Council wish to acknowledge the continuing strength of relationship between the Council and Audit Wales and the professional and constructive approach in which audit colleagues continue to conduct their activities.
- 3.8. There were no recommendations raised in this years ISA 260 Audit Report which is encouraging to note. This reflects positively on the internal financial governance controls in place in the Council and on the dedication of the finance and wider service teams in maintaining high standards of financial records and supporting documentation.
- 3.9. Audit Wales have included commentary on two significant issues regarding the inclusion of up to date figures for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) and the ongoing uncertainty regarding the legal process relating to the Renting Homes Wales (Act) 2016. These are regional/national issues that are not solely in the Council's control and have developed since the draft accounts were published. Whilst both are considered to have a immaterial impact to the Council, they are matters to be monitored.
- 3.10. Appendix 3 of the ISA 260 Audit Report contains a list of corrected misstatements. The majority of the these do not affect the primary financial statements, rather the notes to the accounts. Those affecting the primary statements relate to the duplication of a capital addition, and an error in the uplift in the carrying value of assets.
- 3.11. All misstatements have been corrected in full within the audited Statement of Accounts found in **Appendix 1**.

## **4. REASONS**

- 4.1. To approve the Council's final audited Statement of Accounts which incorporate all adjustments for "corrected misstatements" which have been identified by Audit Wales and as noted within their ISA 260 Audit of Accounts report.

## **5. CONSULTEES**

Acting Chief Executive  
Cabinet Member for Resources  
Audit Wales

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1: Audited Statement of Accounts 2023/24

## **7. AUTHORS:**

Ruth Donovan  
Assistant Head of Finance  
Email: [ruthdonovan@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:ruthdonovan@monmouthshire.gov.uk)  
Phone: (01633) 644592

# **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**2023/24**



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

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# 1 NARRATIVE REPORT

## 1.1 Introduction

Monmouthshire County Council's Statement of Accounts provides a record of the Council's financial position for the year. This section of the document supplements the financial information contained in the accounts, with the aim of providing an overview of the more significant financial and accounting issues which affected the Council during the year.

### Key facts about Monmouthshire



Monmouthshire is the most South Eastern County in Wales covering the area from the main towns of Abergavenny & Monmouth in the North to Chepstow & Caldicot in the South. It is a predominantly rural County covering an area of 880sq miles and serving a resident population of just over 94,000.

The majority of the Council's administrative and political functions are carried out at County Hall at The Rhadyr, near Usk, Monmouthshire.

### Political and management structure

The Council uses a Leader and Cabinet (Executive) governance model, with the Cabinet comprised of elected members, who each have lead responsibility for an area of the Council's business, including the Leader. Council determines the Authority's policy framework and budget and other constitutional functions. Below Cabinet and Council level there are a number of committees and panels that fulfil various scrutiny, statutory oversight and regulatory functions.

Following the Local Government elections in May 2022, there are 46 locally elected councillors representing 39 Monmouthshire wards who sit on the various committees of the Council, with the current political make-up of the Council being 22 Labour; 18 Conservative; 4 Independent; 2 Green Independent.

The Cabinet and elected members are supported by the Council's Strategic Leadership Team which is led by the Chief Executive. For management purposes the Council's operations are organised into Service Areas each of which is headed by a chief officer reporting to the Chief Executive. The Service Areas with a brief overview of their budget and functions are:

**Social Care, Health & Safeguarding**  
 £64.1m  
 Adult services  
 Children's services  
 Public protection  
 Resources & support

**Children & Young People**  
 £62.5m  
 Schools and Early Years provision  
 Standards  
 Resources  
 Emergency Planning

**Communities & Place**  
 £25.2m  
 Business growth & enterprise  
 Facilities & Fleet  
 Neighbourhood services  
 Planning & housing  
 Highways & Flooding

**Monlife**  
 £8.3m  
 Leisure  
 Youth & Outdoor Adventure  
 Countryside & culture  
 Communications

**Resources**  
 £8.5m  
 Finance & Audit  
 Commercial & landlord services  
 ICT  
 Corporate Health & Safety

**Chief Executive's Unit**  
 £3.1m  
 Policy, Scrutiny, & Customer service  
 People

**Law & Governance**  
 £2.7m  
 Democratic services  
 Legal

**Corporate & Treasury**  
 £34.3m  
 Corporate management  
 Precepts & levies  
 Insurances  
 Treasury



## 1.2 Operational Performance for the Year

2023/24 saw the adoption of the new Community & Corporate Plan by Council in April 2023. The ambition outlined in the plan looks to the long-term and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations. The actions cover the first steps of the journey and will continue to shape the development of the council's medium-term financial strategy to ensure that our spending follows clear priorities.

The Community & Corporate Plan establishes a clear purpose to become a net-zero county, supporting well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. This is supported by six well-being objectives, with the progress being made against these during 2023/24 outlined below:

### A fair place to live

- We have rolled out universal free school meals to all primary school pupils in Monmouthshire. The proportion of children having these free meals has increased from 64% to 75%
- We have supported children and young people in the school holidays with free or low-cost play provision. We provided 3,363 hours of play provision, with 10,605 attendances. These also provided over 1,000 meals through the summer holidays for families who need it
- We facilitated small grants to 75 local schemes to focus on projects they deemed important to their local areas, included developing community growing areas and addressing holiday hunger

### A green place to live

- Our residents have recycled 71.7% of household waste. This is well above the national target of 64%
- We have created or enhanced 20 active travel routes in the county to provide more opportunities for residents to walk and cycle
- We have worked with partners and volunteers to develop 'libraries of things', reuse shops and repair cafes. Our reuse shops diverted 33 tonnes of waste from going to landfill
- We have increased the percentage of our vehicle fleet which is ultra-low emission from 8.4% to 10.2% as part of our commitments to reduce our carbon emissions

### **A thriving & ambitious place**

- We supported 115 people into employment during the year through a range of training and support
- We supported 21 young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) into employment. Overall, 1.8% of school leavers in Monmouthshire are NEET. We will use the tools available to us to try and prevent young people becoming NEET
- We provided support to 165 pre-start-up and existing local businesses to help them develop and grow

### **A safe place to live**

- We have prevented 71% of homeless applications from becoming homeless, an increase from 50% the previous year
- We have decreased the number of homeless households in Bed & Breakfast accommodation by 50%, from 92 in 22/23 to 46 in 23/24

### **A connected place where people care**

- We supported 1,580 adults with social care, 84.6% of those we support are happy with the care and support they receive
- We have provided early help to support families through our Building Stronger Families service; 100% of families involved reported positive outcomes following intervention
- We delivered 331 packages of reablement to support people to regain independence, of which almost three quarters helped to mitigate or reduce the need for further support; 55.3% of packages mitigated the need for support, whilst 14.2% reduced the need for support

## A learning place

- We have worked with schools to support pupils to attend schools. Pupil attendance at our primary schools is returning to pre-pandemic levels and was 93.3% so far this year. Pupil attendance at our secondary schools remains lower than pre-pandemic levels at 87.4%. We are providing continued support to increase attendance
- We are building a new 3-19 school in Abergavenny that will provide wide ranging education and support to 1,900 pupils, including for those with complex learning needs
- We have increased the number of adult learners participating in community education courses to 937, from 560, supporting them to continue to develop their learning

## 1.3 Financial Performance for the Year

### Revenue Budget for 2023/24

The 2023/24 budget set in March 2023 accommodated additional costs of delivering services of £26m or 14%. Whilst income and funding increased by 9% (£16m) to meet some of these costs, the Council needed to find savings of 5% (£10m) from services.

Financial headwinds continued to impact the service operating environment through higher inflation and interest rates, a shortage in some staff resources, supply chain issues, and higher demands as a result of the cost of living crisis and the wider and longer lasting impact of the pandemic on communities have all had an impact. These ultimately result in a growing need for supportive Council services such as Social care and Homelessness support; a reduced demand for income generating services; increased risks around debt recovery; and, a continued high-cost operating environment.

Cabinet received an early financial update for the year at their July 2023 meeting which highlighted significant early pressure on the Council's budget of around £6m. As part of a package of measures to tackle this, Cabinet approved the use of £2.5m of useable revenue reserves to increase the Council's overall level of inflation contingency. This equated to the amount of reserves that were originally anticipated to be required to support the 2022/23 budget outturn position, but were not ultimately called upon. When set alongside a further unbudgeted grant assumption of £1m, this left a remaining forecast budget pressure of £2.6m

Cabinet immediately instigated mitigating action to develop a structured approach to tackling the remaining forecast deficit through budget recovery proposals brought forward by services. These proposals included a targeted vacancy freeze, maximising grants and income, bearing down on all non-essential spend, and identifying eligible capital related costs that could be met from capital funding.

At outturn, the Council has successfully mitigated the overall cost pressures through those targeted actions. This has culminated in a revenue budget under spend against the revised budget of £1.701m, which has consequently reduced the required draw on additional reserve funding.

Further details on the outturn position are provided in the July 2024 budget outturn report to Cabinet.

	Revised Budget	Actual	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Net Expenditure:</b>			
<b>Net cost of services (as per internal management reporting)</b>	<b>204,599</b>	<b>204,685</b>	<b>86</b>
Interest and Investment Income	(925)	(1,811)	(886)
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	6,953	6,622	(331)
Charges Required Under Regulation	5,793	6,006	213
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	(3,658)	(4,244)	(586)
Earmarked Contributions to/(from) Reserves	(3,063)	(3,063)	0
Contributions to/(from) Council Fund	(1,184)	(1,184)	0

<b>Net Revenue Budget</b>	<b>208,515</b>	<b>207,011</b>	<b>(1,504)</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>			
General government grants	(91,451)	(91,451)	0
Non-domestic rates	(31,224)	(31,224)	0
Council tax	(93,642)	(93,440)	202
Council Tax Benefit Support	7,802	7,403	(399)
<b>Net Financing Budget</b>	<b>(208,515)</b>	<b>(208,712)</b>	<b>(197)</b>
<b>Year-end Surplus</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,701)</b>	<b>(1,701)</b>
Year-end Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0	1,235	1,235
Year-end transfer to Council Fund	0	466	466
<b>Council Fund (surplus)/deficit - Non Schools</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Council Fund (surplus)/deficit - Schools</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,162</b>	<b>5,162</b>
<b>Council Fund (surplus)/deficit - Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,162</b>	<b>5,162</b>

The net cost of services in the table above of £204.685m is reported on a management accounting basis, i.e. the same basis as the budget reports that Cabinet receive during the year. The net cost of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (CIES) of £212.238m is different because these accounts are prepared on a financial accounting basis, which is specified and governed by accepted accounting guidelines.

Note 11.1 to the accounts shows how these figures reconcile.

#### Level of general and specific reserves/balances

The following summarises the Council's general and earmarked reserve balances.

Reserves & balances	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Council Fund Balance	10,528	11,105	10,388
School Balances	6,955	4,256	(905)
Earmarked Reserves	16,115	11,549	9,359
<b>Total Usable Reserves &amp; balances available for Revenue Purposes</b>	<b>33,597</b>	<b>26,910</b>	<b>18,842</b>

The Council's reserves have been significantly depleted as a consequence of the reserve cover needed to both support budget proposals and resultant budget recovery action in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This follows a period through the pandemic where reserves were restored as a result of significant Welsh Government funding.

Cabinet were clear in their budget planning framework for 2024/25 that there is a need to progress the Council on a path towards financial sustainability including conserving an appropriate and prudent level of financial resilience, of which the Council's reserves are a key component.

As a consequence, the final revenue budget for 2024/25 did not include any use of reserves to meet recurrent revenue expenditure. This is in line with the agreed budget planning framework.

The level of the Council Fund at the end of 2023/24 represents 5% of the Council's net revenue budget and is considered to be at a prudent level.

Further information on reserves can be found in Section 10 of the accounts.

**Schools:** The following table summarises the schools year-end balances position by school type:

School Balances	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Comprehensives	2,253	1,259	(976)
Middle	0	0	(329)
Primaries	4,622	3,027	1,142
Other	79	(31)	(742)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,955</b>	<b>4,256</b>	<b>(905)</b>

School balances are designed to provide a level of financial resilience to mitigate and smooth risk and are not expected to fund ongoing day-to-day expenditure.

Pre pandemic, net school balances had remained at low levels and had reduced to a net deficit balance of £435k at the end of 2019/20. Receipt of unprecedented levels of grant support from Welsh Government during 2020/21 and 2021/22 looked to ensure appropriate support for schools and their pupils during a period of significant disruption to learning. This had resulted in school balances being in surplus at the beginning of 2022/23 of £6.95m.

The investment plans enacted by schools looked to deliver the best learning outcomes for pupils in line with the purpose of the grant funding provided. As a consequence of this, by the end of 2022/23 school balances had reduced to £4.26m.

The 2023/24 financial year has culminated in a £5.16m draw on schools balances, resulting in the return to a cumulative deficit balance of £0.9m and with thirteen of thirty-three schools now holding deficit balances. Schools continue to face significant budget pressures, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision.

The Authority continues to work closely with those schools of concern to aid in the return to a more sustainable budget plan over the medium term without impacting on educational standards.

Recovery plans are required to be put in place by schools that move into deficit and these are being closely monitored by the Council.

### Capital expenditure & financing

In addition to revenue spending the Council also spent £64.85m on its assets which is detailed below along with the corresponding finance streams:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
	<b>Expenditure</b>	
12,258	Schools modernisation programme	28,192
12,168	Infrastructure	11,941
3,211	Asset management schemes	8,357
2,832	Inclusion schemes	1,481
979	ICT schemes	503
6,910	Regeneration schemes	8,976
1,977	Vehicles	1,209
5,336	Other	4,193
<b>45,670</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>64,852</b>
	<b>Financing</b>	
(4,128)	Capital receipts	(6,472)
(10,608)	Borrowing and Finance Lease Commitments	(12,095)
(30,541)	Grants and Contributions	(45,758)
(393)	Revenue and Reserve Contributions	(527)
<b>(45,670)</b>	<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>(64,852)</b>

### Significant capital receipts

The most significant capital receipt received in 2023/24 was £2.1m for the disposal of land at Caldicot comprehensive school. All other receipts totalled £0.88m. The Council currently utilise its capital receipts reserve to support the ongoing investment priorities in line with its approved Community & Corporate plan.

### Revaluation and disposals of non-current assets

The Council has a policy of revaluing all Land & Building assets every five years on a rolling programme. During 2023/24 the valuations included Community Centres, Corporate Facilities, Hubs & Public Contact Centres and Recreational Spaces. The programme for subsequent years is as follows:

- 2024/25 – Primary Schools, Comprehensive Schools, Public Conveniences and Hubs & Public Contact Centres
- 2025/26 – Community Centres, Corporate Facilities, Leisure & Outdoor Ed. Centres and Recreational Spaces

In addition to the assets individually revalued a program of indexation has been undertaken on the remaining Land & Building assets to uplift values. Significant inflation in recent years increases the risk that the carrying values of non-revalued assets may be materially different to the current value. This has been addressed by uplifted DRC asset values in line with the relevant movements in the BCIS' All In Tender Price Index.

In addition to this rolling asset revaluation programme, an annual review is also undertaken of our assets for any significant changes in their use. The Investment Property portfolio is assessed annually by the Authority's Estates section to ensure the value is accurately reflected in the accounts.

During the year the value of our non-current assets has increased from £476.8m to £524.9m. The increase arises from recognising the in-year asset expenditure of £54.7m; the rolling programme of revaluations increasing their held value by £11.9m, additional Land & Building uplifts of £5.8m; offset by depreciation of £17.7m, impairment of £4.3m and book value of disposals of £2.3m.

### Borrowing arrangements and sources of funds

The Council's overall borrowing, on a principal valuation basis, totalled £175.3m as at 31st March 2024 (£200.2m as at 31st March 2023), comprising of the following:

31st March 2023		31st March 2024
£000		£000
120,792	Public Works Loan Board	126,236
13,811	Market Loans & Bank loans	3,081
5,251	Welsh Government	4,739
57,370	Local Government bodies	38,830
3,000	Special Purpose Vehicle	3,000
<b>200,224</b>	<b>Total borrowing</b>	<b>175,886</b>

Further information on borrowing arrangements is disclosed in notes 13.3 and 13.4 to the accounts. The Council continues to operate within its limits as set according to the Local Government Act 2003 and the CIPFA Prudential Code.

### Collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

The Council Tax bill for Monmouthshire County Council in 2023/24 (including amounts raised for Police and Community Councils) was £1,959.94 (£1,847.25 in 2022/23) for properties in valuation Band D. We collected 96.7% in year of the total due (96.4% 2022/23). Our in-year collection rate for Non-Domestic Rates was 96.9% in 2023/24 (94.3% in 2022/23). During the year £53,000 Council Tax and £0 Non-Domestic Rates' debts were written off (£58,000 and £158,000 in 2022/23).

### Pension Liabilities

We are required to state the cost of paying retirement pensions when we become committed to the costs, not when we actually pay them. An Actuary is used to estimate the figure for Monmouthshire and 2023/24 shows a net liability of £5.98m (£56.6m in 2022/23).

There is a decrease in the combined net liability of the Greater Gwent pension funds of £50.6m from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This has resulted from an increase of £59.5m in the value of scheme assets, offset by an increase in the value of scheme liabilities of £8.9m. The increase in scheme assets is due to the improvement of investments with equities, bonds and infrastructure investments all increasing in value. The increase in liabilities is due to changes in financial assumptions (e.g. inflation, discount rate, longevity/age presumptions).

The date of the latest actuarial valuation was 31 March 2022 and this will inform the updated employers' contribution rates until 31st March 2026. Further details are given in section 14 of the notes to the Accounts.

## 1.4 The Financial Outlook

2024/25

The budget round for 2024/25 was the second successive year that the Council has needed to tackle gross cost pressures of £10m+. Whilst the Council in the past has regularly dealt with financial challenges in the order of £5m - £10m in an annual planning cycle, the scale of the pressure for 2024/25 was challenging, particularly following a budget cycle for 2023/24 which saw significant service change needing to be delivered across the Council that continues to draw on staff capacity and resources.

Given the nature and extent of the budget challenge faced for 2024/25 and the range of budget savings proposals being proposed, Cabinet committed to a significant budget engagement process with a wide range of different interest groups and communities within Monmouthshire. The valuable feedback received informed the final budget deliberations and was significantly addressed within the final budget approved by Council.

The Council was required to make difficult choices balancing the levels of service delivery, fees and charges, reserve usage, and Council Tax levels. As part of the process the Council approved an annual Council Tax increase of 7.8%, which increased the annual band D charge by £122.04 to £1,686.70 (excluding amounts raised for Police and Community Councils). Cabinet committed to maximising its efforts to ensure that individuals and households eligible for council tax exemptions or reductions claim the benefit available to them.

In respect of the Council's forward capital programme this has been constructed to principally support the Schools modernisation programme, Disabled Facilities Grants, and Asset management and Infrastructure. The Council has a good track record of securing external capital grant funding and this will continue through 2024/25 to support wider regeneration within Active travel, town centre regeneration and wider infrastructure improvements. £60.6m (including contributions to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) initiative) is budgeted to be spent in 2024/25.

### The Medium Term

The Council has needed to generate over £77m of budget savings since 2010/11. In the last two years alone it has had to absorb cost pressures of over £30m.

The medium term prognosis continues to present a challenge, with the current Medium Term Financial Plan indicating a funding gap of £34m over the next four years based on indicative Welsh Government funding settlements. We continue to see increases in the demand for supportive services, coupled with higher complexity needs in areas such as Children's services, Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Children's additional learning needs.

Alongside this, the volatility presenting in the wider economic environment around inflation, interest rates, and the labour market, continue to place pressure on budgets over the medium term.

The Council is not blessed with significant levels of reserves, and therefore difficult choices will need to be made in future budget rounds to balance the needs of service delivery and the aspirations of the Council's Community & Corporate Plan. It is clear that a programme of service change will be required that looks to redefine the shape and size of our services over the medium term.

The financial strategy for the next five years will be underpinned by a commitment to fiscal prudence, strategic investment, and sustainable growth.

Amidst a challenging economic landscape, the Council is poised to navigate through uncertainties with a forward-looking approach that ensures the delivery of essential services while fostering a resilient and thriving community.

### Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)

A Joint Working Agreement established the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal as a Joint Committee, with delegated functions, from 1 March 2017 as a partnership between the 10 councils in South-East Wales, including Monmouthshire County Council.

From the 18 March 2024 the City region became a Corporate Joint Committee. The public body will be known as Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), but the legal name will be the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

In total this Council will make a 6.1% contribution to the £120 million project, with the percentage being based on its proportion of the regional population, and which will fund the annual costs of this investment. The development and management of the £120 million investment is the responsibility of the CJC Regional Cabinet.

The revenue contribution required during the year was £78,568 (£74,826 in 2022/23). The capital contribution to the project was not required during 2023/24, as was the case in 2022/23, due to reprofiling of the investment pipeline.

The Authority has included its share of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows relating to the arrangement within the single entity accounting statements and disclosures. Further details of the arrangement are outlined in note 16.6.

## 1.5 The Accounting Statements

The Authority's accounts for the year are set out in sections 5 to 17. They consist of:

### *Movement in Reserves Statement*

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. The Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the authority's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the Council Fund Balance for council tax setting. The Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory Council Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the council.

### *Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement*

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations. This may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### *Balance Sheet*

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the authority. The net assets of the authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the authority. Reserves are reported in two categories:

- The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the authority may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt).
- The second category of reserves is those that the authority is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

### *Cash Flow Statement*



The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the authority during the reporting period. The statement shows how the authority generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the authority are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the authority's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the authority.

**Notes to the Accounts**

The core financial statements outlined above are supported by notes to further assist the reader in interpreting the Authority's financial position for the year ended 31st March 2024. The notes are sectioned to aid the user of the accounts to navigate the extensive supporting notes.

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**Jonathan Davies**  
**Head of Finance (Acting S151 Officer)**

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**Date**

## 2 STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1 The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs, in line with statute this is the Section 151 Officer;
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets; and
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

### 2.2 The Section 151 Officer's Responsibilities

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the *CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Section 151 Officer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the Local Authority Code.

The Section 151 Officer has also:

- kept proper accounting records which were up to date; and
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

I certify that the accounts set out within sections 5 to 17 gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at the 31st March 2024 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2024.

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**Jonathan Davies**  
**Head of Finance (Acting S151 Officer)**

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28th November 2024

**Date**

# **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

**2023/24**









## Executive Summary


This Annual Governance Statement confirms that Monmouthshire County Council (the 'Council') has, for the financial year 2023/24, conducted a review of its governance arrangements which concluded that these arrangements accorded with the principles as set out in the Councils Code of Corporate Governance. Consequently, the Council's overall governance arrangements are assessed as being **effective** and provide a sound framework for delivering services to the citizens of Monmouthshire. This statement outlines the Council's responsibility for ensuring proper standards and the safeguarding of public money, as well as the arrangements for the management of risk.

There have been a small number of changes to the Senior Officers within the Council during the period, all of which have benefitted from robust succession planning with consequential amendments being made to the Strategic Leadership Team structure to strengthen executive oversight.

The effective governance arrangements as set out in the body of this document have been operated continuously through the year and up until the date of the 2023/24 Report and Accounts. The remainder of this document sets out further detail of the review of the Council's governance arrangements. In undertaking its review of governance, the Council considered each of the principles set out within the Code of Corporate Governance and assessed what the Council has in place to support each of the Principles, its effectiveness and any areas for future improvement. In summary the Council has concluded as follows:

Principle	Rating	Movement from Previous Year	Number of Areas for Improvement
A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	Very Good		3
B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Very Good		3
C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits	Very Good		1
D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Very Good		-
E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Adequate		2
F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Very Good	 (Previously Good)	2
G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability	Very Good		-

Monmouthshire County Council - Annual Governance Statement (2023/24)

Principle	Rating	Movement from Previous Year	Number of Areas for Improvement
Overall	Very Good		11

Overall, the governance arrangements in place at Monmouthshire County Council continue to be regarded as being fit for purpose.

- 1 This Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016' and Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Guidance Notes for Welsh Authorities 2016'. It embraces the elements of internal financial control required by the 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom'.
- 2 The Statement itself demonstrates that Monmouthshire has governance arrangements in place to meet the challenges of the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. We have demonstrated that in most areas we have effective governance arrangements in place which are continually improving, but also recognise that there is further work to do. Progress against the 2022/23 Action Plan is shown on page 31.

### **Scope of Responsibility**

- 3 Monmouthshire County Council (the Council) (MCC) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.
- 4 In discharging these responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 5 The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the 'CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010)'.
- 6 The **Code of Corporate Governance**, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government', was initially approved by Council in July 2011; the Code was revised and updated again in June 2020, approved by Cabinet in September 2021. A copy of the Code is available from the Chief Internal Auditor. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the revised Framework and Guidance (2016) and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. The revised Code sets out what governance arrangements are in place within Monmouthshire CC for each of the Governance Principles. The Council had planned to review the Code of Corporate Governance during the 2023/24 financial year, however, this was not completed. This will now be a priority for the 2024/25 year.

### **The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

- 7 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads in the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.
- 8 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, outcomes and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised. Appropriate internal controls also ensure the Council's resources are utilised, and services are delivered efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 9 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for a number of years and continued to be in place for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

## The Governance Framework

- 10 The Council's Code of Corporate Governance is in line with the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' principles:

Overarching requirements for acting in the public interest:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

In addition, achieving good governance in the Council requires effective arrangements for:

- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

### Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 11 Monmouthshire has to demonstrate it is compliant with the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG)(Wales) Act 2015 and this complements the way it functions in line with the above principles of good governance; the core behaviours being:

- behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law; and
- ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

This needs to be applied to the five ways of working outlined in the 2015 Act. These five ways of working have to permeate all segments of delivering outcomes which, in turn, should ensure effective use of resources as the Council maximises its contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Monmouthshire and Wales.

- Long Term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

- 12 The key elements of the Council's governance arrangements are set out in its Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28. This was approved by the Council on the approved by Council on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- 13 Since the Local Government elections in May 2022, initially the administration had been working without a majority, however, in May 2023 a coalition agreement was reached.
- 14 As part of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Public Service Board (PSB) is focused on improving social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, in accordance with the sustainable development principle. Public Service Boards have a planning

responsibility to prepare and publish an assessment of local well-being, produce a local well-being plan and report annually on its progress.

### Review of Effectiveness

- 15 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Strategic Leadership Team within the Authority which has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 16 The review of effectiveness has been completed using a six point scale which is used within Monmouthshire County Council to assess the performance framework and progress with the Community and Corporate Plan.

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

### Chief Internal Auditor Statement and Annual Opinion

- 17 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an annual opinion based upon and limited to the work performed on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of Monmouthshire County Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control. This is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management, which should provide a reasonable level of assurance.

The Internal Audit team has completed its internal audit work for the year based upon the Operational Audit Plan approved by the Governance & Audit Committee in July 2023. The Plan was designed to ensure adequate coverage over the Council's financial and operational systems using a risk based assessment methodology.

The audit work included reviews, on a sample basis, of each of these systems/establishments sufficient to discharge the Authority's responsibilities for Internal Audit under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. The opinion is based upon the work undertaken. Work was planned in order to provide sufficient evidence to give me reasonable assurance of the internal control environments tested.

The 2023/24 Audit opinion is partially reliant on previous work undertaken by the team where Reasonable Assurance opinions were issued; there have been no significant changes to the organisation's systems or key personnel and no major frauds were identified.



Internal Audit opinions on the work undertaken at the Shared Resource Service by Torfaen Internal Audit team were also taken into consideration.

Based on the planned work undertaken during the year, in my view the internal controls in operation give **Reasonable Assurance**; *There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of the Councils strategic objectives.*

The opinion does not imply that Internal Audit has reviewed all risks relating to the organisation.

Jan Furtek  
Acting Chief Internal Auditor  
June 2024

**Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law**



The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also for how we use the resources under our stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes we have achieved. In addition, we have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, we can demonstrate the appropriateness of all our actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

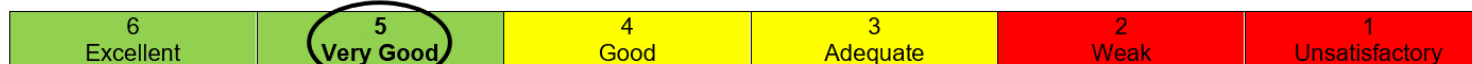
Page 50

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement																
<b>Behaving with integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members Code of Conduct in Constitution which reflects Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2016</li> <li>Officers Code of Conduct in Constitution</li> <li>Registers of interests / hospitality</li> <li>Induction training</li> <li>Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution</li> <li>Member led Authority principles/document</li> <li>Member training programme</li> <li>Council Values — Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, Teamwork, Kindness</li> <li>Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy</li> <li>Standards Committee</li> <li>Standards Committee Annual Report presented to Council</li> <li>Member Dispute Resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Code of Conduct for Members and the protocol on Member / Officer relationships are set out in the Constitution.</li> <li>The Standards Committee, which includes a majority of independent representatives, advises on and monitors the Members' Code of Conduct, the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations, and any other Codes relating to the conduct of Members. The Standards Committee met 3 times during 2023/24.</li> <li>Public Service Ombudsman Wales Annual Report (2022/23) was presented to Cabinet in November 2023.</li> <li>Conduct Complaints about MCC Members received by the Public Services Ombudsman:                     <table border="1" data-bbox="875 1023 1462 1265"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2020/21</th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2022/23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not upheld</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referred to Standards Committee</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referred to Adjudication Panel</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </li> <li>No judicial reviews were commenced or dealt with at the pre-action stage in the previous year.</li> </ul>		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Not upheld	1	2	1	Referred to Standards Committee	0	0	0	Referred to Adjudication Panel	0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. (Action 1)</li> <li>Review the Corporate Induction process to ensure the key messages are being delivered. (Action 2)</li> </ul>
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23																
Not upheld	1	2	1																
Referred to Standards Committee	0	0	0																
Referred to Adjudication Panel	0	0	0																

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complaints procedure</li> <li>▪ Decision 'Call In' process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Governance &amp; Audit Committee met 7 times during 2023/24 and has the responsibility for ensuring that sufficient internal control mechanisms are in place to help identify any potential misconduct within the authority.</li> </ul>	
<b>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Values — Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, Teamwork, Kindness</li> <li>▪ Contract procedure rules</li> <li>▪ Financial procedure rules</li> <li>▪ Codes of conduct for members and employees</li> <li>▪ Whistleblowing Policy</li> </ul>	<p>The ethical governance framework includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Codes of conduct for officers and Members.</li> <li>▪ A protocol governing Member/Officer relations.</li> <li>▪ A whistle-blowing policy widely communicated within the Council.</li> <li>▪ Registers of personal and business interests for Members.</li> <li>▪ Declarations of interests for Chief Officers.</li> <li>▪ An agreed policy and associated corporate procedures for ensuring that complaints about services can be properly made and investigated, and for ensuring that any lessons learnt can be applied.</li> <li>▪ All exemptions of the Contract Procedure Rules are reported through the Governance &amp; Audit Committee periodically. The Internal Audit team co-ordinates the exemption process in conjunction with strategic procurement.</li> <li>▪ The Governance &amp; Audit Committee has the opportunity to call in senior managers during the year and challenge them on why a procurement process went outside the Council's normal tendering processes. There were no call-ins during 2023/24.</li> <li>▪ A Scrutiny and Executive Protocol is in place which is aligned to the updated constitution of May 2023 and provides parameters for effective executive and scrutiny relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and update the Employee Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy. (Action 3)</li> </ul>
<b>Respecting the rule of law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member and Officer Code of Conduct in Constitution</li> <li>▪ Role of Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer established in Constitution</li> <li>▪ CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer</li> <li>▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy</li> <li>▪ Governance &amp; Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ Internal Audit Section</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Constitution is updated periodically by the Monitoring Officer; the latest update approved by Council was in May 2023. It can be found on the Council's website.</li> <li>▪ To ensure agreed procedures and all applicable statutes are complied with, the Monitoring Officer attends full Council meetings, Cabinet and SLT. To ensure sound financial management is a key factor in decisions, the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Resources (S151 Officer) attends SLT, Cabinet and Council meetings.</li> <li>▪ In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, the Monitoring Officer ensures compliance with</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internal Audit Annual Report presented to Governance &amp; Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ External Auditors Annual Audit Letter</li> <li>▪ Standards Committee</li> <li>▪ Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>▪ Complaints procedure</li> <li>▪ Decision 'Call In' process</li> </ul>	<p>established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. After appropriate consultation, this officer will report to the full Council in respect of any proposals, decisions or omissions which could be unlawful or which have been subject of an Ombudsman Investigation resulting in a finding of maladministration. The Monitoring Officer has not issued a Section 5 report in 2023/24, or in the previous year, 2022/23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Councils Anti-Fraud, Corruption &amp; Bribery Policy was reviewed over the course of the year, endorsed by the Governance &amp; Audit Committee before being approved by Cabinet in January 2024.</li> </ul>	

**Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**



Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<b>Openness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agendas published in advance of meetings</li> <li>▪ Minutes published following meetings</li> <li>▪ Democratic meetings live streaming on YouTube</li> <li>▪ Decision making process described in Constitution</li> <li>▪ Forward Plan published on internet showing key decisions to be made by Council and Cabinet</li> <li>▪ Annual budget consultation</li> <li>▪ Freedom of Information Scheme</li> <li>▪ Public questions at Council, Cabinet and Select Committees</li> <li>▪ Engagement with hard to reach groups, including those with the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. As well as engagement with children and young people to meet the requirement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agendas are published in advance of all meetings on the Council's website; corresponding minutes are published post meeting.</li> <li>▪ Transparency and openness are important to Monmouthshire; the Annual Statement of Accounts was considered by the Governance &amp; Audit Committee prior to their approval. All Council decisions, reports and questions asked by Members are available on the website. Financial information, Corporate Plan progress, Council activities, achievements, developments, updates and events were included on the Council's intranet and website. All public meetings of the Council are live streamed and are available to view on the Council's YouTube channel at any time after the meeting, which provides greater transparency of the Council's business.</li> <li>▪ A Forward Plan showing key decisions to be made by Council, Cabinet and Committees is published.</li> <li>▪ The Council's website contains links to the following areas of open data in the interests of openness:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ List of expenditure over £50</li> <li>○ Gender Pay Gap</li> <li>○ Food Hygiene ratings</li> <li>○ List of Primary Schools</li> <li>○ List of Secondary Schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review the minute taking process to ensure accurate minutes are held of all meetings. (Action 4)</li> <li>▪ To continue to increase the number of datasets published on the council's website. (Action 5)</li> </ul>

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publication of open data sets on the Council's website</li> </ul>	<p>Following a decision of the First Tier Information Rights Tribunal (EA/2018/0033) the Authority no longer publishes business rates data on its open data web page. It will no longer disclose information about business rate accounts in response to FOI requests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy and decision-making is facilitated through (i) Council and Cabinet; the meetings of which are open to the public and live streamed online except where exempt or confidential matters are being discussed, and (ii) a scheme of delegation to committees and officers as set out in the Constitution: Four Scrutiny Committees (including the statutory Public Services Scrutiny Committee) and a separate Governance &amp; Audit Committee review, scrutinise and hold to account the performance of the Cabinet, decision-making committees and officers. A Scrutiny "Call-In" process for decisions which have been made but not yet implemented is incorporated in the Constitution in order to consider their appropriateness.</li> <li>▪ Implementing Open Government standards which enable us to effectively engage with our citizens and open up our data for anyone who needs to use it. Making the most of digitisation and digital inclusion to enable us to engage with people across our County.</li> <li>▪ Corporate risks are published.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gwent Public Service Board Partnership arrangements and structure</li> <li>▪ Gwent Public Service Board Well-Being Plan</li> <li>▪ Public Services Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>▪ Cardiff Capital Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During 2021/22 several local PSBs merged to form the Gwent Public Services Board. A Gwent wide well-being assessment has been produced, including an assessment of well-being in Monmouthshire and local communities within the county, March 2022.</li> <li>▪ In June 2023 the Council considered and approved the Gwent Public Services Board Well-being Plan. The plan had been subject to scrutiny Monmouthshire's Public Services Scrutiny Committee in March 2023.</li> <li>▪ The Monmouthshire Programme Board, chaired by a senior officer links directly to the Gwent PSB to ensure that local issues remain at the forefront of partnership delivery. There</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<p>is a good alignment between the priorities of the PSB document and our own Community and Corporate Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council is a member of the Cardiff Capital Region, a regional body made up of the 10 councils across South East Wales.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ward role of Councillors</li> <li>▪ Consultations on the council website and social media platforms</li> <li>▪ Complaints Policy and Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</li> <li>▪ Complaints procedure</li> <li>▪ Integrated Impact Assessment including Future Generations evaluation and Equality Impact Assessment, on decision reports</li> <li>▪ Strategic Equality Plan</li> <li>▪ Communication via Social Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, are used to engage local people and communicate the corporate message. Scrutiny Committees hold a Public Open Forum on each agenda and the public can attend meetings remotely or in person. They can also submit written, audio or video representations to Scrutiny Committees and submit suggested topics for the scrutiny forward work programme via the Scrutiny Website <a href="http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/scrutiny">www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/scrutiny</a>. Chief Officers, Members and the Communications team are very proactive in engaging with the public.</li> <li>▪ Public engagement events and YouTube continued to be used for the budget proposals. The Council has encouraged the community within Monmouthshire to actively contribute to making stepped changes to improve the way in which services are provided. This links back to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act which sets out five ways of working including involvement.</li> <li>▪ The Medium Term Financial Plan supports the vision for Monmouthshire and extensive public engagement continued in 2023/24 for the 2024/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan which engaged with the public in their own community; this included website, social media, drop in sessions, Cabinet Member YouTube video and open meetings.</li> <li>▪ Audit Wales reviewed the council's use of performance information from the service users perspective and outcomes in 2023/24. The report found the Council provides some performance information to enable senior leaders to understand the perspective of service users, but information on outcomes is limited restricting their ability to manage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver the action plan to address the recommendations from the Audit Wales Use of Performance Information review. (Action 6)</li> </ul>

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		performance effectively. An action plan to address the recommendations has been developed.	



**Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**

6 Excellent	5 <b>Very Good</b>	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available

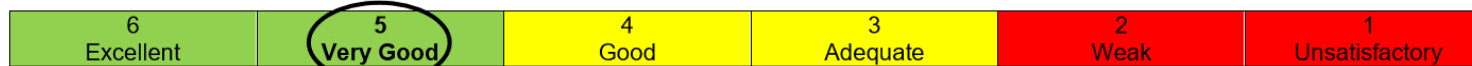
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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<b>Defining Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community &amp; Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government &amp; Elections Act 2021 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</li> <li>▪ Quarterly, six monthly &amp; annual Performance Monitoring Reports</li> <li>▪ Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report</li> <li>▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report</li> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.</li> <li>▪ Monthly Financial Monitoring meetings held for each service area</li> <li>▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance</li> <li>▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register</li> <li>▪ Capital Review Programme</li> <li>▪ Self-Assessment report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Community &amp; Corporate Plan 2022-2028, "Taking Monmouthshire Forward" was approved by Full Council in April 2023 and sets a purpose 'To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life'. This is underpinned by the Councils 6 objectives (fair place, green place, thriving &amp; ambitious place, safe place, connected place and learning place) and 5 values (teamwork, openness, fairness, flexibility and kindness).</li> <li>▪ The Council's Annual Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 was presented to the Performance &amp; Overview Scrutiny Committee, Governance and Audit Committee and was agreed by Council. The report was published on the council's website in October 2023.</li> <li>▪ The six-month performance report on the Community and Corporate Plan was presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in January 2024.</li> <li>▪ Monmouthshire County Council is a member of the Gwent PSB (July 2021), where we work with other public services and the voluntary sector on the delivery of the local well-being plan. This includes countywide well-being objectives that are a focus for public services.</li> <li>▪ Regular budget monitoring reports for revenue and capital were presented to and approved by Cabinet during the year, in July 2023, November 2023, December 2023, February 2024, and at</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure that the revised financial strategy is considered by scrutiny and approved by Cabinet. (Action 7)</li> </ul>

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<p>Outturn. The budget management actions of Cabinet and senior officers are scrutinized regularly by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council has a Welsh Language Strategy for 2022 – 2027, which sets out a vision of how Welsh language will look in Monmouthshire until 2027. The Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2022/23 was presented to the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee in July 2023.</li> <li>▪ Objectives are supported by Service Business Plans to operationally deliver these objectives. Service plans are made available on the Council’s Hub intranet site. These are quality assessed as part of the service planning process. All service plans were developed to align the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering 3 financial years approved annually by Council</li> <li>▪ Corporate Plan</li> <li>▪ Risk management Policy and Guidance</li> <li>▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register</li> <li>▪ Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan</li> <li>▪ Future Generations Evaluation, including Equality Impact Assessment, on decision making reports</li> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.</li> <li>▪ Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Budget Setting Process and Timetable for 2024/25 was reviewed and approved by Cabinet in November 2023 This provided a framework to underpin the 2024/25 budget and a set of principles were adopted. This report also highlighted an initial budget shortfall of £14.4 million taking into account the impact of economic situation, service demand pressures and the latest intelligence on likely funding levels. Budget recovery actions were undertaken to allow services to maintain delivery whilst addressing the in-year financial over spend that had been forecast.</li> <li>▪ The Draft Capital Budget Proposals 2024/25 were taken to Cabinet in January 2024. Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2024/25 also went to Cabinet in January 2024. Final Proposals went to Cabinet before being approved by Council in February 2024. Ongoing scrutiny of the Council’s budget position in line with the MTFP has provided Members with a greater understanding of the budget setting process and the pressures within individual directorates.</li> <li>▪ In May 2019 Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency. Plans are underway to meet our target to reduce council carbon emissions to zero by 2030. In November 2021, following wide community consultation, an updated and amended action plan was published. This was reviewed over</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		the course of the 2023/24 financial year with a revised Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy due to be considered by Cabinet in May 2024.	

**Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**



Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource input while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised

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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<b>Determining interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate Plan</li> <li>▪ Scrutiny / Select Committee function</li> <li>▪ Risk management policy and guidance</li> <li>▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register</li> <li>▪ Finance and Legal implications in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports report writing template and guidance</li> <li>▪ Future Generations Evaluation (including Equality Impact Assessment)</li> <li>▪ Results of consultation exercises</li> <li>▪ Reports to Government Agencies</li> <li>▪ Enabling strategy framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monmouthshire is a partner in the South East Wales Consortium Schools Causing Concern protocol. This Policy forms a part of, and is aligned with, the National Model for School Improvement in relation to the informal support and challenge provided by the Local Authority to a school prior to any issuing of a warning notice or invocation of formal powers of intervention based on the six grounds for intervention. It also aligns with the Welsh Government Guidance on Schools Causing Concern (September 2017).</li> <li>▪ Regular reporting into Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance &amp; Audit Committee enables the achievement of the Council's objectives to be challenged and appropriate actions put in place to address any identified issues so that the intended outcomes can be achieved.</li> <li>▪ Dealing with customer complaints helps Monmouthshire to identify and deal with failures in service delivery. The Council's complaint / compliment procedure is available on the web site. During 2023/24 there were;                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stage 1 Complaints - 136</li> <li>○ Stage 2 Complaints - 2</li> <li>○ Comments - 399</li> <li>○ Compliments - 325</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Ombudsman draft annual statement for 2023/24 states they received 32 complaints which are all closed. None of the complaints were investigated, although, 3 of these were classed as 'interventions'. This is where they may ask the Council to provide an early resolution to a particular matter.</li> <li>▪ A separate report containing the Ombudsman's findings in relation to complaints about Monmouthshire County Council was reported separately to both Cabinet and Governance &amp; Audit Committee. In the previous year it showed that Monmouthshire has one of the lowest levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.25 per 1,000 residents.</li> <li>▪ Consultation on budget proposals is extensive.</li> <li>▪ The Authority makes numerous annual returns to various external Governing Bodies, such as the Food Standards Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, Department for Levelling Up &amp; Communities, Department for Transport, Home Office, Gambling Commission, DEFRA, Health &amp; Safety Executive, General Registrar's Office, National Fraud Initiative and other government departments'. These allow the Council to self-assess and determine if any intervention is required within the services provided.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Planning Interventions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly Financial Monitoring meetings for each Directorate reviews progress and authorises corrective action where necessary</li> <li>▪ Medium Term Financial Plan</li> <li>▪ Annual budget setting process in place including consultation exercise</li> <li>▪ Financial procedure rules</li> <li>▪ Senior Management Structure</li> <li>▪ Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government and Elections Act 2021 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council has established robust planning and control cycles covering strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets which is achieved through:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A timetable for producing and reviewing plans on an annual basis.</li> <li>○ Working with a consultation and engagement strategy.</li> <li>○ Quarterly and annual performance monitoring including achievement of national and local performance indicators.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There is robust Medium Term Financial Planning.</li> <li>▪ There is an annual budget setting process in place including an extensive consultation exercise.</li> <li>▪ Self-assessment report presented to Governance &amp; Audit Committee and Performance &amp; Overview Scrutiny Committee to review, scrutinise and make any recommendations for changes.</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarterly, six monthly &amp; annual Performance Monitoring Reports</li> <li>▪ Annual Self-Assessment Report</li> <li>▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan</li> <li>▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report</li> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.</li> <li>▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance</li> <li>▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register</li> <li>▪ Reports to Government Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-assessment report agreed by Council and published in October 2023. The report provides an assessment of the Authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2023, in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet and scrutiny</li> <li>▪ Mid-Year Budget Statement to Cabinet</li> <li>▪ Medium Term Financial Plan</li> <li>▪ Budget consultation</li> <li>▪ Community &amp; Corporate Plan</li> <li>▪ Annual Self-Assessment Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council ensures the Medium Term Financial Plan integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints by setting out any shortfall in resources and spending requirements in the context of service priorities.</li> <li>▪ The achievement of the Community &amp; Corporate Plan is reviewed at least annually.</li> </ul>	

**Principle E — Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.**

6 Excellent	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 <b>Adequate</b>	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities

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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<b>Developing the entity's capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performance review for all staff where required by them or their line manager</li> <li>▪ People Strategy</li> <li>▪ Quarterly financial reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>▪ Partnership &amp; collaborative working arrangements</li> <li>▪ Quarterly, six monthly &amp; annual Performance Monitoring Reports</li> <li>▪ Community &amp; Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report</li> <li>▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report</li> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council's recruitment procedures provide equality of employment opportunities. The equality-assessed pay structure meets the requirements of the Single Status Agreement of 1997. The Single Status Collective Agreement was approved by Cabinet in September 2010. This is complemented by the People Strategy. The Pay Policy is approved annually by Council and is available on the MCC website.</li> <li>▪ Developing the digital capabilities of people and systems to enable effectiveness, efficiency and enhanced customer services is important within Monmouthshire and is measured via the Service Business Plan. The Council has both an Information Security and Technology Team and an Digital Design and Innovation Team to drive technology across the organisation.</li> <li>▪ An Audit Wales review has identified 'The Council does not have a clearly articulated strategic approach to digital'. An action plan to address the recommendations in the report has been developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A learning management system to be implemented across the organisation to coordinate all training including for schools. (Action 8)</li> <li>▪ Roll out of a new performance appraisal system across the organisation. (Action 9)</li> </ul>

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is continued support for Members' development through briefing sessions and other learning opportunities.</li> <li>▪ A Scrutiny Member Development Training Programme is in place which provides ongoing specific skills based training for Members and includes scrutiny induction; this is agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs' Group. The training programme forms part of the Scrutiny Service Plan.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate and relevant job descriptions were in place for the Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.</li> <li>▪ The Council ensures that it has appropriate governance arrangements around its collaborations with other public agencies and other third parties. These can take a range of forms, from informal arrangements to those where governance arrangements are determined through legislation. The governance arrangements form a key part of the decision making processes that the Cabinet or Council follow when deciding to enter a collaborative arrangement, transparent local accountability is a key area of focus.</li> <li>▪ A review of the Councils Senior Pay structure commended during the 2023/24 year and will be concluded within 2024/25.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution</li> <li>▪ Scheme of Delegation published in Constitution</li> <li>▪ Scrutiny member development programme</li> <li>▪ Occupational Health and Wellbeing Policy exists with aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees to enable them to achieve their full potential at work</li> <li>▪ Internal and external audit reports and action plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monmouthshire Council takes an active part in the INFUSE programme which is designed to build skills and capacity for future public services across the Cardiff Capital Region. 9 associates from MCC took part in cohort 3 which commenced in January 2023.</li> <li>▪ There has been member led training with both senior officers and cabinet members.</li> <li>▪ There are regular 1-2-1 meetings with the Leader, Cabinet members, Chief Executive, SLT and Heads of Service.</li> <li>▪ The Constitution sets out the Scheme of Delegation which is regularly reviewed.</li> <li>▪ Annual appraisal and performance review</li> </ul>	



**Principle F — Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**



Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will ensure financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<b>Managing Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance</li> <li>▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register</li> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area, including service risk registers</li> <li>▪ Strategic Risk Register reported to Governance &amp; Audit Committee, Performance &amp; Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council's Strategic Risk Management Policy was updated and approved by Cabinet in March 2019; progress was reported into Governance &amp; Audit Committee in December 2023. The policy requires the proactive participation of all those responsible for planning and delivering services in identifying, evaluating and managing high level strategic risks to the Council's priorities, services and major projects. The risk controls necessary to manage them are identified and monitored to ensure risk mitigation.</li> <li>▪ The Strategic Risk Management Policy was reviewed during 2023/24. This review was due for completion and adoption in June 2024.</li> <li>▪ Within the Council the purpose of risk management is to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ preserve and protect the Council's assets, reputation and staff.</li> <li>○ aid good management of risk and support whole authority governance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For Cabinet to approve the Councils updated Strategic Risk Management Policy. (Action 10)</li> </ul>

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ aid delivery of its population outcomes internally and when working with partners.</li> <li>○ improve business performance and anticipated risks in delivering improvements.</li> <li>○ avoid unnecessary liabilities, costs and failures.</li> <li>○ shape procedures and responsibilities for implementation.</li> <li>▪ The strategic risk assessment ensures that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategic risks are identified and monitored by Monmouthshire.</li> <li>○ Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate.</li> <li>○ Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the Council.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The risk assessment is prepared by drawing on a wide range of evidence including service plans, performance measures, regulatory reports, progress on the previous risk assessment and the views of Scrutiny and Governance &amp; Audit Committees. In order to mitigate the risks, proposed actions are recorded and also aligned back into the respective Service Business Plan. The risk assessment is a living document and is updated over the course of the year as new information comes to light.</li> <li>▪ The strategic risk assessment was presented to Performance &amp; Overview Scrutiny Committee in November 2023. The Committee scrutinised the risk assessment and responsibility holders to ensure that strategic risks have been appropriately identified and risk is being appropriately managed. An overview of the strategic risk register was also presented to Governance and Audit Committee in December 2023 to fulfil the committee's role of assessing the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements</li> <li>▪ The Council's Strategic Risk Assessment for 2023/24 contained 15 risks. Following mitigation there were 6 medium risks and 9 high risks.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Managing performance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community &amp; Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually</li> <li>▪ Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audit Wales presented the Councils ISA260 report for 2022/23 to the Governance &amp; Audit Committee in February 2024.</li> <li>▪ The Councils Self-Assessment report 2022/23 was completed in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to ensure that members and the</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.</li> <li>▪ Quarterly, six monthly &amp; annual Performance Monitoring Reports</li> <li>▪ Director of Social Services Annual report</li> <li>▪ Chief Officer Children &amp; Young People Annual Report</li> <li>▪ Scrutiny function</li> <li>▪ Bi-monthly Directorate and Financial monitoring meetings</li> </ul>	<p>public had a clear and transparent assessment of the Council's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Authority makes numerous annual returns to various external Governing Bodies and Government Agencies, such as the Food Standards Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, Department for Levelling Up &amp; Communities, Department for Transport, Home Office, Gambling Commission, DEFRA, Health &amp; Safety Executive, General Registrar's Office, National Fraud Initiative and other government departments'.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Robust internal control</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Governance &amp; Audit Committee provides assurance on effectiveness on internal control, risk management and governance</li> <li>▪ Governance &amp; Audit Committee Annual Report to Council</li> <li>▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy</li> <li>▪ Role of Internal Audit Section</li> <li>▪ Annual Plans approved by Governance &amp; Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ Annual Reports to Governance &amp; Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>▪ Governance Working Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Governance &amp; Audit Committee considers the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for securing continuous improvement including risk management arrangements. The Governance &amp; Audit Committee also considers corporate governance, monitors the work of auditors and inspectors, and monitors the relationships between auditors and staff and the responses to audit and inspection recommendations. It also has responsibility for reviewing the Annual Statement of Accounts and its associated reports (which include this statement) before approval by Council. The Governance &amp; Audit Committee has an independent, non-political, Chairperson who prepares an annual report of the work of the Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</li> <li>▪ A Governance Working Group was established and met over the course of the year. The core purpose of the group was to be reviewed by SLT in May 2024.</li> <li>▪ Internal Audit operate to the standards set out in the 'Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards' which have been developed from the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Internal Auditing Standards which came into effect in April 2013. The team's role and status is set out in the Council's Internal Audit Charter (revised and updated approved by Governance &amp; Audit Committee September 2021). The Chief Internal Auditor reports a summary of audit findings to the Governance &amp; Audit Committee each quarter; he also reports annually an opinion</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement																												
		<p>on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment through his Internal Audit Annual Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chief Internal Auditor continues to ensure Internal Audit complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. A self-assessment was undertaken during 2023/24 to assess compliance with the Standards which was validated as 'generally compliant' in March 2024 by an external assessor.</li> <li>▪ The Council has an objective and professional relationship with its external auditors and statutory inspectors. It manages its information resource through strategies and policies to enable effective decision making which is managed via the Information Strategy and action plan.</li> <li>▪ The Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy was revised and updated during 2023/24. It was approved by Cabinet January 2024 and provides a deterrent, promotes detection, identifies a clear pathway for investigation and encourages prevention.</li> <li>▪ The overall opinion on the adequacy of the internal control environment for 2023/24 was <b>REASONABLE</b>. Management agreed to implement the recommendations made in audit reports in order to address the weaknesses identified. The Internal Audit opinions issued in 2023/24 were;</li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="831 916 1476 1139"> <thead> <tr> <th>Opinion</th> <th>2021-22</th> <th>2022-23</th> <th>2023-24</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Substantial Assurance</td> <td>5</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Considerable Assurance</td> <td>6</td> <td>10</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reasonable Assurance</td> <td>7</td> <td>4</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Limited Assurance</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No Assurance</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>20</b></td> <td><b>22</b></td> <td><b>34</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The reasons why the outcome of an audit review was deemed to provide Limited Assurance was included within quarterly reports to the Governance &amp; Audit Committee; assurances have been sought from respective operational managers that</li> </ul>	Opinion	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Substantial Assurance	5	7	8	Considerable Assurance	6	10	-	Reasonable Assurance	7	4	18	Limited Assurance	2	1	8	No Assurance	-	-	0	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	
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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<p>action will be taken to make the necessary improvements in control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Audit team did not have a full complement of staff for the whole year. The Acting Chief Internal Auditor's overall audit opinion is based on the number of audits undertaken and their individual opinions; he was able to give an overall opinion on the adequacy of the control environment. The 2023/24 audit opinion was supported by the knowledge that there were appropriate governance, risk management and internal control assurances in place in previous years, with no significant changes.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Managing data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have established an Information Security &amp; Technology Team across the organisation, including education</li> <li>▪ A cyber security team is in place to support, advise and train our workforce. The same team provides a cyber audit function of our ICT infrastructure and governance arrangements</li> <li>▪ The Information Governance Group with participants from each directorate</li> <li>▪ A Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) in place</li> <li>▪ Mandatory training in GDPR and Cyber Security, alongside comprehensive guidance and policies for all aspects of data management</li> <li>▪ Information Asset Register</li> <li>▪ Information sharing &amp; publication guidance in place</li> <li>▪ A comprehensive EDRMS is in place</li> <li>▪ Annual National and Local performance Indicator data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our comprehensive governance and security arrangements for data and information have enabled us to gain accreditation in industry standards for cyber security.</li> <li>▪ Cyber security arrangements cover cultural, physical and electronic barriers to data access and misuse.</li> <li>▪ Information governance is maintained through policies, guidelines, and training that are reported and disseminated via the Information Governance Group, headed up by the SIRO and with departmental representatives. Performance is reported to the Governance &amp; Audit Committee, and this year our performance targets have been exceeded.</li> <li>▪ Privacy notices are published online and have been updated through the year.</li> <li>▪ Schedules are maintained of all MCC information 'line of business' systems to ensure they are fit for purpose and upgraded/replaced as needed.</li> <li>▪ A central EDRMS system is being rolled out to electronically manage, share and retain all data and information outside of line of business systems.</li> <li>▪ Networks and forums are in place to work with the South East Wales Information Forum (SWIF) and WARP (Warning Advice and Security Point) and the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre).</li> <li>▪ Data arrangements are audited by Audit Wales and performance reported through the Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	collection process and internal audit arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ICT service, the SRS, are audited by the host organisation Torfaen County Borough Council, and all audits are reported through the SRS governance structures.</li> </ul>	
<b>Strong public financial management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial procedure rules in Constitution</li> <li>▪ Contract procedure rules in Constitution</li> <li>▪ Accounting Instructions on Intranet</li> <li>▪ Spending Restrictions document on Intranet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council ensures both long term achievement of outcomes and short term performance through the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan.</li> <li>▪ In June 2023, the Council's Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 was approved by Cabinet. In July 2021 Cabinet approved the collaboration with Cardiff Council, for mutual benefit, the discharge and provision of the Council's Strategic Procurement services.</li> <li>▪ The Councils Contract Procedure Rules were updated in March 2021.</li> <li>▪ Due to an anticipated budget overspend a Financial Management Board was established to ensure strong financial management and to consider any actions were required to address the shortfall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. (Action 11)</li> </ul>

**Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability**

6 Excellent	5 <b>Very Good</b>	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

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Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<b>Implementing good practice in transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report writing template and guidance</li> <li>▪ Integrated Impact Assessment including Future Generations evaluation and Equality Impact Assessment, on decision reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council aims to present understandable and transparent reports for both stakeholders and the public which is supported by:-                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Report Authors Protocol which ensures consistency in reports.</li> <li>▪ A Clear Writing guide for Officers.</li> <li>▪ All reports are signed off by Chief Officers, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer prior to publication.</li> <li>▪ Where possible exempt reports are split so that the main report can be heard in public with confidential information being a separate exempt report.</li> <li>▪ Publication of delegated decisions.</li> <li>▪ Reports are published on the website</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Implementing good practices in reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual Statement of Accounts audited by an external auditor and approved by Council</li> <li>▪ Code of Corporate Governance based on CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 2016</li> <li>▪ Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>▪ Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report</li> <li>▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transparency and openness is important to Monmouthshire; the Annual Statement of Accounts was taken through the Governance &amp; Audit Committee before being endorsed by Council. All public meetings of the Council, including Council, Cabinet, Select, Governance &amp; Audit Committee, Planning Committee are live streamed on YouTube and are available to view on the Council's YouTube channel at any time after the meeting, which provides greater transparency of the Council's business.</li> </ul>	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<p><b>Assurance and effective accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ External Audit provided by Audit Wales</li> <li>▪ ESTYN reviews &amp; reports</li> <li>▪ Care Inspectorate Wales reviews &amp; reports</li> <li>▪ Performance of Internal Audit Section monitored by Governance &amp; Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ Implementation of Audit Wales and Internal Audit recommendations monitored by Governance &amp; Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ Peer Review, Corporate Assessment and Corporate Governance Review action plan monitored by SLT</li> <li>▪ Annual Governance Statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council's enabling strategies are being revised to align to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, these include the Digital and Data Strategy, People Strategy and Asset Management Strategy as well as linking in with Service Business Plans.</li> <li>▪ The Governance &amp; Audit Committee continues to support the Internal Audit team and endorses its annual report and plan. The plan details the work and service areas the team will cover based on a risk assessment in order to provide assurance on the adequacy of the internal controls, governance arrangements and risk management process. The Governance &amp; Audit Committee presents its Annual report to Council.</li> <li>▪ The Whole Authority Report: Complaints, Comments and Compliments 2022/23 was presented to Governance &amp; Audit Committee in February 2024 which identified the number and types of feedback, received and dealt with, from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2023.</li> <li>▪ Reports and plans to implement Audit Wales and Internal Audit recommendations are reported (as relevant) to Scrutiny and the Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</li> <li>▪ All agreed recommendation and actions from Internal Audit reviews are monitored.</li> <li>▪ The Council takes note of all reports issued by External Regulators such as Audit Wales, ESTYN and Care Inspectorate Wales. Action plans are agreed and followed up.</li> </ul>	



**Progress against the Action Plan (Previous Year 2022/23)**

No	Area for Improvement	Current Status
1	Establish a 'Governance Working Group' to discuss and review the Governance arrangements across Monmouthshire Council to ensure they are fit for purpose. (Principle A)	<p><b>Implemented</b></p> <p>A Governance Working Group was established and met over the course of the year. The core purpose of the group is to be reviewed by SLT in May 2024.</p>
2	As part of the Governance Working Group, review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. (Principle A)	<p><b>Not Implemented</b></p> <p>This remains outstanding and will be a priority for 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action:</b> Review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance (Chief Officer – Law &amp; Governance)</p>
3	Review the minute taking process and assess any opportunities to further digitise. (Principle B)	<p><b>Partially Implemented</b></p> <p>Changes were made to the minute taking process however it was determined by the Monitoring Officer that further changes are now required to be made to ensure accurate minutes are held.</p> <p>The Council will continue to explore the use of Artificial Intelligence systems such as Co-Pilot to help write consistent minutes.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action:</b> Review the minute taking process to ensure accurate minutes are held of all meetings. (Chief Officer – Law &amp; Governance)</p>
4	Increase the number of datasets published on the council's website. (Principle B)	<p><b>Partially Implemented</b></p> <p>We have seen a small increase in the number of published datasets but not in the numbers anticipated as other work has needed to be prioritised.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action:</b> To continue to increase the number of datasets published on the council's website. (Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships)</p>
5	Review the revenue and capital budget process and the Councils financial strategy. (Principle C)	<p><b>Partially Implemented</b></p> <p>The Councils Financial Strategy has been reviewed and is due to be considered by the Governance &amp; Audit Committee and the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee prior to approval by Cabinet in June 2024.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action:</b> To ensure that the revised financial strategy is considered by scrutiny and approved by Cabinet. (Deputy Chief Executive / Chief Officer – Resources)</p>

6	Ensure that a suite of enabling strategies and a framework is in place to identify and support any interventions needed. (Principle D)	<p><b>Implemented</b> A suite of enabling strategies and a framework has been put in place to identify and support any interventions needed.</p> <p>Several key strategies have been approved over the course of the year: Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy – June 2023 Asset Management Strategy – January 2024 Anti Fraud, Corruption &amp; Bribery Policy – January 2024 Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy – February 2024</p>
7	Review Service Business Plans to ensure they align to the new Community & Corporate Plan. (Principle D)	<p><b>Implemented</b> A review of service plans has been undertaken and feedback provided to managers.</p>
8	A learning management system to be implemented across the organisation to coordinate all training including for schools. (Principle E)	<p><b>Partially Implemented</b> The Learning Management System is in place in Social Care and Health. All development work has been undertaken, content created and historic training records migrated to the system where available. It will be launched organisation-wide by July 2024.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action</b> A learning management system to be implemented across the organisation to coordinate all training including for schools. (Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships)</p>
9	A full analysis to define and identify any training need(s). A focus will be to prioritise ensuring people are suitably qualified and experienced to fulfil roles, capable of leadership, future professional development, and staff are digitally enabled. (Principle E)	<p><b>Not Implemented</b> A new approach for performance appraisal approach is being piloted ahead of an organisation-wide roll-out (excluding teaching staff). This will provide the basis for gathering the information needed for the training needs analysis.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action</b> Roll out of a new performance appraisal system across the organisation. (Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships)</p>
10	Review and update the Councils Strategic Risk Management Policy. Improve how reports are presented to Cabinet and the Governance & Audit Committee to provide the necessary assurance. (Principle F)	<p><b>Partially Implemented</b> The Strategic Risk Management Policy has been revised following engagement with the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee. The new approach has been positively received by the committee and due to be formally approved by Cabinet (June</p>

		<p>2024). A revised approach for reporting risks is now embedded in the policy and will be rolled out as part of future reporting which takes place every 6 months.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action</b> For Cabinet to approve the Councils updated Strategic Risk Management Policy. (Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships)</p>
11	Review the governance arrangements for Corporate Health and Safety to ensure the Council is provided with an assurance that key health and safety risks are being effectively managed across the organisation. (Principle F)	<p><b>Implemented</b> A revised terms of reference and a health and safety work plan have been agreed by the Corporate Health and Safety group.</p>
12 (c/f)	Update the Council's Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy and raise awareness across the Council. (Principle F)	<p><b>Implemented</b> The Anti-Fraud Bribery &amp; Corruption policy was updated, endorsed by the Governance &amp; Audit Committee (October 2023) and approved by Cabinet (January 2024).</p> <p>Following approval the new policy was emailed to all staff, elected and lay members across the organisation.</p>
13	Complete an External Quality Assessment of the Council's Internal Audit Service as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. (Principle F)	<p><b>Implemented</b> An External Quality Assessment was completed of the Internal Audit section. It was independently deemed that the Internal Audit Team 'generally complies' with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.</p>
14 (c/f)	Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. (Principle F)	<p><b>Partially Implemented</b> This is currently outstanding. The Acting Chief Internal Auditor has attended new staff induction sessions covering the importance of Financial Regulations and Controls. However, the delay in roll out of the Thinki system across the Council has impacted a wider roll out along with the need to ensure the Counter-Fraud Policy was updated to include within the training session. This will be actioned during 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Action</b> Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. (Chief Officer – Communities &amp; Place)</p>
15	To produce a new Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy. (Principle F)	<p><b>Implemented</b> In June 2023, the Council's Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 was approved by Cabinet.</p>

16	Alignment of Council, Cabinet, ICMD and Scrutiny forward work planners. (Principle G)	<b>Implemented</b> A forward work plan for informal cabinet has been developed which brings together all work programmes.
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**Action Plan – 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement**

No	Area for Improvement	By Who	By When
1	Review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance (Principle A)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance	December 2024
2	Review the Corporate Induction process to ensure the key messages are being delivered. (Principle A)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	July 2024
3	Review and update the Employee Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy. (Principle A)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	December 2024
4	Review the minute taking process to ensure accurate minutes are held of all meetings. (Principle B)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance	May 2024
5	To continue to increase the number of datasets published on the council's website. (Principle B)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	March 2025
6	Deliver the action plan to address the recommendations from the Audit Wales Use of Performance Information review. (Principle B)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	March 2025
7	To ensure that the revised financial strategy is considered by scrutiny and approved by Council. (Principle C)	Deputy Chief Executive / Chief Officer - Resources	July 2024
8	A learning management system to be implemented across the organisation to coordinate all training including for schools. (Principle E)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	July 2024
9	Roll out of a new performance appraisal system across the organisation. (Principle E)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	July 2024
10	For Cabinet to approve the Council's updated Strategic Risk Management Policy. (Principle F)	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships	June 2024
11	Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. (Principle F)	Chief Officer – Communities & Place	March 2025

**Monitoring & Evaluation**

We propose over the coming year to continually review our governance arrangements to ensure they remain effective and appropriate. Steps will be taken, where appropriate, to further enhance our governance arrangements.

**Certification by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive**

Signed:

Date: 28/11/2024

**Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council**

Signed:

Date: 28/11/2024

**Peter Davies, Acting Chief Executive**

# Audit report

## **The report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Monmouthshire County Council**

### **Opinion on financial statements**

I have audited the financial statements of Monmouthshire County Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

Monmouthshire County Council's financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, and the related notes, including the material accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Monmouthshire County Council as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

### **Basis of opinion**

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of Monmouthshire County Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Monmouthshire County Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other Information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives

rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with guidance.

#### **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Monmouthshire County Council and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit;
- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

#### **Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing Monmouthshire County Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by Monmouthshire County Council will not continue to be provided in the future.

#### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee

that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Monmouthshire County Council's policies and procedures concerned with:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals
- Obtaining an understanding of Monmouthshire County Council's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Monmouthshire County Council operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Monmouthshire County Council.
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Governance and Audit Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of Monmouthshire County Council's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my auditor's report.

## **Other auditor's responsibilities**



I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

**Certificate of completion of audit**

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of Monmouthshire County Council in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

Adrian Crompton  
Auditor General for Wales  
29 November 2024

1 Capital Quarter  
Tyndall Street  
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

## Movement In Reserves Statement for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

	Note	Council Fund Balance £000	Earmarked Reserves £000	Capital Receipts Reserve £000	Total Usable Reserves £000	Unusable Reserves £000	Joint Arrangement CCRCD	Total Reserves £000
Balance at 1st April 2022		17,482	16,115	9,092	42,689	(36,050)	3,133	9,773
<b><i>Movement in reserves during 2022/23</i></b>								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		(889)	-	-	(889)	259,830	1,733	260,674
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	10.2	(5,799)		3,754	(2,045)	2,044		-
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>(6,688)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>(2,933)</b>	<b>261,875</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>260,674</b>
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	10.4	4,566	(4,566)		-			-
Prior period adjustment: CCRCD							216	216
<b>Increase/(Decrease) in 2022/23</b>		<b>(2,122)</b>	<b>(4,566)</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>(2,933)</b>	<b>261,875</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>260,890</b>
Balance at 31st March 2023 carried forward		15,361	11,549	12,846	39,755	225,826	5,082	270,664
<b><i>Movement in reserves during 2023/24</i></b>								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		22,203	-	-	22,203	58,801	-	81,004
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	10.2	(30,270)		(2,626)	(32,896)	32,896		0
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>(8,067)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,626)</b>	<b>(10,693)</b>	<b>91,697</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,004</b>
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	10.4	2,190	(2,190)		-			0
<b>Increase/(Decrease) in 2023/24</b>		<b>(5,877)</b>	<b>(2,190)</b>	<b>(2,626)</b>	<b>(10,693)</b>	<b>91,697</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,004</b>
Balance at 31st March 2024 carried forward		9,483	9,359	10,221	29,062	317,523	5,082	351,667

## Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

2022/23 Restated				2023/24			
Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000		Note	Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000
77,362	(20,429)	56,933	Children & Young People		91,350	(19,835)	71,514
92,605	(23,095)	69,510	Social Care & Health		95,384	(26,333)	69,052
71,516	(34,297)	37,219	Communities & Place		74,778	(38,273)	36,506
15,523	(8,241)	7,282	Monlife		19,742	(9,496)	10,246
10,268	(7,797)	2,471	Chief Executives Unit		5,513	(2,287)	3,226
6,656	(522)	6,134	Law & Governance		2,930	(197)	2,733
37,932	(19,301)	18,631	Resources		42,285	(23,673)	18,611
2,209	(330)	1,879	Corporate		3,514	(597)	2,916
1,510	(1,575)	(65)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)		0	0	0
<b>315,581</b>	<b>(115,587)</b>	<b>199,994</b>	<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>335,495</b>	<b>(120,691)</b>	<b>214,804</b>
			<b>Other operating expenditure:</b>				
			<i>Precepts &amp; Levies:</i>				
14,392	0	14,392	Gwent Police Authority		15,505	0	15,505
4,871	0	4,871	South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority		5,472	0	5,472
3,158	0	3,158	Community and Town Councils		3,381	0	3,381
117	(1)	116	National Parks		116	(1)	115
94	0	94	Internal Drainage Boards		105	0	105
0	(125)	(125)	Gains/losses on the disposal of non-current assets		2,341	(2,227)	114
		<b>22,505</b>	<b>Total Other operating expenditure</b>				<b>24,691</b>
24,754	(18,727)	6,028	Financing and investment income and expenditure	11.3	17,185	(22,263)	(5,078)
	(96)	(96)	Interest & Investment income: CCRCD				0
148		148	Change in Fair Value of Investment Properties: CCRCD				0
			<b>Taxation &amp; non-specific grant income:</b>				
349	(88,235)	(87,886)	Council Tax	11.5	442	(93,883)	(93,440)
0	(34,753)	(34,753)	Non-domestic rates redistribution	11.5	0	(31,224)	(31,224)
0	(105,064)	(105,064)	General government grants	11.6	0	(131,956)	(131,956)
	(1,709)	(1,709)	Recognised Capital Grants & Contributions: CCRCD			0	0
	3	3	Tax Expenses: CCRCD			0	0
		<b>(830)</b>	<b>(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services</b>				<b>(22,203)</b>
			<b>Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:</b>				
		(34,478)	(Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment assets	12.1			(7,468)
		(14)	(Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment assets: CCRCD				0
		405	(Surplus) or deficit from investments in equity instruments designated at fair value through other comprehensive income				(72)
		(225,757)	(Gains)/losses on remeasurement of pension assets / liabilities	14.3			(51,261)
		<b>(259,844)</b>	<b>Total Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>				<b>(58,801)</b>
		<b>(260,674)</b>	<b>Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>				<b>(81,004)</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024

31st March 2023 Restated £000s		Note	31st March 2024 £000s
287,142	Other land and buildings	12.1	294,266
11,633	Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment	12.1	11,108
81,758	Infrastructure	12.1	90,028
4,528	Community assets	12.1	4,547
18,702	Assets under construction	12.1	38,254
10	Surplus assets not held for sale	12.1	10
9,378	Heritage Assets	12.7	9,682
66,862	Investment Property	12.5	79,981
34	Intangible Assets		8
2,126	Long-Term Investments	13.1	1,358
2,931	Long Term Debtors	13.5	2,818
<b>485,104</b>	<b>Long term assets</b>		<b>532,059</b>
16,806	Short Term Investments	13.1	6,878
419	Inventories		504
58,254	Short Term Debtors	13.5	42,763
24,723	Cash and Cash Equivalents	15.3	8,346
1,000	Assets Held for Sale	12.6	1,250
110	CCRCD: Deferred Tax asset		110
<b>101,312</b>	<b>Current Assets</b>		<b>59,851</b>
(802)	Cash and Cash Equivalents	15.3	(1,723)
(67,157)	Short Term Borrowing	13.1	(51,678)
(45,621)	Short Term Creditors	13.6	(43,761)
(404)	Provisions	13.7	(466)
<b>(113,985)</b>	<b>Current Liabilities</b>		<b>(97,629)</b>
(56,576)	Liability related to defined benefit pension scheme	10.9	(5,980)
(2,297)	Provisions	13.7	(2,350)
(133,072)	Long Term Borrowing	13.1	(124,212)
(1,061)	Long Term Creditors: CCRCD		(1,061)
(2,238)	Other Long Term Liabilities	13.1	(2,273)
(4,612)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	11.6	(5,388)
(1,912)	Revenue Grants Receipts in Advance		(1,350)
<b>(201,768)</b>	<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>		<b>(142,613)</b>
<b>270,664</b>	<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>351,667</b>
15,360	Council Fund Balance	10.3	9,483
11,549	Earmarked Reserves	10.4	9,359
12,846	Capital Receipts Reserve	10.6	10,220
1,402	Other usable Reserves: CCRCD		1,402
<b>41,157</b>	<b>Usable Reserves</b>		<b>30,464</b>
77,372	Revaluation Reserve	10.7	81,737
(56,576)	Pensions Reserve	10.9	(5,980)
210,354	Capital Adjustment Account	10.8	247,171
3,409	Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	10.11	2,443
(472)	Financial Instrument Adjustment Account		(449)
(419)	Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve		(347)
(4,353)	Accumulating Absence Adjustment Account	10.10	(3,562)
192	Other unusable Reserves: CCRCD		192
<b>229,507</b>	<b>Unusable Reserves</b>		<b>321,204</b>
<b>270,664</b>	<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>351,667</b>

## Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

31st March 2023 Restated			31st March 2024
£000		Note	£000
(830)	Net (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services	15.1	(22,202)
(4,150)	Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	15.1	(28,741)
30,754	Adjustments for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	15.1	44,727
<b>25,775</b>	<b>Net cash flows from Operating Activities</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>(6,217)</b>
41,149	Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets		51,423
0	Purchase of short-term and long-term investments		0
0	Other payments for investing activities		0
(7,883)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets		(4,010)
(1,378)	Proceeds from short-term and long-term investments		(10,812)
(25,189)	Other receipts from investing activities		(37,460)
6,699	<b>Net Cash (Inflow)/Outflow from Investing Activities</b>		<b>(859)</b>
	<b>Financing Activities</b>		
9,780	Repayments of short and long-term borrowing		30,389
33	Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases and on-balance sheet PFI contracts		35
(33,778)	Cash receipts of short and long-term borrowing		(6,051)
0	Other receipts from financing activities		0
(23,965)	<b>Net Cash (Inflow)/Outflow from Financing Activities</b>		<b>24,373</b>
8,508	<b>Net (increase) / decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>17,298</b>
32,428	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		23,921
<b>23,921</b>	<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>6,623</b>

**Notes to the Accounts  
for the Year Ended  
31st March 2024**

## 10 MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT NOTES

### 10.1 Movement in Reserves

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable' reserves. A summary of the movement in reserves during the financial year is illustrated below. More detailed information to support the Movement in Reserves Statement follows this note.

	Note	Balance at 1st April 2022 £000	Movement in Reserve £000	Balance at 31st March 2023 £000	Movement in Reserve £000	Balance at 31st March 2024 £000
<b>Usable Reserves:</b>						
Council Fund balance: Authority	10.3	10,528	577	11,105	(717)	10,388
Council Fund balance: LMS School Balances	10.5	6,955	(2,699)	4,256	(5,161)	(905)
Earmarked reserves	10.4	16,115	(4,565)	11,549	(2,190)	9,359
Capital Receipts Reserve	10.6	9,091	3,755	12,846	(2,626)	10,220
Usable Reserves: CCRCD		891	511	1,402	(0)	1,401
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>		<b>43,579</b>	<b>(2,421)</b>	<b>41,158</b>	<b>(10,694)</b>	<b>30,464</b>
<b>Unusable Reserves:</b>						
Revaluation Reserve	10.7	46,036	31,336	77,372	4,365	81,737
Capital Adjustment Account	10.8	180,280	30,075	210,354	36,817	247,171
Financial Instruments Adjustment Account		(494)	23	(472)	23	(449)
Pension Reserve	10.9	(259,212)	202,636	(56,576)	50,596	(5,980)
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	10.11	3,612	(203)	3,409	(966)	2,443
Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve		(14)	(405)	(419)	72	(347)
Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account	10.10	(3,976)	(377)	(4,353)	791	(3,562)
Unusable Reserves: CCRCD	16.6	(37)	228	192	0	192
<b>Total Unusable Reserves</b>		<b>(33,806)</b>	<b>263,313</b>	<b>229,507</b>	<b>91,697</b>	<b>321,204</b>
<b>Total Authority Reserves</b>		<b>9,773</b>	<b>260,892</b>	<b>270,664</b>	<b>81,003</b>	<b>351,668</b>

### 10.2 Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations

This note summarises the adjustments that are made to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Authority in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Authority to meet future capital and revenue expenditure. A more detailed overview is provided in the individual notes that follows for each reserve:

Movements in 2023/24:	Council Fund Balance £000	Usable Reserves £000	Unusable Reserves £000
<b>Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:</b>			
<b>Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</b>			
Charges for depreciation and impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment assets	20,812	-	(20,812)
Charges for impairment of Heritage Assets	121	-	(121)
Revaluation movements on Property Plant and Equipment (charged to SDPS)	264	-	(264)
Revaluation movements on Assets Held for Sale (charged to SDPS)	522	-	(522)

Movements in the market value of Investment Properties	(10,214)	-	10,214
Amortisation and impairment of intangible assets	183	-	(183)
Capital grants and contributions applied	(40,505)	-	40,505
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	4,929	-	(4,929)
Amounts of non current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	2,366	-	(2,366)
<b>Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</b>			
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment (MRP)	(5,985)	-	5,985
Capital expenditure charged against the Council Fund	(363)	-	363
<b>Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:</b>			
Transfer of sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	(2,253)	4,010	(1,758)
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0	(6,636)	6,636
<b>Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account:</b>			
Amount by which finance costs charged to the CIES are different from finance costs chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(22)	-	22
<b>Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve:</b>			
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CIES	19,636	-	(19,636)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(18,971)	-	18,971
<b>Adjustment involving the Accumulated Absences Account:</b>			
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(790)	-	790
<b>Adjustment between the Capital Adjustment Account and the Revaluation Reserve:</b>			
Depreciation of non-current asset revaluation gains	0	-	0
<b>Total adjustments between accounting basis &amp; funding basis under regulations</b>	<b>(30,270)</b>	<b>(2,626)</b>	<b>32,895</b>

<b>Movements in 2022/23:</b>	<b>Council Fund Balance £000</b>	<b>Usable Reserves £000</b>	<b>Unusable Reserves £000</b>
<b>Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:</b>			
<b>Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</b>			
Charges for depreciation and impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment assets	18,233	-	(18,233)
Charges for impairment of Heritage Assets	179	-	(179)
Revaluation movements on Property Plant and Equipment (charged to SDPS)	(13,697)	-	13,697
Revaluation movements on Assets Held for Sale (charged to SDPS)	0	-	0
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties	18	-	(18)
Amortisation and impairment of intangible assets	54	-	(54)
Capital grants and contributions applied	(27,539)	-	27,539



Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	3,840	-	(3,840)
Amounts of non current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	4,140	-	(4,140)
<b>Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</b>			
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment (MRP)	(6,642)	-	6,642
Capital expenditure charged against the Council Fund	(393)	-	393
<b>Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:</b>			
Transfer of sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	(7,469)	7,883	(414)
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure		(4,128)	4,128
<b>Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account:</b>			
Amount by which finance costs charged to the CIES are different from finance costs chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(22)	-	22
<b>Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve:</b>			
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CIES	40,447	-	(40,447)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(17,326)	-	17,326
<b>Adjustment involving the Accumulated Absences Account:</b>			
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	379	-	(379)
<b>Adjustment between the Capital Adjustment Account and the Revaluation Reserve:</b>			
Depreciation of non-current asset revaluation gains	-	-	-
<b>Total adjustments between accounting basis &amp; funding basis under regulations</b>	<b>(5,799)</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>2,044</b>

### 10.3 Usable Reserves available for Revenue Purposes

The in-year movements in the Authority's usable Reserves that are available to be applied for revenue purposes are summarised below:

Each of the Authority's Schools is directly governed by a Board of Governors, which is responsible for managing the school's finances. The balance on the Council Fund includes a deficit of £905,000 in respect of underspent (or overspent) budgets which have been delegated to schools. These balances are at the disposal of the respective schools and represent an earmarked reserve which is not available for the Authority to use generally.

	At 1st April 2022 £000	In Year Movement £000	At 31st March 2023 £000	In Year Movement £000	At 31st March 2024 £000
Amount of Council Fund Balance held by Schools under Local Management Schemes	6,955	(2,699)	4,256	(5,161)	(905)
Amount of Council Fund Balance generally available for new expenditure	10,528	577	11,105	(717)	10,388
Total Council Fund Balance	17,482	(2,122)	15,360	(5,877)	9,483
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	16,115	(4,565)	11,549	(2,190)	9,359
<b>Total Usable Reserves available for Revenue Purposes</b>	<b>33,597</b>	<b>(6,687)</b>	<b>26,910</b>	<b>(8,068)</b>	<b>18,842</b>

## 10.4 Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the Council Fund into earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet Council Fund expenditure.

Earmarked reserves have been set up where there has been a need to set aside resources for a specific future purpose. The purpose of each earmarked reserve is detailed below. Utilisation of these reserves is under the control of the Cabinet.

The transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24 can be summarised as follows:

	At 1st April 2022	Transfer to Reserves	Transfer from Reserves	At 31st March 2023	Transfer to Reserves	Transfer from Reserves	At 31st March 2024
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Invest to Redesign	1,456	125	(154)	1,427	1,236	(1,427)	1,236
Priority Investment	1,905			1,905	27	(1,500)	432
Insurance and risk management	925			925			925
IT Transformation	931		(185)	746		(389)	357
Treasury equalisation	590			590	1,007		1,597
Capital Investment	627		(2)	625			625
Redundancy and Pensions	769			769			769
Pay Inflation Reserve	0	1,316		1,316		(1,316)	(0)
Capital Receipt Generation	365		(51)	314			314
<b>Service and partnership Reserves:</b>							
Elections	245	35	(155)	125	35		160
Museums acquisition	53		(17)	36			36
Solar Farm Maintenance & Community Fund	240	23	(105)	158	23		181
Castlegate Business Park	437		(312)	125		(40)	85
Newport Leisure Park	365		(188)	177		(177)	(0)
Sustainability - PV Invertor Replacement Reserve	65			65		(25)	40
Covid19 Reset Reserve: Social Care	1,400		(1,400)	0			0
Covid19 Reset Reserve: Homelessness	1,400		(1,400)	0			0
Covid19 Reset Reserve: Leisure Income	300		(300)	0			0
Covid19 Reset Reserve: Pay Inflation	900		(900)	0			0
Cost of Living Discretionary Payment Reserve	499		(499)	0			0
SCH Electric Vehicle & Driving Lessons Reserve	214		(214)	0			0
Covid19 Hardship Fund Equalisation Reserve	819		(819)	0			0
Ukrainian Support Reserve	0	1,341		1,341	131		1,472
Local Resilience Forum	154	2	(27)	129		(13)	116
Grass Routes Buses	166	5		171	5		176
Schools sickness & maternity cover	196	101		298	49		346
Youth Offending Team	150			150			150

Building Control	(4)	2		(2)		(9)	(11)
Rural Development Plan	693		(675)	19		(4)	15
Highways Plant & Equipment Replacement	188		(47)	141	65	(103)	103
Energy Efficiency Development Reserve	0			0	236		236
Homeless Prevention	68		(68)	0			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,115</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>(7,516)</b>	<b>11,549</b>	<b>2,813</b>	<b>(5,003)</b>	<b>9,359</b>

**Invest to Redesign Reserve** - To fund service redesign to either improve the service, generate income or reduce costs.

**Priority Investment Reserve** - To fund additional one off investment in the Authority's agreed priorities.

**Insurance and Risk Management Reserve** - To meet excesses and administration costs on claims against the Council, to provide cover on self insured risks and contribute to risk management activities.

**I.T. Transformation Reserve** - To invest in information technology in support of the organisations outcomes and generation of improved service efficiency, income generation or cost savings.

**Treasury Equalisation Reserve** - Originally created from loan rescheduling discounts and premia, the reserve is held to manage the longer term approach to treasury decisions.

**Capital Investment Reserve** - To finance future capital expenditure.

**Redundancy and Pensions Reserve** - To meet redundancy costs and commuted payments for early retirements over a maximum of 5 years.

**Pay Inflation Reserve** - To mitigate against the volatility and budgetary risk of future pay settlements.

**Capital Receipt Generation Reserve** - Securing capital receipts is a vital element of the Authority's capital investment strategy. Improving the final disposal value by investment, either in the fabric of the asset or by proper disposal expertise ensures the Council obtains the best possible value for surplus assets.

**Ukrainian Support Reserve** - Created from unspent Welsh and UK Government funding to cover future costs related to housing and supporting Ukrainian refugees.

**Service Reserves** - Held for a specific service purpose and maintained to support and develop service delivery, mitigate specific service risk, or support collaborative arrangements.

## 10.5 School Balances

The balance on the Council Fund includes £905,095 in respect of underspent (or overspent) budgets which have been delegated to schools. These balances are at the disposal of the respective schools and represent an earmarked reserve which is not available for the Authority to use generally. Details of the movements of these reserves are shown below:

	At 1st April 2022	In Year Movement	At 31st March 2023	In Year Movement	At 31st March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Comprehensives</b>					
Caldicot	807,785	(580,286)	227,499	(579,936)	(352,437)
Chepstow	(124,934)	(227,517)	(352,451)	(500,587)	(853,038)
King Henry VIII	756,131	29,048	785,180	(785,180)	0
Monmouth	814,258	(215,066)	599,192	(369,535)	229,657
<b>Sub Total Comprehensives</b>	<b>2,253,240</b>	<b>(993,820)</b>	<b>1,259,420</b>	<b>(2,235,237)</b>	<b>(975,817)</b>

<b>Middle</b>					
King Henry VIII 3-19	0	0	0	(329,197)	(329,197)
<b>Sub Total Middle</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(329,197)</b>	<b>(329,197)</b>
<b>Primaries</b>					
Archbishop R Williams	171,322	(140,262)	31,060	(4,239)	26,821
Cantref	254,092	(57,742)	196,350	(85,933)	110,417
Castle Park	159,297	(54,000)	105,297	(30,251)	75,046
Cross Ash	79,755	21,699	101,453	(42,986)	58,467
Deri View	189,790	(163,465)	26,326	(26,326)	0
Dewstow	358,616	(83,558)	275,059	(217,499)	57,560
Durand	104,979	(49,781)	55,199	3,506	58,705
Gilwern	230,955	(79,190)	151,764	(174,688)	(22,923)
Goytre Fawr	117,735	(45,610)	72,125	(64,781)	7,344
Kymin View	133,714	(45,337)	88,378	(11,511)	76,867
Llandogo	214	(6,156)	(5,941)	23,596	17,655
Llanfoist	219,420	(47,985)	171,434	(45,949)	125,485
Llantilio Pertholey	109,698	(36,984)	72,714	(11,966)	60,748
Llanvihangel Crucorney	136,822	(17,602)	119,219	(22,353)	96,867
Magor Vol Aided	196,816	18,960	215,776	(54,257)	161,519
New Pembroke Primary	218,668	(15,360)	203,307	(32,231)	171,077
Osbaston Church in Wales	93,147	(80,396)	12,750	(86,238)	(73,487)
Our Lady's & St Michael's Catholic Primary	58,648	(75,726)	(17,078)	(4,177)	(21,255)
Overmonnow	162,470	(154,809)	7,662	(132,066)	(124,405)
Raglan	160,593	34,892	195,485	(20,104)	175,381
Rogiet	89,222	(67,784)	21,439	(86,860)	(65,422)
Shirenewton	239,291	(53,954)	185,338	(55,395)	129,943
St Mary's (Chepstow)	104,932	(9,908)	95,024	(25,021)	70,004
The Dell	146,839	(170,750)	(23,912)	(57,082)	(80,993)
Thornwell	110,622	(106,365)	4,257	(99,447)	(95,190)
Trellech	153,939	3,753	157,692	(57,639)	100,054
Undy	210,643	(43,618)	167,025	(25,516)	141,508
Usk CV	270,840	(2,545)	268,295	(176,876)	91,420
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	72,015	(51,227)	20,789	(191,254)	(170,466)
Ysgol Gymraeg Ffin	66,783	(14,105)	52,678	(69,341)	(16,663)
<b>Sub Total Primaries</b>	<b>4,621,878</b>	<b>(1,594,915)</b>	<b>3,026,963</b>	<b>(1,884,883)</b>	<b>1,142,080</b>
<b>Other</b>					
Pupil Referral Unit	79,466	(110,173)	(30,707)	(711,453)	(742,161)
<b>Sub Total Other</b>	<b>79,466</b>	<b>(110,173)</b>	<b>(30,707)</b>	<b>(711,453)</b>	<b>(742,161)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,954,584</b>	<b>(2,698,908)</b>	<b>4,255,676</b>	<b>(5,160,770)</b>	<b>(905,095)</b>

King Henry VIII and Deri View closed on 31/08/2023; the King Henry VIII 3-19 School is operating from these sites with effect from 01/09/2023. A new build is being completed and is utilising the previous schools budgets.

## 10.6 Capital Receipts Reserve

Amounts in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the usable Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's borrowing requirement. Receipts are appropriated to the reserve from the Council Fund via the Statement in Movements Statement.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
9,091	Balance as at 1st April	12,846
7,680	Transfer of sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	2,983
203	Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	1,027
(4,128)	Less: use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(6,636)
<b>12,846</b>	<b>Balance as at 31st March</b>	<b>10,220</b>

## 10.7 Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the net gains made by the Authority arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment, Heritage Assets and Intangible Assets. The balance is reduced when assets are:

- Revalued downwards or impaired;
- Used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation; or
- Disposed of and the gains are realised.

The Reserve contains gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
46,036	Balance at 1 April	77,372
34,572	Upward revaluation of assets	9,725
(94)	Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(2,257)
(3,143)	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(3,103)
0	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	0
<b>77,372</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>81,737</b>

## 10.8 Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties that have yet to be consumed by the Authority. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

This note provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the Account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

2022/23 Restated £000		2023/24 £000
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180,280	Balance at 1 April	210,354
	<b>Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</b>	
(18,233)	Charges for depreciation and impairment of property, plant and equipment assets	(20,812)
(179)	Impairment of Heritage assets	(121)
13,697	Revaluation movements on Property, Plant and Equipment	(264)
0	Revaluation movements on Assets Held for Sale	(522)
(54)	Amortisation & impairment of intangible assets	(183)
(3,840)	Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	(4,929)
(4,140)	Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(2,366)
(211)	Transfer of sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	(792)
3,143	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	3,103
1,208	CCRCD CAA	0
4,128	Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	6,636
27,539	Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	40,505
6,642	Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the Council Fund	5,984
393	Capital expenditure charged against the Council Fund	363
(18)	Movements in the market value of Investment Properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	10,214
<b>210,354</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>247,171</b>

## 10.9 Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Authority has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
(259,212)	Balance at 1 April	(56,576)
225,757	Remeasurement gains or (losses) on pension assets and liabilities	51,261
(40,447)	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(19,636)
17,326	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	18,971
<b>(56,576)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(5,980)</b>

## 10.10 Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the Council Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, for example, annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31st March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the Council Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account. Further information on the calculations of benefits can be found in note 17.8 to the accounts.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
(3,976)	Balance at 1 April	(4,354)
3,973	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	4,352
(4,352)	Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	(3,562)
1	Share of CCRC	0
<b>(4,353)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(3,562)</b>

## 10.11 Deferred Capital Receipts

The Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets but for which full cash settlement has yet to take place. Under statutory arrangements, the authority does not treat these gains as usable for financing new capital expenditure until they are backed by cash receipts. When the deferred cash settlement eventually takes place, amounts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The balance at the 31st March 2024 is made up of £2.443m relating to the Old Abergavenny cattle market site disposed of under a finance lease.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
3,612	Balance at 1 April	3,409
(203)	Transfer to the Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	(1,027)
0	Transfer of deferred sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	61
<b>3,409</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>2,443</b>

## 11 COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT NOTES

### 11.1 Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The objective of the Expenditure and Funding Analysis is to demonstrate to council tax payers how the funding available to the authority (i.e. government grants, council tax and business rates) for the year has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's directorates. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES).

2022/23 Restated				2023/24		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the general fund	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the CIES		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the general fund	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the CIES
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
60,658	(3,725)	56,933	Children & Young People	62,736	8,779	71,514
62,855	6,656	69,510	Social Care & Health	67,020	2,031	69,052
22,921	14,298	37,219	Communities & Place	25,965	10,540	36,505
4,476	2,806	7,282	Monlife	8,067	2,179	10,246
1,558	914	2,471	Chief Executives Unit	2,865	361	3,226
4,879	1,254	6,133	Law & Governance	2,775	(43)	2,733
8,385	10,246	18,631	Resources	8,120	10,491	18,611
24,512	(22,633)	1,879	Corporate	27,136	(24,219)	2,916
0	(65)	(65)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)	0	0	0
<b>190,244</b>	<b>9,751</b>	<b>199,994</b>	<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>204,683</b>	<b>10,120</b>	<b>214,804</b>
<b>(190,821)</b>	<b>(10,003)</b>	<b>(200,824)</b>	<b>Other Income &amp; Expenditure</b>	<b>(203,967)</b>	<b>(33,039)</b>	<b>(237,006)</b>
<b>(577)</b>	<b>(252)</b>	<b>(830)</b>	<b>Surplus or Deficit</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>(22,919)</b>	<b>(22,202)</b>
(10,528)			Opening General Fund Balance	(11,104)		
(577)			Surplus or Deficit on General Fund	716		
<b>(11,104)</b>			<b>Closing General Fund Balance</b>	<b>(10,388)</b>		

### Adjustments from the General Fund to arrive at the CIES Amounts:

2022/23 Restated					2023/24			
Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments	Other differences	Total Adjustments		Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments	Other differences	Total Adjustments
£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
(6,287)	2,816	(254)	(3,725)	Children & Young People	9,497	(790)	72	8,779
2,481	4,878	(702)	6,656	Social Care & Health	2,750	(560)	(159)	2,031
7,291	4,657	2,351	14,298	Communities & Place	8,914	(558)	2,185	10,540
1,828	1,465	(487)	2,806	Monlife	2,877	(220)	(477)	2,179



491	571	(148)	914	Chief Executives Unit	216	(64)	210	361
278	715	260	1,254	Law & Governance	84	(40)	(86)	(43)
2,549	794	6,904	10,246	Resources	2,484	(102)	8,100	10,483
320	(322)	(22,630)	(22,633)	Corporate	0	359	(24,579)	(24,219)
0	0	(65)	(65)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)	0	0	0	0
<b>8,950</b>	<b>15,573</b>	<b>(14,772)</b>	<b>9,751</b>	<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>26,822</b>	<b>(1,976)</b>	<b>(14,734)</b>	<b>10,112</b>
<b>(34,440)</b>	<b>7,208</b>	<b>17,228</b>	<b>(10,003)</b>	<b>Other Income &amp; Expenditure</b>	<b>(46,375)</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>10,696</b>	<b>(33,039)</b>
<b>(25,490)</b>	<b>22,781</b>	<b>2,457</b>	<b>(253)</b>	<b>Adjustments between the Funding &amp; Accounting Basis</b>	<b>(19,554)</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>(4,038)</b>	<b>(22,927)</b>

## 11.2 Expenditure & Income analysed by nature

The authority's expenditure and income is analysed as follows:

2022/23 £000 (Restated)		2023/24 £000
165,668	Employee benefits expenses	153,181
150,744	Other services expenses	159,475
15,688	Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	34,079
22,629	Precepts & levies	24,578
4,595	Interest payments	6,395
4,140	Gain/loss on disposal of non-current assets	2,334
<b>363,464</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>380,042</b>
(61,447)	Fees, charges & other service income	(66,292)
(4,022)	Interest and investment income	(14,125)
(122,988)	Income from council tax & NNDR	(125,107)
(168,368)	External grants and contributions	(194,500)
(7,469)	Gain/loss on disposal of non-current assets	(2,220)
<b>(364,294)</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(402,244)</b>
<b>(830)</b>	<b>Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services</b>	<b>(22,202)</b>

2022/23 figures are restated to reflect further refinement of the classification of income between Fees, charges & other service income, and External grants & contributions.

## 11.3 Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

A summary level breakdown of Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure reported on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is shown below. Further information is contained within the respective notes to the accounts.

31st March 2023 Restated			Note	31st March 2024		
Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000		Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000
4,587	0	4,587	13.2	6,395	0	6,395
7,208	0	7,208	14.3	2,641	0	2,641
0	(1,049)	(1,049)	13.2	0	(1,762)	(1,762)

0	(96)	(96)	Interest receivable and similar income: CCRCD share	0	0	0
9,962	(15,168)	(5,206)	Income and expenditure in relation to investment properties and changes in their fair value	5,615	(18,123)	(12,508)
2,997	(2,502)	495	(Surpluses)/deficits on trading undertakings not included in the Net Cost of Services	2,535	(2,328)	207
0	(7)	(7)	Other investment income	0	(50)	(50)
<b>24,754</b>	<b>(18,823)</b>	<b>5,932</b>	<b>Total Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>17,185</b>	<b>(22,263)</b>	<b>(5,078)</b>

#### 11.4 Agency Income & expenditure

There have been a large number of new grants and financial support made available by Welsh & UK Government to support the additional services required as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and to support the people displaced by the Ukraine war. Local Authorities have been requested to administer these grants on the Welsh Government's behalf because they have the local knowledge and ability to put in place systems quickly to make payments.

A payment was also made to Cardiff City Council to facilitate a CCRCD transaction which was matched by a corresponding receipt for the same amount. As this is a transaction was made on behalf of Cardiff City Council and not relating directly to Monmouthshire's provision of service it has been treated as Agency income & expenditure.

The Council acted as an agent in the provision of the following funding streams:

Amount Received 2022/23 (£000's)	Scheme	Purpose	Amount Received 2023/24 (£000's)
17	<b>NDR Relief grants</b>	Grants given to retail, leisure and hospitality businesses.	0
3,249	<b>Care Workers £1,498 Payments</b>	Bonus payment for individual care workers.	0
375	<b>Unpaid Carers</b>	Payment to Carers in receipt of Carers Allowance.	0
131	<b>Self Isolation Payments</b>	£500 & £750 payments for eligible individuals who have to self isolate.	0
1,374	<b>Winter Fuel Payments</b>	£200 Winter Fuel Support Scheme.	0
2,949	<b>Cost of Living Support Scheme - Main</b>	£150 support payment	0
127	<b>SSP Enhancement</b>	To top up to full salary where employees only receive statutory sick pay when off sick with Covid-19 or having to self isolate as an infection control measure.	0
115	<b>Ukraine £200</b>	Each Ukrainian person arriving in the UK is eligible for a £200 cash payment to support them with essentials before universal credit is awarded.	4
343	<b>Ukraine £350 Host Payments</b>	£350 payment by UK Government for guests that have been in the country for less than a year	104
0	<b>Ukraine £150 Host Top-up Payment</b>	£150 top up payment by Welsh Government for guests that have been in the country for less than a year	44
0	<b>Ukraine £500 Host Payments</b>	£500 payment by UK Government for guests that have been in the country for more than a year	240
0	<b>Ukraine £100 Host Top Up Payment</b>	£100 top up payment by Monmouthshire County Council	13
2,598	<b>Cardiff City Council</b>	Payment on behalf of Cardiff City Council to facilitate CCRCD transaction	3,164

2,510	<b>Gwent Police Collaborative Arrangement</b>	The Council acts as an agent on behalf of Gwent Police where their property maintenance service is managed by Monmouthshire County Council. Payments are made on behalf of Gwent Police with full reimbursement made during the year.	4,068
50,211	<b>Bus Services Support Grants</b>	Monmouthshire County Council are the regional lead on the Bus services support grant and Bus Network grant, acting as the agent on behalf of Welsh Government.	48,286
<b>63,999</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>55,923</b>

These transactions are not included the figures reported in the primary statements or as part of the other disclosure notes to these accounts.

## 11.5 Council Tax & National Non-Domestic Rates

### Council Tax

Council tax derives from charges raised according to the value of residential properties. Each dwelling has been classified into one of nine valuation bands according to its capital value at 1 April 2003 for this specific purpose. Charges are calculated by taking the amount of income required for the Authority, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and Town and Community Councils for the forthcoming year and dividing this amount by the Council Tax Base. The Council Tax Base is the total number of properties in each valuation band adjusted by a proportion to convert the number to a Band D equivalent, totalled across all bands and adjusted for discounts. The tax base was £47,778.09 for 2023/24 (£47,372.80 for 2022/23).

This average basic amount for a Band D property, £1,959.94 (£1,847.25 in 2022/23), is multiplied by the proportion specified for the particular band to give the individual amount due.

Council tax bills were based on the following multipliers for bands A to I.

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
<b>Multiplier</b>	6/9	7/9	8/9	1/1	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	21/9
<b>Chargeable Dwellings</b>	526	3,429	7,119	9,402	7,561	8,020	5,499	1,792	663
<b>Valuation (£000)</b>	up to 44	44-65	65-91	91-123	123-162	162-223	223-324	324-424	424+

The analysis of the net proceeds from council tax are as follows:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
(88,235)	Council tax collectable	(93,882)
349	Provision for non-payment of council tax	442
<b>(87,886)</b>	<b>Total Council Tax proceeds</b>	<b>(93,440)</b>

### National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

NNDR is organised on a national basis. The Welsh Government specifies an amount for the rate, 0.535p per £ in 2023/24 (0.535p per £ in 2022/23) and, subject to the effects of transitory arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying their rateable value by that amount. The NNDR income after relief and provisions of £23,406,540 (£24,212,404 for 2022/23) was based on an average rateable value of £62,020,519 (£59,551,181 for 2022/23).

The Authority acts as the Welsh Government's agent and collects rates due from ratepayers in its area and then pays the proceeds into the NNDR pool administered by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Welsh Government redistributes the sums payable to the local authorities on the basis of a fixed amount per head of population. The total amount redistributed from the National Pool to the Council in 2023/24 was £31.22m (£34.75m in 2022/23).

A net debtor of £1,399,303 at 31st March 2024 (£2,408,884 debtor as at 31st March 2023) is included in the balance sheet which represents the amount by which the cash received from Welsh Government is less than the amount collected from ratepayers.

## 11.6 Grant Income

### Capital Grants and Contributions

The Authority has credited the following capital grants & contributions to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2023/24:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
3,593	WG General Capital Grant	2,495
1,086	Section 106 Developer Contributions	225
25,862	WG Grants	43,038
0	Other Contributions	0
<b>30,541</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>45,758</b>
	<b><i>Credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</i></b>	
(3,001)	Grants and contributions applied towards Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	(5,253)
(27,539)	Capital grants and contributions applied and credited to Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income	(40,505)
<b>(30,541)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>(45,758)</b>

### Capital Grants and Contributions Received in Advance

The Authority has also received a number of capital grants and contributions that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the monies or property to be returned to the provider. The balances at the year-end are as follows:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
	<b><i>Developer Contributions held in Advance:</i></b>	
4,612	S106 Developer contributions	5,388
<b>4,612</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,388</b>

### Revenue Grants and Contributions

The Authority credited the following revenue grants and contributions to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

2022/23 £000	Revenue Grants credited to services	2023/24 £000
	<b><i>Central Government:</i></b>	
15,798	Housing Benefit Subsidy	15,819
	<b><i>Welsh Government:</i></b>	
9,504	Education - General Grants - EIG/PDG/LAEG	10,068
4,101	Education - Post-16 Funding	4,199
2,812	Housing Support Grant (Supporting People)	2,814
1,782	Concessionary Fares, Transport Subsidy	2,265
6,821	Ukrainian Support Fund	1,957
1,445	Education - Children & Communities	1,745
951	Universal Free School Meals	1,745
0	Animal Licensing Wales	1,046
0	ENRAW – Gwent Green Grid Partnership	948
731	Families First	692
754	Homelessness - No one left out grant	647
527	Radical reform	499

484	Waste Management	483
569	Eliminate Agenda	478
783	INFUSE - Innovating Public Services	415
397	Floods and SUDS	364
120	WG 20mph Scheme (Monmouthshire)	359
300	WLGA - EV Charging Infrastructure Grant	0
757	Educational support for Ukrainians	0
131	Rural Development Plan	0
480	Welsh Government Covid-19 Funding	0
18	Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship fund - Income loss Support	0
2,622	Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship fund - Expenditure Support**	0
5,950	Other WG grants	4,876
	<b>Home Office:</b>	
1,646	Community Renewal Fund (Shared Prosperity Fund)	2,222
367	Support Afghan / Syrian / Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers	533
85	Police and Crime Commissioner	170
2,204	<b>Other Grants &amp; Contributions</b>	2,951
<b>62,140</b>	<b>Total Revenue Grants credited to services</b>	<b>57,292</b>
	<b>Non-Specific Grant Income</b>	
34,753	Non-Domestic Rates	31,224
77,524	Revenue Support Grant	91,451
<b>112,278</b>	<b>Total Non-Specific Grant Income</b>	<b>122,675</b>

\*\*Excludes grant income received as part of the hardship funding but paid to MCC acting as the agent

## 12 NON-CURRENT ASSET & CAPITAL FINANCING NOTES

### 12.1 Property, Plant and Equipment

The following tables summarise the movements in the Authority's property, plant and equipment portfolio by asset type for the years ending 31st March 2024 and 31st March 2023.

Movements in 2023/24:							
	Other Land and Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment £000	Community Assets £000	Surplus Assets £000	Assets Under Construction £000	Total Property, Plant and Equipment £000	PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant and Equipment* £000
<b>Cost or Valuation:</b>							
At 1st April 2023	289,776	25,218	4,528	10	18,702	338,234	1,485
Additions	6,311	1,930	306		32,111	40,659	
Revaluation movements taken to Revaluation Reserve	-940					-940	44
Revaluation movements taken to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	(2,630)					(2,630)	
Impairment movements taken to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	(722)	(105)	(280)		(375)	(1,481)	
Impairment movements taken to RRA	(553)		(8)			(560)	
Reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	(3,531)	(1,057)				(4,588)	
Disposals						0	
Other reclassifications	9,930				(12,184)	(2,254)	
Movement in CCRCDC Assets						0	
<b>At 31st March 2024</b>	<b>297,642</b>	<b>25,987</b>	<b>4,547</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38,254</b>	<b>366,440</b>	<b>1,529</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation:</b>							
At 1st April 2023	(2,634)	(13,586)				(16,220)	0
Depreciation charge	(12,626)	(2,194)				(14,819)	
Depreciation written out on revaluation to Revaluation Reserve	9,518					9,518	(45)
Depreciation written out on revaluation to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	2,367					2,367	45
Depreciation written out on impairment to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services						0	
Reclassified to/(from) Held for Sale		900				900	
Disposals						0	
Other reclassifications						0	
Movement in CCRCDC Assets						0	
<b>At 31st March 2024</b>	<b>(3,375)</b>	<b>(14,879)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(18,254)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Book Value:</b>	<b>294,266</b>	<b>11,108</b>	<b>4,547</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38,254</b>	<b>348,185</b>	<b>1,528</b>

<b>Movements in 2022/23</b>							
	<b>Other Land and Buildings £000</b>	<b>Vehicles, Plant, Furniture &amp; Equipment £000</b>	<b>Community Assets £000</b>	<b>Surplus Assets £000</b>	<b>Assets Under Construction £000</b>	<b>Total Property, Plant and Equipment £000</b>	<b>PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant and Equipment* £000</b>
<b>Cost or Valuation:</b>							
At 1st April 2022	243,729	23,034	4,528	10	4,228	275,529	1,245
Additions	9,071	3,113	48		17,135	29,367	
Revaluation movements taken to Revaluation Reserve	24,958					24,958	240
Revaluation movements taken to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	10,720					10,720	
Impairment movements taken to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	(1,401)	(507)	(48)			(1,956)	
Reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale		(514)				(514)	
Disposals						0	
Other reclassifications	2,699				(2,699)	0	
Movement in CCRCD Assets		92			38	130	
<b>At 31st March 2023</b>	<b>289,776</b>	<b>25,218</b>	<b>4,528</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18,702</b>	<b>338,234</b>	<b>1,485</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation:</b>							
At 1st April 2022	(1,089)	(11,937)				(13,026)	0
Depreciation charge	(9,630)	(2,124)				(11,754)	(42)
Depreciation written out on revaluation to Revaluation Reserve	5,108					5,108	42
Depreciation written out on revaluation to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	2,977					2,977	
Depreciation written out on impairment to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services						0	
Reclassified to/(from) Held for Sale		514				514	
Disposals						0	
Other reclassifications						0	
Movement in CCRCD Assets		(39)				(39)	
<b>At 31st March 2023</b>	<b>(2,634)</b>	<b>(13,586)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(16,220)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net Book Value:</b>	<b>287,142</b>	<b>11,633</b>	<b>4,528</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18,702</b>	<b>322,014</b>	<b>1,485</b>

## 12.1b Infrastructure Disclosure

In accordance with the temporary relief offered by the Statutory Instrument as an amendment to the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 (Regulation 24L) this note does not include disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets because historical reporting practices and resultant information deficits mean that this would not faithfully represent the asset position to the users of the financial statements.

The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

The authority has determined in accordance with Regulation [24L Wales] of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England/Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 that the carrying amounts to be derecognised for infrastructure assets when there is replacement expenditure is nil.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
77,363	Net Book Value At 1 April	81,758
8,917	Additions	12,782
0	Derecognition	0
(2,580)	Depreciation	(2,836)
(1,943)	Impairment	(1,676)
0	Other Movements in Costs	0
81,758	Net Book Value At 31 March	90,028

## 12.2 Revaluations of Property, Plant & Equipment

The Authority carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued at least every five years. All valuations were carried out by the Authority's Estates Section overseen by a qualified member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Valuations of land and buildings were carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of RICS.

The following statement summarises the progress of the Authority's rolling programme for the revaluation of fixed assets:

- The 2023/24 revaluations were carried out or approved by qualified valuers within the Authority's Estates section or external qualified valuers. The basis for valuation is set out in the accounting policies within section 17 of the notes to the accounts.
- All assets requiring valuations have been revalued in the 5 year period ending 31st March 2024. The valuations carried out during 2023/24 include Car Parks, Community Centres, Corporate Facilities, Museums and VC Schools.
- In addition to the rolling programme of revaluations any DRC assets not individually revalued were uplifted in line with movements in the BICS All In Tender Price Index. This indexation was undertaken due to the high levels of inflation seen in the year which increased the risk of potential misstatement in carrying value of assets.

Other Land and Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment £000	Community Assets £000	Surplus Assets £000	Assets Under Construction £000	Total Property, Plant and Equipment £000
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Carried at historical cost	0	10,834	4,547	10	38,167	53,558
<b>Valued at current value as at:</b>						
31st March 2024	26,605	-	-	-	-	26,605
31st March 2023	167,817	-	-	-	-	167,817
31st March 2022	84,722	-	-	-	-	84,722
31st March 2021	14,063	-	-	-	-	14,063
31st March 2020	1,059	-	-	-	-	1,059
CCRCD Assets (Method unknown)	-	274	-	-	88	362
<b>Total Cost or Valuation</b>	<b>294,266</b>	<b>11,108</b>	<b>4,547</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>38,254</b>	<b>348,185</b>

### 12.3 Schools Non-Current Assets

The Authority currently owns and runs three secondary, one middle and twenty three primary schools. In addition to the twenty three primary schools, there are two voluntary controlled schools and four voluntary aided schools.

The Authority runs the voluntary controlled schools on behalf of 3rd party organisations such as charities and religious organisations who own the underlying assets. The Authority does not record these school assets on its balance sheet other than Raglan Primary (£5,190,000 as at 31st March 2024) as the transfer of legal ownership to the third party is yet to be concluded.

With regards to voluntary aided schools within Monmouthshire, and similar to voluntary controlled schools, the assets are owned by 3rd party organisations and are not recorded on the Authority's balance sheet other than Osbaston Primary (£2,383,800 as at 31st March 2024) as the transfer of legal ownership to the third party is yet to be concluded.

The net book value of school non-current assets as at 31st March 2024, shown in the Authority's balance sheet, is £206,789,094 (£205,950,442 as at 31st March 2023).

### 12.4 Private Finance Initiatives

#### Monmouth Health & Social Care Facility (Monnow Vale)

The Authority has entered into a pooled budget arrangement with the Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board. Under the arrangements funds are pooled under Section 33 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006 to provide health and social care in the form of inpatient, outpatient, clinic and day care facilities to individuals who have medical, social, community or rehabilitation needs. This agreement came into effect from the 1st June 2006.

The Facility is a unique project that replaced a number of out dated or separate facilities scattered throughout the County with a new building that has been financed by a private finance partner over a period of 30 years.

The Authority accounts for its 28% share of the PFI assets, comprising buildings and equipment, with a corresponding liability amounting to its long term obligation for financing these assets.

The life of the building had originally been established for valuation purposes as being 40 years and the equipment as being 15 years. As the life of the building is 10 years beyond that of the PFI agreement, it is anticipated that the facility will be used by the parties beyond the 30 year PFI agreement. At the end of the agreement, the buildings revert to the Health Board at nil consideration. There have been no changes in the arrangements during the year.

The Authority's share in the assets used to provide services at the facility are recognised on the Authority's Balance Sheet. Movements in their value over the year are detailed in the analysis of the movement on the Property, Plant and Equipment balance in Note 12.1, their total net book value at 31st March 2024 being £1,529,128 (£1,485,227 at 31st March 2023).

## 12.5 Investment Properties

Investment Properties are those that are used solely to earn income and/or for capital appreciation. Investment Properties are not used in any way to deliver a service and are not held for sale. The Authority's current portfolio of investment properties consists of long held assets such as County Farms and District Shops and also a Solar Farm, Newport Leisure Park and Castlegate Business Park constructed/acquired more recently. The resultant impact on the Authority's net income is shown below.

The following items of income and expenditure have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
(4,942)	Rental income from investment property	(5,912)
3,193	Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	3,618
(1,749)	<b>Net (gain)/loss</b>	<b>(2,294)</b>

The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year.

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
68,620	Balance at start of the year	66,862
271	Additions	650
(4,140)	Disposals	0
(18)	Net gains/(losses) from fair value adjustments recognised in Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	10,214
0	Transfers (to)/from Property, Plant and Equipment	2,255
2,128	Movement in CCRCD balances	0
<b>66,862</b>	<b>Balance at end of the year</b>	<b>79,981</b>

No capital receipts were credited to the Capital receipts reserve during 2023/24 in relation to investment properties (£7,343,556 in 2022/23).

### Fair Value Hierarchy

Details of the Authority's investment properties and information about the fair value hierarchy:

2022/23				Type of Property	2023/24			
Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets	Other Observable inputs	Significant Unobservable inputs	Total		active markets for identical assets	Other Observable inputs	Significant Unobservable inputs	Total
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
		111	111	Freehold Reversions			107	107
	27,646		27,646	Agricultural Properties		38,329		38,329
		1,356	1,356	Retail Units			883	883
		2,183	2,183	Industrial Properties			2,677	2,677
		5,485	5,485	Solar Farm			5,611	5,611
		3,907	3,907	Share of CCRCD Asset			3,907	3,907
		26,176	26,176	Properties acquired for rental income			28,467	28,467

0	27,646	39,216	66,862	0	38,329	41,652	79,981
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There have been no transfers between levels during the year. The authorities share in CCRCD assets have recognised at Level 3.

**Level 2 Other Observable inputs:** The fair value for the Agricultural Portfolio (at market rents) has been based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sales prices and other relevant information for similar assets locally. Market conditions are such that similar properties are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy.

**Level 3 Significant Unobservable Inputs:** The Freehold Reversions, Retail Properties, Industrial Properties & Solar Farm located in the local authority area & properties acquired for rental income are measured using the income approach, by means of a term and reversion method. The approach has been developed using the authority's own data requiring it to factor in assumptions such as the duration, rent growth, occupancy levels, bad debt levels, maintenance costs, etc. These property types are therefore categorised as Level 3 in the fair value hierarchy as the measurement technique uses significant unobservable inputs to determine the fair value measurements (and there is no reasonably available information that indicates that market participants would use different assumptions).

**Highest and Best Use:** In estimating the fair value of the authority's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use.

**Valuation Techniques:** There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for investment properties.

### Level 3 Investment Properties

A summary of the movement in the fair value of level 3 investment properties over the year:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
35,684	Balance at start of the year	39,216
0	Transfers (to)/from Level 3	2,255
0	Additions	348
0	Disposals	0
3,532	Net gains/(losses) from fair value adjustments included in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(167)
<b>39,216</b>	<b>Balance at end of the year</b>	<b>41,652</b>

### Fair Value Measurement

The valuers arrive at a Fair Value for level 3 Investment Properties by applying a yield to the income stream. The yield reflects the risk and is derived from factors such as the use made of the property, the quality of the tenant, the length and security of the income and also in the case of retail, the location. These impact on rent growth, occupancy levels, bad debt levels and maintenance costs. The yield is arrived at from the valuers knowledge of the market, from contacts and published information alongside knowledge of the individual asset.

Type of Property	Valuation Technique used to measure Fair Value	Unobservable Inputs	Range	Sensitivity
Freehold Reversions	Income approach, by means of a term and reversion method	Yield	4%	The Fair Value of the Property will increase as the yield reduces.
Retail Units		Yield	7% - 10%	
Industrial Properties		Yield	12%	
Solar Farm		Yield	6%	
Investment Assets		Yield	6%	

Investment Assets		Yield	7%	
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## 12.6 Assets Held for Sale

Assets held for sale comprise those assets that are available for immediate sale and where the sale is highly probable and will be actively marketed at its market value. The in-year movement and balance of assets held for sale as at 31st March 2024 are shown below:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
1,000	Balance outstanding at start of year	1,000
0	Additions	0
0	Assets newly classified as held for sale: From Plant, Property & Equipment	3,687
0	Assets declassified as held for sale: To Plant, Property & Equipment	0
0	Revaluation gains	250
0	Revaluation losses charged to SDPS	(522)
0	Revaluation losses charged to RRA	(799)
0	Impairment losses	0
0	Assets sold	(2,366)
1,000	<b>Balance outstanding at year-end</b>	<b>1,250</b>

## 12.7 Heritage Assets

The Code requires that heritage assets are measured at valuation in the financial statements, together with comparative year information. The Code however permits some relaxations in the valuation requirements of heritage assets, meaning that the authority could potentially recognise more of the museums collections in the Balance Sheet. However, whereas the Authority recognises some heritage collections in financial statements, it is of the view that obtaining valuations for the vast majority of these collections would involve a disproportionate cost of obtaining the information in comparison to the benefits to the users of the Authority's financial statements. Whilst this exemption is permitted by the Code, the position will be subject to ongoing review.

The Authority would not typically consider disposing of any heritage assets even though previously offers have been received.

The following table summarises the movement in the carrying value of Heritage assets:

	Property Heritage Assets £000	Museum Exhibits £000	Civic Regalia, Artwork & Collect'n £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or Valuation:</b>				
1st April 2022	228	4,488	156	4,871
Additions	274	0	0	274
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the SDPS	0	0	0	0
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) taken to Revaluation Reserve	0	4,413	0	4,413
Impairment (losses)/reversals recognised in the SDPS	(179)	0	0	(179)
Reclassified from property, plant and equipment	0	0	0	0
<b>31st March 2023</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>8,901</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>9,378</b>
<b>Cost or Valuation:</b>				
Additions	424	0	0	424
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the SDPS	0	0	0	0

Revaluation increases/ (decreases) taken to Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0
Impairment (losses)/reversals recognised in the SDPS	(121)	0	0	(121)
Reclassified from property, plant and equipment	0	0	0	0
<b>31st March 2024</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>8,901</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>9,682</b>

### Property Heritage Assets

The Authority owns six property assets which meet the criteria for inclusion as heritage assets. These comprise the following assets:

- Caldicot Castle
- Angidy Ironworks, Tintern
- The Slaughterhouse - Arches, Monmouth
- Shire Hall
- Clydach Ironworks, Clydach
- War Memorial, Frogmore St, Abergavenny
- Tintern Station, Tintern

These assets were last valued on an existing use value (EUV) basis and were carried out internally by the Authority's Estates Section under the supervision of the Head Of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services (MRICS).

Further to this Abergavenny Museum and Castle is leased by the Authority.

### Museum Exhibits

Monmouthshire operates four museums, namely Monmouth, (The Nelson Museum), Abergavenny, Caldicot (Castle) and Chepstow. Each individual museum maintains an inventory of exhibits and the Authority last commissioned a valuation of material items in 2022.

The most significant museum exhibit is the Nelson collection which is included on the balance sheet at a valuation of £8.7m. This collection was revalued externally during 2022/23 and the estimated value increased by £4.4m since the previous valuation carried out in August 2012. The valuation was limited to selected items with market prices in excess of £1,000.

### Civic Regalia, Artwork & Collections

Five other assets are classified as Heritage assets under this classification where cost information was readily available. These comprise the following assets:

- Henry Tapestry
- Chairman's Chain of Office
- Vice Chairman's Chain & Insignia
- Lady Chairman's Chain & Insignia
- Vice Lady Chairman's Chain & Insignia

These assets are currently valued at their most recent insurance valuation.

## 12.8 Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under finance leases and PFI contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Authority, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Authority that has yet to be financed. The CFR is analysed in the second part of this note.

31st March 2023 £000	31st March 2024 £000
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189,370	Opening Capital Financing Requirement	193,336
	<b>Capital investment:</b>	
	<b>Enhancing value:</b>	
32,020	Property, plant and equipment	48,884
0	Investment properties	348
2,364	Vehicles	1,188
94	Heritage assets	304
	<b>Not enhancing value:</b>	
3,899	Property, plant and equipment	3,305
271	Investment properties	302
0	Intangible assets	157
0	Vehicles	63
179	Heritage assets	121
6,841	Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	10,181
	<b>Sources of finance:</b>	
(4,128)	Capital receipts	(6,636)
(3,593)	General Capital Grant	(2,495)
(25,862)	Capital Grants and Contributions	(43,038)
(1,086)	S106 Contributions	(225)
(393)	Direct revenue contributions	(363)
	<b>Other:</b>	
(6,642)	Minimum revenue provision	(5,985)
<b>193,336</b>	<b>Closing Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>199,446</b>
	<b>Explanation of movements in year:</b>	
2,431	Increase in underlying need to borrowing - supported by Government financial assistance	2,430
8,177	Increase in underlying need to borrowing - unsupported by Government financial assistance	9,665
(6,642)	Less: Minimum revenue provision	(5,985)
<b>3,966</b>	<b>Increase / (decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>6,110</b>

## 12.9 Capital Commitments

At 31st March 2024, the Authority had entered into 3 major contracts (those individually £200,000 and more) for the construction of Property, Plant and Equipment in 2023/24 and later years, budgeted to cost a total of £36,109,672 (£18,857,436 at 31st March 2023). The major commitments are as follows and are not included in the financial statements within this document.

	£000
Trellech Primary Nursery Childcare Scheme	619
Welsh Medium School and Nursery	500
King Henry VIII Future Schools	34,990
	<b>36,109</b>

## 12.10 Minimum Revenue Provision

2022/23		2023/24
£6,642,105	Minimum Revenue Provision Charged	£5,984,016

The Council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation, impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual minimum revenue provision (MRP) from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement.

The charge is equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis according to the policy determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance. An annual MRP Statement is submitted to Council for approval in advance of each financial year and any variance to this policy must be approved by Council.

The Authority also makes additional voluntary revenue contributions in respect of finance leased assets.

During the financial year the Authority varied its calculation method for MRP on its supported borrowing from equal instalments over a 50 year period, to a calculation based upon an annuity basis over the expected useful life of the asset. This was approved by Council on the 29th February 2024.

This has reduced the MRP chargeable now and over the medium term, however, MRP charges will increase over time to reflect a consistent charge over life of the assets when taking into account the time value of money.

## 12.11 Leases - Authority as Lessor

### Operating Leases

The Authority has entered into operating lease arrangements to lease property assets to various individuals and organisations. These primarily consist of Industrial units, County Farms, Land parcels and Recreation halls.

The minimum lease payments receivable includes rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews. During the financial year £2,507,922 of minimum lease payments were receivable by the Authority (£2,932,638 in 2022/23).

The future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
2,280	Not later than one year	2,565
7,160	Later than one year and not later than five years	9,679
8,719	Later than five years	12,645
<b>18,159</b>		<b>24,890</b>

### Finance Leases

In 2016/17, the Authority entered into a Finance lease arrangement for land at the Old Cattle market in Abergavenny.

The gross carrying amount and present value of the minimum lease payments receivable under this finance lease is detailed below.

2022/23			2023/24	
Present Value of Minimum Lease Payments to the Authority £000	Gross Amount outstanding from Lessee		Present Value of Minimum Lease Payments to the Authority £000	Gross Amount outstanding from Lessee
156	160	Not later than one year	153	160
592	640	Later than one year and not later than five years	579	640
1,806	2,400	Later than five years	1,563	2,080
<b>2,554</b>	<b>3,200</b>		<b>2,295</b>	<b>2,880</b>

The present value of the minimum lease payments has reduced during 2023/24 by the £160,000 receivable in year, offset by finance lease interest receivable.

## 12.12 Leases - Authority as Lessee

### Operating Leases

The Authority has acquired property, vehicles, plant and equipment for fixed periods of time by entering into operating lease agreements.

The expenditure charged to the services within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was £248,831 (£296,831 in 2022/23).

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
239	Not later than one year	213
460	Later than one year and not later than five years	417
100	Later than five years	40
<b>799</b>		<b>670</b>



## 13 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS, CURRENT ASSETS & LIABILITIES NOTES

### 13.1 Categories of Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Non-exchange transactions, such as those relating to taxes, benefits and government grants, do not give rise to financial instruments.

The Council adopted the IFRS 9 Financial Instruments accounting standard with effect from 1st April 2018. The main changes include the reclassification and remeasurement of financial assets and the earlier recognition of the impairment of financial assets.

Under the new Accounting Standard IFRS 9, financial instruments may be held at amortised cost or at fair value either through other Comprehensive income or Profit & Loss.

Financial assets are held as amortised cost where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows. This is the majority of our treasury investments such as term deposits, certificate of deposits, call accounts, trade debtors for goods and services provided contractually and also lease receivables. This excludes council tax debtors and grants receivable as they are non-exchange transactions.

Financial assets held at amortised cost are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council. For most assets, this is 12 month expected credit losses until the risk increases significantly, then it is lifetime expected losses. For trade debtors expected lifetime losses are always used. Due to the high credit rating of counterparties used for treasury investments 12 month expected credit losses are minimal.

Financial assets are held at fair value through other comprehensive income where cashflows are solely payments of principal and interest and it is the Council's business model to collect these cashflows and sell the instruments before maturity. The authority does not hold any such investments. The standard also allows the authority to elect to account for equity investments through other comprehensive income if they are being held for strategic investment purposes, see table below.

All other financial assets are held at fair value through Profit & Loss.

The following categories of financial assets are carried in the Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024:

Long-Term 31st March 2023 Restated £000	Short-Term 31st March 2023 Restated £000		Note	Long-Term 31st March 2024 £000	Short-Term 31st March 2024 £000
<b>Financial Assets</b>					
<b>Investments at amortised Cost:</b>					
2,130	13,184	Principal invested	13.4	1,338	3,184
0	0	Accrued Interest		0	0
<b>Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income:</b>					
0	3,581	Equity Investments elected FVOCI		0	3,653
<b>Investments at fair value through profit &amp; loss:</b>					
(4)	41	Unquoted equity investments	13.4	20	41
<b>2,126</b>	<b>16,806</b>	<b>Total Investments</b>		<b>1,358</b>	<b>6,878</b>
<b>Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents at amortised cost:</b>					
	24,723	Principal	15.3	0	8,346
	0	Accrued Interest		0	0
<b>0</b>	<b>24,723</b>	<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>8,346</b>
<b>At amortised cost:</b>					

0	12,462	Trade Receivables		0	8,306
0	(689)	Loss allowance		0	(1,026)
2,347	105	Lease Receivables		2,240	107
199	(5)	Loans made for service purposes		193	(4)
<b>2,546</b>	<b>11,872</b>	<b>Included in Debtors</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>2,432</b>	<b>7,384</b>
<b>4,672</b>	<b>53,401</b>	<b>Sub-Total Financial Assets</b>		<b>3,790</b>	<b>22,607</b>
0	1,529	Current assets which are not Financial Instruments		0	1,865
385	46,382	Debtors which are not Financial Instruments	13.5	385	35,379
<b>5,057</b>	<b>101,312</b>	<b>Total Financial Assets</b>		<b>4,176</b>	<b>59,851</b>

Long-Term 31st March 2023 Restated £000	Short-Term 31st March 2023 Restated £000		Note	Long-Term 31st March 2024 £000	Short-Term 31st March 2024 £000
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All of the Council's financial liabilities are held at amortised cost including short and long term loans, bank overdraft, lease payables, PFI contracts and trade payables for goods and services.

The following categories of financial liabilities are carried in the Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024:

Financial Liabilities					
<b>Loans at amortised Cost:</b>					
(133,046)	(65,654)	Principal sum borrowed		(124,188)	(50,019)
0	(1,502)	Accrued Interest		0	(1,658)
(26)	(1)	EIR adjustments		(25)	(1)
<b>(133,072)</b>	<b>(67,157)</b>	<b>Total Borrowings</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>(124,212)</b>	<b>(51,678)</b>
<b>Loans at amortised Cost:</b>					
0	(802)	Cash & cash equivalents	15.3	0	(1,723)
<b>0</b>	<b>(802)</b>	<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>(1,723)</b>
<b>Liabilities at amortised Cost:</b>					
(609)		PFI and finance lease liabilities		(574)	
(1,629)		Other Long Term Liabilities		(1,699)	
<b>(2,238)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total Other Long Term Liabilities</b>		<b>(2,273)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Liabilities at amortised Cost:</b>					
	(4,854)	Trade Payables			(2,142)
<b>0</b>	<b>(4,854)</b>	<b>Included in Short Term Creditors</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,142)</b>
<b>(135,310)</b>	<b>(72,813)</b>	<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>		<b>(126,485)</b>	<b>(55,543)</b>
	(40,767)	Short term creditors which are not Financial Instruments	13.6		(41,619)
(66,458)	(404)	Other Current & long term liabilities which are not Financial Instruments:		(16,129)	(466)
<b>(201,768)</b>	<b>(113,984)</b>	<b>Total Balance Sheet Liabilities</b>		<b>(142,613)</b>	<b>(97,628)</b>

Equity instruments elected to fair value through OCI						
31st March 2023 £000	31st March 2023 £000	31st March 2023 £000		31st March 2024 £000	31st March 2024 £000	31st March 2024 £000
Fair value	OCI	Dividends		Fair value	OCI	Dividends
1,775	(249)	101	Kames Capital diversified monthly income fund	1,870	95	115

1,372	(71)	58	Investec Asset Management Ltd diversified income fund	1,366	(6)	62
433	(85)	19	CCLA LAMIT Property Fund	416	(17)	16
<b>3,581</b>	<b>(405)</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>Total Balance Sheet Asset</b>	<b>3,653</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>194</b>

The Council has elected to account for the investments in pooled funds above which are equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income because they are long-term strategic holdings and changes in their fair value are not considered to be part of the Council's annual financial performance.

### 13.2 Financial Instruments - Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

The Income, expense, gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments are made up as follows:

31st March 2023					31st March 2024
£000					£000
	<b>Financial Liabilities measured at:</b>	<b>Fair value through P&amp;L</b>	<b>Fair value through OCI</b>	<b>Fair value through OCI - elected</b>	<b>Amortised cost</b>
16	Interest expense - finance lease /private finance initiative debtors	0	0	0	15
0	Losses on de-recognition	0	0	0	0
0	Losses from changes in fair value	0	0	0	0
0	Impairment losses	0	0	0	0
4,571	Other Interest expense	0	0	0	6,380
4,587	Subtotals	0	0	0	6,395
<b>4,587</b>	<b>Total Interest payable and similar charges</b>				<b>6,395</b>
	<b>Financial assets measured at:</b>	<b>Fair value through P&amp;L</b>	<b>Fair value through OCI</b>	<b>Fair value through OCI - elected</b>	<b>Amortised cost</b>
(57)	Interest income relating to finance lease debtors	0	0	0	(55)
0	Interest from deferred receipts	0	0	0	0
(179)	Dividend income (elected equity instruments)	0	0	(195)	0
0	Gains on derecognition	0	0	0	0
0	Gains from changes in fair value	0	0	0	0
0	Impairment loss reversals	0	0	0	0
(819)	Other Interest income	0	0	0	(1,561)
(1,056)	Subtotals	0	0	(195)	(1,617)
<b>(1,056)</b>	<b>Total Interest &amp; Investment income</b>				<b>(1,812)</b>
<b>3,532</b>	<b>Net impact on surplus/deficit on provision of services</b>				<b>4,583</b>
	<b>Impact on other comprehensive income:</b>	<b>Fair value through P&amp;L</b>	<b>Fair value through OCI</b>	<b>Fair value through OCI - elected</b>	<b>Amortised cost</b>
0	Gains on revaluation	0	0	0	0
405	Losses on revaluation	0	0	(72)	0
0	Amounts recycled to surplus/deficit on provision of services	0	0	0	0
405	Subtotals	0	0	(72)	0

405	Impact on other comprehensive income	(72)
3,937	Net (gain)/loss for the year	4,511

### 13.3 Fair Values of Financial Instruments

Financial instruments, except those classified at amortised cost, are carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value. For most assets, including pooled funds, the fair value is taken from the market price. The fair values of other instruments have been estimated by calculating the net present value of the remaining contractual cash flows at 31st March 2024, using the following methods and assumptions.

The value of financial instruments held at amortised cost have been estimated by calculating the net present value of the remaining contractual cash flows at 31st March 2024, using the following methods and assumptions:

- Loans borrowed by the Council have been valued by discounting the contractual cash flows over the whole life of the instrument at the appropriate market rate for local authority loans.
- The value of "Lender's Option Borrower's Option" (LOBO) loans have been increased by the value of the embedded options. Lenders' options to propose an increase to the interest rate on the loan have been valued according to a proprietary model for Bermudan cancellable swaps. Borrower's contingent options to accept the increased rate or repay the loan have been valued at zero, on the assumption that lenders will only exercise their options when market rates have risen above the contractual loan rate.
- The fair values of other long-term loans and investments have been discounted at the market rates for similar instruments with similar remaining terms to maturity on 31st March 2024.
- The fair values of finance lease assets and liabilities and of PFI scheme liabilities have been calculated by discounting the contractual cash flows (excluding service charge elements) at an appropriate rate.
- The fair value of short-term instruments, including trade payables and receivables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount given the low and stable interest rate environment.

Fair values are shown in the table below, split by their level in the fair value hierarchy:

- Level 1 – fair value is only derived from quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities, e.g. bond prices
- Level 2 – fair value is calculated from inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability, e.g. interest rates or yields for similar instruments
- Level 3 – fair value is determined using unobservable inputs, e.g. non-market data such as cash flow forecasts or estimated creditworthiness

#### Financial liabilities

Balance Sheet	Fair Value		Balance sheet position	Fair Value Level	Balance Sheet	Fair Value
31st March 2023	31st March 2023				31st March 2024	31st March 2024
£000	£000				£000	£000
		<b>Financial liabilities held at amortised cost:</b>				
(200,229)	(175,141)	Borrowings	Borrowing (ST & LT)	2	(175,890)	(150,536)
(609)	(460)	PFI and finance lease liabilities	Other LT Borrowing	3	(574)	(444)
<b>(200,838)</b>	<b>(175,601)</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>(176,464)</b>	<b>(150,980)</b>
		<b>Financial liabilities held at amortised costs for which fair value is not disclosed:</b>				

(802)		Cash & Cash equivalent	C & C E		(1,723)	
(4,854)		Trade payables	Short term creditors		(2,142)	
(1,629)		Net agency creditor and lease deposits	Other LT Borrowing		(1,699)	
<b>(208,123)</b>		<b>Total financial liabilities</b>			<b>(182,028)</b>	

The fair value of financial liabilities held at amortised cost is less than the carrying amount because the authority's portfolio of loans includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is lower than the current rates available for similar loans at the balance sheet date. The commitment to pay interest below current market rates reduces the amount that the authority would have to pay if the lender requested or agreed to early repayment of the loans.

#### Financial Assets

Balance Sheet 31st March 2023	Fair Value 31st March 2023			Fair Value Level	Balance Sheet 31st March 2024	Fair Value 31st March 2024
£000	£000				£000	£000
<b>Financial assets held at fair value:</b>						
3,581	3,581	Equity investments elected FV through OCI	ST Investments	2	3,653	3,653
(4)	(4)	Unquoted equity investments held at FVP&L	LT Investments	3	20	20
<b>3,577</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>3,672</b>	<b>3,672</b>
<b>Financial assets held at amortised cost:</b>						
2,452	1,954	Lease receivables	LT debtors	3	2,347	1,934
0	0	Trade receivables - deferred receipt	LT debtors			
<b>6,028</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>6,019</b>	<b>5,606</b>
<b>Financial assets held at amortised cost for which fair value is not disclosed:</b>						
24,723		Cash & Cash equivalent	C&CE		8,346	
16,806		Short term investments	ST Investments		6,878	
12,462		Trade Receivables	Short term debtors		8,306	
199		Loans made for service purposes	Long term debtors		193	
<b>60,218</b>		<b>Total financial assets</b>			<b>29,742</b>	

There is a small difference between the fair value and carrying value of long term lease receivables and long term trade receivables.

#### 13.4 Nature and Extent of Risks arising from Financial Instruments

In line with the Treasury Management Code, the Council approves a Treasury Management Strategy before the commencement of each financial year. The Strategy sets out the parameters for the management of risks associated with financial instruments. The Authority's overall risk management programme focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services. Risk management is carried out by a central treasury team in conjunction with appointed treasury advisors.

The Treasury Management Strategy includes an Investment Strategy in compliance with the Welsh Government Guidance on Local Government Investments. This Guidance emphasises that priority is to be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy and its management practices seek to achieve a suitable balance between risk and return or cost.

Whilst the majority of Investments used continue to be with institutions which are given a high credit rating by external rating agencies and which continue to show other measures of credit worthiness, the authority's investment portfolio now includes £4m in strategic pooled funds which achieve higher returns. The risk is controlled by following the advice of the Authority's treasury management advisors, by the use of experienced fund managers and diversification within the funds purchased.

The Authority's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks:

- Credit risk – the possibility that the counterparty to any of the Authority's financial assets will fail to meet its contractual obligations to pay the amounts due, causing a loss to the Council.
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that the Authority might not have cash available to make contracted payments on time
- Market risk – the possibility that an unplanned financial loss will materialise because of changes in market variables such as interest rates or equity prices.

The revised Borrowing Strategy continues to take into account the fact that it is cheaper to borrow for shorter periods than for long periods as previously was the case. It also took into account that there was a net benefit to be gained from internal borrowing, where surplus cash is utilised to fund capital expenditure, compared to borrowing externally. This approach reduces surplus cash balances but produces a net benefit as the cost of borrowing is higher than the returns from investing the additional surplus cash.

#### a) Credit Risk

##### Treasury Investments

The Council manages credit risk by ensuring that treasury investments are only placed with organisations of high credit quality as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. These include commercial entities with a minimum long-term credit rating of A-, the UK government, other local authorities, and organisations without credit ratings upon which the Council has received independent investment advice. Recognising that credit ratings are imperfect predictors of default, the Council has regard to other measures including credit default swap and equity prices when selecting commercial entities for investment.

A limit of £4m is placed on the amount of money that can be invested in unsecured investments with a single counterparty (other than the UK government) for the majority of the Authority's activities (for more details see the Treasury Strategy).

The table below summarises the credit risk exposures of the Council's treasury investment portfolio by credit rating and remaining time to maturity:

Balance Long-term 31st March 2023	Balance Short-term 31st March 2023	Counterparty Group	Investment Vehicle	Average rating	Country	Balance Long-term	Balance Short-term
£'000	£'000					31st March 2024	31st March 2024
	13,000	UK Government	Term Deposit with DMADF	AA+	United Kingdom	0	3,000
		Local Authority	Term Deposit	AA+	United Kingdom	0	0
	21,564	Bank	Term Deposit	A+	United Kingdom	0	5,187
		<b>Credit risk Not applicable:</b>					
	3,581	Pooled funds			United Kingdom	0	3,653

788		Unquoted Equity			United Kingdom	19	0
1,338	3,385	CCRC				1,338	3,385
<b>2,126</b>	<b>41,529</b>	<b>Total Investments</b>				<b>1,358</b>	<b>15,224</b>

\* Credit risk is not applicable to shareholdings and pooled funds where the Council has no contractual right to receive any sum of money.

Loss allowances on treasury investments have been calculated by reference to historic default data published by credit rating agencies, multiplied by 365% to adjust for current and forecast economic conditions. A two-year delay in cash flows is assumed to arise in the event of default. Investments are determined to have suffered a significant increase in credit risk where they have been downgraded by three or more credit rating notches or equivalent since initial recognition, unless they retain an investment grade credit rating. They are determined to be credit-impaired when awarded a "D" credit rating or equivalent. At 31st March 2024, £nil of loss allowances related to treasury investments.

#### Trade & Lease receivables and Contract assets

Credit risk also arises from the Authority's customers and other contractual debtors. Customers for goods and services are assessed taking into account their financial position, past experience and other factors such as the current economic climate. Risk of default and uncollectability is assessed based on the nature of the underlying debt and historic collection rates. Receivables as at the year-end are illustrated in note 13.5 to the accounts, together with any associated impairment age.

Trade receivables are normally written off to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services when over due, but steps are still taken to collect sums owing until all economic avenues have been explored. The amount provided for but still subject to collection processes and its age profile is provided in note 13.5.

The Council has one finance lease receivable as a result of a lease disposal of a piece of land, which is held on the balance sheet at amortised cost. The Council's credit risk on lease receivables is mitigated by its legal ownership of the asset leased, which can be repossessed if the debtor defaults on the lease contract, so no loss allowance has been applied. At the 31st March 2024 the carrying value was £2,880,000. The fair value was £1,934,000 reflecting the difference in interest rates used for the two estimates.

#### Loans, Financial Guarantees and Loan Commitments

The Council has not made any material Loans, Financial Guarantees and Loan Commitments.

#### b) Liquidity Risk

The Authority has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements occur, the authority has ready access to borrowing at favourable rates from the Public Works Loans Board and other local authorities. There is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments. It is however exposed to the risk that it will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourably high interest rates. This risk is managed by maintaining a spread of fixed rate loans and ensuring net short term borrowing is no more than 50% of the Council's net total borrowing.

The maturity analysis of financial instruments is as follows:

31st March 2023				31st March 2024		
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
Borrowing	Investment	Net		Borrowing	Investment	Net
<b>The Loans Mature as follows:-</b>						
4	(5,140)	(4,385)	No defined maturity	4	(5,235)	(5,231)
67,156	(13,000)	54,156	Less than one year	51,678	(3,000)	48,678
7,012	0	7,012	Between one and two years	5,086	0	5,086
12,867	0	12,867	Between two and five years	16,594	0	16,594
27,237	(792)	26,445	Between five and ten years	27,714	0	27,714
23,653	0	23,653	Between ten and twenty years	16,634	0	16,634
62,298	0	62,298	More than twenty years	58,179	0	58,179
<b>200,228</b>	<b>(18,932)</b>	<b>182,047</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>175,890</b>	<b>(8,235)</b>	<b>167,655</b>

The Counterparty analysis of Borrowing is shown below:

31st March 2023		31st March 2024
£000		£000
120,792	Public Works Loan Board	126,236
13,811	Market Loans & Bank loans	3,081
5,251	Welsh Government	4,739
57,370	Local Government bodies	38,830
3,000	Special Purpose Vehicle	3,000
4	Other - CCRC	4
<b>200,228</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>175,890</b>

The financial liabilities due to Welsh Government at the 31st March 2024 are the outstanding balances from interest free loans provided to fund energy saving Street Lighting & Refit capital schemes and a loan which funded the Oak Grove solar farm construction. Accounting requirements require financial liabilities in the form of loans to be carried at amortised cost. However, some of these interest free loans have not been carried at amortised cost on the grounds that the figures quoted are not materially different.

Market loans are considered long term loans based on the remaining time to maturity, but it should be noted that they are currently within their call period. If a lender should exercise a call option on one of these loans, Monmouthshire County Council has the right to repay the loan immediately.

### c) Market Risk

#### i) Interest rate risk

The Authority is exposed to significant risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Authority. For instance, a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing liabilities will fall
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall

Investments measured at amortised cost and loans borrowed are not carried at fair value, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the Council Fund Balance. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments measured at fair value will be reflected in Other Comprehensive Income or the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services as appropriate.

The Authority has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The 2023/24 treasury strategy includes a limit on the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. This limit of 50% applies to the percentage of net variable rate debt to total net debt, where net debt is debt net of investments.

The treasury management team has an active strategy for assessing interest rate exposure that feeds into the setting of the annual budget. In-year analysis allows any adverse changes to be accommodated. The analysis will also advise whether new borrowing taken out is fixed or variable.



The interest payable and interest receivable during 2023/24, on borrowings and investments held at the 31st March 2024, with all other variables held constant, would increase / (decrease), if interest rates were 1% higher. The most significant impact would relate to variable rate and short term loans & investments, with long term instruments not being affected:

31st March 2023 £000	Effect of a 1% increase in interest rates	31st March 2024 £000
437	Increase in interest payable on borrowings	51
(128)	Increase in interest receivable on investments	29
0	Decrease in fair value of investments held at FVP&L	0
<b>310</b>	<b>Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services</b>	<b>80</b>
(11,043)	Decrease in fair value of fixed rate borrowing *	(9,587)

\* No impact on Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

The impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as above but with the movements being reversed.

## ii) Price risk

The market prices of the bond component in the Council's multi asset pooled funds are governed by prevailing interest rates and the price risk associated with these instruments is managed alongside interest rate risk. The property element of the Council's multi asset pooled funds is subject to the risk of falling commercial property prices. The equity element of the Council's multi asset pooled funds is subject to the risk of falling share prices. These risks were limited by the Council's maximum exposure to strategic pooled funds of £6m. A 5% fall in the value of the property component or equity component held within these funds could result in a charge to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. The due diligence carried out before these investments purchased would indicate that any such loss is expected to be either temporary or compensated for by the dividend income. One advantage of a multi asset pooled funds is that property, equity and bond prices are not fully correlated with each other reducing the risk of losses.

## iii) Foreign exchange risk

The Authority has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and thus has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

## 13.5 Debtors

The nature and value of payments due to the Council for the year but not received as at 31st March 2024, repayable in the short term (within 12 months of the balance sheet date) and long term (after 12 months of the balance sheet date), is summarised below:

31st March 2023 Restated					31st March 2024			
Long Term	Short Term	Impairment	Net		Long Term	Short Term	Impairment	Net
£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
				<b>Central Government Bodies:</b>				
	26,683		26,683	Welsh Government		13,291		13,291
	2,330		2,330	HM Customs & Excise		2,964		2,964
	3,099		3,099	NNDR Debtor		1,945		1,945
	0		0	Council Tax and Housing Benefit Subsidy				0
			0	Other				0
				<b>Other entities and individuals:</b>				
	7,111	(7)	7,104	Other Local Authorities		4,462	(3)	4,459
			0	Deferred Capital receipts				0
2,347			2,347	Finance Lease	2,240			2,240

	4,713	(71)	4,642	Revenue debtors		5,060	(85)	4,975
	5,213	(2,494)	2,718	Council tax arrears		6,210	(2,935)	3,275
	3,064	(174)	2,890	Corporate sundry debtors		1,584	(178)	1,406
	1,288	(748)	540	Housing benefit overpayments		1,195	(745)	450
	5,958	0	5,958	NHS Bodies		2,567	0	2,567
	1,437	(205)	1,232	Social Services debtors		2,175	(467)	1,708
	489	(304)	185	Rent arrears		558	(378)	180
	229		229	Capital debtors		4,901		4,901
191			191	Housing Advances	184			184
393	642		1,035	Other	393	642		1,035
<b>2,931</b>	<b>62,255</b>	<b>(4,001)</b>	<b>61,185</b>	<b>Total Debtors</b>	<b>2,818</b>	<b>47,554</b>	<b>(4,791)</b>	<b>45,580</b>

The aged analysis of short term debtors outstanding as at 31st March 2024 is as follows:

	Not Overdue £000	Up to 3 Months £000	3 Months to 12 Months £000	Over 12 Months £000	Over 24 Months £000	Total £000
<b>Central Government Bodies:</b>						
Welsh Government	13,150	141	0	0	0	<b>13,291</b>
HM Customs & Excise	2,964	0	0	0	0	<b>2,964</b>
NNDR Debtor	1,359	0	105	112	369	<b>1,945</b>
Council Tax and Housing Benefit Subsidy	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Other	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Other entities and individuals:</b>						
Other Local Authorities	2,538	1,800	108	16	0	<b>4,462</b>
Deferred Capital receipts	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Finance Leases	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Revenue debtors	4,910	0	43	39	68	<b>5,060</b>
Council tax arrears	0	0	1,291	1,204	3,715	<b>6,210</b>
Corporate sundry debtors	161	1,089	184	40	110	<b>1,584</b>
Housing benefit overpayments	0	0	265	138	792	<b>1,195</b>
NHS Bodies	1,447	1,137	6	-23	0	<b>2,567</b>
Social Services sundry debtors	332	318	857	404	264	<b>2,175</b>
Rent arrears	129	26	68	76	259	<b>558</b>
Capital debtors	4,901	0	0	0	0	<b>4,901</b>
Housing Advances	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Other	641	0	0	0	0	<b>641</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,532</b>	<b>4,511</b>	<b>2,927</b>	<b>2,006</b>	<b>5,577</b>	<b>47,553</b>

The associated impairment for potential default and uncollectability for debtors outstanding as at 31st March 2024 is as follows:

	Not Overdue £000	Up to 3 Months £000	3 to 12 Months £000	Over 12 Months £000	Over 24 Months £000	Total £000
Other Local Authorities	0	0	3	0	0	<b>3</b>
Revenue debtors	0	0	21	20	44	<b>85</b>
Council Tax Arrears	0	0	610	569	1,756	<b>2,935</b>

Corporate sundry debtors	0	8	54	39	77	178
Housing benefit overpayments	0	0	42	29	674	745
NHS Bodies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social Services sundry debtors	11	38	231	95	92	467
Rent arrears	0	5	38	76	259	378
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>4,791</b>

### 13.6 Creditors

It is the Authority's policy to pay creditors promptly, without undue delay and within mutually agreed terms. 95.9% of payments were paid within a 30 day target settlement date (97.3% in 2022/23).

The nature and value of payments due to be made by the Council in the year but not actually made as at 31st March 2024 is summarised below:

31st March 2023 Restated		31st March 2024
£000		£000
3,980	Central Government Bodies	6,819
5,944	Other Local Authorities	4,459
1,071	NHS Bodies	65
4,853	Capital Creditors	6,951
25,670	Other entities & individuals	19,819
4,352	Accumulating Compensated Absences	3,562
-249	CCRCD	2,087
<b>45,621</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>43,761</b>

### 13.7 Provisions and Contingent Liabilities

The value of provisions as at 31st March 2024, together with their movement for the year, is summarised below:

	Note	As at 1st April 2023 Restated	New or increased Provisions	Used or reduced Provisions	As at 31st March 2024
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Insurance Claims	13.7a	809	564	(449)	924
CCRCD Consolidation		1,893	0	0	1,893
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,702</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>(449)</b>	<b>2,817</b>

The analysis of provisions between those that are short-term and long-term where it is expected that the provision will be settled within 12 months or greater than 12 months of the balance sheet date respectively, are summarised below:

Current	Long Term		Current	Long Term
31st March 2023	31st March 2023 Restated		31st March 2024	31st March 2024
£000	£000		£000	£000
404	404	Insurance Claims	466	457
0	1,893	CCRCD Consolidation	0	1,893
<b>404</b>	<b>2,297</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>2,350</b>

### a) Insurance Claims

The Authority maintains insurance policies to cover itself against claims made. The effect of these policies is to limit the Council's costs in relation to successful claims made against it. Annual insurance premiums have been recharged to services during the financial year along with costs of claims incurred.

To satisfy IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets, a full actuarial assessment of open insurance claims was carried out in 2022 by the Authority's insurance brokers. The Authority has used this data to project future potential liabilities on the basis of current claims received, policy excesses and stop losses (the capped loss we can incur in any policy year). This assessment has allowed the Authority to reflect the estimated cost of liabilities at 31 March 2024. Provision has only been made where the Authority's insurers indicate a settlement is likely. The result is that the total provision is at the most likely level to be paid out in the future. Any movement in provisions has been charged against the services to which the claims relate.

The Authority maintains the insurance and risk management reserve to assist in the control of the Authority's insurance risks. The balance in the reserve is reviewed annually as part of the assessment on the adequacy of reserves by the Section 151 Officer. The reserve is required to cover potential claims not yet reported as well as recorded claims, which do not merit a provision, referred to above. It therefore represents additional cover, over and above the provision, to cover all foreseeable claims as at the balance sheet date.

The provision in place at 31st March 2024 was £923,592 (£808,577 at 31st March 2023) and the balance on the insurance and risk management reserve as at 31st March 2024 was £924,997 (£924,997 as at 31st March 2023). These balances are deemed to provide sufficient cover for the Authority's claims exposure.

A breakdown of the provision made across policy types is provided below:

31st March 2023 £000		31st March 2024 £000
723	Public Liability	892
0	Motor Liability	9
86	Employer's Liability	22
809	<b>Total</b>	<b>924</b>

### b) Contingent Liabilities

There are no Contingent Liabilities as at the 31st March 2024.

## 14 POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFIT NOTES

### 14.1 Participation in Pension Schemes

The council is required to account for its pension costs in accordance with IAS19 - employee benefits.

The Council makes contributions towards the cost of post employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement. The Council participates in two separate pension schemes; the Greater Gwent Pension Fund (Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)) and the Teachers' Pensions Scheme (TPS), both of which provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions) earned as employees worked for the Council.

#### ***Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) – Unfunded Defined Benefit Scheme Accounted for as a Defined Contribution Scheme***

Whilst this is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme it is required to be accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme, because the arrangements are such that the liabilities cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. A notional fund is used as the basis for calculating the employer's contribution rate paid by local authorities and valuations of the notional fund are undertaken every four years. This scheme is administered by the Teachers' Pensions Agency (TPA). No liability for future payments of these benefits is recognised in the Council's Balance Sheet.

In 2023/24, the Council paid £7,093,236 to the TPA in respect of teachers' retirement benefits, (£6,474,000 in 2022/23) representing 23.6% of pensionable pay (23.6% in 2022/23). In 2024/25 the expected contributions for the plan are £7.4 million.

Under this scheme there are separate arrangements for the award of discretionary post employment benefits upon early retirement – these are unfunded defined benefit arrangements, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made.

There were £598,688 of contributions remaining payable to the scheme at the year end (£559,992 at 31st March 2023). The Council is not responsible for any other employers' obligations under this pension plan.

#### ***Greater Gwent Pension Fund***

The Authority participates in two pension schemes administered by Torfaen County Borough Council:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme - This is a funded defined benefit scheme, meaning that the Authority and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets in the long term. Pension benefits accrued up until March 2014, based on pensions being a percentage of final salary. Benefits since that time have accrued on an average salary basis.
- Unfunded Teachers Discretionary Benefits - the Authority is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the teachers' scheme above. This is unfunded, meaning that there are no investment assets built up to meet pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

The following sections of the notes provide further supporting information covering the Authority's interest in the Greater Gwent Pension Fund.

14.2 Pension Fund Stakeholders

14.3 Entries in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement

14.4 Expected future pension contributions

14.5 Actuarial Assumptions

14.6 Sensitivity analysis

14.7 Investments held by the pension fund

14.8 The movement in the authority's share of the assets and liabilities within the Fund

14.9 A summary explanation of the movement in assets and liabilities

## 14.2 Pension Fund Stakeholders

The total defined benefit obligation for the Authority's share of the Greater Gwent Pension fund (excluding unfunded liabilities) as at the 31st March 2024 is split as follows, along with the weighted average duration of each group:

2022/23			2023/24		Average Age (Years)
£000's	%		£000's	%	
212,099	42%	Active	226,322	44%	52
74,158	15%	Deferred	73,223	14%	52
214,342	43%	Pensioners	209,944	41%	69
<b>500,599</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>509,489</b>	<b>100%</b>	

A breakdown of the investments held by the Greater Gwent pension fund, quoted and unquoted is given in 14.7 giving an indication of the level of diversification and therefore risk within the Investment Portfolio.

## 14.3 Entries in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement

The Authority recognises retirement benefits in the net cost of services, as they are earned by employees not when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge we are required to make against council tax is based on the cash payable to the pension fund in the year, so the real cost of post-employment/ retirement benefits is reversed out of the Council Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Council Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

To account for the McCloud Judgement (public service pensions age discrimination cases) the actuary has made an estimated adjustment to these liabilities from the 2019 valuation data to ensure that it is captured in the 31 March 2024 IAS19 balance sheet figures.

Finance is only required to be raised to cover teachers unfunded discretionary benefits when the pensions are actually paid.

Local Government Pension Scheme	Teachers' Unfunded Discretionary Benefits		Local Government Pension Scheme	Teachers' Unfunded Discretionary Benefits
2022/23 £000's	2022/23 £000's		2023/24 £000's	2023/24 £000's
		<b>Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account</b>		
		<b>Net Cost of Services:</b>		
33,015	0	current service cost	15,839	0
224	0	past service cost / (gain) including curtailments	1,156	0
0	0	settlement gain	0	0
<b>33,239</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>16,995</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:</b>		
19,396	89	interest cost on pension liabilities	23,974	122
(12,277)	0	interest income on plan assets	(21,455)	0
0	0	Impact of asset ceiling on net interest	0	0

40,358	89	<b>Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services</b>	19,514	122
		<b>Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:</b>		
(225,290)	(466)	(Gains) and losses on remeasurement	(51,548)	288
0	0	Effect of business combinations and disposals	0	0
(225,290)	(466)	<b>Total Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>(51,548)</b>	<b>288</b>
(184,932)	(377)	<b>Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</b>	<b>(32,034)</b>	<b>410</b>
		<b>Movement in Reserves Statement</b>		
(40,358)	(89)	Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit for the Provision of Services for post-employment benefits	(19,514)	(122)
		<b>Actual amount charged against the Council Fund for pensions in the year:</b>		
16,984	343	Employers' contributions payable to scheme	18,591	381

#### 14.4 Expected future pension contributions

The total contributions expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme by the Authority in the year to 31 March 2025 are £18,134,000. Expected contributions for Teachers Unfunded Discretionary Benefits scheme in the year to 31 March 2025 are £395,000.

Statutory arrangements are in place to ensure that the financial position of the fund remains healthy. In the 31 March 2022 Actuarial Valuation, a shortfall of 3% of the fund's liabilities was identified. The Fund's 'funding target' is to achieve and maintain a funding level of 100% of liabilities. The maximum deficit recovery period has been set at 20 years. At each Actuarial Valuation, a contribution rate is set to meet the funding target over the deficit recovery period.

In June 2023, the High Court found in the Virgin Media case that changes to member benefits in contracted out defined benefit pension schemes between 1996 and 2016 required an actuarial certificate in line with section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993 and that changes without this certification are to be considered void.

Where specific actuarial 'section 37' certificates cannot be found, the June 2023 legal ruling has the potential to invalidate historic scheme benefit changes dating all the way back to 1997. Pension practitioners were awaiting the outcome of an appeal, but this has now (July 2024) been dismissed by the Court of Appeal and the original ruling stands.

LGPS practitioners are not currently making additional liability allowances within funding and accounting valuations, as there is significant uncertainty about whether this ruling will impact the LGPS. We understand HM Treasury are currently looking into whether section 37 certificates exist for prior LGPS benefit changes, and a number of pension bodies have written to DWP to request legislation that would allow retrospective section 37 certificates to be produced now to validate historic changes.

For the Local Government Pension Scheme, Government's Actuary Department do not believe that there are any absent actuarial confirmations. Therefore, they do not expect any liability changes to arise following this judgement. GAD will confirm that actuarial confirmations are available in due course.

#### 14.5 Actuarial Assumptions

The principal IAS19 assumptions used by the Actuary for these accounts are shown in the following table. Using the projected unit method, the Actuary determines the figures at the Balance Sheet date using the latest scheme valuation as a base, which was 31 March 2022.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary in their calculations have been:

Financial Assumptions	Local Government Pension Scheme
-----------------------	---------------------------------

	& Teachers Unfunded Discretionary Benefits		
	31st March 2024	31st March 2023	31st March 2022
Rate of increase in salaries	3.3%	3.5%	3.5%
Rate of increase in pensions (inline with CPI)	2.8%	3.0%	3.2%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	4.9%	4.8%	2.7%
<b>Life Expectancy:</b>			
Current male pensioner aged 65 (years)	20.9	21.0	20.5
Current female pensioner aged 65 (years)	23.9	24.1	23.2
Future male pensioner aged 65 in 20 years' time (years)	21.8	21.9	21.8
Future female pensioner aged 65 in 20 years' time (years)	25.4	25.7	25.1

The discount rate used to value fund liabilities is based on market yields on high quality corporate bonds over appropriate terms. To facilitate this, Hymans Robertson produce a corporate bond yield curve based on the constituents of the iBoxx AA corporate bond index.

#### 14.6 Sensitivity Analysis

As noted above, changes to the financial assumptions disclosed in 14.5 will result in movements in the key pension related financial outcomes. An estimation of the results of such movements are given below.

Change in assumption at 31st March 2024	Approximate % increase to Employer	Approximate monetary amount (£000)
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	2%	9,469
1 Year Increase in Member Life Expectancy	4%	20,609
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	1,059
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate	2%	8,580

In addition the actuary estimates that a one year increase in life expectancy would approximately increase the Employers Defined Benefit Obligation by around 3-5%. In practice this is dependent on the age groups predominantly affected.

#### 14.7 Investments held by the pension fund

Teachers unfunded discretionary payments have no assets to cover its liabilities. The Local Government Pension Scheme's assets are valued at fair value, and consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

31st March 2023		Category	Quoted in Active markets	31st March 2024	
£000	%			£000	%
0	0.0%	Equities	Yes	0	0.0%
		<b>Investment funds &amp; Unit Trusts</b>			
332,012	73.8%	Equities	No	374,836	73.6%
59,913	13.3%	Bonds	No	62,428	12.3%
46,374	10.3%	Other	No	45,555	8.9%
9,108	2.0%	Property	No	8,696	1.7%
2,334	0.5%	Cash accounts	No	17,738	3.5%



0	0.0%	Alternatives	No	0	0.0%
449,740	100.0%	Total		509,253	100.0%

#### 14.8 The movement in the authority's share of the assets and liabilities within the fund

##### The Movement in Fund Assets

Local Government Pension Scheme	Teachers Unfunded Discretionary Benefits		Local Government Pension Scheme	Teachers Unfunded Discretionary Benefits
2022/23 £000	2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000
452,486	0	As at 1st April	449,740	0
0	0	Settlement costs	0	0
12,277	0	Interest on plan assets	21,455	0
16,984	343	Employers contributions	18,591	381
4,320	0	Contributions by scheme participants	4,659	0
(20,156)	0	Gains / (losses) on remeasurement of assets	34,137	0
0	0	Administration expenses of plan assets	0	0
(16,171)	(343)	Benefits paid	(19,329)	(381)
449,740	0	As at 31st March	509,253	0

##### The Movement in Fund Liability

(708,219)	(3,479)	As at 1st April	(503,557)	(2,759)
(33,015)	0	Current service cost	(15,839)	0
(224)	0	Past service (cost) / gain (including curtailments)	(1,156)	0
0	0	Settlement gains	0	0
0	0	Curtailment costs	0	0
(19,396)	(89)	Interest on pension liabilities	(23,974)	(122)
(4,320)	0	Contributions by scheme participants	(4,659)	0
245,446	466	Gains / (losses) on remeasurement of liabs	17,411	(288)
16,171	343	Benefits paid	19,329	381
0	0	Effect of business combinations & disposals	0	0
(503,557)	(2,759)	As at 31st March	(512,445)	(2,788)

There were £1,872,000 of contributions remaining payable at the year end for the Local Government Pension Scheme (at 31 March 2023 £1,749,000 was payable) and £14,000 was owed to the Authority for the Teachers unfunded discretionary benefits scheme (£14,000 at 31 March 2023).

Within the £512,445,000 of pension liabilities for the Local Government Pension Scheme at 31 March 2024 (£503,557,000 31 March 2023), there are £2,766,000 of unfunded liabilities (£3,908,000 as at 31st March 2023).

#### 14.9 Summary of the movement in assets and liabilities

Over the five years ending the 31 March 2024, the fund's actuaries have estimated that the Authority had the following assets and liabilities:

	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
--	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

<b>Local Government Pension Scheme</b>					
Present value of scheme liabilities	(549,563)	(727,091)	(708,219)	(503,557)	(512,445)
Fair value of scheme assets	322,980	424,338	452,486	449,740	509,253
<b>Surplus / (deficit) in the scheme</b>	<b>(226,583)</b>	<b>(302,753)</b>	<b>(255,733)</b>	<b>(53,817)</b>	<b>(3,192)</b>
<b>Teachers Unfunded Discretionary Benefits</b>					
Present value of scheme liabilities	(3,943)	(3,951)	(3,479)	(2,759)	(2,788)
Fair value of scheme assets	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Surplus / (deficit) in the scheme</b>	<b>(3,943)</b>	<b>(3,951)</b>	<b>(3,479)</b>	<b>(2,759)</b>	<b>(2,788)</b>
<b>Total</b>					
Present value of scheme liabilities	(553,506)	(731,042)	(711,698)	(506,316)	(515,233)
Fair value of scheme assets	322,980	424,338	452,486	449,740	509,253
<b>Surplus / (deficit) in the scheme</b>	<b>(230,526)</b>	<b>(306,704)</b>	<b>(259,212)</b>	<b>(56,576)</b>	<b>(5,980)</b>
<b>Year on year increase in net liability (or deficit)</b>		<b>(76,178)</b>	<b>47,492</b>	<b>202,636</b>	<b>50,596</b>

There is a decrease in the authorities share of the combined net liability of the Greater Gwent pension funds of £50,596,000 from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This has resulted from an increase of £59.5m in the value of scheme assets offset by an increase in the value of scheme liabilities of £8.88m. The performance of underlying assets have improved with equities, bonds and infrastructure investments all increasing in value.

## 15 NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

### 15.1 Reconciliation of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Account to Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
(830)	Net (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services	(22,202)
	<b>Non-cash transactions:</b>	
(14,600)	Depreciation of non-current assets	(17,656)
9,798	Impairment and downward valuations	(4,220)
(54)	Amortisation of intangible non-current assets	(26)
(497)	Increase/(decrease) in impairment for provision for bad debts	(884)
(135)	Increase/(decrease) in inventories	85
16,012	Increase/(decrease) in debtors	(14,491)
11,120	(Increase)/decrease in creditors	1,595
229	(Increase)/decrease in provisions	(115)
(23,121)	Pension liability	(665)
3,032	CCRCD: Capital & Revenue Grants recognised	0
(4,140)	Carrying amount of non-current assets, assets held for sale and investment properties which are sold or derecognised	(2,366)
(166)	Movement in the value of investment properties	10,214
(1,628)	Other non-cash items charged to the net Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(213)
	<b>Items classified in another classification in the cash flow statement</b>	
63	Other payments for investing activities	3,248
25,189	Other receipts from investing activities	37,460
(33)	Other payments for financing activities	(35)
(2,451)	Other receipts for financing activities	0
7,986	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	4,054
<b>25,775</b>	<b>Net cash flows from Operating Activities</b>	<b>(6,217)</b>

### 15.2 Returns on Investments and Servicing of Finance

Returns on Investments received and Servicing of Finance paid during the year are made up of the following elements:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
	<b>Returns on Investments received:</b>	
(965)	Interest received	(1,799)
(7)	Other interest and investment income	(50)
	<b>Servicing of Finance paid:</b>	
3,979	Interest paid	6,106
0	Interest element of finance lease rental payments	0
<b>3,006</b>		<b>4,257</b>

### 15.3 (Increase)/decrease in Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of Cash and Cash Equivalents is made up of the following elements:

	At 31st March 2023	In Year Movement	At 31st March 2024
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash held by the Authority	149	1	149
Bank current accounts	0	172	172
Short-term call account deposits	24,574	(16,550)	8,024
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Bank current account overdrafts	(802)	(920)	(1,723)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,921</b>	<b>(17,298)</b>	<b>6,623</b>

## 16 OTHER NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

### 16.1 Members Allowances

Information on members' allowances is available on request from the Payroll Manager, Payroll Section, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk NP15 1GA

The Authority paid the following amounts to Councillors and co-optee members of the council during the year:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
772	Basic allowance	806
226	Special responsibility allowance	244
8	Travel allowance	10
9	Subsistence allowance	3
0	ICT Costs	0
<b>1,015</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,063</b>

The increase from 2022/23 is due to the Members pay award following recommendations by the Independent Remuneration Panel and an increase in the number of Co-Opted members (increasing from 2 to 9). Increased expenses are due to more face to face meetings taking place.

### 16.2 Audit Costs

The Authority has incurred the following costs during 2023/24 in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims, statutory inspections and to non-audit services provided by the Authority's external auditors:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
210	Fees payable to the appointed auditor with regard to external audit services - financial audit	223
112	Fees payable to the appointed auditor with regard to external audit services - Performance Audit Work	119
49	Fees payable to the appointed auditor for certification of grant claims & returns	52
<b>371</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>394</b>

### 16.3 S31 and S33 Pooled Budget Arrangements

Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 and Section 33 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006 enables the establishment of joint working arrangements between NHS bodies and local authorities. Pooled funds enable bodies to work collaboratively to address specific local health issues. A key feature of the pool is that the use of resources contributed to the pool should be dictated by the need of clients who meet the criteria established for the pool, rather than the respective contributions by the partners. Thus, it is to be expected that health service resources could be used to deliver local authority services and vice versa.

Pooled funds are not legal entities. The partners in the pool will nominate one partner to be the host to the pool. That host has responsibility for the administration of the pool.

#### a) Mardy Park Rehabilitation Scheme

The Authority had previously entered into a pooled budget arrangement with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board for the provision of a Rehabilitation Scheme at Mardy Park which came into effect from the 1st April 2004, with the Authority being host for the partnership.

The Purpose of the scheme was to reduce the time spent in hospital for rehabilitation patients who have no need for in-patient care, undertaken through the assessment of individuals needs and on how community based schemes could adapt to manage the risk of non-residential care effectively.

The income and expenditure for the pooled fund arrangements for the financial year ended 31st March 2024 was:

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
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<b>Funding</b>		
(298)	Monmouthshire County Council	(367)
(225)	Monmouthshire Local Health Board	(276)
<b>(523)</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(643)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
372	Employee related	419
96	Premises related	147
0	Transport related	0
27	Supplies & Services	35
22	Agency & Contracted	31
<b>517</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>632</b>
<b>(6)</b>	<b>Net (Under)/over spend</b>	<b>(11)</b>

#### **b) Gwent Integrated Community Equipment Store (GWICES)**

The Authority has entered into a pooled budget arrangement with the Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board and four other local authorities in the Gwent area, namely Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen. Under the arrangement funds are pooled under Section 33 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006. This agreement came into effect on 1st October 2008.

The Purpose of the scheme is to provide an efficient and effective integrated equipment store to service users who are resident in the partnering localities.

Torfaen County Borough Council is the host for the Partnership, who recorded gross expenditure of £4,457,000 (£3,940,000 for 2022/23) and gross income of £4,457,000 (£3,940,000 for 2022/23) for the financial year ended 31st March 2024. Monmouthshire County Council's contribution for the year was £406,000 (£322,000 for 2022/23).

#### **c) Monmouth Health & Social Care Facility (Monnow Vale)**

The Authority has entered into a pooled budget arrangement with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Under the arrangements funds are pooled under Section 33 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006 to provide health and social care in the form of inpatient, outpatient, clinic and day care facilities to individuals who have medical, social, community or rehabilitation needs. This agreement came into effect from the 1st June 2006.

The Facility is a unique project that replaced a number of out dated or separate facilities scattered throughout the County with a new building that has been financed by a private finance partner over a period of 30 years. Further information is contained in note 12.4 to the accounts.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is the host for the Partnership, who recorded gross expenditure of £4,667,000 (£4,272,000 for 2022/23) and gross income of £4,172,000 (£3,845,000 for 2022/23) for the financial year ended 31st March 2024. Monmouthshire County Council's total contribution for the year was £1,447,000 (£1,328,000 for 2022/23).

#### **d) Gwent Frailty Programme**

A Section 33 Partnership Agreement exists between five Local Authorities in the former Gwent area and Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board for the provision of Frailty services to service users who are resident within each of the Partner Localities. This service became operational from the 4th April 2011 and the agreement came into effect from this date.

The Gwent Frailty programme has created a Community based integrated model of care through the establishment of Community Resource Teams (CRT's) delivering a range of services to avoid hospital admissions, facilitate early discharge and help individuals remain 'happily independent'. The CRT's provide integrated Urgent Response, Reablement, Falls Services within each Locality in line with agreed Locality Commissioning Plans (LCPs).

The programme has attracted Welsh government Invest to Save funding totalling £7.3m which is being used to pump prime the establishment of CRTs and to fund the IT infrastructure. Partners have also committed recurring budgets to the programme totalling £8.9m per annum and have agreed savings targets to ensure on-going financial stability.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is the host for the Partnership, who recorded gross expenditure of £17,166,000 (£16,447,000 for 2022/23) and gross income of £17,232,000 (£16,521,000 for 2022/23) for the financial year ended 31st March 2024. Monmouthshire County Council's total contribution for the year was £1,626,000 (£1,469,000 for 2022/23).

#### **e) Pooled Fund for Care Home Accommodation Functions for Older People**

Under section 169 and Part 9 Statutory Guidance of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, Welsh Government has directed the forming of a pooled arrangement across Wales for Care Home Accommodation Functions for Older People.

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board decided to establish a pooled fund and service, by establishing a 'Gwent' section 33 agreement from the 6 organisations being 5 Local Authorities comprising of Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly, along with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

Torfaen County Borough Council is the host for the Partnership, who recorded gross expenditure of £137,951,490 (£118,709,313 for 2022/23) and funding of £137,951,490 (£118,709,313 for 2022/23) for the financial year ended 31st March 2024. Monmouthshire County Council's total contribution for the year was £12,680,547 (£10,828,264 for 2022/23).

### **16.4 Related Party Transactions**

The Authority is required to disclose material transactions with related parties - bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Authority or to be controlled or influenced by the Authority. Disclosure of these transactions allow readers to assess the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Authority.

#### **Central & Welsh Government**

Central & Welsh Government has effective control over the general operations of the Authority - it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of core and specific grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Authority has with other parties (e.g. housing benefits). Details of grant income received from Central & Welsh Government and other government departments are set out in note 11.6 to the Accounts and balances owing to/from these parties is outlined in notes 13.5 & 13.6.

#### **Members**

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of Members' allowances paid in 2023/24 is shown in note 16.1. Under the Code of Conduct, incorporated in the Council's constitution, Members are required to record in the Register of Members' Interests any financial and other personal interests, together with any gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage. The Register is open to inspection by the public and is available on an individual Member basis on the Council's website. Members who declare an interest do not take part in any discussion or decision relating to grants made or works or services commissioned. Details of all interests declared are recorded in the minutes of relevant meetings.

Members of the Council are nominated to serve on numerous outside bodies, such as Town & Community Councils. These bodies will either receive funding from the Council or issue levies and precepts to be paid by the Council. When sitting on these bodies Members are expected to act independently and not to represent the views of the County Council. Where works or services have been commissioned or where grants were made during the financial year in which Members had an interest, Members have a duty to declare such an interest. The Council must ensure that contracts entered into were in full compliance with standing orders and that grants were made with proper consideration of declarations of such interests.

Some County Councillors are also active Town or Community Councillors during the Financial Year. All Community Council precepts are included within the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Statement. The Authority made payments of £20,554 and received income of £598,551 for Town & Community councils in addition to precept payments in 2023-24.

The Authority made payments of £603,469 and received income of £709,881 from other organisations that were identified as a related party to Councillors. There were no debtor or creditor balances outstanding with related parties at the end of 2023-24 (nil in 2022-23)

## Companies and Joint Ventures

The Authority has interests in companies and joint ventures and relevant transactions are disclosed in note 16.6 to the Accounts about such interests.

## Senior Officers

Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires officers to declare any pecuniary interests that they may have regarding any transactions being entered into by the Authority in which they have a direct or indirect involvement.

The Monitoring Officer for the Authority, Chief Officer for Children & Young People, Chief Officer Social Care Safeguarding & Health, the Head of Policy and Governance, and the Chief Operating Officer - Monlife, have no pecuniary interests.

The Chief Executive was the Acting Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Monmouthshire during 2023/24 and held the following position during the year:

- **Member of the Cardiff Capital Region Investment Committee**
- **Shared Resource Services - Board Member**
- **Governor (Honorary) - Cardiff Metropolitan University**

The Chief Officer for Communities & Place held the following position during the year:

- **Cadwyn Housing Association (Chair)**

The Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer for Resources has an indirect involvement with:

- **Cardiff Capital Region - City Deal**
- **South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

Payments of £3,850, and receipts of £3,290 were paid and received from Cardiff Metropolitan University during 2023/24 (£3,850 and £3,290 respectively in 2022/23) in relation to transactions involving goods and services. Contracts were entered into in full compliance with the council's standing orders.

Any transactions and balances held with these parties are shown within note 16.6 to the accounts.

## 16.5 Trust Funds

The Council acts as sole or custodian trustee for a number of trust funds. The funds do not represent assets of the Council and they have not been included in the Consolidated Balance Sheet. The below balances are based upon unaudited figures for the year ended 31st March 2024:

2022/23					2023/24			
Income £000	Expend £000	Assets £000	Liabs £000		Income £000	Expend £000	Assets £000	Liabs £000
(212)	692	5,406	(204)	<b>Welsh Church Act Fund</b>	(303)	294	5,484	(5,475)

The primary objective of the Charity is to assist groups and individuals for educational, social, recreational and other charitable purposes. The Trust owns tangible fixed assets comprising eight parcels of land. Five of these are agricultural, two are grazing and one is forestry.

(3)	5	132	(66)	<b>Llanelly Hill Social Welfare Centre</b>	(6)	6	138	(72)
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The primary objective of the fund is the provision of a Social welfare centre to the residents of Llanelly hill. The Trust's fixed assets comprise the social welfare centre premises and land upon which it is situated.

(0)	0	0	0	<b>Chairman's Charity</b>	(1)	0	1	0
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The Chairman's Charity supports and raises funds for the Chairman's nominated Charity of the year.

				<b>Funds for which Monmouthshire County Council acts as custodian trustee:</b>				
(27)	89	625	(2)	<b>Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment</b>	(30)	18	636	(2)



(1,744)	1,519	1,326	(1,102)	<b>Appointeeship - Personal Monies</b>	(1,560)	1,519	1,368	(1,326)
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## 16.6 Related Businesses and Operations

The Council has a number of interests in other entities which fall within the group boundary of the Council on the grounds of control and significant influence in line with the Code.

In respect of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD), the Authority has included its share of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows relating to the arrangement within the single entity accounting statements and disclosures. Further details of the arrangement are outlined below.

The Council's remaining interests in other entities, in aggregate, are not sufficiently material to warrant producing consolidated financial statements when reviewing both quantitative and qualitative information. For this reason, group accounts are not deemed necessary for these entities within these statements. In order to ensure compliance with the Code, a range of narrative disclosures have been made as follows:

### SRS Public

The Authority entered into a public sector collaborative arrangement, known as the Shared Resource Service, with Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) and Gwent Police Authority in May 2011, Newport City Council and Blaenau Gwent Borough Council have joined the partnership subsequently. The arrangement has resulted in a Shared Resources Centre (SRC) being set up for the purpose of providing IT services to each member authority.

A memorandum of understanding is in place to provide robust governance arrangements. The arrangement is not a separate legal entity and ownership of the SRS premises resides with TCBC. The arrangement is funded by core contributions from partners, income from desk licences and rack rentals from schools and external income. Monmouthshire's core contribution during 2023/24 included in the Council's Accounts totalled £2.374m (£2.279m in 2022/23).

The Authority owed £384,362 to SRS Public at the 31st March 2024 (£209,859 owed as at 31st March 2023).

### Melin Homes & Y Prentis

Y Prentis is a business set up by Monmouthshire County Council and Melin Homes with a 50/50 share to actively promote the provision of technical and vocational secondary education.

The Company's latest available trading results are the financial statements for the period ending 30th September 2023.

The company is exempt from audit under section 477 of the companies act 2006 for the financial year ending September 2023.

30th Sep 2022		30th Sep 2023
£000		£000
Final		Draft
322	Total Assets/(Liabilities)	299
3	Profit/(Loss) before Taxation	(25)
3	Profit/(Loss) after Taxation	(25)
0	Dividends	0

There were no transactions between Monmouthshire County Council and Y Prentis during 2023/24 (nil in 2022/23).

### Education Achievement Service (EAS)

The five local Councils of Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Newport have formed an Education Achievement Service (EAS). The integrated service has been designed to raise education standards in South East Wales.

The EAS became operational in September 2012. It is a joint company, limited by guarantee and wholly owned and completely controlled by the five local Councils, but operating at arm's length. It is not a profit making company, and it is a separate legal entity. There is no lead Council with each being represented equally with a 20% interest and having equal voting rights. The company has a Board consisting of the Lead Director and elected member representatives from the partner Councils. The collaboration Agreement commits the Council to participating in the EAS company for a minimum period of four years.

The Company's latest available trading results are the draft estimates for the period ending 31st March 2024.

31st March 2023		31st March 2024
£000 Final		£000 Draft
369	Total Assets/(Liabilities)	473
105	Profit/(Loss) before Taxation	125
105	Profit/(Loss) after Taxation	125
0	Dividends	0

Payments of £498,143 were made to the EAS during 2023/24 (£528,636 during 2022/23). Income received from EAS was £166,663. Outstanding income of £121 was owed by the EAS to MCC at 31st March 2024 (£Nil at 31st March 2023).

#### Gwent Archives

The five local Councils of Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Newport are included in the Gwent Archives Service. The integrated service collects, preserves, and makes accessible to the public, documents relating to the area it serves.

The Company's latest available trading results are the draft estimates for the period ending 31st March 2024.

31st March 2023		31st March 2024
£000 Final		£000 Draft
239	Total Assets/(Liabilities)	255
25	Profit/(Loss) before Taxation	16
25	Profit/(Loss) after Taxation	16
0	Dividends	0

Payments of £213,302 were made to Gwent Archives during 2023/24 (£196,353 during 2022/23). There were no balances owing to/from Gwent Archives at 31st March 2024 (nil at 31st March 2023).

#### Gwent Crematorium

The five local Councils of Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Newport are included in the Gwent Crematorium Service. The integrated service provides crematorium services to the public relating to the area it serves.

The Company's latest available trading results are the draft estimates for the period ending 31st March 2024.

31st March 2023		31st March 2024
£000 Final		£000 Draft
2,314	Total Assets/(Liabilities)	2,110
236	Profit/(Loss) before Taxation	(350)
236	Profit/(Loss) after Taxation	(350)
0	Dividends	0

A dividend payment of £48,294 was received from Gwent Crematorium for the 2022/23 financial year (£83,045 during 2022/23). The dividend was outstanding as at 31st March 2024 (nil at 31st March 2023).

### Project Gwyrdd

The five local Councils of Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Newport, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan are included within the Project Gwyrdd. The integrated service collects, processes, and disposes of household waste that is suitable for recycling.

The Company's latest available trading results are the draft estimates for the period ending 31st March 2024.

31st March 2023		31st March 2024
£000		£000
Final		Draft
268	Total Assets/(Liabilities)	237
(28)	Profit/(Loss) before Taxation	(30)
(28)	Profit/(Loss) after Taxation	(30)
0	Dividends	0

A payment of £27,000 was made to Project Gwyrdd during 2023/24 (£27,000 for 2022/23) There was £Nil owing to Project Gwyrdd at 31st March 2024 (£Nil at 31st March 2023).

### Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)

A Joint Working Agreement established the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee as a Joint Committee, with delegated functions, from 1 March 2017 as a partnership between the 10 councils in South-East Wales, including Monmouthshire County Council. From the 18 March 2024 the city region became a Corporate Joint Committee. The public body will be known as Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), but legal name will be the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

In accordance with the Code requirements, the Authority has included its share of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows relating to the arrangement within the single entity accounting statements and disclosures. At the time of these accounts being finalised the 2023/24 CCRCD figures were not available. The latest available financial information incorporated are the audited figures as at 31st March 2023 and the 2022-23 figures have been re-stated to reflect this. The updated figures will not have a material impact on these consolidated accounts.

The revenue contribution required during the year was £78,568 (£74,826 in 2022/23).

In respect of capital spending, no contribution was required in 2023/24 (no contribution in 2022/23) as the forecasted spend did not materialise. There were no balances owing to/from the joint committee at 31st March 2024 (nil at 31st March 2023).

### CSC Foundry

During 2023/24 MCC had 'Significant Influence' over CSC Foundry Ltd which is a subsidiary of CCRCD. As at 31st March 2024 CSC Foundry had £3.0m invested with the Authority which is classified within Short term borrowing in the Balance sheet (£3.0m in 2022/23).

## 16.7 Senior Officer Remuneration

The remuneration paid to the Authority's senior employees, where annualised salary is equal to or more than £60,000 per year, is as follows:

Year ended 31st March 2024						
Post Holder	Salary including fees and allowances	Compensation for loss of employment	Expense Allowances inc. Benefits in Kind	Total Remuneration excluding Pension contributions	Pension Contributions (Based on Common Rate from Actuary)	Total Remuneration including Pension contributions
	£	£	£	£	£	£

Chief Executive Officer	128,008	0	874	<b>128,882</b>	28,493	<b>157,375</b>
Chief Officer - Resources and Deputy Chief Executive	100,965	0	0	<b>100,965</b>	24,333	<b>125,298</b>
Chief Officer - Children and Young People	94,538	0	0	<b>94,538</b>	22,784	<b>117,322</b>
Chief Officer - Communities and Place	94,538	0	0	<b>94,538</b>	22,784	<b>117,322</b>
Chief Officer - People and Governance and Monitoring Officer (April to July)	31,084	0	202	<b>31,286</b>	7,008	<b>38,294</b>
Chief Officer - Law and Governance (November to March) replaced post above	38,320	0	0	<b>38,320</b>	9,235	<b>47,555</b>
Chief Officer - Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	91,967	0	0	<b>91,967</b>	22,164	<b>114,131</b>
Chief Officer - MonLife and Customer, Culture & Wellbeing	82,970	0	0	<b>82,970</b>	19,996	<b>102,966</b>
Chief Officer - People, Performance & Partnerships (previously known as Head of Policy, Performance & Scrutiny)	78,043	0	0	<b>78,043</b>	18,808	<b>96,851</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>740,433</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>741,509</b>	<b>175,604</b>	<b>917,113</b>

Year ended 31st March 2023						
Post Holder	Salary including fees and allowances £	Compensation for loss of employment £	Expense Allowances inc. Benefits in Kind £	Total Remuneration excluding Pension contributions £	Pension Contributions (Based on Common Rate from Actuary) £	Total Remuneration including Pension contributions £
Chief Executive Officer	123,679	0	0	<b>123,679</b>	29,807	<b>153,486</b>
Chief Officer - Resources & Deputy Chief Executive	96,309	0	0	<b>96,309</b>	23,210	<b>119,519</b>
Chief Officer - Children and Young People	91,341	0	0	<b>91,341</b>	22,013	<b>113,354</b>
Chief Officer - Communities & Place	91,341	0	0	<b>91,341</b>	22,013	<b>113,354</b>
Chief Officer - People & Governance & Monitoring Officer	88,857	0	634	<b>89,491</b>	19,964	<b>109,455</b>
Chief Officer - Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	87,616	0	0	<b>87,616</b>	21,115	<b>108,731</b>
Chief Operating Officer - MonLife	80,164	0	0	<b>80,164</b>	19,320	<b>99,483</b>
Head of Policy, Performance & Scrutiny	73,334	0	0	<b>73,334</b>	17,673	<b>91,008</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>732,641</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>733,275</b>	<b>175,116</b>	<b>908,391</b>

The Chief Officer - Law & Governance role was covered by 3 individuals in the interim period of Aug 2023 - Oct 2023 and honorarium payments of £7,987, with associated employer pension contributions of £1,925, were made in relation to the additional responsibilities.

Senior Officers are defined for the purposes of this disclosure as the Chief Executive, together with those senior officers that the Chief Executive is either directly responsible for or senior officers who are directly accountable to the Chief Executive. If they meet this definition any time during the year, their annual salary has been reported.

Senior staff can act in an ancillary capacity as Returning Officers overseeing the administration of periodic referenda and elections. Commonly the fee for such work is nationally set. For the avoidance of any doubt, any such costs are not included in this analysis.

Employers' pension contributions were paid at a rate of 24.1% of pensionable pay for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme (24.1% for 2022/23). Expense allowances are defined as those additional costs that are chargeable to income tax and no such costs are reported in respect of 2023/24 (Nil in 2022/23).

In satisfying the requirement to report the Chief Executive's remuneration as a proportion of the full time equivalent median salary of Monmouthshire County Council employees, the median employee position has been calculated as £27,334. This equates to spinal point 14 and resulting in a median ratio when compared with the Chief Executive Officer salary of 5:1.

In 2022/23, the median employee position was calculated as £24,948, equating to spinal point 13 and resulting in a median ratio when compared with the Chief Executive Officer salary of 5:1.

For the purposes of reporting remuneration, voluntary aided schools' employees have been included in the remuneration notes 16.7 to 16.9, where appropriate, as if they were employees of the council even though their contract of employment is with their respective governing body.

## 16.8 Officers' Emoluments

The number of employees whose remuneration was £60,000 or more in bands of £5,000, during the year ended 31st March 2024, was:

2022/23		Remuneration Band	2023/24	
Number of employees	(Of which are teaching staff)		Number of employees	(Of which are teaching staff)
0	0	£130,000 - £134,999	1	1
0	0	£125,000 - £129,999	1	0
3	1	£120,000 - £124,999	1	0
0	0	£115,000 - £119,999	2	2
0	0	£110,000 - £114,999	4	2
0	0	£105,000 - £109,999	0	0
1	1	£100,000 - £104,999	2	1
1	0	£95,000 - £99,999	1	0
4	0	£90,000 - £94,999	8	5
3	1	£85,000 - £89,999	1	0
7	2	£80,000 - £84,999	11	2
4	2	£75,000 - £79,999	19	13
15	11	£70,000 - £74,999	16	16
12	11	£65,000 - £69,999	20	12
29	19	£60,000 - £64,999	38	21
<b>79</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>75</b>

Remuneration is defined as gross salary and expenses and the effect of any severance costs e.g. redundancy, termination and compromise agreements. Remuneration also excludes pension contributions.

Bandings above include the effect of senior officers shown in note 16.7.

Employers' pension contributions were paid at a rate of 24.1% of pensionable pay for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme (24.1% for 2022/23) and 23.68% of pensionable pay for staff within the Teachers' Pension Scheme (23.68% in 2022/23).

## 16.9 Termination Benefits

The Code does not set out a precise definition of exit packages and authorities need to consider the relevant departure costs that have been recognised in the financial statements in accordance with the Code's requirements on termination benefits.

Termination benefits are defined as amounts payable as a result of either an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date, or an employee's decision to accept an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. The Code sets out that the form of the employee benefit does not determine whether it is provided in exchange for service or in exchange for termination of the employee's employment.

Total Cost of Exit packages reflects redundancy payments, settlement agreements to terminate employment, and any strain costs associated with the agreed enhancement of post-employment pension benefits.

2022/23			Exit package Cost band	2023/24		
No. of Compulsory Redundancies agreed	No. of other departure costs agreed	Total Cost of Exit Packages in each payband £000's		No. of Compulsory Redundancies agreed	No. of other departure costs agreed	Total Cost of Exit Packages in each payband £000's
13	4	171	£0 - £20,000	31	8	364
11	0	304	£20,001 - £40,000	10	2	346
2	0	110	£40,001 - £60,000	5	3	389
0	0	0	£60,001 - £80,000	1	2	206
1	0	92	£80,001 - £100,000	1	0	89
0	0	0	£100,001 - £150,000	1	0	136
1	0	157	£150,001 - £200,000	0	0	0
<b>28</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1,530</b>

#### 16.10 Events after the Balance Sheet date

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. There are two types:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period - the Statement of Accounts are adjusted to reflect such events.
- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period - the Statement of Accounts are not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

No such unadjusting events have been identified subsequent to the balance sheet date.

## 17 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### 17.1 General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Authority's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31st March 2024.

The Authority is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended), which those Regulations require to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices.

These practices, primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2023/24 (SeRCoP).

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared on a 'going concern' basis. The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

Unless otherwise stated the convention used in these statements is to round to amounts of the nearest thousand pounds. All totals are the rounded totals of unrounded figures and therefore may not be the strict sums of the figures presented in the text or tables. Throughout the statements all credit balances are shown with parentheses e.g. (£1,000).

### 17.2 Accounting Standards issued not yet adopted

There are no new relevant standards or amendments to existing standards that have been published but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) that will have an impact on the Statement of Accounts.

However the following details are provided for information purposes:-

**IFRS 16 Leases.** The Standard removes the previous lease classifications of operating and finance leases and requires local authorities that are lessees to recognise all leases on their balance sheet as right use of assets, with a corresponding lease liability representing the lessees obligation to make lease payments for the assets. The Authority intends to adopt the new standard on 1st April 2024, in line with CIPFA/LASAAC's date for compulsory implementation.

As the Code requires implementation of these standards from 1st April 2024 there is no impact on the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts. With the exception of IFRS 16, it is not anticipated that the changes to standards will have a significant impact on the information provided in the 2024/25 financial statements.

**Infrastructure Assets - Temporary Relief.** CIPFA/LASAAC issued a code update in November 2022 that included specifications for future codes on the disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets. The Code has been updated to include a temporary relief from the Code's core requirement to disclose gross cost and accumulated depreciation of infrastructure assets until 31st March 2025.

### 17.3 Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place rather than when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from the sale of goods or services is recognised in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.

- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.
- A discretionary de minimus level of £1,000 is applied to accruals of both income and expenditure with the exception of automatically system generated accruals or those required where it is necessary to ensure accuracy for grant claims or agency work.

#### **17.4 Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on the next banking day. Cash equivalents are investments that are readily convertible on the next banking day to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Authority's cash management.

#### **17.5 Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets**

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding fixed assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service.
- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off.
- Amortisation of intangible fixed assets attributable to the service.

The Authority is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement calculated on a prudent basis as determined by the authority in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the contribution in the Council Fund Balance with a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

#### **17.6 Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies**

In applying the accounting policies set out in this note, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- The Council is deemed to control the services provided under its PFI arrangements and also to control the residual value of the assets at the end of the contract. The accounting policy for PFIs and similar contracts has been applied to these arrangements and the assets are recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment in the Council's Balance Sheet.



- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) – a number of points are considered relevant in determining to present this item of expenditure as gross in the Cost of Services segment of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement rather than netting it off Council Tax income in the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income segment. The most persuasive and significant of these being that, as there is no specific reference to the proper accounting treatment of CTRS in the CIPFA Accounting Code of Practice or Guidance Notes, reliance has been placed on IPSAS 23 - Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions (taxes and transfers). This standard is relevant to public sector bodies, and states that taxation revenue shall be determined at a gross amount; it shall not be reduced for expenses paid through the tax system.

## 17.7 Assumptions Made about the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Authority's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2024 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Consequences if actual results differ from assumption
Revaluation of Property, plant & equipment	<p>Property, plant and equipment (with the exception of infrastructure, community assets, assets under construction and vehicles, plant and equipment) are revalued on a periodic basis and tested annually for indicators of impairment.</p> <p>Traditionally the Council undertakes a rolling five-year valuation schedule to review and update the value of the assets held in the balance sheet.</p> <p>Given the potential extended length of time between valuations and the perceived impact of recent construction inflation changes upon replacement cost figures, this introduces an increased uncertainty as to the values reported.</p> <p>In order to mitigate this, a desk based exercise has been completed to revise property values impacted by construction inflation annually until that asset receives its next formal revaluation.</p>	<p>If the actual results differ from the assumptions, the value of PPE will be over or understated. This would be adjusted when the assets were next revalued.</p>
Property, Plant and Equipment	<p>Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Authority will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.</p>	<p>If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls.</p>

Pensions Liability	<p>Pensions Liability – Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on several complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the expected rate of price inflation, the rate at which salaries and pensions are expected to increase, mortality rates and rate of commutation of pensions.</p> <p>A firm of actuaries are engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied. A sensitivity analysis of these assumptions is provided in Note 14.</p> <p>To account for the McCloud Judgement (public service pensions age discrimination cases) the actuary has made an estimated adjustment to these liabilities from the 2022 valuation data to ensure that it is captured in the 31 March 2024 IAS19 balance sheet figures. The final impact on the pension scheme will not be known until the required changes in legislation have been made.</p>	The assumptions interact in complex ways. Further information is provided in note 14 concerning the risks and sensitivity of changes in the pension assets and liabilities.
Provisions	The Council has included provisions for known insurance claims as at 31st March 2024. The value of these claims is based on information provided by our Insurers on the number of claims outstanding at the end of the financial year, the average settlement amount for each type of claim and the likelihood of each type of claim being settled. However the outcome of these cases is still uncertain as outstanding legal cases and negotiations remain on going.	The Authority maintains the insurance and risk management reserve to assist in the control of the Authority's insurance risks. The provisions in place and the balance on the insurance and risk management reserve at 31st March 2024 are deemed to provide sufficient cover for the Authority's claims exposure. Notes 13.7 provides further information on the types of claims the Authority is exposed to.
Arrears	<p>At 31st March 2024, the Authority had an outstanding balance of short term debtors totalling £47.55m. Against this debtors balance, there is an impairment allowance of £4.79m.</p> <p>It is not absolutely certain that this impairment allowance would be sufficient as the Council cannot assess with certainty which debts will be collected or not. The economic impact of high inflation and cost of living crisis has made the estimation of debt impairment more difficult as there is more uncertainty about the economic viability of debtors and hence their ability to settle their debts.</p>	An understatement of doubtful debts would lead to a future adjustment and impairment to be reflected. The impairment allowances held are based on policies adapted to historic experience and success rates experienced in collection.

## 17.8 Employee Benefits

### *Benefits Payable During Employment*

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Authority. A creditor is held for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The creditor is held at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The charge to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services is reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

### ***Termination Benefits***

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Authority to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Authority is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an officer or group of officers or making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the Council Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

### ***Post Employment Benefits***

Employees of the Authority are members of two separate pension schemes:

- The Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Torfaen County Borough Council

Both schemes provided defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees when they worked for the Authority and related to final salary, career average earnings, and length of service.

However, the arrangements for the teachers' scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be identified to the Authority. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contributions scheme and no liability for future payment of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Children's and Education Services line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers' Pensions in the year.

### ***The Local Government Pension Scheme***

All other staff, subject to certain qualifying criteria, are entitled to become members of the Local Government Pension Scheme which is administered by Torfaen County Borough Council. The pension costs charged to the Authority's accounts in respect of this group of employees is determined by the fund administrators and represents a fixed proportion of employees' contributions to this funded pension scheme.

The Local Government Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme:

- The Liabilities of the pension fund attributable to the Authority are included in the balance sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method - i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions such as mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of earning for current employees.

- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a single discount rate which is derived from the spot rates on a selection of AA rated corporate bonds of various durations which match the liabilities within the Authority's pension fund. This is known as the yield curve approach.
- The assets of the Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund attributable to the Authority are included in the balance sheet at their fair value as determined by the Fund's actuary.
- The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into seven components:
  - Current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
  - Past service cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non- Distributed Costs.
  - Interest cost – the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer to being paid – debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
  - Interest on plan assets – this is the interest on assets held at the start of the period and cashflows occurring during the period, calculated using the discount rate at the start of the year.
  - Gains or losses on settlements and curtailments – the result of actions to relieve the Authority of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees – debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non-Distributed Costs.
  - Gains or losses on remeasurement – changes in the net pensions liability (Liabilities less assets) that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve.
  - Contributions paid to the pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the Council Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the Council Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Further details are given in section 14 of the notes to the Financial Statements.

### *Discretionary Benefits*

The Authority also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff (including teachers) are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

## 17.9 Events After the Balance Sheet Date

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events
- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

## 17.10 Exceptional Items

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Authority's financial performance.

## 17.11 Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument. They are classified based on the business model for holding the instruments and their expected cashflow characteristics.

### *Financial Liabilities*

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost. For the Council's borrowing this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest).

Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument.

### *Financial Assets*

Financial assets are held as amortised cost where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows. This is the majority of our treasury investments such as term deposits, certificate's of deposit and call accounts and also trade debtors for goods and services provided contractually and also lease receivables. This excludes council tax debtors and grants receivable as they are non-exchange transactions.

Financial assets held at amortised cost are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council. For most assets, this is 12 month expected credit losses until the risk increases significantly, then it is lifetime expected losses. For trade debtors expected lifetime losses are always used.

Financial assets are held at fair value through other comprehensive income where cashflows are solely payments of principal and interest and it is the Council's business model to collect these cashflows and sell the instruments before maturity. The authority does not hold any such investments. The standard also allows the authority to elect to account for equity investments through other comprehensive income if they are being held for strategic investment purposes.

All other financial assets are held at fair value through Profit & Loss.

## 17.12 Government Grants and Contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Authority when there is reasonable assurance that:

- The Authority will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- The grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Authority are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Receipts in Advance account. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Receipts in Advance account are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

## 17.13 Expenditure & Income where the Council is acting as an agent

Welsh Government or UK Government will periodically use Councils' as an intermediary to distribute resources to the electorate or particular business sectors as an alternative to making their own direct payment arrangements. Such measures are classified as agency arrangements and are noted within Section 11 of these statements.

As the Code requires transactions classified as agency arrangements to be excluded from the income and expenditure of the Council (i.e amounts debited and credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement), many of the cash flows involved in agency arrangements will be excluded from these statements.

## 17.14 Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are assets that are held by the authority principally for their contribution to knowledge or culture.

Heritage assets were previously shown in community assets but are now recorded in a separate category on the balance sheet as a non-current asset class. The Authority does not classify any operational assets as heritage assets.

Heritage Assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the Authority's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment. However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed in relation to heritage assets and as a result the Authority has chosen not to value heritage assets if the cost is deemed to be excessive.

A further condition for expenditure to be capitalised is that it exceeds the relevant de minimus limit in place. A de-minimus limit has been put in place of £10,000 for heritage assets.

The Authority considers that the heritage assets held by the Authority will have indeterminate lives and a high residual value, hence the Authority does not consider it appropriate to charge depreciation for the assets.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment, for example where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Authority's general policies on impairment. The trustees of the Authority's Museum will occasionally dispose of heritage assets which have a doubtful provenance or are unsuitable for public display. The proceeds of such items are accounted for in accordance with the Authority's general provisions relating to the disposal of property, plant and equipment. Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and are accounted for in accordance with statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts.

#### **17.14 Intangible Assets**

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Authority as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Authority for more than one financial year.

Internally generated assets are capitalised where it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the Authority will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and is restricted to that incurred during the development phase (research expenditure cannot be capitalised).

Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is solely or primarily intended to promote or advertise the Authority's goods or services.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Authority can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Authority meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at amortised cost. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and, for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000, the Capital Receipts Reserve.

#### **17.15 Inventories and Long Term Contracts**

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the latest price paid, with an allowance made for obsolescent and slow moving items. This is a departure from the requirements of the Code which require inventories to be shown at the lower of actual cost and net realisable value. However, the amounts concerned are not considered material.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

#### **17.16 Investment Property**

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value. Investment properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end.

Revaluation gains and losses are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. However, regulations do not permit unrealised gains and losses to impact the General Fund balance. Therefore, gains and losses are reversed via the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Net rental income together with any revaluation gains and losses or impairments are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

### **17.17 Fair value measurement**

The Council measures its assets held for sale, surplus assets, investment properties and available-for-sale financial instrument at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset, or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Measurement will be at highest and best use from the perspective of a market participant. The fair value of an investment property held under a lease is the lease interest.

It is assumed that any fair value measurement of an asset or liability uses the same assumptions that market participants acting in their economic best interest would use and that the transaction takes place in the principal market or failing that in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

Appropriate valuation techniques are used for which sufficient data is available. Inputs to the techniques are categorised within the fair value hierarchy that consists of three levels as follows:

- Level 1 inputs are unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that are accessible by the Council at the measurement date
- Level 2 inputs are quoted prices other than quoted prices within Level 1 that are observable either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 inputs are unobservable inputs for an asset or liability.

The use of relevant observable inputs is maximised and the use of unobservable inputs is minimised.

Any transfers between valuation levels will take place at the valuation date at the end of the reporting period.

### **17.18 Interests in companies and other entities**

The Council has a number of interests in other entities which fall within the group boundary of the Council on the grounds of control and significant influence in line with the Code.

In respect of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCDD), the Authority has included its share of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows relating to the arrangement within the single entity accounting statements and disclosures.

However the Council's remaining interests in other entities, in aggregate, are not sufficiently material to warrant producing consolidated financial statements when reviewing both quantitative and qualitative information. For this reason, group accounts are not deemed necessary for these entities within these statements. In order to ensure compliance with the Code, a range of narrative disclosures have been made in other sections of the accounts (See note 16.6 for further information).

### **17.19 Leases**

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.



Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

### ***The Authority as Lessee - Finance Leases***

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Authority are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred. Assets of less than £10,000 Current value, the de minimus for capitalisation of Fixed assets, will not be treated as Finance leases.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability, and
- A finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).
- A revenue provision (MRP) equal to the principal repayments made, taken to the Capital Adjustment Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Property, Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the authority at the end of the lease period).

The Authority is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the Council Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

### ***The Authority as Lessee - Operating Leases***

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

### ***The Authority as Lessor - Finance Leases***

Where the Authority grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Again, representing the Authority's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease (long-term debtor) asset in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- Finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the Council Fund Balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the Council Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the Council Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### *The Authority as Lessor - Operating Leases*

Where the Authority grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Where material, initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

## **17.20 Overheads and Support Services**

The costs of overheads and support services are no longer charged to those that benefit from the supply or service in accordance with the costing principles of the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Statement of Accounts are now presented in the same way as the management reporting structure of the Council, so overheads are reported in the budget areas where they are managed.

## **17.21 Property, Plant and Equipment**

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

It is not a requirement for expenditure outside of the capital programme to be capitalised if it does not exceed the de minimus limit of £10,000 for all asset categories.

### *Measurement*

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- The purchase price.

- Any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.
- The initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

The Authority does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the Donated Assets Account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the Council Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost.
- All other operational assets – Current value based on existing use value (EUV) for operational assets where there is an active market, or if there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of the asset and/or the asset is rarely sold ( i.e. EUV cannot be determined), depreciated replacement cost (DRC) using the ‘instant build’ approach.
- Non-operational assets – Fair value based on the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Adopted roads built by developers are in many respects seen as donated assets. Whilst donated assets are required to be measured at fair value at recognition, infrastructure assets are measured initially at historical cost and subsequently at depreciated historical cost rather than fair value. The authority have taken the view that the historical cost of such adopted roads is zero.

Where non-property assets that have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for current value. Vehicles, plant and equipment are categories of asset treated in this manner.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

In addition to the assets individually revalued a program of indexation has been undertaken on the remaining Land & Building assets to uplift values. Significant inflation in recent years increases the risk of that the carrying values of non-revalued assets may be materially different to the current value. This has been addressed by uplifted asset values in line with the relevant movements in the BCIS' All In Tender Price Index.

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for by:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- Where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

## Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- Where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

## Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life including freehold land and Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- **Dwellings and other buildings** – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer
- **Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment** – straight-line allocation over the life of the asset as advised by a suitable qualified officer
- **Infrastructure:**
  - Carriageways** – Straight Line over 27 years
  - Street Lighting** – Straight Line over 20 years
  - Principal Rights of Way** – Straight Line over 15 years
  - Green Infrastructure** – Straight Line over 20 years
  - Bridges & Major Retaining Walls** – Straight Line over 30 years
  - Abergavenny & Caldicot Town Centre** – Straight Line over 20 years
  - Flood Alleviation & Land Slip** – Assessed on a case by case basis.

Useful lives of Infrastructure assets are reviewed annually.

No depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition with a full year charge applied in the disposal year.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

## Components

An asset may consist of several different and significant physical components. If an item of property, plant and equipment comprises two or more significant components with substantially different useful lives, then each component is treated separately for depreciation purposes and depreciated over its individual useful life.

When a component is replaced or restored, the old component is written off to avoid double counting and the new component capitalised. Where a component does not have its own carrying amount because it has not previously been accounted for separately the cost of the new component is used as an indication of the cost of the replaced part. A component is derecognised where no future economic benefits are expected from its use.

The Authority has established thresholds for the separation of significant components. As a result components of an item of property, plant or equipment that make up a significant part of the cost of the item would only need to be separated where the item itself is material individually or when aggregated with like items.

### ***Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale***

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale.

Assets held for Sale Assets are assets where the:

- asset is immediately available for sale
- sale is highly probable
- asset is actively marketed
- sale is expected to be completed within 12 months

The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously losses recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale, adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as Held for Sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Authority's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

## 17.22 Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Authority's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

## 17.23 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Similar Contracts

PFI and similar contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Authority is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes, and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Authority at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Authority carries the assets used under the contracts on its Balance Sheet as part of Property, Plant and Equipment.

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment.

Non-current assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Authority.

The amounts payable to the PFI operators each year are analysed into five elements:

- Fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Finance cost – an interest charge on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Contingent rent – increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator (the profile of write-downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease)
- Lifecycle replacement costs – proportion of the amounts payable is posted to the Balance Sheet as a prepayment and then recognised as additions to Property, Plant and Equipment when the relevant works are eventually carried out.

## 17.24 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

### *Provisions*

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Authority a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Authority may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the authority becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the authority settles the obligation.

### **Contingent Liabilities**

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the authority a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the authority. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

### **Contingent Assets**

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the authority a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the authority.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

## **17.25 Reserves**

The Authority sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Authority – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

## **17.26 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute**

Legislation requires defined items of revenue expenditure charged to services within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to be treated as capital expenditure. All such expenditure is transferred from the General Fund balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account.

## **17.27 VAT**

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account excludes amounts relating to VAT and will be included as an expense only if it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income within the Council's Income and Expenditure account.

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## Audit of Accounts Report – Monmouthshire County Council

Audit year: 2023-24

Date issued: November 2024

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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](#).

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# About Audit Wales

## Our aims and ambitions

### 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



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

I have now largely completed my audit in line with my Detailed Audit Plan May 2024.

This Audit of Accounts Report summarises the main findings from my audit of your 2023-24 annual report and accounts. My team have already discussed these issues with the Section 151 Officer.

Whilst our audit is largely complete, there are some areas of work that remain ongoing at the time of writing. We will provide a verbal update to the Governance and Audit Committee upon these areas:

- Agreement of consolidation adjustments concerning the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal;
- Resolution of matters relating to the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and provision of electrical certificates to housing tenants;

I am very grateful to your officers for their support in undertaking this audit.



**Adrian Crompton**  
Auditor General for  
Wales

# Financial statements' materiality



## Materiality £3.766 million

My aim is to identify and correct material misstatements, ie those that might otherwise cause the user of the accounts to be misled.

Materiality is calculated using:

- 2023-24 gross expenditure of £376.6 million calculated using 2023-24 draft accounts.
- Materiality percentage of 1%

I apply the materiality percentage to gross expenditure to calculate materiality.

I will report to you any misstatements above £188,000, calculated as 5% of materiality (called the 'trivial level').



## Areas of specific interest

There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the user of the accounts. We set lower materiality levels for these as follows:

- Remuneration report £1,000
- Related party disclosures £10,000

# Ethical compliance



## Compliance with ethical standards

We believe that:

- we have complied with the ethical standards we are required to follow in carrying out our work;
- we have remained independent of yourselves;
- our objectivity has not been comprised; and
- we have no relationships that could undermine our independence or objectivity.

# Proposed audit opinion



## Audit opinion

We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation (see below).

Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 1**.



## Significant Issues

There are no uncorrected misstatements to report.

However, our report includes commentary on two matters:

- Inclusion of figures from the audited 2022-23 accounts of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD), due to late receipt of the draft 2023-24 accounts from the same body. Since receiving the draft 2023-24 accounts we have confirmed that there is no material difference in income, expenses, assets or liabilities between 2022-23 audited and 2023-24 draft CCRCD accounts. -
- Ongoing uncertainty regarding a legal process relating to the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016. At the time of writing there is no impact on the financial statements however we continue to monitor developments and will update verbally at the committee meeting should the situation change.

Further comment on these matters is included in the "other significant matters" section of our report.



## Letter of representation

A Letter of Representation is a formal letter in which you confirm to us the accuracy and completeness of information provided to us during the audit. Some of this information is specified as being necessary by auditing standards; other information may relate specifically to your audit.

The letter we are requesting you to sign is included in **Appendix 2**.



# Issues arising during the audit



## Misstatements

A misstatement arises where information in the accounts is not in accordance with accounting standards.

### Uncorrected misstatements

Management have agreed to amend all misstatements identified during the audit. There are no uncorrected misstatements in the accounts.

### Corrected misstatements

During our audit, we identified misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention.

These are set out in **Appendix 3**.



## Other significant issues

In the addition to misstatements identified during the audit we also report other significant issues to you. The following significant issue has been identified:

**Inclusion of 2022-23 audited figures from Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) due to late receipt of draft 2023-24 accounts**

When collating its accounts, the Council consolidates its share of income, expenses, assets and liabilities from the CCRCD, who forward their accounts to the ten constituent Councils each year for this purpose.

For 2023-24 there was a delay in receiving both the audited 2022-23 accounts and the draft 2023-24 CCRCD accounts. The Council has therefore included audited 2022-23 CCRCD figures in these final accounts as it was judged too complex and onerous to implement any further changes in time for issue. Details of the amendments that have been made to this set of accounts are found in **Appendix 3**.

Our analysis shows that there is no material difference in income, expenses, assets or liabilities between 2022-23 audited and 2023-24 draft CCRCD accounts. Therefore, we are satisfied that the Council's final 2023-24 accounts are not materially misstated by inclusion of audited 2022-23 CCRCD figures.

**Ongoing legal case in relation to the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016**

From December 2023, the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 brought into effect a change in rights for tenants and increased safety responsibilities for landlords. As the Councils does not own any dwellings there is currently thought to be limited impact on the Council and as such no disclosures regarding this matter have been made in the 2023-24 financial statements.

However, a legal process regarding the implementation of this Act is ongoing and we are required to monitor this process until the date of certification. Should any developments require additional disclosures to be made in the financial statements prior to certification we will update the Council in due course.

# Appendix 1

## Proposed audit report

### The report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Monmouthshire County Council

#### Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of Monmouthshire County Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

Monmouthshire County Council's financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, and the related notes, including the material accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Monmouthshire County Council as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

#### Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of Monmouthshire County Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Monmouthshire County Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## **Other Information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

## **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with guidance.

## **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Monmouthshire County Council and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit;
- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

## **Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing Monmouthshire County Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by Monmouthshire County Council will not continue to be provided in the future.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Monmouthshire County Council's policies and procedures concerned with:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals
- Obtaining an understanding of Monmouthshire County Council's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Monmouthshire County Council operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Monmouthshire County Council.

- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Governance and Audit Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of Monmouthshire County Council's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my auditor's report.

### **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

### **Certificate of completion of audit**

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of Monmouthshire County Council in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

Adrian Crompton  
Auditor General for Wales  
29 November 2024

1 Capital Quarter  
Tyndall Street  
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

# Appendix 2

## Letter of representation

Auditor General for Wales  
Wales Audit Office  
1 Capital Quarter  
Cardiff  
CF10 4BZ

28 November 2024

## Representations regarding the 2023-24 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements (including that part of the Remuneration Report that is subject to audit) of Monmouthshire County Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

## Management representations

### Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith;
- the design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

## Information provided

We have provided you with:

- full access to:
  - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
  - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and

- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects Monmouthshire County Council and involves:
  - management;
  - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
  - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements;
- our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others;
- our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements;
- the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware;

## Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.



## Representations by the Governance and Audit Committee

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by Monmouthshire County Council on 28 November 2024.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Jonathan Davies  
Acting Section 151 Officer

Andrew Blackmore  
Chair, Governance and Audit Committee

Date:

Date:

# Appendix 3

## Summary of corrections made

During our audit, we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention.

Value of correction	Accounts areas	Explanation
£52,355,000	<p><b>Note 11.4 Agency Income and Expenditure</b></p> <p>Two grants treated on an agency basis were excluded from the disclosure note.</p> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure completeness of the disclosure and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>
£24,927,000	<p><b>Note 13.1 Categories of Financial Instruments</b></p> <p>A misclassification between rows in the note required that:</p> <p><u>Long term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Principal Sum Borrowed was increased by £24,583,000; and</li><li>– EIR adjustments were decreased by £24,583,000</li></ul> <p><u>Short term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Principal Sum Borrowed was increased by £344,000; and</li><li>– Accrued Interest was decreased by £344,000</li></ul> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the financial statements and compliance with the CIPFA Code.</p>

<p>£8,749,000</p>	<p><b>Note 12.1 Property, Plant and Equipment</b></p> <p>The CIPFA code requires that the carrying values of assets at the 31 March are materially in line with current values. Due to the current economic climate, for example increases in build costs, the authority have uplifted the valuation of some properties to ensure compliance with this CIPFA code requirement.</p> <p>An error in the uplift calculation resulted in the net book value of land and buildings being overstated by £8,749,000.</p> <p>The error has been corrected resulting in the net book value of assets in the Balance Sheet reducing by £8,749,000.</p> <p>Corresponding entries have also been made to the revaluation reserve and capital notes.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosures and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>
<p>£5,123,000</p>	<p><b>Note 13.3 Fair Values of Financial Instruments</b></p> <p>A working paper error resulted in an understatement of the fair value of borrowings at 31 March 2024 requiring the value to be uplifted by £5,123,000.</p> <p>Note 13.3 is a disclosure note only and the amendment does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosures and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>

<p>£4,353,000</p>	<p><b>Note 10.10 Accumulated Absences Account</b></p> <p>A misclassification between rows in the note required that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Settlement or cancellation of the accrual made at the end of the preceding year was increased by £4,353,000; and</li> <li>– Amounts accrued at the end of the current year was decreased by £4,535,000</li> </ul> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosure and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>
<p>£3,857,000</p>	<p><b>Note 12.8 Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing</b></p> <p>A misclassification between rows in the note required that that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enhancing value – Property, Plant and Equipment was increased by £3,857,000</li> <li>– Enhancing value – Investment Properties was decreased by £3,740,000</li> <li>– Enhancing value – Vehicles was decreased by £117,000</li> </ul> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the financial statements and compliance with the CIPFA Code.</p>

<p>£2,409,000</p>	<p><b>Note 13.4 Nature and Extent of Risks arising from Financial Instruments</b></p> <p>A working paper error resulted in an overstatement of the impact of a 1% change in interest rates on the fair value of fixed rate borrowing. This required the value to be reduced by £2,409,000.</p> <p>Note 13.4 is a disclosure note only and the amendment does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosures and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>
<p>£2,087,000</p>	<p><b>Note 13.6 Creditors</b></p> <p>A misclassification meant creditors relating to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) were incorrectly disclosed in the Accumulating Compensated Absences line in the note.</p> <p>£2,087,000 creditors in relation to CCRCD have now been disclosed separately within the note. There is no impact on the note total.</p> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosures and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>

<p>£1,653,000</p>	<p><b>Note 12.11 Operating Leases – Authority as Lessor</b></p> <p>Agreed rental increases in a number of lease agreements had not been captured within the future lease payment calculations. This required increases to the values disclosed as follows:</p> <p>Not later than one year increased by £37,000  Later than one year and not later than five years increased by £682,000  Later than five years increased by £934,000</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the financial statements and compliance with the CIPFA Code.</p>
<p>£328,000</p>	<p><b>Note 11.1 Expenditure and Funding Analysis</b></p> <p>A reclassification of £328,000 between the Communities &amp; Place and Resources rows of the note was required to ensure the disclosure agreed with the Council’s outturn report.</p> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosure and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>

<p>£324,000</p>	<p><b>Note 12.1 Property, Plant and Equipment</b></p> <p>A capital addition of £324,000 was duplicated in error meaning the value of land and buildings in note 12.1 was overstated.</p> <p>This meant that the value of land and buildings in the Balance Sheet, expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and related notes were also overstated by £324,000.</p> <p>The amendment removes the duplicate from the fixed asset register and reduces the value of land and buildings and capital expenditure by £324,000.</p> <p>Officers undertook a review of capital schemes which was tested by Audit Wales and confirms that this was an isolated error, and no risk of material misstatement is present.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosures and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>
<p>£200,000</p>	<p><b>Note 12.9 Capital Commitments</b></p> <p>A commitment of £200,000 was removed from the disclosure as it did not meet the Council's recognition criteria for disclosure.</p> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure accuracy of the disclosure and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>

<p>£45,000</p>	<p><b>Note 16.8 Officer’s Emoluments</b></p> <p>A missing termination payment to one individual resulted in a change in bandings from the £60,000 - £65,000 band to the £110,000 - £115,000 band.</p> <p>This amendment only affects the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure completeness and accuracy of the financial statements and compliance with the CIPFA Code.</p>
<p>Various</p>	<p><b>Note 16.4 Related Party Transactions</b></p> <p>Various narrative and formatting amendments have been made to the note and additional transactions have been added to the as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Income: £1,138,052</li> <li>– Payments: £22,143</li> </ul> <p>These amendments only affect the note and does not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure completeness and accuracy of the disclosures and compliance with the CIPFA code.</p>
<p>Various</p>	<p><b>Note 16.7 Senior Officer Remuneration</b></p> <p>Benefits in kind were missing from the disclosure for two officers, these totalled £1,076</p> <p>Additional disclosures were added to the note to explain the interim arrangements between the Chief Officer of People and Governance departing and the Chief officer of Law and Governance joining the Authority. Honorarium payments totalling £9,912 paid during the interim period were added to the disclosure.</p> <p>These amendments only affect the note and do not impact the primary statements.</p>	<p>To ensure completeness of the disclosure and compliance with the CIPFA Code.</p>



Various

**Various**

Several minor amendments were made to the financial statements relating to revisions of disclosures of information, narrative changes, casting errors or typos.

To ensure completeness and accuracy of the financial statements and compliance with the CIPFA Code.

# Audit quality

Our commitment to audit quality in Audit Wales is absolute. We 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 QAD\*, and our Chair acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2023](#).

## 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

\* QAD is the quality monitoring arm of ICAEW.

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Audit Wales

1 Capital Quarter

Tyndall Street

Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

Website: [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.  
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Governance and Audit Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b>
<b>DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an assessment of the implementation of the council's strategic 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.

## 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 strategic 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 council's strategic risk management policy and guidance 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 mitigations to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management. The report is made up of two parts:
  - Part 1 provides a self-assessment of the effectiveness of the operation of strategic risk management arrangements in line with the strategic risk management policy.
  - 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 who has agreed the update, and any key changes, such as adjustments to risk levels or mitigating action updates.

### Part 1 - Effectiveness of strategic risk management arrangements

- 3.3 The updated strategic risk management policy was agreed by Cabinet in June 2024 following consideration and feedback by Governance and Audit Committee. The policy aims to strengthen strategic risk management arrangements. Some of the main updates include:
  - Integrating related corporate risk management arrangements that the council has in place through which risks are identified and managed.
  - The requirement and responsibilities to consistently produce directorate risk registers, supporting the identification, management, escalation, and de-escalation of strategic risks.

- The further definition of the Council's risk appetite, using a 'risk appetite range' for various categories of risk that are based on organisational activity.
- 3.4 A period of transition in implementing the policy was agreed until April 2025 to allow the council time to strengthen arrangements in line with the revised policy, including:
- Developing directorate risk registers and embedding these in planning and decision-making processes.
  - Reviewing policy documents to ensure that risk, and risk appetite, has been considered and is captured.
  - Adapting and updating the format of the strategic risk register
  - Strengthening risk management training and awareness for all officers.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 provides a self-assessment of the effectiveness of the operation of strategic risk management arrangements. This incorporates an assessment of the progress made in implementing the new or amended requirements of the new policy. This also includes a section on the Council's risk control policies that are aligned to the strategic risk management policy, following a separate overview and assessment of these provided to the committee in September 2024.
- 3.6 In addition, some of the strategic risks identified in appendix 2 will have further risk controls in place. In reviewing the risks provided the committee should consider if there is any further assurance of the risk controls in place they require from risk owners. This could then be requested to be provided to Governance & Audit Committee or coordinated with the remits of scrutiny committees.

## **Part 2 - Risk Register updates overview**

- 3.7 The council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and has controls in place to assess, manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks. The strategic risk register regularly evolves and adapts in line with this. This will include adjusting the focus, detail and risk levels of risks where necessary. An overview of the changes to the risks and progress with mitigating actions is provided in Appendix 2. Some of the more significant changes since the last report to the committee in April 2024 include:
- The pre-mitigation risk scores for risk 3 have increased from 12 (high) to 16 (high) to reflect pressure on the capital budget. Post-mitigation risk scores remain unchanged.
  - Pre-mitigation risk scores for risk 4 have decreased from 16 to 12 for 25/26 and 26/27. The 24/25 post-mitigation risk score has increased from 8 (medium) to 12 (high); risk levels remain medium for 25/26 onwards. This reflects the immediate pressure faced within workforce planning but recognises the foundations that the people strategy has put in place to mitigate this risk.
  - Risk 8 remains a high risk (12) of meeting the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases. The pre-mitigation risk score has been re-assessed from 16 (high) to 12.
  - Risk 9 has been divided into two related, but separate, risks; one which focuses on school attendance and attainment, and one which focuses on behaviours that challenge, to provide greater clarity in managing and mitigating the risk.
  - Risk 10 has been refocused to reflect progress made in developing the replacement local development plan and the risk that this may not be approved by Council following public consultation. The post-mitigation risk level for 26/27 has increased from medium to high.
  - The risk on the delivery of public bus services, previously risk 14, has been de-escalated from the strategic risk register as it is no longer a significant risk to the whole organisation. This risk

will be monitored closely within the relevant directorate risk register, and may escalate to the strategic risk register in future, if needed.

- 3.8 This report does not include the full risk register or a full update of progress against mitigating actions. Scrutiny of that aspect of the work rests with Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and the full register will be presented to the committee at its December meeting. The full strategic risk register will also be presented to Cabinet for consideration in December. 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.

### **Chief Officer Commentary**

- 3.9 It has been agreed that a commentary from the responsible Chief Officer be added to this report. The responsibility sits with the Chief Officer for People, Performance and Partnerships:
- 3.10 "Having overseen the process of updating the risk assessment I'm satisfied that it presents an accurate assessment of the strategic risks facing the authority over the next three years based on knowledge available to responsible officers at the present time. The assessment of the risk management arrangements that we have in place is fair, identifying both strengths and areas needing improvement. We have made progress with implementing the requirements of the revised risk management policy, there are further requirements we still need to develop and embed in the council to make our arrangements more robust and strengthen their application."

### **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:**

Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager  
Hannah Carter, Performance Analyst

### **6. CONTACT DETAILS:**

E-mail: richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
Telephone: 01633 740733

E-mail: hannahcarter@monmouthshire.gov.uk

**Appendix 1- Self-assessment of the effectiveness of the strategic risk management framework**

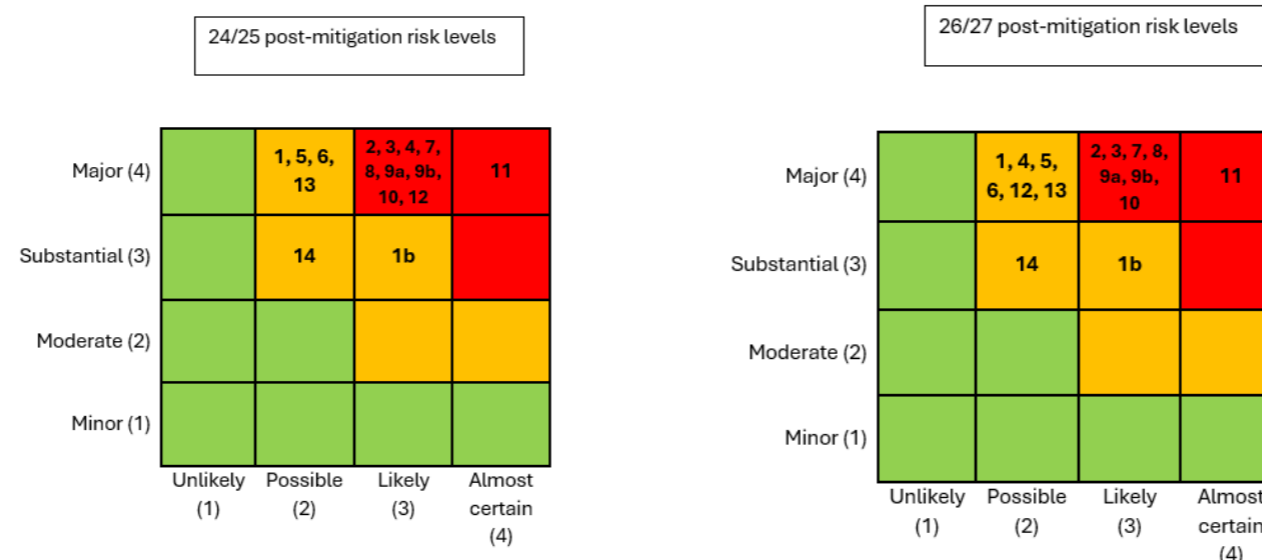
<b>Strategic Risk Management</b>			
<p>The strategic risk register captures the high and medium level strategic risks that face the council in line with the council’s risk management policy. This ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority</li> <li>• Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate</li> <li>• Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority</li> </ul>			
	<b>How well are we doing?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>	<b>Action &amp; timescale</b>
<p>Is there a collective view of the council’s strategic risk management arrangements and risk appetite that is communicated and understood?</p>	<p>The council’s strategic risk management policy and guidance has been updated and agreed. The council has also defined its risk appetite and agreed a risk appetite statement. These documents are available on the council’s intranet.</p> <p>The policy is being embedded in the council, the requirements have been integrated as part of the Council’s performance management framework, including in the service business planning process.</p> <p>The awareness of the policy, and the importance of adhering to it, needs to be further embed through the organisation. There is a need to develop a risk management training offer to support the effective discharge of risk management responsibilities.</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy and guidance</p> <p>Risk appetite statement</p>	<p>Embed the updated strategic risk management policy – April 2025</p> <p>Develop strategic risk management training and guidance – April 2025</p>
<p>Is strategic risk management embedded in the council?</p>	<p>The strategic risk register is updated regularly and available to all members and officers to view at any time. There are arrangements to formally review and report the whole strategic risk register six monthly.</p> <p>Directorate risk registers are being developed to strengthen the management of risks at a directorate level and facilitate risk identification and mitigation between a service (service business plan) and strategic (risk register) level. Two directorate risk registers are in the process of being established with arrangements being prepared to complete the remaining three directorates by April 2025.</p> <p>The starting point for identifying risks are often service business plans, where heads of service and service managers identify risk to their service. Quality assurance of these plans has continued to show service-based risk registers are</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy and guidance</p> <p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Service business plans risk registers</p>	<p>Embed the updated strategic risk management policy – April 2025</p> <p>Develop strategic risk management training and guidance – April 2025</p>



	often not robust enough or fully completed. This shows strategic risk management remains not consistently embedded at a service level. Further strategic risk management training, as part of implementing the updated risk management policy will be undertaken.		
Is there a shared understanding of the most significant corporate risks?	<p>The strategic risk register identifies high and medium level strategic risks and ensures risk levels are assessed, and mitigating actions are identified. The register is updated regularly, which ensures it remains focussed on the most significant strategic risks facing the council. It is available to all members and officers to view at any time and has regular reporting arrangements in place. This ensures there is a shared understanding of strategic risks facing the council.</p> <p>The latest update of the strategic risk register has embedded some of the requirements of the new policy, including risk category, appetite level and treat/tolerate categories. Further work is needed to embed the remaining requirements of the policy in the register, including target risk scores. This will be completed as part of the continued planned implementation of the policy.</p> <p>Service business plans not being robust enough or fully complete impacts on the effectiveness of service risk identification and management. This may subsequently be having an impact on the effective identification and management of strategic risks, although other arrangements in place, including the development of directorate risk registers, will limit this, strengthening service risk registers remains important.</p>	<p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Service business plans risk register</p>	<p>Embed the requirements of the strategic risk management policy in reporting arrangements – April 2025</p> <p>Develop strategic risk management training and guidance – April 2025</p>
Is there integration with other risk control arrangements that facilitate the management of risk?	<p>Strategic risk management is an integral part of the Council's activities to support decision-making in achieving its objectives. The updated strategic risk management policy identifies other corporate risk control arrangements that the council has in place through which risks are identified and managed and need to integrate with strategic risk management policy. These are Health and Safety, Emergency Planning, Insurance, Finance, Internal Audit, Information Governance &amp; Cyber Security.</p> <p>An assessment of the effectiveness of each of these risk control arrangements, following the same process that is used to evaluate the strategic risk</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy</p> <p>Overview of the effectiveness of risk control policies</p>	<p>Assess progress in implementing the actions to develop or strengthen risk control arrangements – April 2025</p>

	<p>management arrangements, was completed in August 2024 and reported to the committee in September 2024. The assessment demonstrates the arrangements in place to identify, respond, monitor and report risk. The assessment identifies actions that need to be completed to develop or strengthen the arrangements. An update on the progress with implementing these actions will form part of the next assessment of the effectiveness of risk control arrangements reported to Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</p>		
<p>Is there a robust risk management assurance framework in place?</p>	<p>There are arrangements to formally review the whole strategic risk register six monthly. These are facilitated by the performance and data insight team in liaison with risk owners and include review reports to Strategic Leadership Team and cabinet. The strategic risk register is formally reported to Governance &amp; Audit Committee, Performance &amp; Overview scrutiny committee and Cabinet. This provides assurance on the robustness of risk management framework in place.</p> <p>Directorate risk registers are being developed to strengthen the management of risks at a directorate level. These are being facilitated by the performance and data insight team in coordination with Directorate Management Teams.</p> <p>An internal audit review of risk management has been completed and was given a reasonable assurance rating. This identified strengths and some weaknesses. Actions to respond to the recommendations have been agreed and are being implemented. The findings from the review have informed the development of the updated strategic risk management policy.</p> <p>A review of strategic risk management arrangements is reported to Governance and Audit Committee six monthly. Risk management arrangements also form part of the Council's annual self-assessment report. These arrangements are providing assurance of the framework in place and informed areas for development identified in this report.</p>	<p>Strategic risk register</p> <p>Strategic risk management reports</p>	<p>Embed the updated strategic risk management policy – April 2025</p> <p>Complete actions in response to the internal audit review recommendations – April 2025</p>

**Appendix 2 - Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment Overview – November 2024**



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Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
	<i>Risk identified in the strategic risk register</i>	<i>Risk to delivery of Community and Corporate plan objective</i>	<i>Risk assessed by the level of likelihood of occurrence and impact/consequence prior to any mitigation</i>	<i>Risk assessed by the level of likelihood of occurrence and impact/consequence informed by the expected impact of mitigation</i>	<i>The rationale for adjusting the risk level since the last risk update report in April 2024</i>	<i>Identifies the risk category and appetite level for each risk, aligned with the whole organisation risk appetite statement</i>	<i>Whether the risk is being transferred, treated, tolerated or terminated – see policy for further detail</i>	<i>Significant planned mitigation actions identified for delivery in the risk register by November 2024</i>	<i>The progress made and impact, where available of the planned mitigation actions by November 2024</i>	<i>The owners of the risk, in line with strategic management policy, who have agreed the risk</i>

Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
<b>Risks to resources</b>										
1	Potential risk that:  Financial pressures and increased complexity of demand for services impact on delivering all of the council's commitments in the Community and Corporate plan, leading to longer term outcomes for the county not being achieved	All	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Strategic  Cautious	Treat	Regularly review progress made in implementing the commitments of the community and corporate plan, ensuring resource is targeted in the most pertinent areas  Review the progress of the Enabling Strategies which support delivery of the community and corporate plan to ensure alignment of resources with policy priorities	A six-month progress report and annual self-assessment report on the delivery of the community and corporate plan is completed.  The community and corporate plan measurement framework has been revised and agreed by Cabinet in September.  The enabling strategies which support the delivery of the community and corporate plan have now been updated. These will be subject to an annual review of progress, as outlined in each strategy.	Paul Matthews, Chief Executive & Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader

Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
1b	Potential risk that:  A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects	All	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Strategic, Service delivery  Cautious	Tolerate	Utilise members seminars and scrutiny workshops to engage and involve all councillors in the development of policy  Maintain a fully populated forward work planner of Cabinet and Council business	Members seminars are being used to share developments and involve councillors on significant forthcoming decisions. Scrutiny workshops are being held to seek councillors’ involvement in the development of proposals.  An established forward work planner is in place. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the cabinet and council forward plan and align the forward plans of each committee.	Paul Matthews, Chief Executive & Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader
2	Potential risk that:  Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures	All	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Service delivery  Cautious	Treat	Ensure that services deliver within budget, deliver savings targets and continue to identify, review and challenge pressures  Develop a set of budget proposals for 2025/26  Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-term financial plan	Regular budget monitoring is undertaken. The latest forecast is an overall in year deficit of £3,388,000 made up of in-year budget pressures alongside a forecast shortfall in meeting budgeted savings targets.  A programme of budget recovery actions is being implemented to achieve a balanced budget.  A medium-term financial plan update and budget setting process and timeline for the 2025/26 budget has been developed. Following receipt of Welsh Government’s provision settlement in December draft budget proposals will be released for public consultation in January, with final budget proposals due to be presented in Council in March 2025.  The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established. Progress with implementing the strategy will be regularly reviewed as part of six-monthly MTFP updates.	Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Resources & Cllr Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources
3	Potential risk that:  The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	All	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Pre-mitigation risk scores have increased from 12 to 16 to reflect pressure on the capital budget. Post-mitigation risk scores remain unchanged.	Service delivery  Cautious	Treat	Regularly review assumptions as part of the capital MTFP taking account of any new information that is relevant and the consequential impact on the revenue MTFP  Review and refresh the council’s Capital Strategy	The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) model was reviewed and updated as part of the development of the MTFS in July 2024. The Capital Programme for 2025-2029 will be reviewed and reconsidered during the 2025/26 budgetary process.  Capital and Asset Management working groups have been established to strengthen the scrutiny and challenge of the Capital Programme.  The Capital strategy will be refreshed and brought alongside final budget proposals to Council in March 2025.	Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Resources & Cllr Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources
4	Potential risk that:  Increases in the number of people exiting the labour	All	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	Pre-mitigation risk scores have decreased from 16 to 12 for	Service delivery, Governance  Minimalist	Treat	Recruit and retain staff more effectively	The People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024 and contains a specific objective, and actions, aimed at improving recruitment and retention. The progress of the strategy will be reviewed annually.	Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People,

Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
	market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, particularly for posts that require specific skills or qualifications, retention and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services		2026/27 – High (12)	2026/27 – Medium (8)	25/26 and 26/27. The 24/25 post-mitigation risk score has increase from 8 (medium) to 12 (high)				An e-recruitment system is being implemented to support the development of recruitment as a genuine talent acquisition process.	Performance and Partnerships & Cllr Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources
								Embed workforce planning to ensure the right skills, expertise and knowledge are available for future changes	The People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024 and focusses on strengthening workforce planning. The progress of the strategy will be reviewed annually.  A new work experience and apprentice policy has been developed to create a new pipeline of people being recruited and trained to supply the workforce of the future.	
5	Potential risk that:  Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	All	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Information governance, service delivery  Averse	Tolerate	Ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard the organisation’s data and systems from cyber-attack	The Council recognises that total elimination of cyber-attack is not possible, but the focus is on ensuring robust arrangements are in place to safeguard data and systems from cyber-attack via: physical barriers to the network, staff awareness, training and culture and structured governance, risk analysis and business continuity planning.	Sian Hayward, Head of Information, Technology & Security & Cllr Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources
<b>Risks to service delivery</b>										
	Potential risk that:  Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements	A Connected Place Where People Care	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Safeguarding  Averse	Tolerate	Continually monitor and evaluate safeguarding processes and practice and ensure good accountability for safeguarding	The most recent Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2024. The report evaluates the progress of the Council’s key safeguarding priorities during 2023/24, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2024/25.	Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health & Will Mclean, Chief Officer Children & Young people, & Cllr Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services
7	Potential risk that:  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	A Connected Place Where People Care	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Safeguarding  Averse	Treat	Develop and expand the Children’s Services Commissioning Strategy in response to the intention to eliminate profit from children’s social care	A commissioning and placement strategy has been developed, with a specific emphasis on the development of in-county residential and support living accommodation. This is aligned with Welsh Government’s ambition to eliminate profit from children’s care.  Two children’s homes have been commissioned through partnership models, one of which is a specialised provision for children with very complex	Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health & Cllr Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care,

Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
									needs. Finding appropriate placements for children remains challenging.	Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services
								Continue to implement the fostering strategy	The overall offer to foster carers is being reviewed to see where and how more foster cares can join the in-house team. Little progress has been made in the net numbers of in-house foster carers despite considerable effort and attention. The recruitment and retention of foster carers remains an area of significant challenge	
8	Potential risk that:  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	A Connected Place Where People Care	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Pre-mitigation risk levels re-assessed to High (12) from High (16)	Safeguarding  Averse	Treat	Rebalance reablement and long-term care within our in-house care at home service	There is increased capacity to provide reablement service to those who would benefit from it. While this is good progress the aim is to improve this further. In line with the aims of the commissioning strategy the focus is on further increasing the availability of in-house home care to support reablement as opposed to providing long term care.	Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health & Cllr Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services
								Monitor requests for Domiciliary Care to ensure demand is being met and delays are minimised	All referrals are triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Case reviews are being undertaken, applying the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act to ensure a strengths-based approach looking at individual, family and community based support where appropriate. Access to care and support is not always timely; however, overall there is increased capacity across home care.	
								Implement a 'place-based' approach to create sustainability in care at home services	The Council remains committed to developing a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. A comprehensive strategy for commissioning home care through increased block purchasing has been developed. Engagement with local providers to progress the strategy has commenced.  There has been an increase in residential placements and costs of residential care is having a big impact on the budget in Adult Social Care.	
9a	Potential risk that:  Failure to return attendance figures to those seen before the pandemic, particularly	A Learning Place	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	Recently revised risk	Strategic  Minimalist	Treat	Complete the consultation on the new Attendance and Engagement Policy and processes	The Local Authority Attendance and Engagement Policy has been updated to encompass all aspects of the Engaging, Belonging and Participating guidance issued by Welsh Government in October 2023 and will be consulted on with schools.	Will Mclean, Chief Officer Children & Young People & Cllr Martyn

Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
	among vulnerable pupils and those eligible for free school meals, could lead to a worsening in educational attainment		2026/27 – High (12)	2026/27 – High (12)				Work with schools and partners to better understand drivers of low attendance	Programmes such as Community Focused Schools (which focuses on the way in which families work with schools), Trauma Informed Schools and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) approaches have been implemented with schools to support attendance through engagement in. The Education Welfare Service are also working closely with schools and pupils.  Attendance in primary schools has improved to near pre-pandemic levels, secondary school attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels	Groucutt, Cabinet member for Education
9b	Potential risk that:  An increase in behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic may lead to harm to a pupil or member of staff	A Learning Place  A Safe Place to Live	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Recently revised risk	Safeguarding, Health and Safety  Averse	Treat	Support learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions or of Permanent Exclusions through the Education Support Team (EST)  Implement the outcomes of the Pupil Referral Service review	The Education Support Team has enabled those learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) or of Permanent Exclusions (PEX) to receive support from specialist professionals.  The number of permanent and fixed term exclusions from schools remain high.  The Pupil Referral Service (PRS) has been reviewed. This has helped to understand the current demand, while considering the future role and function of the PRS. The findings of this review will be implemented including increasing the capacity of the PRS to provide preventative intervention for pupils at risk of PEX and enhanced support for learners to reintegrate into mainstream having had a period of support in the PRS.	Will Mclean, Chief Officer Children & Young People & Cllr Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet member for Education
<b>Risks to policy priorities</b>										
10	Potential risk that:  The Council does not support the Replacement Local Development Plan, leading to delays in its adoption which restricts our ability to take forward key policy objective such as job creation, affordable housing development and the adoption of key policies to protect the environment and tackle climate change	All	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The 2026/27 post-mitigation risk level has increased from medium (8) to high (12) to reflect the risk of the deposit RLDP not being endorsed	Governance, strategic  Minimalist	Tolerate	Prepare a Replacement Local Development Plan to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities  Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the Rivers Usk and Wye  Ensure RLDP growth ambition is met by essential infrastructure	This Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan was endorsed by Council for a detailed public consultation in October 2024. The Deposit Plan sets the ambition for development within the county. Council will consider the results of the consultation in Summer 2025, following which the RLDP will be subject to public examination.  Dŵr Cymru has recently committed to providing phosphate stripping technology at Monmouth and Llanfoist waste water treatments works by April 2025.  A Local Transport Plan was approved by Cabinet in May 2024.  An Employment, Economy & Skills Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2024.	Craig O'Connor, Chief Officer Place & Cllr Paul Griffiths, Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development

Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
11	<p>Potential risk that:</p> <p>a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge</p> <p>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 demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities</p>	All	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Strategic, Environmental, Service Delivery  Minimalist	Tolerate	<p>Deliver the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy</p> <p>Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change</p>	<p>The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. This strategy is underpinned by four action plans to better reflect the breadth of work that is taking place: Internal decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change. Progress in implementing the strategy is regularly monitored by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.</p> <p>Welsh Government has produced The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, and in response, Monmouthshire is currently reviewing our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Flood Risk Management Plan; a new combined strategy document is being developed.</p>	Strategic Leadership Team & Cllr Catrin Maby, Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment
12	<p>Potential risk that:</p> <p>The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities</p>	All	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Service delivery, Economic  Cautious	Tolerate	<p>Support residents with the cost-of-living crisis through ensuring they have the right advice and support</p> <p>Review the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan</p>	<p>In October 24, the Community Development Team, together with partners such as Citizen’s Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others, held the first in a series of events across the county to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Representatives from Benthylg library of things will also attend to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling poverty interventions.</p> <p>A Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead was appointed in April 2024. It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option at this time. The Community Development Team, who coordinate delivery of our work in this area, will continue to work to their targeted work plan. Ensuring a joined-up, whole authority approach will be key to ensuring action is targeted and effective.</p>	Ian Saunders, Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing, Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health & Cllr Angela Sandles, Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement
13	<p>Potential risk that:</p> <p>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</p>	<p>A Safe Place to Live</p> <p>A Fair Place to Live</p>	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Service delivery  Minimalist	Treat	Prevent homelessness through Rapid Rehousing	<p>Through Rapid Rehousing the council has facilitated increased resources into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund.</p> <p>New arrangements have been established with partner agencies such as the DWP and Shared Benefit Service to support more people at risk of homelessness. The Housing Support service has been remodelled to include dedicated substance misuse support, temporary</p>	Cath Fallon, Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships, Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance



Ref	Potential risk that:	Council objective impacted	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Changes to risk level/score	Risk category and appetite level	Transfer/treat /tolerate /terminate	Planned mitigating actions	Mitigating action progress	Risk owned by:
									accommodation support and re-settlement support. This also includes dedicated support for young people with higher need.	and Partnerships & Cllr Angela Sandles, Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement
								Develop suitable accommodation for homeless people, including long-term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing and specialist provision for those with additional needs	The availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households is being increased through a range of means including partnerships with private landlords through Monmouthshire Lettings and more homes through new build developments and acquisitions. Accommodation is starting to be acquired for temporary accommodation use and the first approval has been given to re-purpose a council owned agricultural property.	
14	Potential risk that:  An increase in the number of legal challenges to decisions resulting in delays and increased costs	All	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	2024/25 – Medium (6) 2025/26 – Medium (6) 2026/27 – Medium (6)	Risk levels remain unchanged	Legal and Regulatory  Averse	Treat	Impact assess service changes and policy decisions	An established Integrated Impact Assessment template and guidance is in place and is completed for all decisions that require an assessment. These assessments are challenged by a panel of policy officers prior to decision.	James Williams, Chief Officer Law and Governance & Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader

### Appendix 3: Strategic Risk Management – Summary

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

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

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

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

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

<b>High risk</b>	The risk is <b>highly likely</b> to occur and the impact will be major. Management action/control evaluation and improvement is required coupled with continued pro-active monitoring
<b>Medium risk</b>	The risk is <b>unlikely</b> to result in a major issue, however, if it did the impact would be <b>significant or serious</b> . 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.
<b>Low risk</b>	The risk is <b>very unlikely</b> to occur and the impact will be <b>minor or moderate</b> at worst. Risk will be managed by seeking control improvements where practical and / or monitoring and reviewing at regular intervals

Risks are also given a score. Scores of 1-4 are low risks, scores of 6-9 are medium risks and scores 12-16 are high risk. Providing a score as well as a risk level allows the variations within risk levels to be more clearly stated.

Major (4)	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)
Substantial (3)	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)
Moderate (2)	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)
Minor (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)
	Unlikely (1)	Possible (2)	Likely (3)	Almost certain (4)

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COMPLAINTS PROCESS</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Governance &amp; Audit Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>28 NOVEMBER 2024</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide information which enables the committee to form a view on the effectiveness of the authority's complaints processes.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee use the report, which covers the 12 month period up to 31 March 2024, to seek assurance about the effectiveness of the authority's processes for dealing with complaints and compliments and makes recommendations where it identifies any shortcomings.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Councils provide services and make decisions which affect the lives of local people. It is inevitable that sometimes people will feel the authority has made a wrong decision, or has not fulfilled its duty in the services it provides and will access our complaints process to seek redress. The Governance and Audit Committee has a legal duty to assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and make recommendations in relation to this. While there is no specific role for the committee in the approval of the complaints policy itself, the committee may make recommendations to ensure its effective application. The following section provides an overview of the different components of the complaints process including the procedure and accountability to assist the committee in this role.

### Accountability

- 3.2 Overall accountability for ensuring that the complaints procedure is followed falls to the Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships and the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement. The Customer Relations Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the work including recording, allocating, monitoring, advising on and reporting on complaints.

### Policy and Procedure: Whole Authority

- 3.3 Our whole authority complaints and compliments policy and procedure follows the model that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) asked each local authority to adopt in 2011. The initial scheme was approved by Council with subsequently updates

being completed by officers under delegated powers. The policy was last updated in 2020. It was then reviewed by the PSOW in 2021 who confirmed that policy is compliant.

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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. Most investigations are carried out by local authority officers in addition to their core roles, there is no additional remuneration for conducting investigations.
- 3.6 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.

#### Policy and Procedure: Social Services

- 3.7 Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. It is a statutory requirement for the authority to operate a complaints procedure that follows the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and The Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.

#### Promotion and Awareness

3.12 General advice about the procedure for the public can be found in our complaints leaflets “Tell us What You Think” and “How to be heard”. Alternatively, people can contact the Customer Relations team for help and advice about how to make a complaint.

### Number of Complaints

3.13 Appendix one provides details of the number and details of the complaints received from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 along with figures for previous years.

### Timeliness

3.14 Stage 1 complaints under the Whole Authority policy should be dealt with within 10 working days. For stage 2 formal complaints we are allowed 20 working days for the investigation plus a further 10 working days for Heads of Service to respond to the report’s findings. The following table shows the number of complaints responded to within timescales:

Whole Authority Timescales	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Stage 1	Stage2	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	96 (62%)	2 (17%)	84 (61%)	0 (0%)	93 (68%)	0 (0%)
11 – 30 working days	48 (31%)	3 (25%)	32 (23%)	0 (0%)	28 (21%)	1 (50%)
30+ working days	12 (8%)	7 (58%)	21 (15%)	10 (100%)	15 (11%)	1 (50%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>2</b>

3.15 68% of stage 1 complaints were responded to within the ten day timescale in 2023-24. There was one stage 2 complaint responded to within the combined 30 day timescale during 2023-24 and one that took longer.

3.16 The number of Stage 2 complaints decreased significantly for this period.

Social Services Timescales	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	20 (57%)	1 (11%)	14 (42%)	1 (14%)	23 (52%)	1 (10%)
18 - 25 working days	5 (14%)	0 (0%)	6 (18%)	1 (14%)	5 (11%)	0 (0%)
26+ working days	10 (29%)	8 (89%)	13 (39%)	5 (71%)	16 (36%)	9 (90%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>10</b>

Social Services complaints continue to exceed the time limits at both stage 1 and stage 2. This is due to the capacity of staff to respond to complaints while having to prioritise their incoming workloads. Independent investigators are also taking longer to investigate the complaints and anecdotally, this can be due to their own workloads, availability of complainant / staff for interviews and cross-referencing file records of cases.

### Effectiveness of our process

- 3.17 In addition to this report. The Governance and Audit Committee receives a separate report containing the PSOW's findings in relation to complaints about Monmouthshire County Council. This is also reported separately to Cabinet. The [latest report](#), presented to the committee on 28 November 2024, shows that Monmouthshire is in the lower quartile for of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.31 per 1,000 residents. The range of from 0.15 to 0.58 with an average of 0.36. The Ombudsman's report highlighted that they intervened in three cases (9%) compared to a Wales average of 14%. This indicates that for the most part our thresholds and responses were considered appropriate and proportionate.
- 3.18 The Ombudsman's annual letter now includes the number of recommendations made to individual local authorities and the timeliness of our response. They made four recommendations compared to a Wales average of 19. Three of the four were not responded to on time. Two of these were one day late and one was eleven days late.
- 3.19 We have a number of guidance documents on the MCC Hub to assist staff on resolving complaints for customers in a timely manner. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) have provided free training on handling complaints, investigation and communication skills. This is ongoing with more staff scheduled to receive training in the coming year.
- 3.20 The committee previously indicated that some issues could be resolved more quickly if residents went directly to the department. An addition has now been made to the complaints and compliments webpage taking people to a form where they can report an issue via the My Monmouthshire app.

#### Learning and Evaluation

- 3.21 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. Complaints are generally resolved on an individual basis. Most formal investigation reports make recommendations for improvements to processes with teams responsible for putting in action plans. These are followed up to ensure the recommendations are addressed. However, there are a number of recurring issues. These are frequently down to human error and the pressure of workloads rather than the design of systems.
- 3.22 The PSOW's Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) was created under the PSOW (Wales) 2019 Act. The aim of the CSA is to drive improvement in public services. The CSA's task is to work with public bodies within their jurisdiction to support effective complaints handling; collate and publish data; deliver bespoke training packages. This ensures that our staff are trained to deal with complaints in line with the authority's policy and best practice identified nationally.
- 3.23 All local authorities provide the CSA with quarterly complaints statistics submissions. This information is published on their website alongside information from other bodies and the cases their office handles.



3.24 The CSA has provided Monmouthshire County Council staff with 6 sessions on handling complaints, investigation skills and communication skills. In total 33 staff have attended these sessions in 2023/24. More sessions are scheduled for 2024/25.

3.25 The authority's new Learning Management System was rolled-out in September 2024. This will improve our ability to target training for specific groups of staff, such as those conducting complaints. A training needs analysis will help identify where additional development is required to ensure colleagues are able to perform their roles effectively. The Chief Officer for People, Performance and Partnerships has also begun undertaking sample checks of responses to complainants to provide an additional level of quality assurance.

#### **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 the committee is able to fulfil its role to oversee the effectiveness of the authorities process for dealing with complaints, comments and compliments.

#### **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

**10. AUTHOR:**

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

**11. CONTACT DETAILS**

Tel: 01633 644647

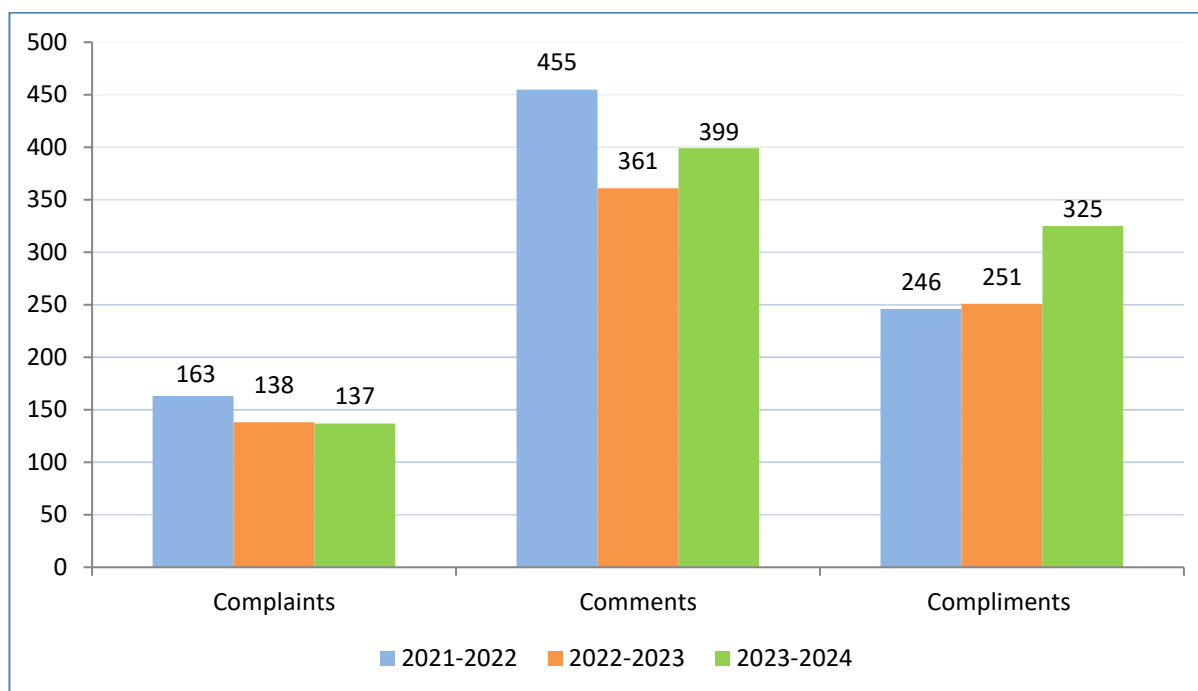
Email: [annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1

### Additional Details of Complaints, Comments and Compliments

#### Whole Authority Policy

The following table shows the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each of the three years to March 2024.



137 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2024. This is 16% lower than 2021-2022 with the highest number being in the second quarter and the number declining each subsequent quarter.

Services most commonly complained about were Waste & Street services, Animal Health & Trading Standards, Passenger Transport Unit, Highways & Flood Management / Operations / SWTRA, Development Management & Planning Policy, Revenue, Systems and Exchequer, Housing and Homelessness.

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 and in many cases these will have multiple contact points over the course of a year.

2 complaints were investigated at the formal stage and they were not upheld.

## Social Services Policy

Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. 51 complaints were received, 74 comments and 96 compliments were made about the service during April 2023 – March 2024.

### Comments

399 comments were received in the year ending 31 March 2024, 11% more than last year. These issues are important as they help the authority understand where problems may be arising that customers do not wish to formally complain, however want appropriate action taken to prevent issues arising in future.

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

Most comments were received in relation to Waste and Street services, Highways / Flood Management / Operations & SWTRA.

### Compliments

325 Compliments were received in the year to 31st March 2024 which is 24% more than we received in 2020-2021

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.

### Social Services Representations and Complaints

The number of Social Care and Health complaints have risen this year, mainly Children's Services complaints. 10 complaints were dealt with at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. The trend running through the complaints relates to staffing, quality of service and communication issues which features in most of the complaints.

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2023/24</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE &amp; AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>28 NOVEMBER 2024</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## 1. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose is to fulfil the expectation of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales that their report is brought to the attention of this Committee and Cabinet.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 Governance & Audit Committee to note the content of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and inform the PSOW of their considerations and any proposed actions. The PSOW is aware that due to the scheduling of meetings there would be a delay in responding to them.
- 2.2 That the authority continues to engage with the PSOW complaints standards work, access training for staff and provide the PSOW with complaints data. We have also fully implemented the PSOW's model complaints policy.

## 3. **KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales sends every Council an annual letter which provides a summary of the complaints received and investigated. This compares the number of complaints against the local authority which were received and investigated by the PSOW during 2023/24, with the local authority average during the same period.
- 3.2 The PSOW annual letter provides:
  - a breakdown of the number of complaints about the local authority broken down into subject categories.
  - shows the complaint outcomes for the local authority and the volume and proportion that each outcome represents for the local authority.
  - the numbers and percentages of cases received in which an intervention has occurred.
  - a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against councillors.
  - a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against town or community councils.

3.3 The PSOW received 29 complaints about Monmouthshire County Council. This is 6 more than they received in the previous year, although they closed 32, some complaints were carried over from the previous year. They did not investigate any complaints although they requested early resolutions in 3 cases which was agreed. Comparisons are shown below, noting that the categories used by the commissioner differ between years.

<b>Complaints received by subject: (PSOW definition)</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>	
	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
Adult Social Services	1	0
Children Social Services	6	7
Complaints handling	3	5
Environment and Environmental health	2	0
Licensing	0	0
Finance and Taxation	1	1
Housing	1	3
Planning and Building Control	6	4
Roads and transport	0	4
Community Facilities, Recreation & Leisure	0	0
Covid 19	0	0
Benefits Administration	0	1
Education	0	0
Various Other	4	4

### PSOW Comparison of complaint outcomes

Local Authority	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early resolution/voluntary settlement	Discontinued	Other report – not upheld	Other report – upheld in whole or in part	Public interest reports
Monmouthshire	6	10	13	3	0	0	0	0

The PSOW sought early resolution on 3 complaints which we agreed.

### Compliance performance comparison

The PSOW's annual letter now includes the number of recommendations made to individual local authorities and the timeliness of our response. The PSOW made four recommendations and 25% of them were complied with on time. Three of the four

were not responded to on time. Two of these were one day late and one was eleven days late.

### **Code of Conduct complaints**

There were 15 complaints that the PSOW decided not to investigate and one where it was decided no action was necessary.

### **Town/Community Council Code of Conduct complaints**

There was one complaint that was referred to the Standards Committee and one complaint where it was decided not to investigate.

- 3.4 This report and the PSOW Annual letter 2023/24 will also be presented to the Standards Committee and Cabinet.

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

This report provides feedback information from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The report does not seek to divert from the Council's corporate priorities and the continued delivery of the wide range of services provided through the Council to the public. As the report deals solely with feedback information, a Future Generations and Equality Impact Assessment is not considered appropriate in this instance.

## **5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

This section is not relevant as the work of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is outside of our control.

## **6 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

We will continue to work with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales office to resolve as many issues as possible at an early stage and monitor the number of complaints the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales receives and deals with.

## **7 REASONS:**

- 7.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) role is to consider complaints about public services providers in Wales and to consider complaints that members of local authorities have broken the Code of Conduct. The PSOW has requested that the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet considers the complaints that the PSOW has received.

**8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

There are currently no extra resource costs identified.

**9 CONSULTEES:**

Strategic Leadership Team

**10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

**Appendix 1:** The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2023/24

**11 AUTHOR:**

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

**12 CONTACT DETAILS:**

Tel: 01633 644647

E-mail: [annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk)





**Ombwdsmon  
Ombudsman**  
Cymru • Wales

Ask for: Communications



01656 641150



Caseinfo@ombudsman.wales

Date: 6 September 2024

Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby  
Monmouthshire County Council

**By email only**

maryannbrocklesby@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
paulmatthews@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
JamesWilliams@monmouthshire.gov.uk

## Annual Letter 2023/24

Dear Councillor Brocklesby

### Role of PSOW

As you know, the role of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is to consider complaints about public services, to investigate alleged breaches of the councillor Code of Conduct, to set standards for complaints handling by public bodies and to drive improvement in complaints handling and learning from complaints. I also undertake investigations into public services on my own initiative.

### Purpose of letter

This letter is intended to provide an update on the work of my office, to share key issues for local government in Wales and to highlight any particular issues for your organisation, together with actions I would like your organisation to take.

### Overview of 2023/24

This letter, as always, coincides with my Annual Report – “A New Chapter Unfolds” – and comes at a time when public services continue to be in the spotlight, and under considerable pressures. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – a 17% increase in overall contacts compared to the previous year, with nearly 10,000 enquiries and complaints received. Our caseload has increased substantially - by 37% - since 2019.

Page 1 of 12

ombwdsmon.cymru  
holwch@ombwdsmon.cymru  
0300 790 0203  
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ  
Rydym yn hapus i dderbyn ac  
ymateb i ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg.

ombudsman.wales  
ask@ombudsman.wales  
0300 790 0203  
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ  
We are happy to accept and respond  
to correspondence in Welsh.

During 2023/24 we considered and closed more enquiries and complaints than we ever have done before, and we reduced the average cost for each case and investigation. We started the year with a focus on reducing our aging cases, those over 12 months old, by 50% by the end of the year. These cases are often the most complex and distressing for the people making the complaint. I am extremely pleased to say we exceeded this target, reducing our aged investigations by over 70%. We are now well on track to meeting our objective to complete investigation of complaints within 12 months.

### **Public Services Complaints and compliance with recommendations**

In total 1,108 complaints about local authorities were made to us last year – broadly the same number as the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 14% of local authority complaints – a similar proportion to recent years.

We received 29 complaints about Monmouthshire County Council in 2023/24 and closed 32 - some complaints were carried over from the previous year. Monmouthshire County Council's intervention rate was 9%. Further information on complaints about your organisation can be found in the appendices.

We made 4 recommendations to your council during the year. To ensure that our investigations and reports drive improvement, we follow up compliance with the recommendations agreed with your organisation. In 2023/24, 4 recommendations were due and 25% were complied with in the timescale agreed. The remainder were complied with, but outside the timescales agreed or remain outstanding as at 9 April 2024.

Recommendations and timescales for complying with recommendations are always agreed with the public body concerned before being finalised, and we therefore expect organisations to comply within the timescales agreed.

### **Our Code of Conduct work**

My role is to investigate allegations that councillors have breached their Code of Conduct. Where an investigation finds evidence to support the complaint on a matter which is serious enough to require a referral in the public interest, these cases are referred either to the local Standards Committee or to the Adjudication Panel for Wales for consideration.

In 2023/24, we received 16% more Code of Conduct complaints than the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. My office made 21 referrals – to Standards Committees or the Adjudication Panel for Wales, an increase from 12 the previous year.

I am grateful to your Monitoring Officer for their positive engagement with my office over the last year. We will continue to engage with them on matters relating to the ethical standards framework, including Local Resolution Procedures this year.

## **Independent Review**

As you will be aware, I became aware of inappropriate comments, of a political nature, made by a member of my staff via social media. These comments were widely reported in the media. The member of staff in question was suspended and subsequently resigned. However, the comments prompted questions about my office's work on councillor Code of Conduct cases.

In view of the seriousness of the matter, I commissioned Dr Melissa McCullough to conduct an independent review of our Code of Conduct work, and I have published the full [Terms of Reference](#) for that review. I and my staff are engaging closely with the Monitoring Officer Group and the National Forum for Standards Committee Chairs in relation to this matter. I will be publishing Dr McCullough's final report on completion of the review and sharing it with the Senedd's Finance Committee this Autumn.

## **Supporting improvement of public services**

We continued our work on supporting improvement in public services last year and worked on our second wider Own Initiative investigation. The investigation includes four local authorities and considers carers' needs assessments. I am grateful to the investigated authorities for their co-operation and candour throughout the year, and we look forward to sharing our finalised report this Autumn. This will make recommendations to the investigated authorities and will ask all local authorities across Wales to make similar improvements.

We have continued our work on complaints handling standards for public bodies in Wales and now have 56 public bodies following our model complaints handling policy. These public bodies account for around 85% of the complaints we receive. We have continued our work to publish complaints statistics, gathered from public bodies, with data published twice a year.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a third year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 15% of complaints made to Monmouthshire County Council's went on to be referred to PSOW.

## **Action we would like your organisation to take**

Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Consider the data in this letter, alongside your own data, to understand more about your performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and your organisation's compliance with recommendations made by my office.

- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.

I would like to thank you, and your officers, for your continued openness and engagement with my office. Our information shows that local authorities are looking into more complaints than ever before and are using information from complaints to deliver better outcomes for the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michelle Morris in black ink.

**Michelle Morris**  
Public Services Ombudsman

Cc. Paul Matthews, Chief Executive, Monmouthshire County Council  
James Williams, Monitoring Officer, Monmouthshire County Council



**Factsheet**

Appendix A - Complaints Received

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>	<b>Received per 1,000 residents</b>
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15	0.22
Bridgend County Borough Council	59	0.41
Caerphilly County Borough Council	56	0.32
Cardiff Council*	149	0.41
Carmarthenshire County Council	69	0.37
Ceredigion County Council	32	0.45
Conwy County Borough Council	36	0.31
Denbighshire County Council**	31	0.32
Flintshire County Council	51	0.33
Cyngor Gwynedd	38	0.32
Isle of Anglesey County Council	38	0.55
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	12	0.20
Monmouthshire County Council	29	0.31
Neath Port Talbot Council	35	0.25
Newport City Council	52	0.33
Pembrokeshire County Council	40	0.32
Powys County Council	54	0.41
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	64	0.27
Swansea Council	81	0.34
Torfaen County Borough Council	14	0.15
Vale of Glamorgan Council	77	0.58
Wrexham County Borough Council	76	0.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>0.36</b>
* inc 2 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 1 Wales Penalty Processing Partnership		



Appendix B - Received by Subject

<b>Monmouthshire County Council</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>	<b>% share</b>
Adult Social Services	0	0%
Benefits Administration	1	3%
Children's Social Services	7	24%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	5	17%
Covid-19	0	0%
Education	0	0%
Environment and Environmental Health	0	0%
Finance and Taxation	1	3%
Housing	3	10%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	4	14%
Roads and Transport	4	14%
Various Other	4	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	



Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes  
(\* denotes intervention)

<b>Monmouthshire County Council</b>		<b>% Share</b>
Out of Jurisdiction	6	19%
Premature	10	31%
Other cases closed after initial consideration	13	41%
Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	3	9%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports Upheld*	0	0%
Public Interest Reports*	0	0%
Special Interest Reports*	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	



Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	16	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	8	59	14%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	3	48	6%
Cardiff Council	28	144	19%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	0	3	0%
Carmarthenshire County Council	8	60	13%
Ceredigion County Council	7	32	22%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	37	0%
Denbighshire County Council	2	32	6%
Denbighshire County Council - Wales Penalty Processing Partnership	0	1	0%
Flintshire County Council	8	57	14%
Cyngor Gwynedd	6	39	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	10	41	24%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	3	14	21%
Monmouthshire County Council	3	32	9%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	34	15%
Newport City Council	5	51	10%
Pembrokeshire County Council	7	38	18%
Powys County Council	7	53	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	11	63	17%
Swansea Council	12	77	16%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	14	14%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	15	71	21%
Wrexham County Borough Council	7	79	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>14%</b>





Appendix E – Compliance performance comparison

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Number of recommendations made in 2023-24</b>	<b>Number of recommendations falling due in 2023-24</b>	<b>% of recommendations, complied with on time</b>
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	1	100%
Bridgend County Borough Council	18	20	35%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	9	9	11%
Cardiff Council	74	75	92%
Carmarthenshire County Council	25	25	52%
Ceredigion County Council	23	23	78%
Swansea Council	29	32	63%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	1	0%
Denbighshire County Council	5	6	67%
Flintshire County Council	17	17	59%
Cyngor Gwynedd	12	19	74%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	26	24	92%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	11	9	56%
Monmouthshire County Council	4	4	25%
Neath Port Talbot Council	14	14	29%
Newport City Council	10	7	43%
Pembrokeshire County Council	24	23	96%
Powys County Council	18	16	31%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	26	26	77%
Torfaen County Borough Council	3	3	67%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	50	48	92%
Wrexham County Borough Council	16	19	42%



Appendix F - Code of Conduct Complaints

**Monmouthshire County  
Council**

<b>Decision not to investigate</b>	15
<b>Discontinued</b>	0
<b>No evidence of breach</b>	0
<b>No action necessary</b>	1
<b>Refer to Adjudication Panel</b>	0
<b>Refer to Standards Committee</b>	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>



Appendix G - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Decision not to investigate	Investigations				Total	
		Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel		Refer to Standards Committee
Caerwent Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Llantilio Pertholey Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Monmouth Town Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raglan Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1



## Information Sheet

**Appendix A** shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. These complaints are contextualised by the population of each authority.

**Appendix B** shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

**Appendix C** shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

**Appendix D** shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

**Appendix E** shows the compliance performance of each Local Authority.

**Appendix F** shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

**Appendix G** shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.



**SUBJECT: INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION  
CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES -  
EXEMPTIONS**

**DIRECTORATE: Resources**  
**MEETING: Governance & Audit Committee**  
**DATE: November 2024**  
**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To consider the adequacy and appropriateness of the exemption process from the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 1.2 To inform the Governance and Audit Committee of the number of exemptions requested by operational managers and to identify any noncompliance with the process or adverse trends.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 That the Governance and Audit Committee accepts and acknowledges the justifications for the exemptions provided by operational officers.
- 2.2 If the justifications are not accepted, then consideration should be given to calling in the respective operational officer and their respective Head of Service to further account for the reasons why they could not comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules at the time of the procurement.
- 2.3 That the Governance and Audit Committee receive an updated report in 6 month's time.

## **3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 To ensure compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in the way goods, works and services are procured on behalf of the Authority.
- 3.2 Reassurance that the exemption process from Contract Procedure Rules is operating as intended by managers procuring goods, works or services on behalf of the Authority.

- 3.3 Some operational managers procuring goods, works and services on behalf of the Authority may not be as familiar with Contract Procedure Rules and the exemption process as they should be.

#### **4. REASONS**

- 4.1 Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) were revised and updated in 2020/21 and approved by Council as part of the update of its Constitution in March 2021.
- 4.2 The previous report regarding CPR Exemptions was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee in June 2024.
- 4.3 A number of potential legislative changes with regards to Procurement are being discussed by UK Government and the Senedd which may result in the Councils Contract Procedure Rules requiring an update within the next 6 months.
- 4.4 Previously, managers have been invited to attend a Governance & Audit Committee meeting to explain to Members their reasons for seeking an exemption rather than complying with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The Acting Chief Internal Auditor is not recommending that any managers be called in to the Governance and Audit Committee as a result of this report.

#### **5. EXEMPTIONS - Background**

- 5.1 Although the Contract Procedure Rules were written to ensure a consistent and fair approach to how officers procure works, goods and services on behalf of the Council, there will be occasions where full compliance may not be appropriate or possible. Provided there is sufficient justification and appropriate approval for not following these rules the policy recognises this.
- 5.2 Management need to ensure that the use of exemptions is proper and they are not being used for convenience or to avoid following CPRs. Exemptions from CPRs are therefore currently administered by Internal Audit, although approvals are given by Heads of Service, Chief Officers and/or Cabinet Members.
- 5.3 As detailed within the previous report to the Governance & Audit Committee, a high percentage of requested forms are not being returned back to the Internal Audit team.

At the end of the period 14/21 (67%) of forms requested during the 6 months had not been returned. This caused additional workload for the Internal Audit team chasing for outstanding returns. This also raises the possibility that exemptions may not have been appropriacy approved in

a timely manner. It was noted that 3 of the requested forms were ultimately not required but Internal Audit had not been notified of this.

- 5.4 It is important to note that this process only captures the exemptions which have been requested via and returned to Internal Audit.
- 5.5 Comprehensive guidance documents and a set of FAQ's are available via the internal MCC Hub for Officers who conduct procurement exercises. This includes specific guidance on Exemptions to the Contract Procurement Rules.
- 5.6 The correct process is as follows:  
Officers are to;
- Obtain a sequentially numbered exemption form from Internal Audit
  - Record the reason for requesting the exemption on the form
  - Check that the Procurement Team are happy with the justification of the exemption and obtain their approval to proceed
  - Obtain the appropriate level of approval
  - Return the fully signed off and approved form to Internal Audit.

## **6. EXEMPTIONS - Summary**

### **6.1 EXEMPTIONS – 01<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 [450 - 470]**

Of the 21 requested exemptions.

- 16 have now been returned to Internal Audit and were correctly authorised
- 3 were no longer required after the form was issued
- 2 have not yet been returned to Internal Audit

6.2 The comments of the Acting Chief Internal Auditor regarding the requested exemptions can be seen within the table at Appendix 3. It was pleasing to note that where forms had been returned, these contained appropriate justifications as to why an exemption was required.

6.3 As detailed above, 2 of the issued exemption forms have not yet been correctly returned. The respective officers were contacted on a number of occasions prior to writing this report to ascertain the current status but no properly completed and authorised form has yet been received by Internal Audit in respect of these.

These issued forms now require retrospective approval as based on the information received the contracts have already been extended without the necessary Chief Officer / Cabinet Member agreement being obtained as required by the Councils Contract Procedure Rules. These are detailed within Appendix 3 (No's. 455 & 462).

- 6.4 It was further noted that a number of completed and authorised exemption requests were done so retrospectively following the previous contract expiring. Although adequate justifications were provided as to why the contract should be extended officers need to be aware of upcoming contract end dates and ensure that any extensions are appropriately approved in advance.

**7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Internal Audit team resource in chasing for outstanding forms which can impact on planned audit work.

**8. CONSULTEES**

Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Resources

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Internal Audit CPR Exemption Logs

**10. AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS**

Jan Furtek, Acting Chief Internal Auditor  
Telephone: 01600 730521  
Email: [janfurtek@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:janfurtek@monmouthshire.gov.uk)



**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES - EXEMPTIONS**

**APPENDIX 1**

**Contract Procedure Rules  
Exemption Forms Log**

<b>Report</b>	<b>Report Date</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Exemption Ref</b>	<b>No' of exemption requests</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
Report 1	January 2011	April 2009 to 31 Aug 2010	1 – 41	41	41
Report 2	November 2012	September 2010 to August 2011	42 – 60	19	60
		September 2011 to August 2012	61 – 92	32	92
Report 3	May 2013	September 2012 to March 2013	93 – 102	10	102
Report 4	December 2013	April 2013 to October 2013	103 - 117	15	117
Report 5	July 2014	November 2103 to May 2014	118 - 132	15	132
Report 6	December 2014	June 2014 to October 2014	133 - 141	9	141
Report 7	July 2015	November 2014 to May 2015	142 - 174	33	174
Report 8	December 2015	June 2015 to October 2015	174 - 179	5	179
Report 9	June 2016	November 2015 to May 2016	180 - 194	15	194
Report 10	December 2016	June 2016 to October 2016	195 - 207	13	207
Report 11	November 2017	November 2016 to May 2017	208 - 222	15	222
Report 12	November 2018	June 2017 to October 2017	223 - 246	24	246
		November 2017 to May 2018	247 - 259	13	259
Report 13	July 2019	June 2018 to October 2018	260 - 272	13	272
		November 2018 to May 2019	273 - 280	8	280
Report 14	May 2021	June 2019 to October 2019	281 - 291	11	291
		November 2019 to May 2020	292 - 300	9	300

Report	Report Date	Period	Exemption Ref	No' of exemption requests	Cumulative
		June 2020 to October 2020	301 - 312	12	312
Report 15	June 2021	November 2020 to April 2021	313 - 333	21	333
		May 2021 to October 2021	334 - 348	15	348
Report 16	October 2023	November 2021 to March 2022 * 5 month period	349 - 365	17	365
		April 2022 to September 2022	366 - 397	32	397
		October 2023 to March 2023	398 – 420	23	420
		April 2023 to September 2023	421 - 440	20	440
Report 17	May 2024	October 2023 to March 2024	441 - 449	9	449
Report 18	November 2024 (this report)	April 2024 to September 2024	450 - 470	21	470

## APPENDIX 2

### EXTRACT FROM CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

#### 4. Exempt Contracts

The following contracts are exempt from the requirements of Contract Procedure Rules:

- a) contracts of employment which make an individual a direct employee of the Council (this exemption does not extend to the recruitment of agency staff)
- b) contracts relating solely to the disposal or acquisition of an interest in land and property.
- c) Contracts for the execution of mandatory works by statutory undertakers, such as utilities providers.
- d) use of the Council's in-house services
- e) individual care packages or education placements where it is considered in the Council's interest or the Council is required to meet obligations under relevant legislation
- f) orders placed under a corporate framework arrangement or contract arranged for the Council by the Strategic Procurement Manager.
- g) unconditional grants by the Council
- h) In a genuine emergency threatening public health, injury to persons or serious and immediate damage to property, an Authorised Officer can take any necessary action to alleviate the threat. This power is limited to the alleviation of the threat and does not extend to any Works beyond what is strictly essential.

An exemption form does not need to be completed for any of the reasons stated in clause 4.

## 5. Exemption Process

- a) In exceptional circumstances an Authorised Officer can request an exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. No exemption will be considered where the value of such action exceeds the EU procurement thresholds or any subsequent UK Government threshold. Approval has to be obtained in the first instance by the completion of the "Request for Exemption from Compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules", which can be obtained from Internal Audit.
  
- b) Where approval has been granted Contract Procedure Rules shall not apply to the following:
  - I. Purchase by auction or works of art-artists
  - II. Single tender action where a single contractor or a proprietary item or service of a special character is required and justified.
  - III. Extensions of existing contracts where the extension is in accordance with the terms & conditions, specification, rates and/or prices of the original Contract award and where provision for the extension was provided for in the original contract notice.
  - IV. Extensions of consultancy contracts (where the combined original value and extension value do not exceed any EU/UK thresholds), where continuation of Services is deemed necessary, and where the particular knowledge and understanding of the requirement is intrinsically linked to the supplier, and no suitable supplier could undertake the work without undue delay or additional/further cost.

Poor planning or insufficient time is not justification for seeking an exemption.

## 39. Contract Extension

- c) Where the terms of the contract and the original procurement exercise do not expressly provide for an extension, the contract may only be extended in exceptional circumstances, where legislation permits and value for money issues

have been addressed. Such decisions will be made by the relevant Authorised Officer, Internal Audit & the Strategic Procurement Manager.

## APPENDIX 3

### EXEMPTIONS – 01<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 [450 - 470]

No	Requester	Details / comment	Estimated Contract Value	Service Area	Date Issued	Correctly Completed & Authorised	Date Returned to Internal Audit	Reason for Exemption	Chief Internal Auditor Comments
450	John Pearson	Election registers	£40k	L&G	04/04/24	Yes	26/04/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
451	Jen Bradfield	DBS provider	£45K	PPP	05/04/24	Yes	10/05/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
452	John Pearson	Digital Register	£192k	L&G	22/04/24	Yes	30/04/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
453	Andrea Jones	Extension of FISCAL	£37k	Res	29/04/24	Yes	09/10/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Retrospective approval for extension to a contract following expiry.  Form was not returned to Internal Audit promptly.  Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
454	Sam Mills (c/o Criag Williams)	Project Eliminate	£50k	SCH	10/05/24	Yes	15/11/24	CPR 5 b) II	Retrospective approval. The contract commenced in July 2024 but a fully completed form was not received until November 2024.

No	Requester	Details / comment	Estimated Contract Value	Service Area	Date Issued	Correctly Completed & Authorised	Date Returned to Internal Audit	Reason for Exemption	Chief Internal Auditor Comments
455	Pauline Batty	Frozen Plated Food (contract extension)	£220k	SCH	24/05/24	No fully completed form has been returned.			<p>This requires retrospective approval. The form was requested in May 2024 and the contract extension commenced in June 2024.</p> <p>There is no evidence of appropriate approval being obtained to extend the contract.</p>
456	Grant Harris	Animal Licensing Wales system development / changes	£58k	C&P	06/06/24	Yes	08/10/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
457	Deb Jackson	Purchase of pre-registered 4x4 vehicle	£32k	C&P	12/06/24	Yes	29/10/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Retrospective Approval. The exemption was requested in June 2024 with a contract start date of 01/08/24. The form was not authorised until 29/10/24.
458	Stacey Jones	Legend PoS System (contract extension)	£133K	MonLife	19/06/24	Yes	16/08/2024	CPR 5 b) II	<p>Retrospective approval following existing contract expiry.</p> <p>This was for the extension of an existing contract and justification for the extension was provided.</p>

No	Requester	Details / comment	Estimated Contract Value	Service Area	Date Issued	Correctly Completed & Authorised	Date Returned to Internal Audit	Reason for Exemption	Chief Internal Auditor Comments
459	Rachel Lewis	RDP Consultants	£8K	C&P	19/06/24	Yes	09/10/2024	CPR 5 b) IV	Retrospective Approval following existing contract expiry.  This was for the extension of an existing contract and justification for the extension was provided.  Completed form was not promptly returned to Internal Audit.
460	Rachel Lewis	LDP - Net Zero Carbon Based Report	£25k	C&P	17/07/24	Yes	02/08/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
461	Sandra Travers	Commission work from Centrica, Newport	£141k	SCH	17/07/24	Yes	04/11/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Retrospective Approval. The contract started in April 2024, exemption process was started in July 2024 but was not fully authorised until November 2024.
462	Nicola Venus-Balgobin	Dementia Respite Bed	£30k - £35k	SCH	25/07/24	No fully completed form has been returned.			This now requires retrospective approval.
463	Lisa Widenham	Merchant banking contract	n/a	Res	05/08/24	Cancelled - procurement advised that a full procurement exercise was required			
464	Peter Webb	Structural design check of the proposed Wye Active Travel Bridge in Monmouth	£32.5k	C&P	02/09/24	Yes	04/10/2024	CPR 5 b) III	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
465	Thomas Keyne	Locata - extension of licence	£22.5k	C&P	02/09/24	Yes	14/11/24	CPR 5 b) III	Retrospective approval for extension of an existing contract following the expiry of the original term (October 2024). The provision for an extension was included within the original contract.



No	Requester	Details / comment	Estimated Contract Value	Service Area	Date Issued	Correctly Completed & Authorised	Date Returned to Internal Audit	Reason for Exemption	Chief Internal Auditor Comments
466	Chris Price	2 Mobile Canteen Office	£70k	C&P	10/09/24	Yes	18/09/2024	CPR 5 b) II	Adequate justification was provided within the completed exemption request.
467	Chris Price	Extension of road markings framework	£600k	C&P	24/09/24	Yes	19/11/24	CPR 5 b) III	Retrospective approval for extension of an existing contract following the expiry of the original term (April 2024). The provision for an extension was included within the original contract.
468	Gareth Sage	Extension of street lighting contract	TBC	C&P	25/09/24	Yes	20/11/24	CPR 5 b) III	Retrospective approval for extension of an existing contract following the expiry of the original term (April 2024). The provision for an extension was included within the original contract.
469	Duncan Thompson	Activity Counters	n/a	C&P	25/09/24	Cancelled - a viable framework was identified			
470	Duncan Thompson	Access Ramp and Gate	n/a	C&P	25/09/24	Cancelled - now going to go out to market.			

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>INTERNAL AUDIT Progress Report for Quarter 2 (2024/25)</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Governance &amp; Audit Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>November 2024</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

To consider the adequacy of the internal control environment within the Council based on the outcomes of audit reviews and subsequent opinions issued to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Quarter 2).

To consider the performance of the Internal Audit Section over the first 6 months of the current financial year.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee consider and note the audit opinions issued.

That the Committee note the progress made by the Section towards meeting the 2024/25 Operational Audit Plan and the Section's performance indicators at the 6 month stage of the financial year which are currently ahead of the profiled target.

## 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Audit work has started in line with the 2024/25 agreed audit plan, considered and approved by the Governance & Audit Committee in April 2024.
- 3.2 This report gives brief details of the work undertaken in the year to date. The report also gives details of the Section's performance indicators for the 6 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- 3.3 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards came into force in April 2013 (updated March 2017) which the Internal Audit team needs to demonstrate compliance with.
- 3.4 The new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) were issued in January 2024. They will replace the International Professional Practice Framework, the mandatory elements of which are the basis for the current UK public sector internal auditing standards (the PSIAS). The

PSIAS are issued under the authority of the Relevant Internal Audit Standard Setters (RIASS). The RIASS have agreed to use the new GIAS as the basis for internal auditing for the UK Public Sector and have asked the UK Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards Advisory Board (IASAB) to carry out a review of the new standards with a view to identifying and producing any sector specific interpretations or other material needed to make them suitable for UK public sector use. Consultation is due to begin in September 2024.

The effective date of the new material developed by IASAB will be 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Until then, the existing PSIAS based on the old International Professional Practices Framework will continue to apply.

- 3.5 The year end opinion for 2024/25 will be based on the audit work undertaken during the year, cumulative audit knowledge from previous years on key financial systems along with any assurance gained from other parties where relevant.

#### **4. REASONS**

- 4.1 Since the start of the financial year, the Internal Audit Section has completed 23 audit jobs to draft stage from its 2024/25 Operational Audit Plan; 14 of these being opinion related and are shown in the table at Appendix 1.

- 4.2 In relation to audit opinion related reports, 8 had been issued in draft during the second quarter of the year;

1. School Improvement Grant - Unqualified
2. Housing Support Grant - Unqualified
3. Active Travel – Substantial Assurance
4. Rogiet Primary – Reasonable Assurance
5. Service Business Plans – Reasonable Assurance

- 4.3 Three 'unfavourable' audit opinions have been issued (for planned audit work) during Quarter 2.

6. Procurement Cards – Limited Assurance (Appendix 4)
7. Mardy Park Resource Centre – Limited Assurance (Appendix 5)
8. Facilities & Building Cleaning – Limited Assurance (Appendix 6)

The details and individual weaknesses of why these audit reviews were considered to be 'Limited Assurance' are included within Appendix 4-7.

- 4.4 One reactive unplanned review was completed during Quarter 2.

- Severn View Residential Home Imprest Bank Account - Limited Assurance (Appendix 7).

- 4.5 As detailed during the Quarter 1 progress report, 1 opinion job has been issued during the year which has been given a Limited audit

opinion and not yet reported to the Committee. This continues to be the case. After discussion with the Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee and the Deputy Chief Executive it has been agreed to delay reporting the findings of this review to the Committee. This is due to significant on-going work within the area in question, where the reporting of the findings may impact subsequent HR investigations and processes which are continuing.

A commitment has been made by the Acting Chief Internal Auditor to report the details of this audit and investigation to Committee as soon as possible. Consideration has been given to reporting these findings as a confidential paper, however, it was concluded that it would be in the public interest that the findings are shared fully upon the investigation conclusion.

- 4.6 Other audit work in line with the plan has started and site visits have been undertaken to a number of establishments. At the end of Quarter 2, 48% of the agreed audit plan has been deemed as being started or in progress.
- 4.7 An audit review of the Pupil Development Grant was planned during the year however, we were informed that certification by Internal Audit of the submission was not required by Welsh Government and this has therefore been removed from the 2024/25 audit plan.
- 4.8 Where reports had been issued in draft, but not finalised, by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, work has continued during Quarter 2 to finalise these. As of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, it is pleasing to note that all have now been successfully finalised.
- 4.9 Severn special investigations / reactive pieces of work have been undertaken during the first 2 quarters of the year. 5 of these have been closed / completed during the quarter, the other 2 remain outstanding and are subject to further investigation.
- 4.10 During the first quarter of the year the Acting Chief Internal Auditor was appointed as an independent investigating officer for 2 disciplinary investigations. These investigations have diverted internal audit resource away from planned audit work during the quarter. It is hoped that the investigation will be completed during the third quarter of the year.
- 4.11 Appendix 3 of the report gives details of the Section's performance indicators as at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- 4.12 32% of the 2024/25 Audit Plan has been completed as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This is ahead of target (30%).

## **5. SERVICE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 Heads of Service and service managers are responsible for addressing any weaknesses identified in internal systems and demonstrate this by including their management responses within the audit reports. When management agree the audit action plans, they are accepting responsibility for addressing the issues identified within the agreed timescales.
- 5.2 Ultimately, managers within MCC are responsible for maintaining adequate internal controls within the systems they operate and for ensuring compliance with Council policies and procedures. All reports, once finalised, are sent to the respective Chief Officers and Heads of Service for information and appropriate action where necessary.

## 6. FOLLOW UP AUDIT REVIEWS

- 6.1 Where 'unfavourable' (Limited Assurance / No Assurance) audit opinions are issued, they are followed up within a twelve month timescale to ensure that the agreed actions have been taken by management and that the internal control systems are improved.
- 6.2 No follow-up reviews have yet to commence during the year. The following reviews were subject to unfavourable audit opinions issued during the 2023/24 financial year and the table below indicates when the follow-up work will be conducted by the Internal Audit team. The findings from each of these reviews have already been presented to the Committee.

Year	Assignment	Opinion	Status
2023/24	Chepstow School	Limited	2024/25 – Q3
	Till Float	Limited	2024/25 – Q3
	Commissioning & Contracts	Limited	2024/25 – Q3
	Mileage	Limited	2024/25 – Q4
	General Expenses	Limited	2024/25 – Q4
	Children Looked After Savings	Limited	2024/25 – Q4
	Private Sector Leasing	Limited	2024/25 – Q4
	Democratic Services & Governance	Limited	2024/25 – Q4

- 6.3 The timing of a follow-up review is based on when the previous final report was issued plus enough time for management to successfully implement their management actions along with sufficient time to pass

to ensure the changes are fully embedded within the service. As the table details, this is a challenging programme to ensure all these reviews are completed during quarter 3 and especially quarter 4 of the year. The Audit Management team are planning workloads to ensure as much of these can be completed within the year as possible.

- 6.4 During the 2024/25 financial year the following unfavourable opinion has been issued which was previously reported to the Committee in September 2024. This review has not yet been followed up, this will take place during the 2025/26 financial year.

Year	Assignment	Opinion	Status
2024/25	Job Evaluation	Limited	2025/26

**7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**8. CONSULTEES**

Deputy Chief Executive / Chief Officer Resources  
Chair of Governance & Audit Committee

**Results of Consultation:**

N/A

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Draft Operational Audit Plan 2024/25

**10. AUTHORS AND CONTACT DETAILS**

Jan Furtek, Acting Chief Internal Auditor  
Telephone: 01600 730521  
Email: [janfurtek@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:janfurtek@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

#### APPENDIX 1

Internal Audit reviews from the 2024/25 Draft Operational Audit Plan where fieldwork has been completed and/or final reports issued since 01/04/24 are listed in the table below.

Internal Control Opinions give the auditor's overall conclusion on the control environment operating in each system/establishment under review. Opinions range from Substantial Assurance through to No Assurance (Appendix 2).

Draft issued indicates that a draft report has been issued and a response is awaited from the client before the report can be finalised.

### Status of reports as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

#### Internal Audit Services - Management Information for 2024/25 – Quarter 2

Opinion Summary	Number
Substantial Assurance	2
Reasonable Assurance	5
Limited Assurance	6
No Assurance	0
Unqualified	2
Qualified	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

Job number	Directorate	Service	Job Name	Risk Rating / Priority	Final / Draft	Opinion given
P2425-43	Communities & Place	Enterprise and Community Animation	Homelessness Assessment & Prevention	High	Final	Substantial
P2425-52	Customer, Culture and Wellbeing - Mon Life	Environment & Culture	Active Travel	High	Draft	Substantial
P2425-12	Children & Young People	Achievement & Attainment	Flying Start	Medium	Final	Reasonable
P2425-16	Children & Young People	Primary Schools	Rogiet Primary	Medium	Draft	Reasonable
P2425-32	Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	Childrens Services	Youth Offending Service	Medium	Final	Reasonable
P2425-40	Communities & Place	Highways and Flooding	Car Parks	Medium	Final	Reasonable



**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

<b>Job number</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Job Name</b>	<b>Risk Rating / Priority</b>	<b>Final / Draft</b>	<b>Opinion given</b>
P2425-60	People, Performance and Partnerships	Performance & Data Insight	Service Business Plans	Medium	Final	Reasonable
P2425-03	Resources	Finance - Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	Procurement Cards (2023/24)	Medium	Draft	Limited
P2425-20	Children & Young People	Secondary Schools	Caldicot School	Medium	Draft	Limited
P2425-29	Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	Adult Services	Mardy Park Residential	Medium	Draft	Limited
P2425-38	Communities & Place	Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services	Facilities & Building Cleaning	Medium	Draft	Limited
P2425-57	People, Performance and Partnerships	Human Resources	Job Evaluation / Equal Pay	High	Final	Limited
U2425-01	Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	Adult Services	Bank Imprest - Severn View Residential	High	Draft	Limited
P2425-13	Children & Young People	CYP Finance & Support Services	School Improvement Grant	Medium	Final	Unqualified
P2425-42	Communities & Place	Enterprise and Community Animation	Housing Support Grant	Medium	Draft	Unqualified

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

**Non – opinion / Added Value Audit Work**

<b>Job number</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Job Name</b>
P2425-05	Resources	Resources General	Audit Advice
P2425-08	Law & Governance	Law & Governance General	Audit Advice
P2425-25	Children & Young People	CYP General	Audit Advice
P2425-35	Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	Social Care, Safeguarding & Health General	Audit Advice
P2425-46	Communities & Place	Communities & Place General	Audit Advice
P2425-55	Customer, Culture and Wellbeing - Mon Life	Customer, Culture and Wellbeing - Mon Life General	Audit Advice
P2425-62	People, Performance and Partnerships	People, Performance and Partnerships General	Audit Advice
P2425-68	Corporate	Corporate	Fleet Management Board
P2425-71	Corporate	Corporate General	Audit Advice

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

**APPENDIX 2**

**Internal Audit Opinions**

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

<b>OPINION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>SUBSTANTIAL ASSURANCE</b>	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>REASONABLE ASSURANCE</b>	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>LIMITED ASSURANCE</b>	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>NO ASSURANCE</b>	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

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

<b>RISK RATING</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>CRITICAL</b>	Major or unacceptable risk which requires immediate action.
<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>	Important risk that requires attention as soon as possible.
<b>MODERATE</b>	Risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed.
<b>STRENGTH</b>	No risk. Sound operational controls and processes confirmed.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

**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.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

**APPENDIX 3**

**Performance Indicators**

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Target</b>
1	Percentage of planned audits completed	15%	36%	50%	82%	80% pa
2	Average no. of days from audit closing meeting to issue of a draft report	2	4	2.5	1.8 days	15 days
3	Average no. of days from receipt of response to draft report to issue of the final report	N/A	4.2	1.6	1.4 days	10 days
4	Percentage of recommendations made that were accepted by the clients	N/A	100%	100%	100%	95%
5	Percentage of clients at least 'satisfied' by audit process	N/A	100%	100%	100%	95%

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Target</b>
1	Percentage of planned audits completed	10%	32%			30% in Q2 80% pa
2	Average no. of days from audit closing meeting to issue of a draft report	2.7 days	1.7 days			15 days
3	Average no. of days from receipt of response to draft report to issue of the final report	N/A*	3.3 days			10 days
4	Percentage of recommendations made that were accepted by the clients	N/A*	100%			95%
5	Percentage of clients at least 'satisfied' by audit process	N/A*	100%			95%

\* These statistics are based on the conclusion of an audit review (final report stage). As at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, no 2024/25 audit review had been finalised.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

#### APPENDIX 4

#### **SUMMARY OF WEAKNESSES – PROCUREMENT CARDS (2024/25)**

The memorandum details the findings of an internal audit review of the Procurement Cards, focusing on a sample of transactions from April 2022 to January 2024 to ensure adherence to key financial and administrative controls within the Procurement Card Policy.

The audit uncovered several weaknesses, including improper use of procurement cards for staff meals, unclaimed VAT, missing VAT receipts, and inadequate documentation for gift vouchers and IT equipment purchases. A small number of transactions were deemed inappropriate, including purchases for team-building events and items that should have been procured through proper channels, highlighting the need for better controls.

The audit recommended a more comprehensive approach to reviewing transactions and updating the Procurement Card policy to include the advisory process, ensuring better compliance and monitoring.

RISK RATING	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL IDENTIFIED
CRITICAL	Major or unacceptable risk which requires immediate action.	0
SIGNIFICANT	Important risk that requires attention as soon as possible.	10
MODERATE	Risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed.	3
STRENGTH	No risk. Sound operational controls and processes confirmed.	Not examined

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
1	Procurement Cards were being used for the purchasing of staff and volunteer meals. In some instances, purchases had exceeded the maximum amount of meal allowance set by HMRC.
2	Full Safer Recruitment checks had not been documented for 2 Freelance workers who had contact with young people.
3	VAT had not always been re-claimed on vatable purchases.
4	The Unattainable VAT Receipt Form was not fit for purpose and was not always completed when receipts / VAT receipts were not submitted.
5	The distribution and receipt of 'gift' vouchers was not recorded and unused vouchers were not always stored appropriately.
6	For cardholders on long term absence the budget holder did not always notify the Procurement Card Administration Team.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>
8	Procurement cards have been issued without appropriately authorised Business Case Application Forms.
9	Transactions have been made where the use of a procurement card was inappropriate and/or spend was deemed inappropriate.
10	Monthly reviews of transactions were not comprehensive enough to appropriately highlight breaches of the policy.

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>
11	Some items were coded to incorrect account codes.
12	Invoices received for purchases showed invoice and/or delivery address as being non-Monmouthshire County Council locations.
13	Justification for the purchases made via procurements cards cannot be detailed within Business World to aid the Approver in their review of the transactions.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

#### APPENDIX 5

#### SUMMARY OF WEAKNESSES – MARDY PARK RESOURCE CENTRE (2024/25)

The audit was conducted as part of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan, focusing on the financial and administrative controls at Mardy Park Resource Centre. The audit aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the governance framework using a risk-based approach. The audit identified significant gaps, weaknesses, and areas of non-compliance, resulting in a 'Limited' assurance.

Key areas examined included:

- Security controls for buildings, cash, equipment, and other assets.
- Lettings policy for land and buildings used by third parties.
- Income collection, banking, and reporting.
- Imprest transactions and compliance with financial instructions.
- Authorization and compliance of supplies and services.
- Health and safety compliance and staff training.
- Management of residents' monies and valuables.
- Budgetary control procedures.
- Administration of Amenity Funds

Significant issues identified included:

- Inadequate security protocols and lack of CCTV.
- No community lettings policy and no charges for third-party use of land and buildings.
- Poor inventory management and inappropriate access to the safe.
- Inadequate handling of residents' monies and valuables.
- Lack of proper documentation and approval for Amenity Fund transactions.

RISK RATING	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL IDENTIFIED
CRITICAL	Major or unacceptable risk which requires immediate action.	2
SIGNIFICANT	Important risk that requires attention as soon as possible.	18
MODERATE	Risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed.	13
STRENGTH	No risk. Sound operational controls and processes confirmed.	16



**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>CRITICAL</b>
2.01	The Authority did not have appropriate arrangements with all organisations that used the land and buildings of Mardy Park.  As detailed in 2.01 a – e below.
2.01 (a)	There was no community lettings policy in place for the site.
2.01 (b)	Mardy Park did not charge third parties for using its lands or buildings.
2.01 (c)	There was no agreement in place between the Authority and 2 groups using the site.
2.01 (d)	A letting agreement was inadequate and had not been reviewed by the appropriate Council departments.  The agreement had not been appropriately authorised.
2.01 (e)	Documentation was not available to confirm that the Authority had approved the installation of equipment and buildings, such as shelters, polytunnels, sheds and pond, that third parties had placed on the site.
6.02	Risk assessments were not undertaken or were out of date.

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>
1.02	Appropriate security protocols were not in place to prevent unauthorised access to land and buildings:  As detailed in 1.02 a–f below.
1.02 (a)	There were various uncontrolled points of entry to the ground and to buildings.
1.02 (b)	Fire doors were identified as being left open.
1.02 (c)	The action plan from the May 2024 MCC Health & Safety visit raised issues around site access that were not yet fully addressed.
1.02 (d)	No CCTV was installed at site and the intruder alarm system was not working
1.02 (e)	There were door access code locks with infrequent or unknown updates.
1.02 (f)	Swipe cards automatically allowed access into all restricted areas of the building, were overissued and poorly tracked.
1.03	There was no inventory / asset register for the site.
1.04	Access to the safe was inappropriate.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
1.05	<p>The content of the safe was inappropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was no safe content register.</li> <li>• Unrecorded monies belonging to third parties and members of staff was stored in the safe.</li> <li>• Some items belonging to service users appeared to have been stored for some time.</li> </ul>
1.06	Money was kept in the safe in excess of the Councils insurance policy.
1.07	A Gift & Hospitality register was not held. Gifts had been accepted when not appropriate.
3.05	Café price lists were inadequate. Staff were offered discounted meal rates without appropriate approval.
3.06	<p>No daily till reconciliation was produced.</p> <p>There was no formal cash handover process between members of staff.</p> <p>A till float of £30 had not been declared to Internal Audit. The cash float was kept in a lockable fridge, overnight.</p>
3.07	The site did not have a Point of Sale (PoS) System. Sales by type were not recorded or compared to inventory / stock control records for kitchen or catering activities.
4.02	The imprest account could not be balanced to the level held on Business World.
7.03	Residents' "Record of Monies" cards were not updated regularly. A small amount of residents' money was unaccounted for.
7.04	There were no procedures on how to handle money and valuables in the event of a death of a resident, or in the case of a resident leaving the home.
9.02	Cheque signatory arrangements for the Amenity Fund were unclear.
9.03	Record keeping for the Deri Wing Amenity Fund was inappropriate, untidy and difficult to follow. There was no recent cashbook maintained to show all cheques raised and income received which had been reconciled to the bank account monthly.
9.04	Amenity Fund expenditure lacked proper evidence and approval. Some items bought were eligible for VAT relief, therefore purchasing via the Amenity Fund increased the cost.
9.05	Amenity fund income was not banked intact. Receipts were not issued for all income received.
9.06	<p>There were missing amenity fund bank statements and the balance could not be confirmed as correct during these periods.</p> <p>There was a lack of regular checks on the cash in hand balance and no bank reconciliations had been completed.</p>
9.07	The Amenity Fund was not subject to an annual audit.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

Ref.	MODERATE
1.08	Technology such as video doorbells, was not in use which could help staff with identifying visitors at the foyer door during unsociable hours. An electronic visitor management system was not used by the site.
2.02	The Service Business Plans for Social Care, Health and Safeguarding has not included review of the flat facility at Lavender Garden to ensure it still met the needs that were identified in 2018.
3.08	Laundry income record keeping was untidy and did not confirm that the user's eligibility was being met.
3.09	Monmouthshire County Council receipt books were not being used.
4.03	Imprest reimbursement claims could not be agreed to the individual receipts.
4.04	An imprest cheque could be approved by a single authorised signatory.  A staff member who had the debit card for the imprest account was absent from work due to long term illness and kept the card at home.
4.05	The sample included one imprest payment without a receipt and one payment with a receipt that did not match the amount recorded in the cashbook  The imprest records did not clearly show who was reimbursed for spend and who authorised the spend.
5.05	Purchase orders were raised after invoice date in some cases.
5.06	For the sample tested, supplier invoices were not always paid in a timely manner.
6.03	Training records showed that for some members of staff, courses were recorded as expiring over 6 months ago.
8.03	The financial impact of some activities e.g. community cafe, Lavender Gardens, were not easily seen and accounted for within the overall budgets.  It was not possible to ascertain whether the cafe and laundry service was making enough income to cover its costs.
9.08	It was not known whether the other bank accounts, besides the main one for Mardy Park Amenity Fund, were closed properly.
9.09	Cheque stubs from the Amenity Fund were not initialled confirming the details recorded on the stub were consistent with those shown on the signed cheque. Some cheque stubs lacked appropriate detail.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

#### APPENDIX 6

#### **SUMMARY OF WEAKNESSES – FACILITIES & BUILDING CLEANING (2024/25)**

The audit was conducted as part of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan, focusing on the financial and administrative controls within the Building Cleaning Service. The objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the governance framework using a risk-based approach. The audit identified significant and moderate risks, resulting in a 'Limited' assurance rating.

Key areas examined included:

- Guidance and procedural frameworks for governance.
- Costing and management of internal and external clients.
- Staff recruitment, training, and management.
- Safeguarding of assets, hazardous chemicals, and vehicles.

Significant issues identified included:

- Lack of a proactive quality assurance framework.
- Inconsistent pricing and charges not covering service costs.
- Absence of formal agreements with various clients.
- Non-compliance with procurement rules.
- Incomplete compulsory training for staff.
- Inadequate documentation of staff inductions and timesheets.

RISK RATING	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL IDENTIFIED
CRITICAL	Major or unacceptable risk which requires immediate action.	0
SIGNIFICANT	Important risk that requires attention as soon as possible.	18
MODERATE	Risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed.	5
STRENGTH	No risk. Sound operational controls and processes confirmed.	7

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
1.02	No pro-active quality assurance framework was in place. Where a re-active quality review was undertaken records of the outcome were not maintained.
1.03	There was no central recording and monitoring of complaints received by the service.
1.04	The service remained heavily paper based and where standard computer packages are used there were a number of manual interventions, resulting in inefficiencies.
1.05	Risk Assessments were out of date and there was no evidence as to when the Method Statements / Standard Working Practices had last been reviewed.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>
2.02	The fees and charges did not cover the cost of providing the service.
2.03	No written agreements existed between the Authority and Town Councils, the Police or internal clients.
2.04	Goods and services have not always been procured in line with Contract Procedure Rules. No written agreement could be located for a third-party contractor appointed to clean one of the Authorities public conveniences.
3.03	The service advertised for jobs outside of the corporate arrangements and were recruiting directly after receipt of a CV.
3.04	There was no evidence that all staff have completed the necessary training required by the Authority for their roles.
3.05	Department inductions were not being undertaken with new starters.
3.06	Staffing needs were not regularly reviewed and recharges updated to reflect actual service delivery.
3.07	Timesheets had not been provided by employees and the current format used did not contain all the necessary information. No mechanism existed to ascertain that employees contracted hours were being worked.
3.08	No secondary checks were undertaken one payroll batches had been input.
3.09	It was not always evidenced that Return to Work and Attendance Management Review meetings were being undertaken, as required by the Attendance Management policy.
3.10	Staff were not requested to submit Employee Disclosure Forms to declare any secondary employment.
4.04	Daily defect reports have only been compiled for 65% of days the vehicles have been used for.
4.05	Keys were not managed in a secure manner.
4.06	No inventory was maintained of stock or equipment.

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>
1.06	The Service did not have an office or procedural manual which outlines the mechanics of the services and the processes involved in service delivery.
2.05	Information in relation to 'who to bill' and in some cases the cost centre was missing from the budget spreadsheet.
2.06	The Building Cleaning Budget (D050) needed reprofiling, as the service was operating in a surplus despite contract amounts not meeting the cost of providing the services.
2.07	Schools' SLA agreements had been incorrectly re-charged.
3.11	Staff were paid for untaken holiday entitlement. This had not been approved by the Head of Service.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024

### INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 – 6 MONTHS

#### APPENDIX 7

#### SUMMARY OF WEAKNESSES – SEVERN VIEW IMPREST ACCOUNT (2024/25)

The audit was conducted to review the management and administration of the Imprest Account at Severn View Care Home, which had recently moved to a new site in April 2024. The audit identified several control weaknesses and resulted in a 'Limited Assurance' rating, indicating significant gaps, weaknesses, or non-compliance.

Key findings included:

- Inaccurate signatory records: The banking team's records included former officers, causing delays and increasing the risk of fraud.
- Improper control of the debit card: The card's PIN was shared, and it was used for purchases instead of just cash withdrawals.
- Excessive cash on site: The amount of cash held exceeded insurance guidelines, increasing the risk of loss.
- Operating above approved levels: The Imprest account had a surplus amount not reflected in the Authority's accounts.
- Lack of prior approval for purchases: Purchases were sometimes made using personal cards, and reimbursements were delayed.
- Inadequate receipts and documentation: Receipts were often missing or lacked necessary information for VAT reclaim.
- Inappropriate purchases: Some purchases should have been made through established suppliers or using procurement cards.
- Inaccurate cash fund reconciliation: Discrepancies were found in the reconciliation of multiple funds.

RISK RATING	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL IDENTIFIED
CRITICAL	Major or unacceptable risk which requires immediate action.	0
SIGNIFICANT	Important risk that requires attention as soon as possible.	8
MODERATE	Risk partially mitigated but should still be addressed.	0
STRENGTH	No risk. Sound operational controls and processes confirmed.	Not examined

Ref.	SIGNIFICANT
1.	The banking team's authorised signatory records included former officers and did not align with the information provided by the establishment.
2.	The Imprest Account's debit card was not properly controlled. The PIN was shared, and there seemed to be no restrictions on online purchases.
3.	The amount of cash held on site exceeded the limits recommended by the insurance guidelines.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2024**

**INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION PROGRESS REPORT  
2024/25 – 6 MONTHS**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>
4.	The Imprest account was operating above its approved level. Claims were not always timely and sometimes amounted to more than the funds approved level.
5.	Purchases did not demonstrate prior approval processes in place. Purchases were sometimes made using personal credit / debit cards and reimbursements were not always in a timely manner.
6.	Appropriate receipts / vouchers were not always retained to support the items purchased. The records sometimes lacked the necessary information to support the reclaim of VAT.
7.	Purchases made through the Imprest account were not always suitable and could have been procured using other avenues such as a purchase order, procurement card, or fuel card.
8.	The imprest cash fund could not be reconciled to the supporting cash book. Not all transactions / fund transfers appeared to be documented.

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## GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25

**29TH APRIL 2024**

Reports to be with Peter by – 15th April 2024  
 Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 17th April 2024  
 Pre-meeting – 19th April 2024  
 Finalised reports to committee section – 19th April 2024  
 Despatch by committee section – 19th April 2024

Report Title	Report Author	Terms of reference category				
		Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update	Richard Jones		✓			
Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework	Richard Jones		✓			
Internal Audit Plan 24/25	Jan Furtek				✓	
Implementation of Internal Audit agreed recommendations	Jan Furtek				✓	
Proposed future delivery model for the Internal Audit Service	Peter Davies				✓	
Audit Wales Performance Data Review	Charlotte Owen					✓

**6TH JUNE 2024**

Reports to be with Peter by – 17th May 2024  
 Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 21st May 2024  
 Pre-meeting – 23rd May 2024  
 Finalised reports to committee section – 28th May 2024  
 Despatch by committee section – 29th May 2024

Report Title	Report Author	Terms of reference category				
		Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
Draft Freedom of Information (FOI) & Data Protection Act (DPA) Breaches & Data Subject Access Request (DSARs)	Sian Hayward		✓			
CPR Exemptions - 6 monthly update to 31st March 2024	Jan Furtek				✓	
Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24	Jan Furtek				✓	
2023/4 Treasury Outturn report	Jonathan Davies	✓				
Draft Financial Strategy	Jon Davies/Peter Davies	✓				
People Strategy	Matt Gatehouse		✓			

Annual Audit Plan 24-25	Audit Wales					✓
Audit Wales Capital Programme Management Review	Audit Wales					✓
Audit Wales MCC Annual Audit Summary 2023	Audit Wales					✓
Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable quarterly update - March 2024	Audit Wales					✓

**10TH JULY 2024**

**Reports to be with Peter by – 21st June 2024**  
**Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 25th June 2024**  
**Pre-meeting – 27th June 2024**  
**Finalised reports to committee section – 1st July 2024**  
**Despatch by committee section – 2nd July 2024**

Report Title	Report Author	Terms of reference category				
		Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
Financial Strategy	Jon Davies/Peter Davies	✓				
Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24	Jan Furtek				✓	
Internal Audit Plan and Annual Report for Shared Resource Service (SRS)	TCBC IA Team				✓	
Governance & Audit Committee Annual report 2023/4	Chair – Andrew Blackmore		✓			
Audit Wales Digital Review	Charlotte Owen					✓

**31st July 2024**

**Reports to be with Peter by – 9th July 2024**  
**Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 11th July 2024**  
**Pre-meeting – 15th July 2024**  
**Finalised reports to committee section – 22nd July 2024**  
**Despatch by committee section – 23rd July 2024**

Report Title	Report Author	Terms of reference category				
		Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
2024/5 Q1 - Treasury report	Jon Davies	✓				
2023/4 Draft WCF/Mon Farm Statement of Accounts	Jon Davies	✓				
2023/24 MCC Draft Statement of Accounts	Jon Davies	✓				

**5TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

Reports to be with Peter by – 2nd August 2024  
 Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 6th August 2024  
 Pre-meeting – 8th August 2024  
 Finalised reports to committee section – 27th August 2024  
 Despatch by committee section – 28th August 2024

Report Title	Report Author	Terms of reference category				
		Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
Initial assessment of corporate risk control arrangements	Richard Jones		✓			
Internal Audit Quarterly progress report (Q1)	Jan Furtek				✓	
Draft Self Assessment Report	Richard Jones		✓			

**17TH OCTOBER 2024**

Reports to be with Peter by – 1st October 2024  
 Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 3rd October 2024  
 Pre-meeting – 7th October 2024  
 Finalised reports to committee section – 8th October 2024  
 Despatch by committee section – 9th October 2024

Report Title	Report Author	Terms of reference category				
		Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress update	Richard Jones		✓			
Audit Grants report	Audit Wales - Rachel Freitag					✓
Audit Wales Financial Sustainability Review	Audit Wales					✓
Annual Audit Plan 22-23 Welsh Church Funds	Rachel Freitag					✓

**28TH NOVEMBER 2024**

Reports to be with Peter by – 12th November 2024  
 Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 14th November 24  
 Pre-meeting – 18th November 2024  
 Finalised reports to committee section – 19th November 2024  
 Despatch by committee section – 20th November 2024

		Terms of reference category				
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Report Title	Report Author	Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
24/25 Q2 Treasury report	Jon Davies	✓				
2023/24 MCC Statement of Accounts Final	Jon Davies	✓				
ISA260 response to accounts	Rachel Freitag/Jon Davies					✓
Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework and summary of wider arrangements	Richard Jones		✓			
CPR Exemptions - 6 monthly update to 30th September 2024	Jan Furtek				✓	
Whole Authority annual complaints report	Annette Evans			✓		
Internal Audit quarterly progress report (Q2)	Jan Furtek				✓	
The Ombudsmans's Annual Letter - 2022/23	Annette Evans			✓		

**16TH JANUARY 2025**

- Reports to be with Peter by – 20th December 2024
- Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting – 2nd January 2025
- Pre-meeting – 6th January 2025
- Finalised reports to committee section – 7th January 2025
- Despatch by committee section – 8th January 2025

Terms of reference category						
Report Title	Report Author	Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
2023/4 WCF/Mon Farm Statement of Accounts Final	Jon Davies	✓				
ISA260 for trust funds	Rachel Freitag/Jon Davies					✓
Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Risk Assessment	Jan Furtek					✓

**20TH FEBRUARY 2025**

- Reports to be with Peter by –
- Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting –
- Pre-meeting – 10th February 2024
- Finalised reports to committee section –
- Despatch by committee section –

Terms of reference category						

Report Title	Report Author	Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
2024/25 Q3 Treasury report	Jon Davies	✓				
Statement on the robustness of the budget process and the adequacy of reserves	Peter Davies	✓				
2025/26 Capital Strategy and Treasury Strategy	Jon Davies	✓				
Cyber Security	Sian Hayward		✓			
Self Assessment of Performance Management arrangements	Richard Jones		✓			
MCC Fraud, Corruption & Bribery Risk Assessment and NFI Self Assessment	Peter Davies					
Internal Audit Quarterly Progress report (Q3)	Jan Furtek					✓

**13TH MARCH 2025**

Reports to be with Peter by –  
 Reports to be with Wendy Barnard/Chair prior to pre-meeting –  
 Pre-meeting –  
 Finalised reports to committee section –  
 Despatch by committee section –

Terms of reference category						
Report Title	Report Author	Financial Affairs	Risk, Internal Control, Performance & Corporate Governance	Complaints	Internal Audit	External Audit
Draft Internal Audit Plan 2025/26	Jan Furtek				✓	

**TO BE PUT ON A FUTURE MEETING AGENDA BUT DATES NOT YET CONFIRMED**  
 Presentation on Global Internal Audit Standards/Update of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards  
 Review of MCC Internal Audit Charter

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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, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 17th October, 2024 at 2.00 pm

**PRESENT:** A. Blackmore (Chairman)  
County Councillor Tony Easson, (Vice Chairman)

Lay Members: C. Prosser, M. Veale, R. Guest,

County Councillor: Sara Burch, John Crook, David Jones and Peter Strong

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Davies	Acting Chief Executive
Jan Furtek	Acting Chief Internal Auditor
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Charlotte Owen	Audit Wales Officer
Richard Jones	Performance and Data Insight Manager
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
Rachel Freitag	Audit Wales Officer
Hannah Carter	Performance Analyst

### APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy and Ann Webb

#### 1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

#### 2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

#### 3. To note the Action List from the previous meeting.

No action points were outstanding.

#### 4. Audit Wales Grants Report

The Audit Wales Officer presented the Audit Wales Grants Report. Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/lHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=SXD3W3EtvJGaYKBf&t=67](https://www.youtube.com/live/lHNIJuQL_v8?si=SXD3W3EtvJGaYKBf&t=67)

The report was noted.

#### 5. Audit Wales Financial Sustainability

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 17th October, 2024 at 2.00 pm

The Audit Wales Officer presented the Financial Sustainability Report. The Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer presented the Council's Response to the paper.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=0y4fQhOfxDGZR-XA&t=618](https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL_v8?si=0y4fQhOfxDGZR-XA&t=618)

The report was noted.

#### **6. Annual Audit Plan 22.23 Welsh Church Funds**

The Audit Wales Officer presented the Annual Audit Plan 2023/24.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=lyNg\\_rc8s1ySMitP&t=1360](https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL_v8?si=lyNg_rc8s1ySMitP&t=1360)

The report was noted.

#### **7. Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update**

The Performance Analyst presented the Audit Wales Work Programme Council Progress Update Report. Committee Members were invited to ask questions:

[https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=Jq\\_U3t7HynHJf\\_I\\_&t=1431](https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL_v8?si=Jq_U3t7HynHJf_I_&t=1431)

As per the report recommendations, Committee Members

1. scrutinised the council's response to the Audit Wales work programme, and sought assurance that adequate progress is being made.
2. considered referring any issues contained within Audit Wales national studies to other committees for consideration where they identified there are findings of particular relevance to the council that need further scrutiny. In doing so, it was resolved to request that the relevant scrutiny committee reviews the success of Active Travel schemes and the expectations and aspirations of local residents.

The report was noted.

#### **8. Presentation on the new Global Internal Audit Standards and the Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government**

The Governance and Audit Committee received a presentation from the Interim Chief Internal Auditor on the new Global Internal Audit Standards and the Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government. Committee Members were given the opportunity to ask questions:

[https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=Vbh6H-XA9\\_K0Nocx&t=3170](https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL_v8?si=Vbh6H-XA9_K0Nocx&t=3170)

The Interim Chief Internal Auditor was thanked for the presentation.

#### **9. Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan**

The Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan was noted.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=w1KySnxTv6cEe3\\_n&t=4509](https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL_v8?si=w1KySnxTv6cEe3_n&t=4509)

#### **10. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting**



## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held  
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 17th October, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL\\_v8?si=C4HWSdl4MNR3J0WP&t=4523](https://www.youtube.com/live/IHNIJuQL_v8?si=C4HWSdl4MNR3J0WP&t=4523)

11. **Date of Next Meeting: 28th November 2024 at 2.00pm**

**Meeting ended at 3.17 pm**

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