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Tuesday, 13 May 2025

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk** on **Wednesday, 21st May, 2025,** at **4.30 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

3. PLACEMAKING GRANT PROGRAMME 2025/26-2026/27   1 - 26

    Division/Wards Affected: ABERGAVENNY, CALDICOT, CHEPSTOW, MAGOR WITH UNDY, MONMOUTH, USK

    Purpose: This report seeks Cabinet's agreement to an indicative programme for delivery of town centre regeneration projects in Monmouthshire in 2025/26 and 2026/27 using funding allocated from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant

    Author: Daniel Fordham, Regeneration Manager

    Contact Details: danielfordham@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4. ACTIVE GWENT SPORT PARTNERSHIP REPORT   27 - 40

    Division/Wards Affected: All

    Purpose: To seek Cabinet Member approval to enter a formal partnership for Sport Development in the Gwent region, with Sport Wales and the other four Gwent local authorities.

    Author: Nick John, Head of Leisure and Wellbeing.
    Stacey Jones, Performance, Finance and Resource Manager

    Contact Details: nickjohn@monmouthshire.gov.uk
    staceyjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk

5. MARCHES FORWARD PARTNERSHIP   41 - 66

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To provide an update on the collaborative "Marches Forward Partnership" with neighbouring local authorities, Herefordshire Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Council.

Authors: Peter Davies – Assistant Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Resources, S151 Officer
Will McLean – Strategic Director, Learning, Skills and Economy
Cath Fallon – Head of Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation

Contact Details: Peterdavies@Monmouthshire.gov.uk
Willmclean@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk

6.   DIGITAL, DATA AND TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATION

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To develop proposals to build on existing collaborative arrangements in place for the provision of technology services through the Shared Resource Service. Expanding these to include digital, data and information governance services will generate economies of scale enabling the authority to access expertise to accelerate progress against delivery of priorities set in the Community and Corporate Plan and the Council's Digital and Data Strategy.

Author: Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships
Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive

Contact Details: matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk
peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk

7.   Y PRENTIS - SHARED CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to consider the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme as a limited company by guarantee, to become a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Shared Apprentice Scheme – a limited company by guarantee with charitable status.

Authors: Will McLean, Chief Officer Learning Skills and Economy
Hannah Jones, Head of Economy Employment and Skills

Contact Details: willMcLean@monmouthshire.gov.uk
hannahjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk

8.   LETTING OF THE FORMER ABERGAVENNY LIBRARY

Division/Wards Affected: All

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	**Leader** Lead Officers – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation, including DDAT Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships including CJCs. PSBs and cross boarder Emergency Planning	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	**Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader** Lead Officers – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor Economic Strategy Skills and Employment Replacement Local Development Plan Placemaking and the development of market and affordable housing Placemaking and Transforming Towns Car parking and civil parking enforcement Development Management Building Control	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	**Cabinet Member for Resources** Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Revenue and Benefits Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Strategic procurement	Llanfoist & Govilon
Martyn Groucutt	**Cabinet Member for Education** Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education School standards and improvement	Lansdown

	Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport	
Ian Chandler	**Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services** Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers Children's services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health Wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	**Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment** Lead Officers – Debra Hill-Howells, Craig O'Connor, Ian Saunders Decarbonisation Transport Planning Highways and MCC Fleet Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces and parks Pavements and Back lanes Flood Alleviation Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and River health	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	**Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement** Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Ian Saunders, Jane Rogers, James Williams Community development, inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars, communications, public relations and marketing Leisure centres, play and sport Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Ethics and standards Welsh Language Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Protection, and Licencing	Magor East with Undy

| Sara Burch | **Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism**
Lead Officers – Craig O'Connor, Ian Saunders

Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture
Homelessness, Temporary accommodation, private sector housing, (empty homes leasing schemes, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive technology),
Allocation of social housing
Broadband connectivity
Active Travel
Countryside Access and Rights of Way
Tourism Development and Cultural Services | Cantref |

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.

SUBJECT:	**PLACEMAKING GRANT PROGRAMME 2025/26-2026/27**
MEETING:	**CABINET**
DATE:	**21 MAY 2025**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**ABERGAVENNY, CALDICOT, CHEPSTOW, MAGOR WITH UNDY, MONMOUTH, USK**

1.   PURPOSE:

1.1.   This report seeks Cabinet's agreement to an indicative programme for delivery of town centre regeneration projects in Monmouthshire in 2025/26 and 2026/27 using funding allocated from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1.   That Cabinet agrees the proposed indicative Placemaking Grant programme for delivery in 2025/26 and 2026/27, and authorises the Chief Officer, Place, to prioritise and adjust the programme as needed in liaison with the Cabinet Member and informed by consultation with local placemaking steering and delivery groups.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1.   Placemaking Grant is one of a number of funding streams which comprise the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme for regeneration and placemaking delivery in town centres. Placemaking Grant provides capital funding to support a range of types of regeneration projects requiring up to £300,000 of Welsh Government funding.

3.2.   Six town centres in Monmouthshire are eligible for Transforming Towns funding. These are in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow, Magor with Undy, Monmouth and Usk.

3.3.   To access Transforming Towns funding, The Welsh Government requires a placemaking plan – a strategy which offers a vision for the town centre, considers the challenges and opportunities it faces, and propose actions and interventions to realise the vision and address the challenges and opportunities – or equivalent document to be in place or in development for the town centre.

3.4.   The Council has worked with town councils and other stakeholders to develop placemaking plans for each town centre in the county. The status of these placemaking plans is as follows

- Abergavenny: placemaking plan currently in development, expected to be adopted late 2025.
- Caldicot: Town Centre Regeneration Framework published 2018. Replacement placemaking plan to be developed in 2025/26
- Chepstow: Transforming Chepstow Masterplan adopted 2023.
- Magor with Undy: placemaking plan currently in development, expected to be adopted late 2025.
- Monmouth: placemaking plan currently in development, expected to be adopted late 2025.
- Usk: Usk & Woodside Improvement Masterplan adopted 2022.

3.5. Local placemaking steering and delivery groups have been established in each of the six towns to oversee the development and implementation of placemaking plans. These groups comprise elected members from the town and county councils and are each chaired by a representative from the town council.

3.6. A three-year Placemaking Grant programme ran from 2022/23 to 2024/25. Funding for that period was allocated through an application process in the early part of 2022/23. As a result of that process Monmouthshire County Council was allocated £1,137,252 in Placemaking Grant over the three years. Opportunities for additional project delivery in Monmouthshire, along underspends in other local authorities in south east Wales, meant that the Council was able to slightly increase its allocation (to £1,319,954) and draw down additional funding over the period.

3.7. Placemaking Grant delivery in Monmouthshire during the 2022/23 to 2024/25 programme focused on two main types of project: improvements to buildings in town centres, and small-scale town centre public realm/connectivity improvements.

3.8. In relation to buildings in town centres, the Council has used Placemaking Grant to provide a flexible grants scheme which has enabled building owners and businesses to bring vacant commercial space back into use and improve the functionality, performance and appearance of town centre buildings. 17 buildings or commercial units in town centres across the county have benefited from this grant. Key projects completed to date include:

- 43 Frogmore Street, Abergavenny (Air Ambulance shop): reinstatement of historic shopfront.
- The Zone, Caldicot: external improvements to youth centre, including timber and stone cladding, lighting, and replacement roof.
- Caldicot Post Office: refurbishment of longstanding vacant unit in town centre to provide new Post Office facility.
- Holman House, Caldicot: external improvements to prominent town centre building, including new shopfronts to retail units on ground floor and cladding/external wall insultation to first floor flats, delivered in partnership with MHA.
- 38 Moor Street, Chepstow: refurbishment of prominent town centre building, previously in very poor condition, home to Rainbow Trust Café which hosts two local food projects, Chepstow Community Fridge and Chepstow Food Club.

- Drill Hall, Chepstow: replacement roof and internal improvements/reconfiguration to allow increased use of community/arts buildings. Delivered in partnership with Chepstow Town Council.
- 15 Monnow Street, Monmouth: refurbishment of large vacant building (formerly occupied by Natwest bank branch) to provide three flats, as well as improved ground floor commercial space which is expected to be leased shortly.

3.9.   Building grants projects delivered in 2024/25 levered over £800k of third party match funding against £680k of Placemaking Grant and £152k of MCC capital investment.

3.10. Town centre public realm/connectivity projects funded with Placemaking Grant have included:

- St Thomas Garden, Monmouth: New natural stone paving, benches, lockable bin store for nearby commercial properties, new waste monitoring sensor bins use. Planting with pollinator friendly plants to enhance biodiversity. Information board telling the story of the historic Monnow Bridge.
- The Dell, Chepstow: installation of steps and walkways improving connectivity between the town centre, play park and Chepstow Castle; widening of existing connecting walkway around the play park to improve accessibility for wheelchair users and pushchairs.
- Magor Undy Community Hub/town centre link: footway repair, refurbishment of footbridge and installation of ramps for DDA compliance, installation of safety fencing around the stream, moving field gate to improve accessibility to/from town, planting of fruit trees, repairs to unsightly car park surface.
- Church Road, Caldicot: public realm improvements, traffic calming and green infrastructure (principally funded through Active Travel, with additional funding from Placemaking Grant)

3.11. The Welsh Government has extended the current Transforming Towns programme for two more years, 2025/26 and 2026/27. In January 2025 local authorities were invited to submit a request for funding for that period supported by a project pipeline to evidence deliverability.

3.12. As a result of that process Monmouthshire was awarded £700,000 Placemaking Grant per year for each of the two years. An indicative delivery programme, based on the project pipeline submitted to Welsh Government and revised in light of the level of funding allocated, is attached at Appendix A. The proposed delivery programme reflects priorities identified in the local placemaking plans (adopted and emerging) and through consultation with local placemaking steering and delivery groups.

3.13. It is proposed that, as in the previous programme period from 2022/23 to 2024/25, Placemaking Grant-funded delivery in Monmouthshire will focus on improvements to buildings in town centres and small scale public realm improvements, responding to priorities identified in adopted and emerging placemaking plans or equivalents.

3.14. The proposed building grants scheme will continue and expand on the grants offered in previous years and in 2024/25 in particular, with a focus on bringing vacant commercial space back into use, improving the condition of town centre buildings in a condition which has significant negative impact on the streetscape, and maintaining the historic fabric of the town centres. As before, grants will be made available via a call for expressions of interest open to businesses and building owners, alongside a targeted approach focusing on town centre buildings identified as priorities in the Council's Buildings at Risk Strategy and in consultation with local placemaking steering and delivery groups.

3.15. Small scale public realm improvement projects will be developed in partnership with local placemaking steering and delivery groups, responding to priorities identified in local placemaking plans. It is anticipated that these may include both standalone schemes and projects which constitute an initial phase of potentially larger public realm initiatives, delivering early "quick wins" in advance of detailed design and funding for the full scheme.

3.16. The delivery programme presented here is indicative. Flexibility in delivery will be required to enable the Council and partners to respond to opportunities that may arise (for example through the call for expressions of interest for building improvement grants) and to ensure that the programme can respond to emerging priorities which may be identified by local placemaking steering and delivery groups. Because the placemaking plans for Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth are not yet finalised, and in anticipation of the development a new placemaking plan for Caldicot in 2025/26, it is not yet possible to specify the projects which the funding will support in those towns.

3.17. Cabinet is therefore requested to authorise the Chief Officer, Place, to prioritise and adjust the programme as needed in liaison with the Cabinet Member and informed by consultation with local placemaking steering and delivery groups. The role of the placemaking steering and delivery groups in each town will be vital in ensuring that funded projects respond to local needs and priorities.

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

4.1. The main impacts/findings of the proposal identified in the evaluation are:

- Potential positive impacts on the protected characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy/maternity and sex.
- Potential positive impacts in relation to socio-economic duty arising from investment in town centres and benefits this may bring in particular to people in poverty.
- Positive impacts on all the well-being goals.
- The development of the proposal meets the sustainable development principles.
- No impact on safeguarding or corporate parenting.

4.2. The full evaluation accompanies this report.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1. The table below provides an options appraisal for the proposed Placemaking Grant indicative delivery plan.

Options	Benefits	Risks
Do nothing.	• No requirement for officer input or match funding.	• Limited or no delivery in 2025/26 or 2026/27 against placemaking plans in most towns. • Placemaking Grant funding allocated by Welsh Government would not be used, reducing resources available to the Council and potential prejudicing future funding awards.
Develop an alternative programme for delivery using the allocated funding.	• Allows for further consultation on delivery programme, but with associated risks as set out.	• Will cause delay in delivery, leading to risk that full grant funding cannot be used. • Programme may not align with local needs/priorities identified in placemaking plans and by local placemaking steering/delivery groups. • Any further consultation is likely to duplicate recent consultation on placemaking plans, leading to consultation fatigue/disengagement.
Agree the indicative programme as recommended here.	• Allows delivery to begin rapidly, maximising potential to use full grant funding allocated • Programme responds to local needs/priorities identified in placemaking plans and by local placemaking steering/delivery groups • Programme is builds on delivery in previous years, providing assurance on deliverability.	• Funding and resource limitations means that delivery of all elements of placemaking plans will not be delivered in two year funding period.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. The Placemaking Grant programme will be evaluated at the end of the current funding period, which covers 2025/26 and 2026/27. Evaluation will focus on relevant measures defined by the Welsh Government in relation to the Transforming Towns programme, supplemented by additional local measures as appropriate. Relevant measures include:

- Number of Jobs accommodated (enabled through regeneration investment)
- Enterprises accommodated
- Non-residential Premises created or refurbished (sqm)
- Non-residential Premises created or refurbished (number)
- Number of additional market housing units (Built or ready for Occupation - as a direct result of TT support)
- Number of additional social housing units delivered (Built or ready for Occupation - as a direct result of TT support)
- Number of additional intermediate housing units delivered (Built or ready for Occupation - as a direct result of TT support)
- Number of non-residential units brought back into use
- Creation of habitat (square metres)
- New and/or improved accessible green public space (square metres)
- New and/or improved recreational space (square metres)
- Level of Match Funding (£)
- Meanwhile use space (square metres)

7. REASONS:

7.1. The decision is required to allow Welsh Government Placemaking Grant funding allocated to Monmouthshire for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to be used to support the delivery of regeneration and placemaking projects in town centres in the county.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1. The Welsh Government requires at least 30% match funding for most types of Placemaking Grant project. The indicative delivery plan provided at Appendix A sets out anticipated sources of match funding, including resource implications in terms of capital match funding for the Council.

8.2. Programme management and project delivery capacity will be provided by existing staff within the Regeneration team, working with delivery partners on individual projects.

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1. The adopted and emerging placemaking plans which are the basis for the proposed Placemaking Grant programme have been coproduced with town councils and with extensive engagement and consultation with wider stakeholders and local communities as well as input from MCC officers.

9.2. In addition the following have been consulted.

- Cabinet

- SLT
- MCC Economic Development and Planning/Heritage officers

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

10.1. The indicative Placemaking Grant delivery plan is provided at Appendix A.

11. AUTHOR:

Daniel Fordham, Regeneration Manager

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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E-mail: danielfordham@monmouthshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A: PLACEMAKING GRANT INDICATIVE DELIVERY PROGRAMME

Indicative project description	Funding – 2025/26 and 2026/27			
	Placemaking Grant	**Match funding: MCC capital**	**Match funding: third party (grant recipient)**	**TOTAL**
Town centre small scale public realm/quick wins - all towns Delivery of small scale public realm and other projects identified in placemaking plans and in consultation with local placemaking groups. *For example*:* • Abergavenny Gabb Square phase 1 • Caldicot town centre public realm "quick wins" • Chepstow St Mary's Priory public realm connectivity • Magor with Undy Magor Square phase 1 • Monmouth bus station public realm • Usk Bridge Street/Twyn Square phase 1	£700,000	£300,000	£0	*£1,000,000*
Town centre building grants - all towns Flexible grants scheme targeting (a) bringing vacant space back into use (b) improvements to town centre buildings in a condition which has significant negative impact on the streetscape/environment.	£700,000	£100,000	£200,000	*£1,000,000*
TOTAL	*£1,400,000*	*£400,000*	*£200,000*	**£2,000,000**

• *Projects to be agreed with local placemaking steering groups*

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Integrated Impact Assessment Template

(incorporating Equalities, Socio-economic Duty, Future Generations, Welsh Language Measures, Corporate Parenting)

Name of the Officer Daniel Fordham, Regeneration Manager	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal**
Phone no: 07890 024489 **E-mail:** danielfordham@monmouthshire.gov.uk	The accompanying report seeks Cabinet's agreement to an indicative programme for delivery of town centre regeneration projects in Monmouthshire in 2025/26 and 2026/27 using funding allocated from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant.
Name of Service area Regeneration	**Date** 30 April 2025

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age *Consider the impact on our community in relation to age, e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	The grant proposals will support the regeneration of town centres, helping to retain locally accessible services in thriving businesses. Enabling communities to safely access local shops and services will benefit those who are without internet access or who cannot travel far to shop/use amenities: these issues disproportionately affect older people. High Streets can be enhanced with improved public realm and attractive buildings. Placemaking will providing thriving places that are pleasant to dwell in, both supporting local businesses and helping those who are lonely, which may disproportionately affect elderly people who are widowed.	None	Public realm improvements may include additional street seating allowing people with limited mobility, expectant or new parents or young children to rest.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability *Consider the impact and what issues there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this; producing information in alternative formats, employment issues etc.*	The grant proposals will support the regeneration of town centres, helping to retain locally accessible services in thriving businesses. Enabling communities to safely access local shops and services will benefit those who are without internet access or who cannot travel far to shop/use amenities. These issues disproportionately affect people with disabilities.	Changes to the public realm can be disorientating for people with sight difficulties and visual impairment and could be distressing for people with severe autism. New street furniture and other elements introduced through public realm improvements may pose potential obstacles to those with visual impairments or mobility difficulties. Care will therefore be taken with the siting of these elements.	Public realm improvements may include additional street seating allowing people with limited mobility, expectant or new parents or young children to rest. Careful consideration will be given to the needs of people with disabilities before implementing any changes.
Gender reassignment *Consider the provision of inclusive services for transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	No impact	No impact	-
Marriage or civil partnership *Same-sex couples registered as civil partners have the same rights as married couples and must be provided with the same benefits, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. Consider the impact of your proposal on these rights.*	No impact	No impact	-

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Pregnancy or maternity *A woman is protected from discrimination during her pregnancy, maternity leave and 26 weeks from the day she gives birth. Including the provision of services, goods and facilities and recreational or training facilities. Consider the impact of your proposal on these protections.*	Public realm improvements can include additional street seating allowing people to rest and feed children.	New street furniture and other elements introduced through public realm improvements may pose potential obstacles to those with pushchairs or prams. Care will therefore be taken with the siting of these areas.	Public realm improvements may include additional street seating allowing people with limited mobility, expectant or new parents or young children to rest.
Race *What will the proposal do to promote race equality with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different racial groups. Think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Possible issues include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy & Traveler, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.*	No impact	No impact	-
Religion or Belief *Consider the impact e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	No impact	No impact	-

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sex *Consider what issues there are for men and women. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues.*	Retail and hospitality businesses provide a significant number of valued job opportunities. Supporting people to shop locally and buy goods and services locally supports the retention of those jobs. Data suggests the majority of these jobs are done by females.	No impact	Changes to the public realm will consider matters such as lighting to ensure that everyone is safe and feels safe. Feeling unsafe at night disproportionately affects females.
Sexual Orientation *Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbia, Gay and Bi-Sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	No impact	No impact	Changes to the public realm will consider matters such as lighting to ensure that everyone is safe and feels safe.

2. The Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions.

Socio-economic disadvantage can be defined as living in less favorable social and economic circumstances than others in society. It also includes social justice, which is about reducing inequalities by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.

Consider how the proposal could affect the following vulnerable groups:

Armed Forces Community (including veterans)	*Students*	*People who have experienced the asylum system*
Single parents	*People living in the most deprived areas*	*People involved in the criminal justice system*
Vulnerable families	*Pensioners*	
Single adult households	*Homeless People*	
Carers	*People misusing substances*	

Socio-economic Duty	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering from socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage?
Think of what evidence you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this proposal. Will it impact disproportionately on certain groups? Can the proposals be improved to reduce inequalities of outcome?	The Social Justice strategy focuses on three main areas: tackling loneliness and isolation; tackling poverty and promoting equitable economic prosperity; and giving children the best start in life. People on low incomes or in poverty may not have internet access or be able to make non-cash payments. Supporting our High Streets will enable everyone to access a range of shops and services locally. Retail and hospitality businesses provide a significant number of valued job opportunities. Supporting people to shop locally and buy goods and services locally supports the retention of those jobs.	None	Public realm improvements may provide additional street seating allowing people with no outdoor space at home a safe outdoor space to meet family and friends.

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3. Policy making and the Welsh language

What are the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated? Explain how you believe the proposals could be improved so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the **Council's Welsh Language Standards:**	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making: *Consider what impact this policy decision will have on the Welsh Language. This includes opportunities for people to use the language, opportunities to promote the language and treating the language no less favourably that the English language. Include any data and evidence e.g. WESP, Census Data, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Strategy.*	Placemaking Plans will be translated when adopted. Consultation will be bilingual.	No negative impact	-
Operational: **Recruitment & Training of workforce** *Carefully consider whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as a desirable or essential skill. This is especially pertinent with front line roles as more than 10 % of the population of Monmouthshire speak Welsh. Also, when assessing the need for Welsh language skills keep in mind the existing Welsh language skills within the workforce. In service areas where there is a current lack of Welsh language skills, posts should be advertised as Welsh language essential. Additionally, consider where further training may be needed to increase the number of staff who can speak Welsh and to enhance the skills of current Welsh speakers.*	n/a	n/a	-
Service Delivery: **Use of Welsh language in service delivery** *When advertising our services you must promote the fact that people can deal with the council in Welsh by*	Signage will be proportionate to avoid physical and visual clutter. It will be bilingual to comply with	No impact	Information to market and promote the regeneration projects will be bilingual.

phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.	Welsh language standards and to promote our local heritage.		

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

Well Being Goals	**Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.**	**Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.**	**What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
A prosperous Wales *An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises global limits and uses resources efficiently (including acting on climate change); a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides jobs.*	The proposals will provide opportunities to create a safe and attractive environment for shoppers and visitors to support local businesses. Creating such an environment is will support retail, services, hospitality outlets which in turn attracts businesses and jobs whilst adding to the general prosperity and vitality of a town centre. This in turns supports the infrastructure to enable citizens and communities to thrive and support local businesses.		A marketing campaign is proposed to promote the grant opportunities to local businesses.
A resilient Wales *Maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).*	Public realm improvements may help to create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage active travel instead of car use. Green infrastructure introduced as part of public realm improvements will provide additional trees and flowers		WG funding has been secured for wider active travel improvements and for regeneration enhancements and grants to support local businesses.

Well Being Goals	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	for pollinators. Such measures may also raise awareness of biodiversity and climate change issues and encourage positive participation.		
A healthier Wales *People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*	Public realm improvements may create opportunities to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists as well as support businesses. Active travel is being promoted and supported by the Welsh government as a way to engender a heathier lifestyle.		Improved place-making and green infrastructure will provide the opportunity to increase physical activity and support physical and mental well-being and support Active Travel.
A Wales of cohesive communities *Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected*	To be successful our High Streets need to be safe and attractive for residents, workers and visitors. The proposals will help businesses adapt to the changing role of the High Street.		
A globally responsible Wales *Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing*	Measures to support local businesses, ensure pedestrian safety and to encourage active travel will encourage people to adopt a more healthy lifestyle through walking and cycling, as well as ensuring amenities and services are successful and therefore remain accessible locally.		
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language *Promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language,*	All streets signs, highway markings and interpretational material introduced as part of public realm improvements will be in Welsh and English. There may be opportunities to use		

Well Being Goals	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
and participation in the arts, and sports and recreation	improvements to historic buildings and the public realm to raise awareness of culture, heritage and the Welsh language and encourage positive participation.		
A more equal Wales *People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. (This includes the protected characteristics listed in section 1 above. You can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty)*	Monmouthshire has a greater range of small businesses than any other county in Wales. Creating an environment to support those seeking to invest or expand in retail thereby adding to the prosperity of our towns benefit from this project. Improved access and facilities can enable citizens to fulfill their potential, whatever their background or circumstances.		Consultation on placemaking plans has included specific engagement with eg disabled representative groups, older people, younger people etc.

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

Sustainable Development Principles		Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Long Term	Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future *We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (guidance says at least 10 years, but preferably 25)*	Improved access and facilities within town centres and green infrastructure short term will assist with medium- and longer-term priorities of health, wellbeing and carbon reduction.	
Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	Local placemaking partnership groups, including representatives from town and county councils, businesses and others, have been establish to oversee the development and delivery of placemaking plans.	

Sustainable Development Principles		Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Involvement	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views *Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?*	The proposals will deliver against adopted and emerging placemaking plans for the six towns, all of which are the product of extensive engagement and consultation with local stakeholders and communities.	
Prevention	Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The proposals will arrest the deterioration of town centre buildings and public realm where investment is targeted.	
Integration	Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies *Focus here on how you will better integrate the Wellbeing Goals impacts on people, economy and environment described above and balance any competing impacts. Think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations*	The proposals will have a positive impact on physical and mental wellbeing by creating pleasant and safe environments in town centres, and will support the work of partner organisation such as town councils towards these goals. *There is space to describe impacts on people, economy and environment under the Wellbeing Goals above, so instead focus here on how you will better integrate them and balance any competing impacts. Also think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations*	

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding *Safeguarding in this context applies to children (not yet reached 18th birthday) and adult at risk (identified as a person over the age of 18 and who (a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.) Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and adults at risk, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.*	n/a		

Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers and Care Experienced People *This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority either through voluntary arrangements with their parents or through a Court Order. The Council has a corporate duty to consider 'children who are looked after especially and to promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own). It also relates to care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old). The Council must consider how to help overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.*	n/a		

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

This will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Key strategies and documents that may help you include: Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: Enabling Strategies See Guidance for more examples.

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

This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee Report Template

The main impacts of the proposal identified in this impact assessment are:

- Potential positive impacts on the protected characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy/maternity and sex.
- Potential positive impacts in relation to socio-economic duty arising from investment in town centres and benefits this may bring in particular to people in poverty.
- Positive impacts on all the well-being goals.
- The development of the proposal meets the sustainable development principles.
- No impact on safeguarding or corporate parenting.

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

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
Seek a decision from Cabinet on the indicative delivery plan	21 May 2025	Daniel Fordham, Regeneration Manager.

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

Version No.	Decision making stage *e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc*	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Subject:	Active Gwent Sport Partnership Report
Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	21 May 2025
Division/Wards Affected:	All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To seek Cabinet Member approval to enter a formal partnership for Sport Development in the Gwent region, with Sport Wales and the other four Gwent local authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Cabinet approve Monmouthshire sport development to formally enter the Active Gwent sport partnership.

2.2 That Cabinet approve the preferred approach of a hosted model of the Sport Partnership in the Gwent region.

2.3 That Cabinet approve the support for Newport City Council to act as the host authority for the new Active Gwent Sports Partnership.

3. KEY MESSAGES:

3.1 There is a national directive from Sport Wales to move towards a regional model of sports governance and delivery, with the aim of better supporting the national Vision for Sport in Wales.

3.2 Regional partnerships have been developed in response across Wales, and Gwent is the final area to establish its regional vehicle.

3.3 The ultimate function of the sport partnership will be to provide strategic focus and oversight to sports development in their region, including the development of a regional vision and strategic plan as well as the administration of all pooled Sport Wales funding currently directed to individual local authorities and partners.

3.4 The future direction of funds will align with the vision, priorities and objectives of the regional partnership.

3.5 In a key difference to current arrangements, Sport Wales require that the new strategic entity includes representation from the wide array of stakeholders alongside the local authority members, to ensure alignment with other national priorities and ensure the strategic board has the required skillsets, diversity and competencies to deliver a coherent and equitable strategy for the region.

3.6   The host authority (Newport City Council) takes a lead role in liaising with Sport Wales in the development and establishment of the partnership and take responsibility both for convening the stakeholders and ensuring the partnership model matures to the timescales set by Sport Wales.

3.7   Once established, the role of the host authority within the partnership is proposed to be equal and equivalent to the other authorities within the partnership. The host authority will not have any additional rights or responsibilities over and above the other four authorities, save those relating to the employment of staff, proper accounting practices around funding, and provision of equipment and workspace to support the operation of the partnership.

4.   OPTIONS APPRAISAL.

4.1   For Monmouthshire to formally enter the Active Gwent sport partnership allowing for the sport development team to retain the ability to operate independently but also collaborate on shared regional objectives, and share resources, best practice and learning.

4.2   For Monmouthshire to opt out of the Active Gwent sport partnership and fore go the opportunity to actively contribute and shape the strategic direction of sports governance and delivery in Gwent and locally to Monmouthshire. Monmouthshire sport development team would focus solely on the delivery.

5.   EVALUATION CRITERIA:

5.1   There are three principal agreements that set out the legal framework required by the emerging partnership:

5.1.1   Collaboration Agreement – setting out how the Active Gwent Board will be developed and operate and be signed by at least the 5 LA's but potentially the whole of the Active Gwent group.

5.1.2   Active Gwent Strategy – this document will articulate the vision, strategy and business case for the Active Gwent Partnership, and its key aims and objectives for the initial five-year period.

5.1.3   Funding and Investment Plan – effectively an agreement between Sport Wales and the host to establish key responsibilities in the funding requirements. This document will also establish the mechanisms for funding distribution against the objectives set forth in the Active Gwent Strategy.

6.   REASONS:

6.1   There is a national directive from Sport Wales to move towards a regional model of sports governance and delivery, with the aim of better supporting the national Vision for Sport in Wales.

6.2   Monmouthshire sport development has a proven track record of delivering the outcomes for Monmouthshire and those set by Sport Wales annually through existing partnership agreements.

6.3   Monmouthshire sport development team has developed clear and measurable annual delivery plans, that dovetail into the Customer, Culture and Wellbeing business service plan and are scrutinised through Monmouthshire's annual self-assessment framework.

6.4   The sports development outcomes within the delivery plan are identified as measures within the Corporate and Community Plan within Fair Place; Connected Place; and Learning Place.

6.5   Monmouthshire sport development team, through their quarterly 'progress and learning session', with the Sport Wales relationship manager has been identified nationally for their work in Monmouthshire.

6.6   Through Sport Wales 'lightening learning programme', the sport sectors good practise learning sessions, attended by leaders of National Governing Bodies and stakeholders. Monmouthshire and their sport development officers have featured in quarterly newsletters; Sport Wales social media campaigns and they have presented on the national lightening learning programme.

6.7   For strategic oversight, Active Gwent will select a strategic and supervisory board comprised of the five local authority partners, 5 independent members and an independent chair. The aim of the Active Gwent Board will be to ensure the successful realisation of the partnership vision and objectives and communicate progress to Sport Wales.

6.8   Monmouthshire will appoint their officer representative on the Active Gwent Board ensuring that their representative is appointed on the basis the range of skills required and the need to comprise a balanced and inclusive Board membership.

6.9   Monmouthshire representative shall be "fixed" to ensure consistency though temporary replacements maybe required in certain circumstances.

7.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1   The projected funding allocation for Gwent is estimated at £2,269,565. For the fiscal year 2024-2025, Monmouthshire has received an annual allocation of £141,894 through the Sport Wales partnership agreement. Additionally, Monmouthshire has successfully secured an average of £58,000 per annum to deliver specific sport intervention projects, funded through the broader allocation of resources.

7.2   The current sport development team comprises of five Community and Sports Development Officers. The annual budget for sport development staffing is £224,375, with 63% of this amount funded through the Sport Wales partnership annual agreement.

7.3   The future direction of funds will align with the vision, priorities and objectives of the regional partnership. Once established, the host organisation will act as receiver for the full amount of regional funding for the Gwent area.

7.4   For the transition period (years 1-3), it is proposed that aggregated regional funding will be maintained to avoid disruption of partnership delivery and disbenefit to service users across Gwent. From year 3, it is expected that the Active Gwent Partnership will have matured fully as a structure and will receive funding based on the regional allocation mechanisms being derived by Sport Wales.

7.5   Throughout the initial five-year period, the partnership hosted by Newport City Council will be responsible for transferring Sport Wales funding to approved groups for agreed purposes. Acting as the legal entity, Newport City Council will maintain records, manage payments, and distribute funds in accordance with the instructions of the Active Gwent Board.

8.   WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING & CORPORATE PARENTING)

8.1   There are no known equality and Future Generations implications arising from the transition to the Active Gwent Sport Partnership. This report summarises the changes to the strategic mechanisms and confirms that the move to a regional partnership model does not adversely affect any equality considerations.

9.   CONSULTEES:

- Cabinet.
- Strategic leadership Team.
- Customer, Culture and Wellbeing DMT.

10.   BACKGROUND PAPERS:

a)   Active Gwent Sport Partnership – Hosted model approach.

11.   AUTHORS:

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Active Gwent Sport Partnership – Hosted Model Approach
November 2024

There is a national directive from Sport Wales to move towards a regional model of sports governance and delivery, with the aim of better supporting the national Vision for Sport in Wales – transforming Wales into an Active Nation (https://visionforsport.wales/). The move also supports the Sport Wales Strategy which envisages "a Wales where everyone is Active" (https://www.sport.wales/sport-wales/strategy/).

Sport Wales also recognises that collaborative partnership is essential to each regional model and one size does not fit all, with local nuance of need and demand evident, and established organisations and partnerships in place that share a collective ambition to work together and to make a significant change and impact in their area through sport.

The format and operation of the individual partnerships is therefore to be agreed between collaborating local authorities and their relevant partners. Economies of scale and the ability to better leverage funding are also key considerations in identifying the optimum shape of each regional partnership.

Through the ongoing development of five Sport partnerships operating across Wales, Sport Wales have identified a number of requirements, which need to be demonstrated as the model develops, and becomes operational. These factors are non-negotiable, and include:

- Partnership boards will adhere to the principles that underpin the governance arrangements expected of Sport Partnerships as set forth in the Governance and Leadership Framework for Wales (more information on the GLFW can be found here).
- Each Sport Partnership will also meet the capability requirements as per Sport Wales guidelines. Sport Wales will require an Independent Chair and a skills-based board in line with good governance practice. For the purposes of clarity, referred to as the 'Active Gwent Board' within this paper (Definition to be confirmed at a later date) This differs from a 'representative board / representative committee.' For the purposes of clarity, referred to as the 'Active Gwent Steering Group' within this paper (Definition to be confirmed at a later date)
- Inclusivity and representativeness, across a wide range of stakeholders, is essential.
- Prior to final approval of the model, Sport Wales will require the development of an emerging vision and strategic objectives framework for the group in order to understand how these align with the Vision for sport in Wales, the Sport Wales Strategy and the requirements and ways of working of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Sport Wales will need to see evidence of a strategy for how the model will target, and bring in additional funding outside of Sport Wales investment, in particular how the partnership will attract funding that is not available to Local Authorities (such as by directing funds to charitable foundations, etc

To date, the most advanced regional sport partnership is Actif North Wales (Home - Actif North Wales (gogleddcymruactif.cymru), which was implemented via the mechanism of an Inter-Authority Governing Agreement between the six constituent local authorities in North Wales. The partnerships in West Wales and Central South (covering the capital, RCT, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend and the Vale), are also advanced, but utilise different models to the North Wales pilot. In these regions, a new company arrangement is being developed as this route has been identified as the optimal model.

Whilst this flexibility to develop the most appropriate model for each individual region reflect the differing demographics and delivery models in situ across Wales, there are also commonalities between the emerging partnerships. Essentially, each model allows for local authorities to retain the ability to operate independently but also collaborate on shared regional objectives, and share resources, best practice and learning. The more established partnerships allow local authorities to opt whether to take a strategic interest in the partnership, or occupy a purely delivery-focused role.

Once implemented, all Sport Wales funding in Gwent will be controlled via the Active Gwent Board, and therefore whilst the models being developed across Wales allow this tiered membership, each of the five Gwent authorities has confirmed their support for the partnership and intention to collaborate at a strategic level in setting a vision and objectives to support a more active Gwent. It is also recognised by the five Gwent Authorities that ongoing collaboration between the independent operational partner organisations across Gwent, as currently embodied in the existing Active Gwent forum, must be maintained in the Active Gwent Steering Group as the region transitions to a fully regional model.

Discussion over the optimum format of the Gwent Sport Partnership has taken place with the Active Gwent group, including both Local Authorities and Leisure Trusts. The Active Gwent group have confirmed that their preferred approach is to develop a hosted model to progress the development of a Sport Partnership in the Gwent region.

The designation of the host authority is therefore a critical next step for the partnership. The host authority will be required to staff the partnership, provide secretariat functions and accounting services in relation to financial resources held for distribution, along with other key tasks set out below.

As the only City authority in Gwent with the fastest growing population in Wales, and largest concentration of sporting facilities (including national and regional facilities), Newport City Council has been proposed as the best fit to act as the host authority for the emerging regional partnership.

Active Gwent

1. Role of the Host Authority

It is proposed that Newport act as the host authority for a minimum term of five years, in order to give the developing partnership stability and the ability to plan strategically beyond the current local government electoral cycle. Newport City Council will host the Active Gwent Partnership for the full initial five year period, including implementation and transition phase (years 1-3).

Whilst the host authority will take a lead role in liaising with Sport Wales in the development of the partnership and take responsibility for convening the stakeholders and ensuring the partnership model matures to the timescales set by Sport Wales, once established, the role of the host authority within the partnership is proposed to be equal and equivalent to the other authorities within the partnership. The host authority will not have any additional rights or responsibilities over and above the other four authorities, save those relating to the employment of staff, proper accounting practices around funding, and provision of equipment and workspace to support the operation of the partnership.

It is suggested that the regional partnership will utilise the existing Active Gwent nomenclature as this body is established, and bring this informal partnership into a formal collaborative setting via the mechanism of the Sport Partnership.

The primary task for Newport will be to implement a cross-authority working group, in order to agree the detail behind the Active Gwent Partnership, including the services to be provided (including standards of service) on behalf of the Active Gwent Board and the costs of these services, which Sport Wales expect to be a fixed cost per annum.

Based on the Sport Wales requirements and the implementation of the North Wales partnership, the role of the host authority (i.e. Newport City Council) will include mobilising as the lead in order to deliver the following tasks:

- Act as the lead authority for the development of the partnership and implementation of operation support structures

- Act as the host and accountable body for the Active Gwent partnership, including responsibility for the appointment and employment of the lead officer;

- As host authority, be allocated an agreed proportion of the Sport Wales Funding to contribute towards the hosting and lead officer roles and functions (including contributions towards insurance, HR, equipment, legal/finance support and all other reasonably required costs).

- To operate as the principal contact for engagement with Sport Wales in relation to development of the partnership, set the framework for receipt and dispersal of Sport Wales Funding and ensure adherence to the Sport Wales governance requirements on behalf of the emerging partnership.

- The host will administer the finances on behalf of the Active Gwent Board, manage the Partnership Account and be responsible for the allocation of funding from the Account as determined by the Active Gwent Board. The host will have an obligation to report to the Active Gwent Board (and by extension, Sport Wales) if monies are to be spent on activities not in line with the budget or objectives partnership and strategy. There is no primacy implied within this role, and Newport will not receive additional priority for funding save where:
    1. The additional funding is a contribution required to support the day-to-day operation and activities of the partnership (see above)
    2. Where through the operation of the board, strategic priorities are identified in Newport and investment of Sport Wales funding made in accordance with the governance and decision-making framework adopted by the partnership

- Engage any staff required by the Active Gwent Board, administer payroll and all matters relating to employment. The Active Gwent Board will determine the roles required, JDs and remuneration levels of any posts and the host will abide by these unless:
    1. The funding does not allow these levels.
    2. Posts are not aligned with Newport's Pay and Grading structure.

    The Active Gwent Board (or delegated executive) will follow the host's procedures (for example disciplinary) but will action the procedures themselves.

- Ensure that Partnership Board and Steering/Working Group meetings are undertaken in accordance with the provisions for the board set out in the heads of terms and subsequent arrangements

- Support the Active Gwent Board in the development of a suite of implementation documents, including heads of terms collaboration agreement, a draft strategic objectives framework and regional funding and investment plan.

2. Finance

The host organisation will not be involved in setting the strategy or budget of Active Gwent, other than via its equal role alongside the other Gwent authorities on the AG Board, Newport will have a responsibility to inform the Board if financial obligations cannot be met or the budget is not sustainable.   There is an onus on Newport to demonstrate clear separation between its role as a strategic partner and the operation of the Sport Partnership.

The immediate tasks around the constitution of a working group and management of the relationship with Sport Wales can be supported within the existing Regeneration and Economic Development service for an initial period of 3-6 months, however as the partnership matures, Active Gwent will need to consider carefully what staff roles are required to deliver the above proposed structures and tasks. Any potential displacement of roles across the Gwent region must also be clearly understood.   Sport Wales funding of up to £220k per annum is available to the host authority, to support the function of the partnership.

Once established, the host organisation structure will act as receiver for the full quantum of regional funding for the Gwent area. For the transition period (years 1-3), it is proposed that aggregated regional funding will be maintained to avoid disruption of partnership delivery and disbenefit to service users across Gwent. From year 3, it is expected that the Active Gwent Partnership will have matured fully as a structure and will receive funding based on the regional allocation mechanisms being derived by Sport Wales.

Throughout the initial five-year period, the partnership hosted by Newport City Council will therefore be passing Sport Wales funding to approved groups for agreed purposes, acting as the legal entity and will be responsible for keeping records, paying bills and distribution of funds in accordance with the instructions of the Active Gwent Board. Clearly separated accounting processes will be required.

The host organisation may finally also be required to provide hybrid working/office space for Active Gwent staff with appropriate costs agreed by the Board, and will form part of the host agreement. Newport City Council has existing office space available at Newport Civic Centre.

Governance Structure

The five authorities will aim to develop the optimum governance board model via the initial working group; however as a starting point Newport has proposed Active Gwent will be modelled on the maturing North Wales partnership, also based on a single host authority lead.

Actif North Wales utilises a two-tier governance system, with clear separation of strategic (i.e. LA) and operational boards and tasks. The proposed structure is set out in Appendix 1.

For strategic oversight, Active Gwent will select a strategic and supervisory board comprised of the five local authority partners, 5 independent members and an independent chair. The aim of the Active Gwent Board will be to ensure the successful realisation of the partnership vision and objectives, and communicate progress to Sport Wales.

The five Active Gwent LA members will appoint their officer representative on the Active Gwent Board ensuring that their representative is appointed on the basis the range of skills required and the need to comprise a balanced and inclusive Board membership (see Sport Wales requirements above). This representative shall be "fixed" to ensure consistency though temporary replacements may be required in certain circumstances. The Active Gwent Board will take responsibility for the following:

- setting the strategy, the budget and framework for partners undertaking the day-to-day operation of activities to support Active Gwent objectives
- reporting the progress of Active Gwent to Sport Wales (or other funders).
- Accounting for the expenditure of funds received from Sport Wales and elsewhere, as set out in the funding and investment plan
- Develop and adopt a Collaboration Agreement which establishes the membership of the board, the operation of the board and the ability to delegate the activities to executive staff (employed by the host). The Collaboration Agreement will be signed by the 5 LA's. The expectation is that the LA's who are engaged in the Active Gwent Board and sign the initial Collaboration Agreement, maintain a place on the Active Gwent board for the full duration of the initial five-year period.
- Manage the activities of the executive staff on a day-to-day basis, although payroll and administration will be run through the host.
- Select the 5 independent members and 1 independent Chair. The Chair and the independent members are to be recruited through an open recruitment process.
- operate in line with the expectations of the Sport Wales Capability Framework and Governance and Leadership framework.
- invite representatives from Sport Wales to meetings, as required to observe and support.
- Establishment of a key stakeholder Steering Group (see below) which will comprise of partners that input into creation and direction of the regional strategy, and take a lead role in the delivery of the strategic plan for Active Gwent. The Steering Group will also provide a forum for discussion on matters of common interest and issues facing sport in the region, as well as ensuring best value and maximisation of benefits are accrued from any investment made by Active Gwent.
- Understand and build strategies that align with other regional public service bodies such as the Gwent Public Services Board, and the Gwent Regional Partnership Board.

ACTIVE GWENT STEERING GROUP

Rather than having one board with decision-making powers held centrally by the six five Local Authorities, Newport proposes to introduce a separate regional Active Gwent Steering Group, which would have authority to implement the vision for Active Gwent and could engage wider representation of the regional partnership as well as independent skills-based board members.

A two-tier approach will place clear delineation between strategic and operational activities, and ensure sufficient scrutiny and accountability across both arms of the partnership, whilst retaining the input, insight and established relationships in place under the existing Active Gwent structure

The Steering Group will draw on wider participation than the Active Gwent Board, and be primarily focused on the operational, day-to-day activities that support the vision and objectives of Active Gwent. The Steering Group may also provide feedback, expertise and other information in order to support the development and evaluation of strategic objectives.

The Steering Group will comprise 5 representatives from the existing Active Gwent local authority members (this may be an officer with operational responsibilities for delivery within the structure) and/or nominated independent delivery partners for those authorities with a designated body undertaking delivery of sport development on behalf of the local authority. The remainder of the board will be independent and should include representation from the following backgrounds:

- health
- education
- housing
- preventative services
- equalities
- service user

All external Steering Group members will be recruited by the Active Gwent Board based on skillset and diversity. Any local authority representatives on the Partnership Board shall be different to those local authority representatives on the Governance Board.

The Steering Group will also select an independent Chair (or enact a similar democratic provision for selecting its Chair that meets with the partnership expectations of Sport Wales). The Steering Group shall initially meet monthly and be accountable to the Active Gwent Board for ensuring the strategic vision and objectives of Active Gwent are progressed successfully.

The regional host body, and its dedicated employees, will take responsibility for the performance and success of Active Gwent and will act as a liaison between the Steering Group and Governance Board.

As discussed, there are three principal agreements required by the emerging partnership:

- **Collaboration Agreement** – setting out how the AG Board will be developed and operate and be signed by at least the 5 LA's but potentially the whole of the Active Gwent group. It is noted that Actif North Wales utilise an inter-authority governing agreement as the basis of their partnership
- **Active Gwent Strategy** – this document should articulate the vision, strategy and business case for the Active Gwent Partnership, and its key aims and objectives for the initial five year period
- **Funding and Investment Plan** – effectively an agreement between Sport Wales and the host to establish key responsibilities in the funding requirements, etc. this document will also establish the mechanisms for funding distribution against the objectives set forth in the Active Gwent Strategy.

Next Steps & Way Forward

In order to progress, Sport Wales and each of the five member authorities party to Active Gwent, must agree the following:

- Confirmation to Sport Wales that Newport is the agreed host authority for the Active Gwent Sport Partnership for the initial 5-year term, and subject to the stipulated role
- Newport will lead on the formulation of a working group that includes the five local authorities, to develop the detail behind the proposed Gwent model and the host body requirements, including engagement with relevant partners. This working group will

effectively be the shadow 'Active Gwent' board with representatives from the five local authorities entering into the collaboration agreement.

- Agree and establish the legal basis and mechanism for the incorporation of the regional sport partnership, including the agreement of formal heads of terms. It is noted that the North Wales Partnership was established pursuant to section 2 Local Government Act 2000 and section 111 Local Government Act 1972 under which the member authorities entered into an Inter-Authority Governing Agreement to set out clearly their roles and responsibilities in relation to the governance and structure the new partnership vehicle. Confirmation of the working group membership (the shadow Active Gwent board)
- Confirmation of a shadow Steering Group membership, which will work alongside the working group/shadow board to develop the vision and strategy for the region
- Development of the three principal agreements in partnership with Sport Wales, which establish the local and regional governance framework, and allow for democratic oversight and accountability for the implementation and development of the regional partnership.

Once the approach and agreements have been agreed, then the actions will switch to recruitment of the Board and Chair and any regional roles required as identified through the development of the strategy. The expectation is that the Active Gwent group will have all required governance and agreements in place by mid/end of March to formally accept and distribute Sport Wales funding from April 2025.

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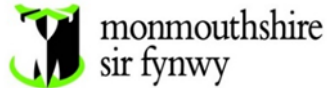
SUBJECT:	**MARCHES FORWARD PARTNERSHIP**
MEETING:	**CABINET**
DATE:	**21ˢᵗ of MAY 2025**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**ALL**

1.   PURPOSE

1.1   To provide an update on the collaborative "Marches Forward Partnership" with neighbouring local authorities, Herefordshire Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Council.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet approves:

2.1   The Marches Proposition - *Appendix One*, as the agreed vision and collective ambition for the Marches Forward Partnership.

2.2   The establishment of light touch governance arrangements, through the establishment of a Partnership Board, set out in *Appendix Two* of the Marches Proposition as a basis for collective delivery and resourcing. The Partnership will focus on the immediate delivery of agreed priorities around environment, health, transport and food production.

2.3   An evaluation of the Partnership's progress in twelve months' time, to satisfy itself of the Partnership's ability to move from concept to delivery and offer longer term, tangible benefits to the County.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1   In September 2023, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Marches Forward Partnership with neighbouring local authorities and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reflect the spirit of cooperation and establishment of a flexible umbrella framework for joint working. The framework supports local service delivery based around how people and place's function, rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries.

3.2   Since the approval of the MOU, the Councils have been working with partners and independent think tanks, to develop the Marches Proposition. This sets out evidence, a joint vision and working arrangements for Marches Forward. Full details of activities to date can be found in Appendix Three.

3.3   The work has rightly involved various iterations, as priorities and programmes have evolved to take on board evidence and input from stakeholders alongside government officials post the general election and recent budget announcements. The Marches Proposition therefore provides the most up to date response on how the Marches region can drive growth and prosperity between England and Wales.

3.4   Whilst the Proposition focuses on the vision and long term added value to the cross-border Marches communities, there is a need to ensure targeted resourcing on

delivery. The following three immediate priorities have therefore been identified as follows with the corresponding Priority Programmes of work:

3.4.1 A High Productivity Rural, Small Town and City-based economy

Marches Good Food Movement -a rural innovation region, leading food production for the nation, growing the food sector and supporting future adaptation techniques and land management opportunities.

3.4.2 A Green Economy Trailblazer Region

Marches Environmental Investment and Innovation Platform- to establish a platform which utilises the unique environmental assets of the region to drive large scale private sector investment.

3.4.3 Healthy and Connected Places

Marches Health Group - to pilot early intervention health inequalities initiatives, working with health partners to take a whole systems approach to health prevention.

Marches Connect Transport Group - to create an equitable and connected cross border transport system which supports movement between the union and reforms services, providing a coherent and integrated rural transport approach.

3.5 The proposed establishment of a simple governance structure, based around a quarterly Partnership Board, reflects the agile, strategic and voluntary nature of the partnership and will enable focused progress in a resource light and non-bureaucratic approach.

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

4.1 The positive impacts of this proposal are as follows; a full assessment can be found in *Appendix Four* **-** Integrated Impact Assessment:

- Four local authorities working together to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value.
- The rural economy and green growth are at the top of the agenda.
- Areas of cross border shared interests include food, environment, health and transport alongside skills, housing, energy, climate change and digital connectivity.
- The Partnership provides an opportunity to join forces to apply for funding from government on major projects that will benefit the collective region.
- It is anticipated that the planned collaboration and the council's willingness to work together will increase overall government investment, potentially unlocking millions of pounds for identified initiatives.

4.2 There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Significant opportunity is provided by the Marches Forward Partnership as a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery. It is based around how people and places function rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries. It also enables the Council to harness the unique value of Monmouthshire's cross border location.

5.2 The Partnership is not a legal entity. There will be no formal governance but a simple structure that reflects the agile, strategic and voluntary nature of the partnership. The proposed Partnership Board will have responsibility for focusing shared resources on agreed priority areas to ensure targeted delivery over the short, medium and longer term. As a result, there are no legal risks, since the Partnership will operate on an informal basis, based around joint working on areas of common purpose.

5.3 Mapping has been undertaken to understand existing strategic partnership arrangements across the area. Engagement has also taken place with both Governments to understand emerging policy under the English Devolution White Paper and review of Corporate Joint Committees. As the Marches Proposition seeks to respond to an existing gap in strategic cross border working between England and Wales it does not pose a risk in terms of duplicating existing or emerging arrangements. Instead, the Marches Proposition focuses only on areas of cross border added value and opportunity.

5.4 As a flexible arrangement, each Local Authority within the Partnership has the freedom to either not undertake a particular activity or not participate further in the Partnership at any point in time. The Partnership does not therefore pose a risk in terms of prejudicing or constraining any of the constituent partners or groupings of partners in being involved in alternative partnership arrangements. The informal governance arrangements will not restrict, in any way, other arrangements that a partner local authority may wish to develop independently.

5.5 The risks and opportunities relating to this report are predominately focused on progressing the associated working arrangements to support delivery. Whilst this poses resource implications, the proposed way of working is aimed at progressing in a resource light and non-bureaucratic approach. In addition, the Marches Proposition provides evidence led basis to seek a £1.5m capacity funding grant from Central and Welsh Government.

6. REASONS

6.1 Following Cabinet approval of the MOU the Marches Forward Partnership officially launched on the 10th of November 2023 with the signing of a high-level Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities. Since then, a significant amount of activity has taken place which can be found in *Appendix Three* – Marches Forward Activity to date.

6.2 Across the partner local authorities, the Marches Forward Partnership' provides an opportunity to:

- Focus on the shared geography and identify opportunities to maximise the potential of the cross-border area.
- Understand and work together to attract the right investment, for example for critical infrastructure.
- Understand and innovate to address the needs of rural communities.
- Harness the value of shared rural assets.
- Align policy and investment drivers to obtain the best from cross border political ambitions.
- Understand future trends and service demands across a functional area.
- Focus on where collaboration adds the greatest value.
- Share learning and best practice.

6.3   The Marches Proposition summarises the vision and opportunity provided by the Marches Forward Partnership. It has been reviewed and shaped by independent think tanks to provide the technical assurance on how the cross-border collaboration between England and Wales provides the greatest value. The proposition takes on board the latest policy steer from government post-election and post budget announcement and provides a phased approach to delivery which recognises the constraint on existing resources.

6.4   The establishment of a quarterly Partnership Board will enable joint development with key partners in relation to the delivery of the Partnership's agreed outcomes. This informal governance structure will support the continuation of a flexible approach to joint working, targeting resources at priority areas of joint delivery.

7.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1   The Marches Proposition provides clarity on the scale of activities and priorities to accelerate. It supports the Local Authority's ability to position the Marches region and seek wider and more innovative opportunities to unlock new funding into the area. It also helps to apply collective resources to deliver greater value for money across the Marches area.

7.2   The partner Local Authorities have already pooled funds to commission feasibility studies and support shared resourcing. Each Local Authority Partner has contributed circa £100,000. Monmouthshire County Council's contribution to date has been £95,627 which was funded via UK SPF, and used to support appointment of the Programme Manager, a Tourism Feasibility Study and various communication and events activities including the Launch Event Marches Forward Partnership Launch event , development of the Marches Forward website and associated press activities.

7.3   The establishment of a Partnership Board enables the continued prioritisation, agreement and apportionment of shared resources across the partner authorities, thereby reducing financial implications to each individual organisation. Therefore, Monmouthshire County Council's contribution for 2025/2026 will continue to be in the provision of Officer time to support the Partnership's activities, and an apportioned financial contribution equating to circa £61,553 or £54,053 without the contingency. This contribution will support the continuation of the Programme Manager role post September 2025, marketing activity and targeted programme development activities needed to access funding for delivery. These costs will be met from capitalisation direction in 2025/26, and thereafter will be allocated to service budgets, depending on the activity to be undertaken. This may require a budget pressure to be considered for the 2026/27 budget.

7.4   Each Local Authority will continue to have individual responsibility for relevant Cabinet and Council briefings. This will include ensuring all the necessary financial agreements are in place within each partner local authority for any key areas of work associated with the Partnership. Political leadership, through the Partnership Board, will ensure regular oversight and identify additional requirements for scrutiny and assurance in relation to specific deliverables.

8.   CONSULTEES

Cabinet

Strategic Leadership Team

Local MPs and AMs

UK Government and Welsh Government colleagues

WLGA

CCR City and Deal colleagues

Infrastructure and Place Leadership Team

9.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix Two – Partnership Board

Appendix Three – Marches Forward Activities to date

Appendix Four – Integrated Impact Assessment

10.   **AUTHORS:**

Peter Davies – Assistant Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Resources, S151 Officer

Will McLean – Strategic Director, Learning, Skills and Economy

Cath Fallon – Head of Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation

12.   **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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Cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix One Marches Proposition

Marches Proposition-
January 2025 .docx

Appendix Two – Marches Partnership

Appendix 2 Marches
Partnership Governan

Appendix Three – Marches Forward Activity – September 2023 to January 2025

1. **Initial Scoping and Establishment of Thematic Groups**

1.1 In the early discussions of the Partnership, a review of each local authority plan and programme of strategic projects identified areas of alignment and common purpose. This review resulted in the identification of four themes for more detailed scoping:

- Nature, Energy and Climate Adaptation, led by Shropshire Council
- Health, Housing and Skills, led by Powys County Council
- Transport and Digital Connectivity, led by Herefordshire Council
- Food, Development and Visitor Economy, led by Monmouthshire County Council.

1.2 Between September- December 2023, the four thematic groups were tasked with exploring how the Partnership can best offer a flexible framework to deliver local services and corporate priorities differently using shared skill sets. With an unusual level of freedom to innovate and look at creative solutions, not bound by statutory delivery timescales or regulatory frameworks, the focus of the thematic groups was on identifying those areas of added value.

1.3 In December 2023, this work was packaged into a focused work plan for detailed scoping:

Work Programme	Scoping Purpose
Nature, Energy and Climate	*A cross border Environmental Investment Zone* o To recognise the shared current and future environmental challenges across the Marches area and harness our unique assets and trading potential, using the existing Enterprise Zone principles around designating areas to unlock investment and resources. o Potential to accelerate through feasibility of an investment zone as part of a pilot for the upper Severn catchment aligned to Severn Valley Water Management Scheme.
	Strategic Area Energy Planning o To drive investment and delivery in local carbon projects which help address our collective net zero ambitions. o To scale up with Government support to provide green energy solutions and energy resilience for partner organisations.
	A joint local authority approach to carbon insetting o To explore a joint approach to offsetting local authority capital investment programmes through a framework for carbon offsetting, which enables environmental benefits and betterment to be retained locally.

Health, Housing and Skills	*Scale up of housing delivery models*
	o To expand the existing local authority led housing across the Marches area.
	Cross border health care services
	o To improve communications and planning for future services and housing development. Improved links regarding public health.
	Sharing of skills strategies and priorities to include alignment of skills work
	Engagement across ICS Boards in particular around the use of digital
	Joint work to share plans and strategies and UKSPF priorities.
	*Joint work to bring together health leads as a joint network t*o understand the unique detriments of rural health across the four counties.
	Shared understanding of rural health inequalities across the Marches corridor, to understand the impact of borders/travel for rural health.
	Mapping of Marches healthy and nutritious food initiatives.
	To identify opportunities to address health issues.
	Joint work to look at demand and capacity planning to understand the cross border flows with patients in different health systems.
Transport and Digital Technology	*EV hub and nodes network* - To consider key locations and deliverability e.g., electricity supply.
	Cross Border Connects- Single ticketing framework – To consider digital infrastructure needs to support single ticketing and framework to enable cross border delivery.
	Collaboration on highway contracts - To explore innovative solutions around delivery vehicles for highway maintenance.
	Delivery of the River Severn Partnership Innovation Region - To develop use case around digital technology in water management, agri-tech and public sector
	Information exchange on Local Transport Plan development and strategic highway schemes – To demonstrate how our transport networks work to

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	complement each other and to ensure that our residents and businesses are not disadvantaged as they cross borders.
Food, Development and Visitor Economy	*Marches Market Town Revitalisation -* To identify the critical success factors of thriving Marches market towns to address and reduce High Street decline*.* *Marches Good Food Movement/ Sustainable Food Networks - To pilot an innovative approach, linking existing* Sustainable Food Partnerships and identifying strategic commonalities to inspire the unique food culture of The Marches. *Celebrate The Marches as a green, sustainable and accessible tourism destination for all - To coordinate tourism activity with a medium-*term ambition to consider the development of a Marches Destination Development Partnership. *Celebrate the unique culture and heritage of The Marches -* To facilitate joint working through Cultural Compacts and Creative Clusters with a medium-term ambition to develop an ambitious cultural framework, events and marketing programme.

2.   Engagement Activities

2.1   A partner event in April 2024, enabled sense checking and wider shaping with key stakeholders, including investors, regulatory bodies and strategic delivery partners. A series of workshop sessions provided opportunity for detailed discussion on the thematic areas of focus and proposed priorities. It aided in providing confirmation on the key areas of opportunity and added value. The partner event was complemented by an all-member event, bringing together all local authority members across the four local authorities to discuss and share thinking on the work to date and providing local political leadership on the emerging areas of focus.

2.2   The outcomes from the partner and member events were further supported by a commission with the New Economics Foundation in summer 2024. This provided an independent and evidence led review of the work to date and an understanding of the unique assets and functional geography of the Marches region.

2.3   In September 2024, the New Economics Foundation provided an early draft of the Marches Proposition. This included a revised focus on three outcomes, rather than the four generic themes, emphasising what the Partnership can uniquely seek to drive as areas of comparative advantage and unique opportunity:

- **A high productivity Rural, Town and City-based economy**
- **A green economy trailblazer region**
- **Health and connected places.**

2.4   A Leader led workshop in October 2024, provided a refocus on four immediate priorities to achieve these three agreed outcomes:

A High Productivity Rural, Town and City Based Economy

- Marches Good Food Movement – development of a regional model and innovative pilot linking together local food partnerships with the Marches reputation as a food and drink destination with good food culture.

A Green Economy Trailblazer Region

- Marches Environmental Investment and Innovation Platform (MEIP) – development of a pioneering place based green finance scheme (both domestically and internationally) utilising our national award-winning River Severn Partnership, to leverage public and private capital, respond to key environmental challenges such as water quality, flood risk and water resource management and unlock the Marches as a leader in green growth.

Healthy and Connected Places

- Marches Health Group - piloting an early intervention and prevention health inequalities programme.
- Marches Connect Transport Group – creation of an equitable and connected cross border transport system which supports movement between the union and reforms services, providing a coherent and integrated rural transport approach.

3. **Development of the Marches Proposition**

3.1 Whilst these provide the initial agreed focus, the Marched Proposition does set out the longer-term vision and wider areas of opportunity should wider funding to resource them become available. These longer-term opportunities include:

Marches Innovation and Knowledge Network

- Development of a Marches hub and spoke model of innovation and technology skill centres, utilising existing FE expertise and sectoral strengths. The Marches Model will reset skills for the future economy, growing the skills base and addressing low wages, by developing the region as a centre of excellence for climate adaptation and fairer pay.

Marches Affordable Market Towns

- Establishing an evergreen investment housing loan fund, to catalyse and scale up affordable housing opportunities, to ensure delivery of the Government's new housing targets for our region, for key workers in growth sectors using an existing delivery model.

Marches Strategic Energy Plan

- Working with Great British Energy on the development of a cross-border energy masterplan to drive resilient energy systems.
- **March The Marches**
  Utilizing Offa's Dyke as the cultural spine of the region, linking and building on the Marches market towns, historic assets, landscape, rivers and canals. This

will open accessibility to all, creating a connected tourism offer to walk in the history and natural beauty of the Marches region.

4. **Delivery and Achievements over the last 12 months**

4.1 Whilst the main focus of work has been on the evidence base and partner engagement to develop a robust programme of joint delivery, the Partnership has already sought to maximise value from the outset:

A high productivity city, town and rural based economy

o Feasibility work to establish a Centre of Excellence for Living with Climate Change (CLiCC) has commenced with the University of Chester. This is exploring the academic offer for green skills development and whilst initially linked to a programme of water management infrastructure (Severn Valley Water Management Scheme) has been aligned to the wider Marches Innovation and Knowledge Network to explore opportunity to take forward as an initial pilot for expansion into a wider hub and spoke network of skill centres.

o A Homes England facilitated workshop on housing and market towns regeneration has taken place to help identify the key areas of opportunity across the Marches.

o A Marches Good Food Movement Proposal has been developed in partnership with all food partnerships across the Marches and has been shared with funders (Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and the National Lottery) with a £1.2million ask for a 3-year project. Work has also taken place to align with wider activity across the Marches on farm clusters to explore and identify sustainable farming funding opportunities.

A green economy trailblazer region

o Feasibility work is in the process of being commissioned for the 'March the Marches' tourism programme with recommendations from this report expected by March 25.

o Joint work has been undertaken with energy providers to agree the scope for a Marches Energy Plan.

o An initial design framework is now in place for the Marches Environmental Investment Platform (MEIP). Work has been undertaken to test this design with key local and national stakeholders including private sector investors and local landowners and ENGOs. Alignment has been made to the funding and finance work of the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme as a potential pilot for the MEIP. A proposal is also in development to take the MEIP forward as a second phase to the River Severn Partnership Advanced Wireless Innovation Region, scaling up work with landowners on piloting digital technology and water management and exploring opportunities through the MEIP to unlock longer term investment. This innovative work has recently been shared with both the National Infrastructure Commission and the National Infrastructure Commission Wales.

Healthy and connected places

o A health subgroup has been established to bring together cross border health partners with joint mapping of strategies and evidence bases underway.

o Joint work between health partners and the Precision Health Initiative (University of Cambridge) has commenced to understand opportunity for a pilot bringing together primary and secondary health prevention work. This could include an initial 3-year R&D

phase fully funded by the Precision Health Initiative to establish case studies in support of a longer-term Priority Health Outcomes Fund.

4.2 In addition, a dedicated Programme Lead for the Marches Forward Partnership has been appointed on a 12month contract to aid focus on immediate delivery.

4.3 Proactive engagement with the National Wealth Fund (NWF) has also led to the signing of an agreement between Shropshire Council and the NWF on behalf of the Marches Forward Partnership. This will provide the Partnership with dedicated advisory support on the Marches project pipeline to inform the delivery programme with a focus on the private sector market and helping to unlock investment opportunities.

5. **Engagement and Governance**

5.1 Ongoing engagement with both Welsh and UK Government has taken place throughout the formative stage of the Partnership. A detailed joint discussion with the Deputy Director for MHCLG and Deputy Director, Wales for MHCLG in August offered clear support for the Partnership and ambition to work over larger spatial areas. The Partnership was seen as an important means by which to consider future service delivery and design in support of growth. However, clarity was sought on the governance model for the Partnership and how this would work in practice in relation to existing legislation.

5.2 The development of the Marches Proposition has therefore included a separate focused commission with independent consultants, Metro Dynamics. This sets out the options for an appropriate democratic model which meets the needs of the Partnership and what the partner organisations collectively want to achieve.

5.3 The recommended governance structure has been included within the Marches Proposition to provide clarity on both the vision and working structure. The Marches Proposition therefore provides a robust basis for engagement activity with government officials and wider stakeholders on how the region will drive economic growth and prosperity across the England Wales border.

5.4 Whilst the overarching Partnership will progress, in the first instance, on an informal basis, some of the specific programmes of work within the Partnership will require their own more formal arrangements to support implementation**.**

Appendix Four

Integrated Impact Assessment document (incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Cath Fallon **Phone no:** 07557 190969 **Email:** cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal** To seek approval from Cabinet for The Marches Proposition - Appendix One, as the agreed vision and collective ambition for the Marches Forward Partnership and the establishment of light touch governance arrangements, through the establishment of a Partnership Board, set out in Appendix Two of the Marches Proposition as a basis for collective delivery and resourcing.
Name of Service area Learning, Skills and Economy	**Date** 7th May 2025

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

Protected Characteristics	**Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic**	**Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic**	**What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
Age	This proposal seeks to have a positive impact on the county's residents, by working in partnership to tackle cross border shared interests and boost investment into the region.	None	None
Disability	As above	As above	As above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	As above	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	As above	As above
Race	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	As above	As above	As above
Sex	As above	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above	As above	As above

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	The Partnership provides a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery based around how people and place's function, rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries. The Partnership will seek to reduce barriers to service delivery, benefiting those experiencing socio economic disadvantage.	There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.	The four authorities will work together to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value.

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	Neutral impact Where possible, the Council will work with its neighbouring Welsh Authority, Powys, to promote the Welsh language as part of this cross-border initiative. We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Neutral impact. This proposal does not involve the appointment of staff. However, on a general basis, the Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate encourages the appointment of Welsh Language speakers and offers staff Welsh Language training	None	N/A

Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Neutral impact	None	We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.

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

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	**Positive:** Positively contributes to the Council's requirement to take a financially responsible approach to its use of resources, to ensure that it meets the needs of its citizens in the most cost-effective way. This includes continuing to bid for funding programmes that have been introduced following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, sharing best practices and supporting the financial resilience of services through joint working initiatives like this one. In addition, Partners will undertake activities which will seek to understand and articulate the needs of existing and prospective employers to improve the ability for learning,	It is an on-going priority for the Council to work collaboratively to maximise efficiency and capitalise on opportunities.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	skills and business support provision across borders to meet demands. **Negative:** None identified	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)	**Positive:** An immediate priority to position the Marches as a trailblazing region for green growth has already been identified. This highlights the opportunity to work together on strategic scale projects which address current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change, water quality and nature recovery. The Partnership also supports rural resilience through work around land management and exploring common local authority aspirations around net zero and renewable energy solutions. Negative: None identified	The Marches Proposition and Partnership provides a significant opportunity for the partner local authorities to support one another on climate and net zero plans and local delivery.
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood	**Positive:** Partners are working together to identify opportunities for understanding cross border movements to access health provision and the infrastructure needed to support this. **Negative:** None identified	N/A
A Wales of cohesive communities	**Positive:** Partners are working together on the development of sustainable	N/A

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	communities, creating a social infrastructure offer which realises the growth and sustainability of the rural economy and supports our residents, employers and users of our geography. **Negative:** None identified	
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	**Positive:** Partners are working together to identify and collaborate on strategic scale opportunities based around our high-quality natural environment, addressing current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery. **Negative:** None identified	N/A.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	**Positive:** Partners are working together to support a coherent cultural and visitor economy offer. **Negative:** None identified	N/A
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	**Positive:** Partners will be leveraging joint intelligence and research expertise to improve the quality of life for all our rural, cross border communities. **Negative:** None identified	N/A

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

Sustainable Development Principle		Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Long Term	Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	Whilst initially focused on short term opportunities for more efficient and effective service delivery, the Partnership also provides opportunity for constituent partners to seek and gain greater recognition of the need for joint working across borders with respective Governments. As such, it provides a platform to raise the profile of the area and seek greater investment for delivery in the future.	
Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	The 'Marches Forward Partnership' brings together strategic joint working between Shropshire, Herefordshire, Powys and Monmouthshire local authorities. Its purpose is to work together to tackle cross border shared interests and boost investment into the region.	N/A
Involvement	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	The Council is engaging with existing partners to make them aware of the opportunity and keep them informed of progress as the Partnership evolves.	N/A

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Putting **Prevention** resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The proposal is about strengthening and improving existing services, providing opportunities to explore areas of collective interest and ambitions to bring together both Welsh and English Governments to support, in principle, joint working across borders and enable efficiencies.	
Integration Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	This strategic cross border Partnership will provide opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving join up between England and Wales and helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects which will aid sustainable development opportunities.	N/A

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	N/A	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	N/A	None.	N/A

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

The Marches Forward Partnership brings together strategic joint working between Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire local authorities. It covers a population of approximately 737,000 residents and covers an area of approximately 1,140,000 hectares.

This strategic cross border Partnership will provide opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving join up between England and Wales and helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects.

Early scoping work has highlighted the potential to innovate and look at creative solutions which are not bound by statutory delivery timescales or regulatory frameworks. The Partnership offers a flexible framework to explore how local services, and corporate priorities can be delivered differently using shared skill sets and an unusual level of freedom.

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

.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template

Positive -

The positive impacts of this proposal are:

- Four local authorities are working together to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value.
- The rural economy and green growth are at the top of the agenda.
- Areas of cross border shared interests include food, environment, health and transport alongside skills, housing, energy, climate change and digital connectivity.
- The Partnership provide an opportunity to join forces to apply for funding from government on major projects that will benefit the collective region.
- It is anticipated that the planned collaboration and the council's willingness to work together will increase overall government investment, potentially unlocking millions of pounds for identified initiatives.
- We will assess the impact of any subsequent decision of the partnership, which requires it, in line with the relevant legislation that applies to that organisation.

Negative

None identified.

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Progress the proposal	On-going.	Strategic Director for Learning, Skills and Economy
Consider and plan next steps and responsibilities.	On going	Strategic Director for Learning, Skills and Economy

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.	SLT/Cabinet Members	July 2023	Give more consideration to understanding the cross-border movements to access health provision and the infrastructure needed to support this.
2.	Cabinet Report	September 2023	Approval of the establishment of the Marches Forward Partnership with neighbouring local authorities and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reflect the spirit of cooperation and establishment of a flexible umbrella framework for joint working.
3	Cabinet Report	March 2025	Request Cabinet Approval of the Marches Proposition - as the agreed vision and collective ambition for the Marches Forward Partnership and the establishment of light touch governance arrangements, through the establishment of a Partnership Board, as a basis for collective delivery and resourcing.

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monmouthshire
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SUBJECT:	Digital, Data and Technology Collaboration
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	21st May 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All	

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To develop proposals to build on existing collaborative arrangements in place for the provision of technology services through the Shared Resource Service. Expanding these to include digital, data and information governance services will generate economies of scale enabling the authority to access expertise to accelerate progress against delivery of priorities set in the Community and Corporate Plan and the Council's Digital and Data Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To begin the process of transitioning towards a shared service model for digital and data in collaboration with Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough, as part of an expanded role for the Shared Resource Service (SRS).

2.2 For the authority's digital team to begin working alongside partner organisations at the earliest opportunity, with a target for the team to transfer to the SRS no later than 1st April 2026, subject to the conclusion of staff and trade union consultation. This would be done in accordance with The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

2.3 To agree that the current digital service budget be used to enable the delivery of the new shared service.

2.4 To prepare an investment case for a modern data service operating across three authorities, to be considered by the SRS Strategic Board in the first instance, being clear where the initial investment is best focused.

2.5 That Cabinet recommend that £77,017 is drawn from the ICT reserve to fund the costs during year one of the collaboration (2025-26). This will include additional funding for the shared digital team and the costs of a new data post to ensure that Monmouthshire can participate fully in, and capitalise from, the embryonic data service from day one.

2.6 To revisit the potential to enter collaborative arrangements in relation to information security at a later stage following the completion of further work which will be reported to the SRS Strategic Board in the coming months.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The Council has a clear purpose to become a zero-carbon county that supports well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. Digital and data are recognised as key enablers that will help us achieve these outcomes. Our ability to make full use of these technologies is currently constrained by capacity and capability. With limited budgets the opportunity to invest the sums that would be required to bring about the necessary change is constrained. Neighbouring authorities in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen are in a similar position. By collaborating, the authorities will be able to capitalise on economies of scale to attract and retain a workforce with the skills to take us to the next level in the use of digital and data.

3.2 All three organisations, along with Newport City Council, are partners in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) which has successfully supplied our technology services since 2011. The SRS Strategic Board commissioned and endorsed exploratory work which has identified the potential for SRS to expand its operations to encompass Digital, Data and Technology (sometimes referred to as DDaT). The initial paper received and agreed by the Board is included as a background paper at appendix 2. Anticipated benefits are:
   - Resilience for service development and delivery
   - Increased momentum to meet partner organisations digital ambitions
   - Maximising skills and capacity and avoiding duplication
   - Wider development opportunities for staff
   - User centred design shaping services.

3.3 To understand whether this was feasible, a group of senior officers met over several months as a *Futures Group*, drawing on the support of the Local Partnerships consultancy. Examination of the Digital and Data Strategies identified common themes across all four partners making collaboration feasible. These are:
Mission One: Digital Skills Development
   - Train staff to enhance their digital skills to ensure they are equipped to deliver customer-centric services.
   - Develop digital leadership among senior managers and elected members.
   - Promote digital literacy within the community to support vulnerable groups and ensure inclusivity.
Mission Two: Customer-Centred Services
   - Design and implement services that prioritise the needs and experiences of customers.
   - Utilise user-centred design principles to ensure services are intuitive and
   - accessible.
   - Offer digital solutions that are available 24/7 and can be accessed from any device or location.
Mission Three: Collaboration and Innovation
   - Foster a culture of collaboration both within the council and with external partners.
   - Embrace new technologies and innovative solutions to improve service delivery.

- Explore opportunities for regional, national, and local collaboration to enhance service efficiency.

Mission Four: Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making
- Improve data quality and use data analytics to make informed decisions.
- Ensure data is protected and shared appropriately to enhance service delivery.
- Utilise data to anticipate and proactively address customer needs.

Mission Five: Technology and Infrastructure
- Develop and maintain a reliable, secure, and adaptable digital infrastructure.
- Implement cloud-based solutions to improve accessibility, resilience, and sustainability.
- Invest in digital infrastructure projects such as broadband, Wi-Fi, and 5G to support city-wide connectivity.

Mission Six: Automation and Efficiency
- Automate routine tasks to free up staff for more value-added activities.
- Explore the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to streamline operations.
- Continuously review and improve IT systems to enhance customer experience and operational efficiency.

Mission Seven: Sustainability and Inclusivity
- Ensure digital solutions align with sustainability goals and reduce the carbon footprint.
- Provide traditional service channels for those unable to access digital services, ensuring no one is left behind.
- Develop digital services that meet accessibility standards and support the Welsh language.

3.4   In addition to these points, collaboration will enhance the ability of partners to tackle inequalities through better use of digital and data in line with the Marmot principles endorsed by the Gwent Public Services Board. This includes preventing issues from occurring or worsening and contributing to better health outcomes.

3.5   A shared digital, data and technology service promotes a holistic and integrated approach to public service delivery, making it more efficient, innovative, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of users. This new way of thinking about public services leverages the collective strengths of multiple organisations to provide higher-quality, more effective, and sustainable services to the public. Partners will work with the Centre for Digital Public Services to ensure that we work in accordance with the twelve digital service standards for Wales.

3.6   Creating seamless access to data will provide practitioners with a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of communities, groups of people and individuals. For example, regional data can highlight disparities in health outcomes, educational attainment, and economic opportunities across different geographies, enabling targeted interventions that promote greater equity and cohesion. This will enable them to make more timely and effective decisions which should lead to better outcomes for individuals. It will also enable us to increase the frequency of data reporting improving the ability of councillors and managers to make data-enabled decisions.

3.7   Bringing these services together will enable a shift in how digital and data are used to deliver social value and community benefit. Working together at scale will enable the teams to attract and retain a workforce with high level skills. This will be afforded by reducing duplication and creating new roles that would be unaffordable to Monmouthshire County Council or the other partners, if working in isolation. The new approach would enable the creation of agile, responsive, and resilient solutions, as well as a digital culture that drives value for money into the partner's medium term financial plans, through efficiency and improvement.

3.8   The data functions that will sit as part of the new collaboration include predictive analytics, data science and capitalising on the potential of the Internet of Things. Functions such as performance data will remain with each of the partners' authorities. It was accepted by the SRS Board that more detailed proposals and further work would need to be done to develop the case for investment in data, with a meeting of the Futures Group having taken place on 9th May to begin this work. This collaborative service will focus on enhancing frontline services, generating actionable insights from data, tailored intelligence and / or predictive analytics to support service redesign and place shaping, fostering collaboration across agencies, and developing innovative solutions to address complex challenges. The investment case will be presented to SRS Strategic Board in the first instance before being subject to a decision by Cabinet.

3.9   Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent will each be transferring one member of staff from day one. Monmouthshire does not have sufficient data staff to be able to do this without stopping core functions. A new data post will be created to ensure that Monmouthshire is able to be participate fully in, and capitalise from, the embryonic data service from day one alongside the other two authorities. This is covered in the recommendations and resource requirements of thus paper and means that partners can begin collaborating on shared data priorities as soon as possible.

3.10   Monmouthshire's small Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team manage the council's geospatial infrastructure and data, administrating MonMaps for Staff, Local Info for Residents and providing geospatial analysis across the council. The team serves as the custodians of the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and Local Street Gazetteer, which are the council's authoritative address and street databases. The team is presently part of a shared arrangement with Newport. As Newport are not presently intending to join the full collaboration, further work will need to be completed before reaching a decision on the location of GIS Services, to ensure we do not lose the benefits of existing collaborative working.

3.11   The first phase of the proposal would see Monmouthshire's Digital Team join the collaboration, with the intention to transfer to the new employer, subject to consultation, no later than 1st April 2026. This would be done in accordance with The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. Meetings, including with trade unions, have been held with those staff who will be affected.

3.12   Appendix one of this report shows a timeline of key activity and decision points along with a summary of the functions within each of the service areas that were considered by the

Futures Group. Appendix 2 is a copy of the paper presented to the SRS Strategic Board in January 2025.

3.13 It is vital to ensure that the SRS can be held to account for delivery of the ambitions of the Council, and commitments set in the Community and Corporate Plan and Digital and Data Strategy. Officers will undertake a review of client-side governance to ensure that existing arrangements overseeing the delivery of the technology service are re-purposed to oversee and ensure accountability of the wider collaboration.

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

4.1 Improving use of digital and data creates the opportunity to improve our understanding of inequalities within our communities by creating access to more granular and timely data and creating the potential to combine datasets improving insights that can be used to make better decisions. For example, this will enable the acceleration of work to put in place a single view of vulnerable individuals that can be shared by partners to improve safeguarding.

4.2 By aligning with the five ways of working, the proposal in the background paper demonstrates a commitment to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 A set of criteria were developed to identify which components of the digital, data and information governance could sit as part of a collaborative model. Options were identified:
1. No change – Business as usual
2. Share all services (subject to a more detailed investment where required)
3. Share digital services only
4. Share data services only (subject to a more detailed investment case for data)
5. Share information governance services only
6. Share information security services only
7. Share a bespoke combination of options 2-6

5.2 The recommendation is to pursue option 7, above. This includes:
- Monmouthshire's digital service becoming part of the collaborative arrangement with SRS.
- Some data functions, as identified in paragraph 3.8 becoming part of the collaborative arrangement with a further investment case to be developed.
- Information governance services would remain outside the collaboration. Monmouthshire CC would need to retain the legal responsibility for information governance.

There was no desire from any partners for services such as freedom of information requests and subject access requests to transfer, making it difficult to split the function effectively. However, MCC will collaborate with the other partners on information governance training.

5.3   A recommendation on information security services could not be taken at this point as further work needs to be done to understand the potential for collaboration

5.3   Sharing data services from the outset will necessitate an upfront financial contribution from Monmouthshire. Torfaen CBC and Blaenau Gwent CBC will each transfer one member of their data teams to the collaboration from the outset, pending the development of the full investment case. Monmouthshire's data capacity is part of its performance management team and the authority would be unable to transfer a member of staff. Consequently, this paper contains a recommendation to commit funds to equal to the staffing being transferred in by the other tow partners.

6.   EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1   The criteria used as part of the initial work can be used to determine whether the collaboration has achieved what it set out do. These include: Increased ability to prioritise resources to work at pace; increased resilience; avoid/reduce duplication, deliver cost savings.

7.   REASONS:

7.1   To optimise the authority's digital and data functions to generate economies of scale, deliver organisational efficiencies and enhanced experiences for residents and businesses.

7.2   The proposals will also see the authority increase its ability to unlock the power of its data, generating insights about people and communities that provide actionable insights and enabling the development of preventative services that improve outcomes and reduce inequalities within and between communities and groups of people.

8.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1   The net increase in expenditure as a result of the recommendations is £77,017. It is recommended that this is funded from the ICT reserve in year one of the arrangement. For year 2 (2026/27) onwards consideration will be given to incorporating the additional costs as a budget pressure or funding from existing departmental budgets should cashable efficiency savings be generated from the collaboration.

8.2   The first phase of the proposal would see existing digital staff transfer to the SRS no later than 1st April 2026. The combined salary cost for those transferring, coupled with Monmouthshire County Council's share of joint management costs, would be £370,273 over a full year which is higher than the current digital team budget of £346,000 necessitating an additional contribution of £24,273

8.3   Sharing digital services allows us to optimise our resources, reducing duplication and maximising the impact of our existing investments, to meet the authority's ambition. This efficiency means we can reduce duplication across the partners and redirect savings

towards other critical areas, enhancing overall service delivery and leading to improved outcomes without the need for additional investment in digital services.

8.3   Monmouthshire County Council's data team are also responsible for its performance and strategic risk management arrangements. These functions are not within the scope of the new shared service model. The other authorities will each transfer one full time equivalent (FTE) data analyst post from day one. Monmouthshire is unable to release this capacity without forgoing its ability to deliver on core work. It is therefore necessary for MCC to make a financial contribution to enable one data officer to be recruited from day one to equal the staffing contribution of the other partners. Including on costs this will result in *additional expenditure* of £52,744 inclusive of on-costs for a full year. A full investment case for data will be brought forward at a later date and will be presented to the SRS Board in the first instance.

8.4   The new collaboration will enable the partners to improve service delivery, generating efficiency improvements through automation and the use of artificial intelligence. It will also enable data sharing and the development of predictive analytics that will enable the development of preventative approaches that will reduce the cost of future service delivery. At present, the financial benefits cannot be estimated with any degree of certainty.

8.5   The software needed to link and match datasets across departments and partner organisations is presently being met from core SRS budgets. Any additional funding required will be subject to future decisions of the SRS Board or partner organisations as appropriate.

9.   **CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Head of HR
SRS Strategic Board
Local Partnerships (a consultancy jointly owned by the Local Government Association, HM Treasury and Welsh Government)
Responsible Chief Officers and Heads of Service at partner organisations
Chief Operating Officer, SRS
Deputy Chief Operating Officer, SRS
Unison

10.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

SRS Futures Base Paper (July 2024) – included as appendix 2

11.   **AUTHORS:**

Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships

Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive

12.   CONTACT DETAILS:

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Timeline of key activity and decision points

July 2024	SRS Strategic Board agreed move towards a shared DDaT model.
Aug	Futures Group Formed
Sept/Oct	Discovery Days
Dec	Options Workshops
Jan 2025	Paper and recommendations presented to SRS Strategic Board
April / May	Proposals presented to Cabinets of MCC, BGCBC and TCBC
Mar / April	Staff consultation and trade union consultation (digital)
May	Work begins on developing an investment case for investment in data
August	Digital Service moves to shadow arrangement
Tbc	Embryonic data service brought together (no MCC staff transferring at this stage)
Tbc	Discovery work for joint information security service
Apr 2026	Final data by which all staff within scope will have transferred to SRS

Service Area Functions examined by Futures Group

Digital

1. Digital service redesign
2. Digital adoption
3. Digital inclusion
4. Digital PMO
5. MCS systems
6. Contracts
7. Automation

Data

1. Systems intelligence
2. Performance data
3. GIS
4. Predictive analytics, forecasting and data science
5. IoT / Smart tech
6. System administration

Information Governance

1. FoI / Environmental requests
2. Subject access requests
3. Complaints
4. Information management
5. Data protection
6. Breaches of governance / security
7. Internal training

For Monmouthshire
- All seven of the defined digital functions are "in scope".
- Four of the six data functions are "in scope". The two functions "out of scope" are performance reporting and the system ownership function. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) are subject to ongoing discussions as MCC is already in a partnership arrangement with Newport City Council.
- One of the seven defined information governance functions are "in scope". This is the internal training function.

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SRS Strategic Board 16th July 2024

"… a proposal for the creation of a modern, vibrant digital agency that can better serve the scale of change required for our citizens and stakeholders together rather than alone."

ONEWALES
.digital

Audience	List of partners: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council.
Document Status	
Document Version	
Issue Date	
Reviewed By	
Prepared By	
Date Approved	

SRO:	Matt Lewis (COO SRS)
Project Manager:	
Organisation:	SRS

Version	Date	Name	Comment
1.0	29/7/24	Matt Lewis	Initial draft

Contents

1.	**Executive Summary**
	"Digital - applying the culture, practices, processes, business models and technology of the internet era to respond to peoples raised expectations."
	The criticality of "digital" to the organisation, in the wider sense of Tom Loosemore's definition above, has already been recognised by SRS partners at the Strategic Board on July 16th 2024 where the Board were very clear about the need for pace, urgency and drive towards a shared DDaT model.
	This is further reflected in the pathfinder Strategic Board Project Strands that the Board agreed and that the SRS has driven including Connecting Wales, Connecting Care, Shared Data Platform (Single View of Child), Cooperative Website and AI / Automation.
	There is significant potential to have a greater impact on the wider four Authority services if our combined resources were organised differently. This paper will describe a potential model for how this can be achieved with benefits and opportunities.
	The SRS Finance and Governance Board summed up the aspiration perfectly, that is that the SRS should be seen as the "platform for collaboration" and challenge given to any four Authority service opportunity that is not seeking a move into this model.

2.	**Key Messages**
	The evolution of the Shared Resource Service (SRS) has been marked by significant milestones and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing public service delivery in South Wales. Initially established as a collaborative effort among several local authorities, the SRS has grown into a modern, vibrant shared service. This transformation has been driven by the need to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape and the increasing expectations of citizens and stakeholders. Key projects such as Vantage Data Centre, Connecting Wales, Connecting Care, the Shared Data Platform and many more have played a crucial role in this evolution, demonstrating the potential for greater impact through collective action and resource optimisation.
	The SRS is now well placed to consider what more it can do for our partner organisations and this business case is step towards that new future. The SRS is seeking to use what it has learned and what it has done with partners collectively over the last year or so in the spaces outside of technology.
	We are very aware that the strands of digital, data, information governance and information security are not in the current provision and that it would require some adapting to deliver but with these strengths existing in our partners, the SRS is confident and positive about a future which enables us to grow, to build and to deliver on our beliefs that our culture of collaboration and strong delivery would allow additional services to be successful across the partnership.
	It is important to be clear that this work is about finding a solution that allows us to apply consistency and not uniformity. We are not seeking to deliver the exact same products or services to every partner as we recognise that you will all remain as sovereign bodies. We have learnt through our work in the technology space that there is significant value in a consistency of approach that becomes quicker the more frequently that it is delivered, irrespective of what the product or service is.

	It has become clear through this process that DDaT is a term that serves only to confuse. We have moved to use the longer phrase of digital, data, information governance and information security as the public service description.

3.	**Summary Position** The evaluation process has resulted in the below views from each of the partners in relation to each of the strands of work. **DIGITAL SERVICE** BGCBC VIEW - IN MCC VIEW - IN NCC VIEW - OUT TCBC VIEW - IN **DATA SERVICE** BGCBC VIEW - IN MCC VIEW - IN NCC VIEW - OUT TCBC VIEW - IN **INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE** BGCBC VIEW - IN MCC VIEW - OUT NCC VIEW - IN TCBC VIEW - IN

4.	**Approvals Sought** To agree to option six, that is to agree to an intent to share the services that have been evaluated and agreed by the partners and provide the SRS COO with absolute clarity of next steps.

5.	**The ask of the SRS** There is a significant opportunity to achieve four partner wide permanent innovation quicker and at lower cost through four Authority level collective action, rather than the tackling the same problems multiple times at an individual council level which is how it works today. Whether we look through the lens of Marmot, of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, of the Welsh Digital Standards, of individual Authority Digital Strategies, of individual Authority project lists or individual Authority roles and functions. To deliver on the request made of us by the Strategic Board on July 16th we will take the permission granted to us from each individual Local Authority and collectively from the four combined as the Strategic Board and progress a proposal which will include: - the identification and transfer of SRS identified digital, data, information governance and information security resources from existing teams or from within the business, into Torfaen as the host employer, to work in a OneWales Digital structure - the shift of organisational governance for the partners into a more effective model that allows for closer working - review of the need for intelligent client functions through a consistent approach to challenge, accountability and progress - flexibility over the procurement process, we will require some direct awards to take advantage of products that already exist in one partner to deliver value in the others - commitment to operating on a multi-disciplinary team model - the ability to progress with savings efforts across the partners

| | - project strand awareness sessions either per SLT / CLT or with all senior leaders. It would be positive signal for the partners to get the wider group together and share the updates in one or two cross partner sessions.
- to work with external organisations to build a set of trusted resources that we can rely upon for expert advice
- to step away from different starting points language and step into shared language of "we will"
- there needs to be a collaborative governance role that aligns all individual organisation funding requests and governance timelines to meet the expected timelines for each of the relevant projects. |

6.	**The Strategic Projects (Shadow Form)**

| 7. | <u>Ambitions and Aspirations</u>

<u>The SRO model</u>

The cross partner single digital lead is proving to be effective. In the contact centre project and the AI / Automation projects this single point of coordination has worked well and has driven the effort to achieve the right outputs and outcomes with less total resource requirement.

Improvement opportunity: this model could now to be scaled into a "shadow" digital service model across the interested partners.
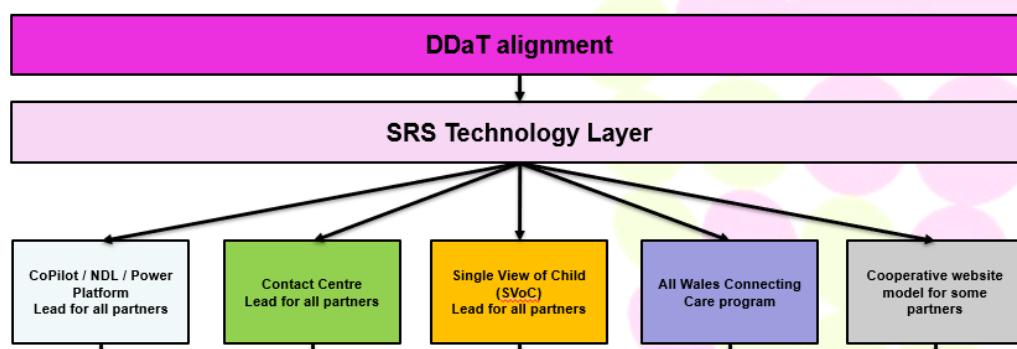
<u>Service users at the heart of the work</u>

The most successful efforts have been defined by the service area users themselves, a number of examples are in our show and tell session at this Board meeting.

The cycle of the service area knowing the problems and the digital teams knowing the available toolsets yet ending in a standoff between the two can be broken. We have proven this on a smaller scale in a number of the strands. |

Improvement opportunity: we need to progress this method of working and offer it as part of a shadow digital offering as part of our DDaT work.

The minimum viable team principle

Working with various members of the partner teams, we have started to shape the minimum viable digital team. We have also worked with external organisations such as Local Gov Digital, CDPS, WLGA and others to start this work.

Simplifying this down to the bare minimum of what we see as forming the multi-disciplinary, minimum function would be:

- Local knowledge (subject matter expert in the service area)
- Decision maker for the service (Product Owner)
- A skilled user researcher / service designer resource
- Developer / Doer / Fixer type technology resource

This is just an initial start point that needs to be tested further as we work our way through the projects.

Improvement opportunity: as we work our way into the options paper on digital as a service in the SRS we intend to work with external organisations to build a set of trusted resources that we can rely upon for expert advice in areas such as this.

Decisions, governance and financial approvals

In the Connecting Care and Contact Centre projects it has been clear that even with the service areas in the projects, there is still a need for someone to coordinate the funding and approval papers.

Improvement opportunity: there needs to be a collaborative governance role that aligns all individual organisation funding requests and governance timelines to meet the expected timelines for each of the relevant projects.

Senior Leadership Teams awareness

The work is happening ground up directly with service area staff and team leads. This is an exciting and welcome change from the past but it requires a very different approach from those we have experienced before.

In the initial projects, we are seeing a point being reached where the knowledge and awareness of the work progresses t a point beyond

Improvement opportunity: the SRS would value running project strand awareness sessions either per SLT / CLT or with all senior leaders. It would be positive signal for the partners to get the wider group together and share the updates in one or two cross partner sessions.

8.	**Strategic Case**

9.	Strategic Context: Shifting The Needle
	The future of public service delivery in South Wales is bright with OneWales Digital. By creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity, we will empower our partners to work, share and build together as one team. Leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies, we will drive significant value for money, contribute to financial sustainability, and make a positive difference to the way we serve our communities. Together, we will set a new standard for public service excellence as we build the future of public services.

10.	Overview of the Current Position
	The current position is that the digital, data, information governance and information security functions all exist within each partner organisation. There may be an amount of informal collaboration but it would be fair to say that there are very few, all partner services delivered out of an authority function outside of the SRS.
	It has become clear during the discoveries that there are very few consistencies across those services, they are all structured differently and they are all managing different functions that they have changed and evolved over the years.

11.	Current Financial Position
	The current financial position is being reviewed and the SRS will update as that information is collated.

12.	**The case for change: What has the Strategic Board requested**
	The Board are not just seeking to see a proposal about a digital, data, information governance and information security service capable of delivering the activities across the digital strategies, that could be done in any one of the four partners individually with varying levels of capabilities. The Board are seeking a widespread mobilising of action and delivery, at ground level, across all partner organisations that enables a shift in digital culture. A culture that embraces innovation, collaboration and user-centricity. A culture that empowers the partners to work together as one team, delivering social value and community benefit, in essence making a difference to and for their communities. A culture that leverages the latest approaches to create agile, responsive, and resilient solutions and a digital culture that drives value for money into partner medium term financial plans through efficiency and improvement.

The SRS Strategic Board are seeking the creation of a modern, vibrant digital agency that will change the way we serve our citizens and stakeholders. To break that down into its component parts this would include:

- a proposal for a partner wide service that aligns to a model for digital, data, information governance and information security principles showing how it will work with the business
- an organisation that delivers to agile principles and focuses on user need through a user centric delivery method
- applying the lessons learned from the Strategic Board projects to the new service proposal
- a clear and defined description of the benefits that show the social value, the organisation value and the difference this change will make. In essence, "why should we do this … ?"
- a commitment from the new operating model that it will deliver savings into the medium term financial plans
- taking the opportunity to repurpose duplication and vacancies into new DDaT roles that would have been unaffordable in an individual position. |

13.	**Marmot**

14.	Gwent as a Marmot Region The Gwent region has formally agreed to adopt the Marmot principles and become a Marmot region to address health inequalities and improve well-being across the area. The key points relevant to this proposal of the agreement are: - Adoption of Marmot Principles: The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) agreed to use the Marmot principles as a framework for action to reduce health inequalities. - Focus Areas: The initiative aims to address significant health inequalities identified in the Well-being Assessment, such as disparities in life expectancy and childhood obesity rates. - Evidence-Based Action: The approach is collaborative and evidence-based, aiming to undertake actions that effectively reduce inequalities in Gwent. - By adopting these principles and collaborating, Gwent aims to create a fairer and healthier region for all its residents.

15.	The Marmot Principles The Marmot principles are: 1. Give every child the best start in life. 2. Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. 3. Create fair employment and good work for all. 4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.

	5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.
	6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.
	7. Tackle discrimination and promote equality.
	8. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity.

16.	**Contributing to the Marmot Principles**
	This proposal outlines a comprehensive plan for creating a unified digital agency, OneWales Digital, aimed at enhancing public service delivery across four local authorities. This is how it aligns with the eight Marmot principles:
	1. Give every child the best start in life:
	The proposal emphasises the integration of digital services to provide seamless access to essential data at both an organisation and regional level for services such as healthcare and education. This will ensure that children receive timely and efficient support, contributing to better health and educational outcomes.
	2. Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives:
	By promoting digital literacy and skills development, the proposal aims to empower citizens and staff of all ages. Training programs and digital inclusion efforts will help individuals gain the skills needed to participate fully in the digital economy and society and we will be able to better use regional data, regional skills and regional approaches to improve service provision.
	3. Create fair employment and good work for all:
	The implementation of OneWales Digital is expected to create job opportunities in the digital sector. By fostering a collaborative digital culture, the proposal supports economic growth and employment,

particularly in digital and data services. In addition, it was identified in the Cardiff Capital Region a number of years ago that provision of open data services can stimulate the economy as businesses have access to better data to make more informed decisions over.

4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.

The proposal's focus on integrating digital services can improve access to public services, reducing the time and effort required to access multiple services. This can enhance the overall quality of life and ensure that all citizens have access to the resources they need.

5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities:

By leveraging data and digital technologies, such as the internet of things, the proposal aims to create more resilient and vibrant communities. The integration of services and data driven decision making can lead to more effective and sustainable public service delivery especially when that is based on accurate data from within our places and communities.

6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention:

The proposal emphasises the use of data analytics and agile methodologies to proactively address challenges and improve service efficiency. This approach can help prevent issues from occurring or worsening, contributing to better health outcomes.

7. Tackle discrimination and promote equality:

The proposal's commitment to digital inclusion ensures that all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location, can access essential services. This inclusive approach helps bridge the digital divide and promotes equality.

8. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity:

	The proposal highlights the importance of sustainability through scale, aiming to reduce the environmental footprint by optimising resources and reducing duplication. This aligns with the goal of promoting health equity and environmental sustainability.

17.	**<u>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</u>**

| 18. | <u>Sustainable Development Principle</u>

There are five principles that public bodies need to think about to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle. Following these ways of working will help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing. By aligning with the five ways of working, the proposal in this paper demonstrates a commitment to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

    1. **Long-term**: The long-term planning aspect of this proposal is focused on creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity with OneWales Digital. This approach is designed to empower partners to work together effectively, leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies. The proposal aims to drive significant value for money, contribute to financial sustainability and make a positive difference to the way communities are served. By setting a new standard for public service excellence, the proposal seeks to build the future of public services in South Wales that are resilient and adaptable to future needs and challenges.

    2. **Integration**: The integration aspect of the proposal focuses on creating a more inclusive environment where citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location can access essential services. By integrating digital services, the proposal aims to provide a seamless experience for citizens accessing public services such as healthcare, education, and transportation. This integration can reduce the time and effort required to access multiple services, thereby improving the overall citizen experience.

Additionally, digital and data services can provide local businesses with valuable insights and resources, such as market trends and customer preferences, fostering innovation and growth. OneWales |

Digital can also reduce costs for businesses, making local economies more competitive. The implementation and ongoing management of OneWales Digital can create job opportunities in the sector, positioning it as one of the major employers of digital resources in Wales.

The collaborative approach outlined in the proposal not only optimises resources but also empowers citizens, creating more resilient and vibrant communities. It supports the strategic goal of shifting the needle towards a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity, which is essential for the integration of services across different sectors and regions

3. **Involvement**: The involvement aspect is centred around engaging with stakeholders and communities to ensure that the digital services developed meet the needs and expectations of citizens. This involves a participatory approach where feedback and insights from users are integrated into the design and implementation of digital solutions.

    By involving citizens in the decision-making process, the proposal aims to create services that are not only user-centric but also foster a sense of ownership and community. This approach aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations Act's emphasis on involvement, ensuring that people of all ages and backgrounds have a voice in shaping the services that impact their lives.

    The proposal's focus on involvement also supports the development of digital literacy and skills, enabling citizens to actively participate in the digital economy. This inclusive approach contributes to a more equitable and connected society, where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the advancements in digital technology .

4. **Collaboration**: The collaboration aspect of the proposal is about creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration, and user-centricity within OneWales Digital. This approach is designed

to empower partners to work together effectively, leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies. It aims to drive significant value for money, contribute to financial sustainability, and make a positive difference to the way communities are served. By setting a new standard for public service excellence, the proposal seeks to build the future of public services in South Wales that are resilient and adaptable to future needs and challenges

5. **Prevention**: This proposal outlines a model for organising combined resources differently across the four Authority services to have a greater impact on services. This approach is expected to be more effective than the current model, where resources are organised individually at the council level. The proposal also aims to prevent issues from occurring or getting worse by using data driven decision making and agile methodologies to proactively address challenges and improve service efficiency and effectiveness.

19.	**CDPS Digital Standards**

20.	<u>The Digital Standards</u> The twelve CDPS digital service standards for Wales are: 1. Focus on Wellbeing 2. Design Bilingual Services 3. Understand User Needs 4. Provide a Joined-Up Experience 5. Ensure Accessibility 6. Empower Service Owners 7. Create Multidisciplinary Teams 8. Iterate and Improve 9. Work in the Open 10. Use Scalable Technology 11. Consider Ethics, Privacy, and Security 12. Use Data to Make Decisions

21.	<u>Meeting the Digital Standards</u> How will sharing digital, data, information governance and information security functions make meeting the twelve CDPS digital service standards for Wales more effective than individually? A shared DDAT service promotes a holistic and integrated approach to public service delivery, making it more efficient, innovative, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of users. This new way of thinking about public services leverages the collective strengths of multiple organisations to provide higher-quality, more effective, and sustainable services to the public and the CDPS have agreed to work with us on delivery of our approach to align to the standards.

22.	**Partner Digital Strategies**

23.	Common Strategic Missions In reviewing the four digital strategies of Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen there are common themes and activities identified from across the documents. This journey will improve the overall experience for our citizens and stakeholders, delivering services that are efficient, effective, and responsive to their needs. Mission One: Digital Skills Development Mission Two: Customer-Centred Services Mission Three: Collaboration and Innovation Mission Four: Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making Mission Five: Technology and Infrastructure Mission Six: Automation and Efficiency Mission Seven: Sustainability and Inclusivity

24.	**Mission One Benefits**

25.	**Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Digital Skills)**

- Train staff to enhance their digital skills to ensure they are equipped to deliver customer-centric services.
- Develop digital leadership among senior managers and elected members.
- Promote digital literacy within the community to support vulnerable groups and ensure inclusivity.

Uplifting of Digital Skills

Embracing a shared digital service to flood our Councils with essential digital skills at all levels is an initiative that promises to enhance our operational efficiency and service delivery. This process begins with the implementation of comprehensive digital training programs tailored to the diverse needs of our workforce. By providing continuous learning opportunities through accessible online platforms, regular workshops, and mentorship initiatives, we ensure that every employee, from entry-level to senior management, is equipped with the latest digital competencies. This systematic approach to skill development not only fosters a culture of innovation but also integrates digital practices into our daily operations, ensuring that new skills are immediately applied and reinforced.

The benefits of this initiative are manifold. A digitally proficient workforce will streamline processes, improve productivity and enhance our ability to deliver high-quality services to our constituents. Enhanced digital skills will enable our staff to utilise data analytics for informed decision making, implement robust cybersecurity measures and drive continuous improvement through innovative solutions. Additionally, investing in our employees' professional development will lead to greater job satisfaction and retention, creating a more stable and motivated workforce. By supporting this initiative, we position our Council as a leader in digital

governance, capable of meeting the evolving needs of our community with agility and excellence.

Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand

The work is happening ground up directly with service area staff and team leads.

Consistency of Digital Leadership and Awareness

In our rapidly evolving digital age, strong digital leadership and awareness is crucial for guiding our communities and partner organisations towards a prosperous future. Currently, our digital initiatives, while effective, have been proven to operate in silos. This fragmented approach limits our ability to leverage technology to its fullest potential and hampers our capacity to respond swiftly to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand "SRO model"

The cross partner single digital lead is proving to be effective. In the contact centre project and the AI / Automation projects this single point of coordination has worked well and has driven the effort to achieve the right outputs and outcomes with less total resource requirement.

Benefits of Collaboration on Digital Services

By collaborating on digital services, we can strengthen our strategic vision. A unified collaboration strategy that underpins our individual digital strategies will align with our broader goals of economic prosperity, social equity, inclusion and environmental sustainability, ensuring that our digital initiatives are coherent and mutually reinforcing. Moreover, a collaborative framework positions us as leaders in digital innovation. Pooling our resources and expertise enables us to pilot cutting-edge technologies and implement best practices more effectively than if we were working in isolation.

Efficiency and resilience

In terms of efficiency and resilience, sharing digital services allows us to optimise our resources, reducing duplication and maximising the impact of our investments. This efficiency means we can redirect savings towards other critical areas, enhancing overall service delivery. Additionally, a collaborative approach ensures that we build a robust, scalable, and secure digital infrastructure capable of adapting to future needs, which is crucial for maintaining service continuity during crises or unexpected events.

Inclusivity and equity

Fostering inclusivity and equity is another significant benefit. By working together, we can ensure that all communities have equitable access to high-quality digital services whilst learning from each other, helping to bridge the digital divide and ensuring that no one is left behind. Shared digital services can be designed with inclusivity in mind, catering to the needs of diverse populations, including people with disabilities and speakers of the Welsh language

Empowerment

Empowering our communities and employees is a vital aspect of this collaboration. Digital collaboration facilitates better engagement and we can enhance communication, gather feedback, and respond more effectively to the needs and concerns at scale. By fostering a collaborative digital environment, we promote stronger connections between public bodies and the communities we serve, which is essential for building trust and ensuring that our services reflect the priorities of our citizens and partners.

Responsible development

This paper supports sustainable and responsible development. We have proven that shared technology services reduce the need for multiple data centres and hardware, lowering our environmental footprint and

contributing to our sustainability goals and we can take this a step further by collaborating at the data and digital levels. By adopting a collaborative approach, we position ourselves as leaders in sustainable development, showcasing our commitment to responsible and forward-thinking governance on a global stage.

In conclusion, enhancing our digital leadership through collaboration is not just a strategic imperative, it aligns with our values and legislative commitments, promising a brighter, more equitable future for all. Together, we can harness the power of digital technology to create a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, and inclusive.

This is in line with the position put forward by the SRS Finance and Governance Board that the SRS should be seen as the "platform for collaboration" and challenge given to any four Authority service opportunity that is not seeking a move into this model.

26.	**Mission Two Benefits**

27.	**Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Customer-Centred Services)**
	- Design and implement services that prioritise the needs and experiences of customers.
	- Utilise user-centred design principles to ensure services are intuitive and accessible.
	- Offer digital solutions that are available 24/7 and can be accessed from any device or location.
	Agility and user-centricity capabilities at scale
	As digital continues to shape the future of public services, OneWales Digital remains committed to delivering exceptional value and innovation across the public sector. One of the key strategies driving success needs to be an alignment of our job roles with Agile Principles and with the UK Government's Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) framework.
	This alignment not only enhances our capabilities within the public sector but also positions us to seamlessly scale expertise into and out of OneWales as and when required. We may need to bring in organisations to help with our work in which case they will understand the role required of them and we may provide services to others where our offer will be crystal clear to all.
	The DDaT framework is designed to be adaptable, allowing OneWales Digital to scale services and easily extend the ability to provide our services from any provide without the need for significant restructuring or retraining. This will mean that accessing external resource and building a partnership network becomes simpler at a scale of four organisations that we could not do alone.

Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand

The most successful efforts within our Strategic Board Project Strand work have been defined by the service area users themselves, a number of those examples have been shown at Strategic Board meetings in April and July 2024. The teams have used agile principles to progress the work.

The cycle of the service area knowing the problems and the digital teams knowing the available toolsets yet ending in a standoff between the two can be broken. We have proven this in several of the strands and we want to push further into the agile delivery methods.

User centric

User-centricity will be at the core of every decision we make. We are committed to engaging with our citizens and stakeholders throughout the development process to ensure that our services are intuitive, accessible, and impactful. By prioritising the user experience, we aim to improve the overall quality of public services, making them more efficient and responsive to community needs.

By placing our citizens and stakeholders at the heart of service design and delivery, we ensure that the services we develop are tailored to meet their specific needs and preferences. This approach leads to higher quality, more relevant solutions that resonate with our communities and partners, ultimately enhancing overall satisfaction and trust in our public services. By actively engaging with users throughout the development process, we can gather valuable insights, allowing us to create services that are not only intuitive and accessible but also more efficient and effective.

A user-centric approach also drives operational efficiency and cost savings across all partner organisations. By focusing on the actual needs of our users, we can identify and eliminate redundant processes and services, streamlining operations and reducing costs. Continuous user feedback enables us to proactively address issues before they escalate, ensuring smoother service delivery and preventing resource wastage.

This collaborative, user-focused strategy fosters a culture of innovation and responsiveness, positioning OneWales Digital as a leading example of modern public service excellence. Embracing this approach will not only improve the quality of services we provide but also demonstrate our commitment to serving our communities in the best possible way.

Agility and putting service users at the heart of the work

By embracing an agile approach, OneWales Digital can enhance its efficiency, responsiveness, and effectiveness. The direct engagement and accountability inherent in agile methodologies render the traditional internal intelligent client function unnecessary, enabling us to allocate resources more effectively and drive faster, more impactful outcomes for our partner and the communities we serve.

Adopting an agile approach within OneWales Digital offers a significant opportunity to streamline our operations and enhance efficiency by potentially removing the need for an internal intelligent client function. Traditionally, an intelligent client function acts as an intermediary between business units and external suppliers, ensuring that project requirements are clearly communicated and that solutions align with organisational needs. However, the agile methodology inherently incorporates many of these responsibilities, thus rendering the need for a separate function obsolete.

Agile emphasises direct engagement between cross-functional, multi-disciplinary teams and stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. By fostering continuous collaboration and communication, agile teams are better equipped to understand and respond to user needs in real-time. This direct interaction reduces the dependency on an intermediary to translate requirements and feedback, as agile teams work closely with stakeholders to iteratively develop and refine solutions. The iterative nature of agile, with its regular feedback loops and sprints, ensures that project outcomes are continuously aligned with organisational goals and user expectations. Consequently, the role of an internal intelligent client, which traditionally bridges this gap, becomes redundant as agile teams integrate these responsibilities into their workflows.

Benefits of DDaT-Aligned Job Roles

By adopting the UK National DDaT format for job roles, we ensure a standardised approach to digital, data, and technology functions. This consistency ensures that team members across different projects, departments and organisations can easily collaborate and understand each other's roles and responsibilities. It will also maintain high standards of work across all projects by adhering to nationally recognised competencies and frameworks.

Development

Aligning with the DDaT framework supports ongoing professional development and skill enhancement and continuous learning. We can encourage a culture of continuous improvement and learning, with clear pathways for career progression and skill development as identified by the DDaT framework.

This will assist is in attracting top talent by offering roles that are recognised and respected across the digital, data, and technology sectors. We have seen this at a national level with CDPS and WLGA who have very little issues in sourcing roles, in part due to their DDaT standard role definition and role title that the market understands.

Enhanced Service Delivery

DDaT-aligned roles can contribute to more effective and efficient service delivery through user-Centric approaches. We will focus our entire service on delivering high-quality, user-centric services that meet the needs of citizens and customers rather than the current air gap and duplication that exists between services. This will promote the use of agile principles and practices, ensuring that projects are delivered on time, within budget, and to the highest standards.

Improved Collaboration with other Sectors

By standardising our roles according to the DDaT framework, we position ourselves as a bridge between public and private sectors using a shared Language. This facilitates better communication and collaboration with private sector partners who recognise and understand the DDaT framework. We will enable smoother integration and execution of joint projects, leveraging shared standards and best practices.

As we continue to build on our success in the public sector, our strategic vision includes expanding our services to other Public Sector organisations. We will be better prepared for diversification by leveraging our DDaT-aligned expertise to offer digital services to others, providing them with the same high standards of service delivery and innovation.

This approach ensures that we remain at the forefront of digital innovation, delivering exceptional value to our partners and driving impactful work across all partners.

28.	**Mission Three Benefits**

| 29. | **Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Collaboration and Innovation)**

- Foster a culture of collaboration both within the council and with external partners.
- Embrace new technologies and innovative solutions to improve service delivery.
- Explore opportunities for regional, national, and local collaboration to enhance service efficiency.

Wider sector access

The scale and importance of OneWales Digital will attract significant attention and support from key organisations in the Welsh public sector, such as the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). These entities recognise the potential of a unified approach to drive digital culture across Wales, offering their expertise, resources, and advocacy to ensure the success of OneWales Digital.

The involvement of such high-profile organisations not only brings credibility and authority but also facilitates broader adoption and integration of OneWales Digital. This collective effort ensures that the service remains aligned with national strategies, maximises public value, and enhances the overall digital maturity of the Welsh public sector.

Collaboration into Product Management

The OneWales Digital unified digital culture will align our efforts towards a singular purpose: delivering value and benefit for our communities and partners. However, collaboration goes beyond mere cooperation; it embodies a strategic partnership where all stakeholders, including partners, community partners and citizens work together with shared goals and mutual respect. True collaboration fosters a culture of innovation by bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise. |

When stakeholders collaborate openly, they generate creative solutions and address complex challenges more effectively. This collective approach enables us to leverage the strengths of each partner, leading to more innovative and effective public service delivery multiplied across multiple partners. True collaboration aligns all partners towards common objectives, ensuring that efforts are coordinated and focused. By working as a unified team, we can achieve shared goals more effectively and create sustainable, long-term impacts for our communities.

When collaboration is genuine, purposeful and inclusive, it enhances community engagement and builds trust. Involving citizens and partners in decision-making processes ensures that services are more closely aligned with needs and priorities. This participatory approach leads to higher satisfaction and greater support for public initiatives.

Consistency

One of the issues that the SRS has always been the inconsistency of advice, of delivery and of the approach then taken to progress business side effort. If we consider the base fact that all four Local Authority partners have the exact same data retention policies and operate in the exact same spaces but the application of these policies ends up being different then we can see that it would be of great to align these services to provide a single, risk based assessment into individual SIRO's to make decisions. This will give us a much stronger chance at greater sharing, at consistency of decision and of streamlining the work moving forward.

Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand The minimum viable team principle

Working with various members of the partner teams, we have started to shape the minimum viable digital team. We have also worked with external organisations such as Local Gov Digital, CDPS, WLGA and others to start this work.

Simplifying this down to the bare minimum of what we see as forming the multi-disciplinary, minimum function would be:

- Local knowledge (subject matter expert in the service area)
- Decision maker for the service (Product Owner)
- A skilled user researcher / service designer resource
- Developer / Doer / Fixer type technology resource

This is just an initial start point that needs to be tested further as we work our way through the projects.

The Minimum Viable digital Team will be a prototype in progress and we will adjust it continually to meet business needs. All roles, except for the subject matter expert role, will be rotated around the business and highly likely to be rotated around multiple partners. This is how we will maximise the effectiveness of resources, in the same way we have with our technology roles.

30.	**Mission Four Benefits**

31.	**Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making)**
	- Improve data quality and use data analytics to make informed decisions. - Ensure data is protected and shared appropriately to enhance service delivery. - Utilise data to anticipate and proactively address customer needs. **Regional data driven decision making** A unified data service represents a strategic advancement that will profoundly enhance our analytical capabilities, offering innovative benefits for our daily operational awareness through to policy making and strategic planning processes. By integrating and centralising data from various sources into a cohesive provision, we unlock a wealth of insights that drive more informed and effective decision making across our partners individually and as a region. The integration of data teams / functions into a unified data service promotes greater collaboration and transparency across all partner organisations. With access to shared data and analytical tools, these teams can work together to address key issues and solve problems jointly once for all. This open collaboration fosters accountability and builds trust among stakeholders, as decisions and strategies are based on transparent, evidence-based information. A unified data service is a powerful tool that will significantly enhance our analytical capabilities. By centralising data, improving accuracy, and providing advanced analytical tools, we can drive more informed policy making and strategic planning. This approach not only enhances our ability to address current challenges but also positions us to proactively manage future developments. Embracing a unified data service will

enable us to make data driven decisions that effectively meet the needs of our communities and achieve our strategic objectives.

Regional data-driven decision-making offers significant advantages over local data-driven decision-making. By pooling data and resources at a regional level, authorities can gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of broader trends and patterns that impact the entire region. This holistic view allows for more informed and strategic decisions that address systemic issues rather than isolated local problems. For instance, regional data can highlight disparities in health outcomes, educational attainment, and economic opportunities across different areas, enabling targeted interventions that promote greater equity and cohesion. Regional collaboration enhances the ability to leverage advanced analytics and technologies that might be beyond the reach of individual authorities, thus improving the overall quality and impact of decision making.

Finally, regional data-driven decision-making fosters stronger collaboration and alignment among the partners, leading to more coherent and effective policy responses. When authorities work together using shared data, they can coordinate their efforts to tackle common challenges such as transportation, housing and environmental sustainability, which often transcend local boundaries. This collaborative approach not only maximises resource efficiency but also ensures that policies are consistent and mutually reinforcing across the region. Regional decision-making strengthens the collective bargaining power of the authorities, making it easier to secure funding and support from national and international bodies. Ultimately, by adopting a regional perspective, the partners in OneWales Digital can achieve better outcomes for their communities, driving economic growth, social well-being, and environmental sustainability on a broader scale.

32.	Mission Five Benefits

33.	**Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Technology and Infrastructure)** - Develop and maintain a reliable, secure, and adaptable digital infrastructure. - Implement cloud-based solutions to improve accessibility, resilience, and sustainability. - Invest in digital infrastructure projects such as broadband, Wi-Fi, and 5G to support city-wide connectivity. **Innovation at scale** Advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, and cloud computing, will play a pivotal role in our future of permanent innovation. These technologies will enable us to create intelligent, data-driven solutions that spans more than individual partners and provide a single view of many complex social problems that enhance service delivery and operational efficiency. By staying at the forefront of technological advancements, we will keep our digital and data services relevant and effective. The growth into data, digital, information governance and information security will allow us to stay at the forefront of these services for our partners in service areas that are currently siloed, disjointed and duplicated.

34.	**Mission Six Benefits**

35.	**Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Automation and Efficiency)**

- Automate routine tasks to free up staff for more value-added activities.
- Explore the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to streamline operations.
- Continuously review and improve IT systems to enhance customer experience and operational efficiency.

Removal of duplicate, triplicate effort

In the analysis performed with the Futures Group, there are roles that are the same across all partners, performing the same functions and implementing the same projects.

Some examples include:

- Sharepoint Project Roles in two with two yet to start a project so maybe more to come
- My Council Services in all four partners developing forms in the same tool
- Service Designers across all four running very similar project lists

On the converse side of this, there are functions that the partners are seeking to move into but they do not have the roles available to them such as:

- Extending IoT provision
- User experience roles
- Shared content design roles

36.	**Mission Seven Benefits**

37.	**Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Sustainability and Inclusivity)**
	- Ensure digital solutions align with sustainability goals and reduce the carbon footprint.
	- Provide traditional service channels for those unable to access digital services, ensuring no one is left behind.
	- Develop digital services that meet accessibility standards and support the Welsh language.
	Delivery social, economic and environmental value
	The social value of sharing digital and data services among the partners lies in fostering inclusive, efficient, and transparent service provision. By leveraging data across the region, we can enhance service delivery, engage citizens, boost economic growth, and promote social well-being.
	This collaborative approach will not only optimise resources but also empower citizens, creating more resilient and vibrant communities.
	Social Value
	OneWales Digital will help in creating a more inclusive environment where citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location, can access essential services.
	By integrating digital services, we can provide a seamless experience for citizens accessing public services such as healthcare, education, and transportation. This integration can reduce the time and effort required to access multiple services.
	Digital and data services can provide local businesses with valuable insights and resources, such as market trends and customer preferences, fostering innovation and growth. OneWales Digital can also reduce costs for businesses, making local economies more competitive.

The implementation and ongoing management of OneWales Digital can create job opportunities in the sector as we would become one of the major employers of digital resource in Wales. Additionally, training programs associated with these services can enhance the digital literacy and skills of the local workforce.

<u>Closer joined up governance</u>

Effective governance is crucial for the success of our shared digital service. We will establish a new governance structure and executive working forum comprising representatives from all partners. This forum will have the authority to make strategic decisions that benefit all partners, ensuring alignment and rapid progress and have early sight of all blockers and clear them out of the way.

We are also committed to measuring the impact of our digital initiatives, setting clear performance metrics, and regularly assessing progress to demonstrate the tangible benefits of our efforts. We will make a clear and measurable difference to citizens and to our partner organisations.
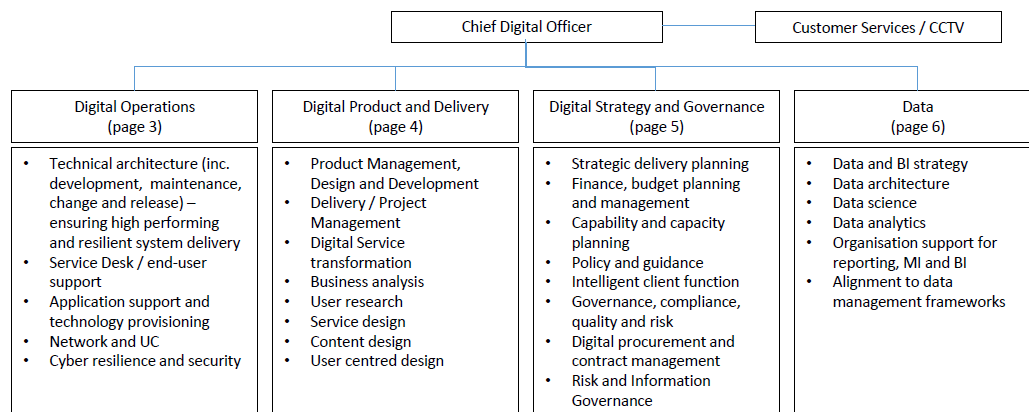
<u>Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand Decisions, governance and financial approvals</u>

In the Connecting Care and Contact Centre projects it has been clear that even with the service areas in the projects, there is still a need for someone to coordinate the funding and approval papers.

38. **How are others across Local Government organising themselves to deliver their digital strategies?**

The SRS has worked with a number of organisations to learn how they provide their services and a model that is common across many is shown below. What is interesting is that this very closely mirrors some of the services we currently provide that may have seemed out of place in a technology function but not in a digital function.

In essence many organise themselves around the ops, delivery, governance and data strands. Within that there are some examples of the organisation then organising around products and services rather than by discipline. The below is an example from Neath Port Talbot.

Chief Digital Officer			Customer Services / CCTV
Digital Operations (page 3)	**Digital Product and Delivery** (page 4)	**Digital Strategy and Governance** (page 5)	**Data** (page 6)
• Technical architecture (inc. development, maintenance, change and release) – ensuring high performing and resilient system delivery • Service Desk / end-user support • Application support and technology provisioning • Network and UC • Cyber resilience and security	• Product Management, Design and Development • Delivery / Project Management • Digital Service transformation • Business analysis • User research • Service design • Content design • User centred design	• Strategic delivery planning • Finance, budget planning and management • Capability and capacity planning • Policy and guidance • Intelligent client function • Governance, compliance, quality and risk • Digital procurement and contract management • Risk and Information Governance	• Data and BI strategy • Data architecture • Data science • Data analytics • Organisation support for reporting, MI and BI • Alignment to data management frameworks

| 39. | **Proposed Digital Resource Sharing Model**

The sharing model we were aiming for would have looked like the below. The way that the evaluations are presenting themselves means that we would need to take steps to achieve this rather than the original view that we could build this for all four from the start.

This remains the target model that we would be seeking to achieve, within this there would be a shift to operate to agile principles, to become more focused on the business and to have a greater focus on product rather than organisation.

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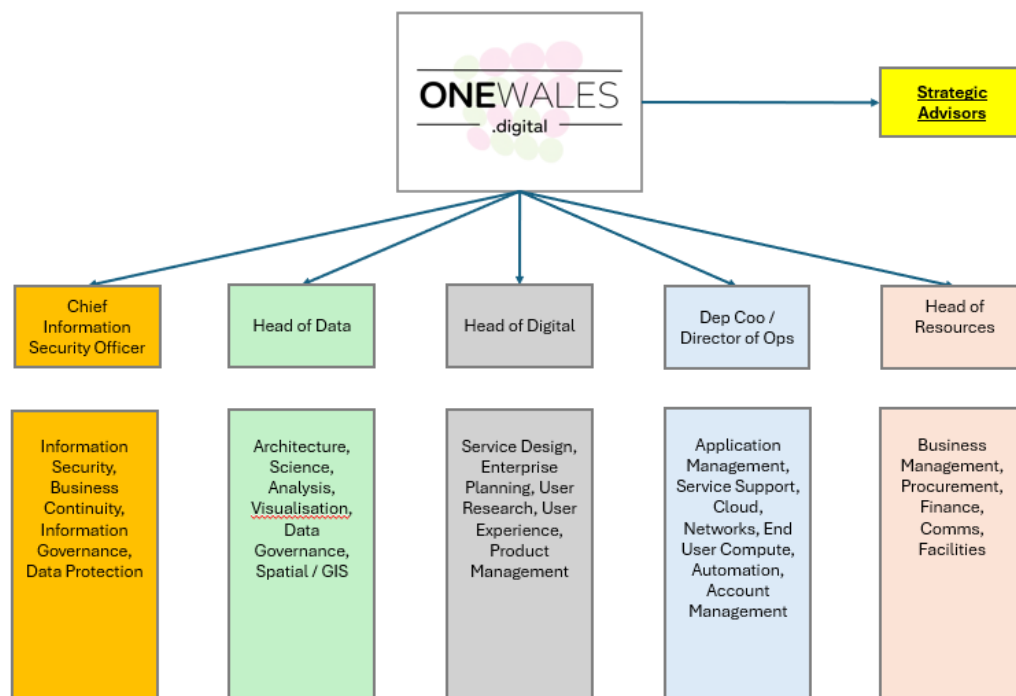
40.	**The Evaluation Work**

41.	The process of evaluation

The COO and Deputy COO, working with the Futures group, agreed a set of discovery days and brought together service areas from each partner to agree the functions in each service and a set of key information that would be used for next steps.

The discovery days for digital, data and information governance ran in Sep / Oct 2024 and the information security discovery ran in January 2025. At the time of this Board, we have been unable to complete the Info Sec position.

We have worked with Local Partnerships to bring together the function information and define a set of criteria for the purpose of evaluation and to help shape the final in or out views of each organisation.

The Futures Group evaluated each strand function against the below criteria to produce a red, amber or green status for a BAU state, i.e continue as you are today compared to a collaborative state, i.e. a shared service in the SRS. In effect, a before and after assessment.

Criteria	Red	Amber	Green
Increases ability to prioritise resources to work at pace	No or decreased ability	Similar or slightly higher ability	High or significantly increased ability
Increases confidence, capability and capacity to innovate	No or decreased confidence, capability & capacity	Similar or slightly higher confidence, capability & capacity	High or significantly increased confidence, capability & capacity
Increases resilience	No or decreased resilience	Similar or slightly higher resilience	High or significantly increased resilience
Avoid duplication	High or significantly increased duplication	Similar or slightly less duplication	No or reduced duplication
Increased ability to crystallise and realise the benefits	No or decreased ability to crystallise and realise benefits	Similar or slightly higher ability to crystallise and realise benefits	High or significantly increased ability to crystallise and realise benefits
Delivery of cost savings	No or very limited savings	Moderate savings	High levels of savings
Upfront cost	High investment required	Moderate investment required	No cost
Service risk	High risk to service delivery	Moderate service delivery risk	No / low risk to service delivery

42.	Digital

The evaluation of the digital strand has produced these outcomes:

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

The breakdown of the evaluation is:
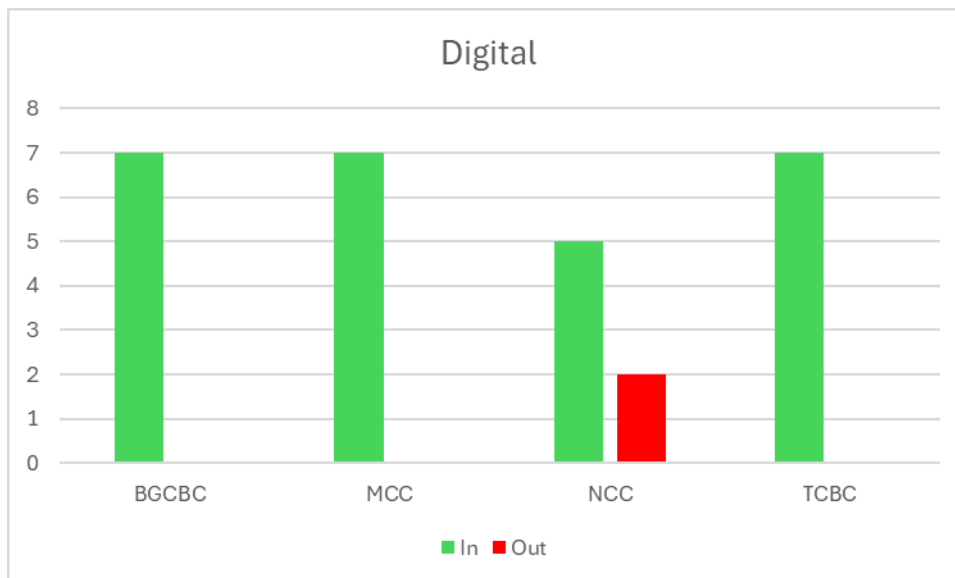
43. Data

The evaluation of the data strand has produced these outcomes:

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

The breakdown of the evaluation is:

Data

44.	Information Governance
	The evaluation of the information governance strand has produced these outcomes:

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

The breakdown of the evaluation is:

Information Governance

	BGCBC	MCC	NCC	TCBC
In	4	2	4	5
Out	3	5	3	2

■ In ■ Out
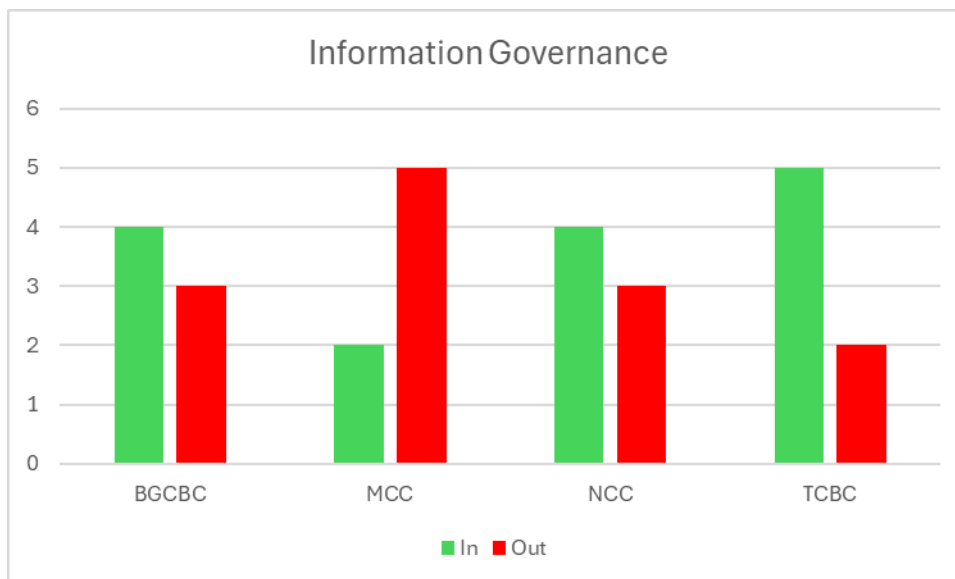
45.	**Options**

Option One – All remain as is, i.e the BAU in the evaluation assessments

Option Two – Agree the intent to share Digital Services only as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

Option Three – Agree the intent to share Data Services only as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

Option Four – Agree the intent to share Information Governance Services only as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

Option Five –Info Sec Services will need to be completed at another Board as we have been unable to finalise this evaluation.

Option Six – Agree the intent to share all services as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

46.	Risks
	As well as the many benefits described within this document, there have been risks identified through the process: - Integrating data from multiple authorities increases the risk of data breaches and unauthorised access which can lead to loss of sensitive information and reputational damage. - There are some different systems in place which will make product management complex to begin with. - If the resources in the business are unable to be released the service will only be able to operate for a limited number of partners. - Establishing a new clear governance structure and accountability will be complex, leading to potential conflicts and inefficiencies in decision-making processes. - Staff and stakeholders may resist changes due to fear of job loss, changes in work processes, or lack of understanding of the benefits of the shared service. - The initial costs of setting up the shared service, including technology investments, training, and integration, may exceed budgets or projected savings may not materialise as quickly as expected. - During the transition to a shared service, there may be disruptions to existing services, affecting the reliability and continuity of service delivery to the public. - Differences in organisational cultures, priorities, and working practices across the four authorities can hinder effective collaboration and integration. - Navigating the legal and regulatory requirements for data sharing and digital services across multiple partners can be complex and may pose compliance risks. The mitigation for many of these risks is the experience that the current SRS technology service has from fourteen years of delivering a shared service.

| | In addition to this, we are starting from a positive place with some partners in these service areas which will enable us to cover others. |

| 47. | **Dependencies**

Many of these services are dependent on each other and lifting one would require the lifting of another.

The SRS preference would have been to have managed all four strands as a single programme of work with partners support. |

| 48. | **Constraints**

The OneWales Digital future will only be constrained by the decisions taken by the four individual partners.

A phrase used by the Strategic Board on July 16th was "we are either all in or not". |

49.	**Final Views**

50.	Delivery Timeline
	The process of moving forward is highly dependent on the partner organisations. If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the organisational activities required could be as follows: - The partners to advise what decision-making process is required within each to progress the recommendation. - New governance model to be brought back to the April Strategic Board for agreement so the timeline for implementation then dependent on the Board. - Start the informal group that have agreed to work on this with the SRS, that includes a number of key sector individuals hand picked by the COO for their experience, knowledge and ambition. They include WLGA CDO, CDPS Chief Execs, Scottish Local Government SRO, Neath Port Talbot CDO and the Chair of LocalGovDigital. - OneWales repositioning will take six months of effort, so the timeline dependent on the Board agreement above. - The agile delivery model will be a work in progress and whilst it will start straight away, we are expecting twelve to eighteen months for it to bedded in, so a date of April 1st 2026 onwards would be more suitable. If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the shared digital service could be as follows: - A shadow digital service to be formed after today's Board to be in place by April 1st 2025 if support is available within the partners to move it forward, support required from OD / HR as this would require a secondment model. - Staff transfers to be reviewed and a target to transfer into the shared digital service by April 1st 2026.

If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the shared digital service could be as follows:

- The technology required to underpin the new shared data service in place by April 1st 2025
- As there are minimal resources transferring in the data space, an investment case would need to be written for a data service within the SRS to be formed after today's Board.

If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the shared information governance service could be as follows:

- A shadow information governance service to be formed after today's Board to be in place by April 1st 2025 if support is available within the partners to move it forward, support required from OD / HR as this would require a secondment model
- Staff transfers to be reviewed and a target to transfer into the shared information governance service by April 1st 2026

Bring back the update in the Information Security service for the April Board.

51.	Summary Recommendation
	To agree to option six, that is to agree to an intent to share all the services that have been evaluated and agreed by the partners and provide the SRS COO with absolute clarity of next steps.

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Integrated Impact Assessment Template
(incorporating Equalities, Socio-economic Duty, Future Generations, Welsh Language Measures, Corporate Parenting)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation: Matthew Gatehouse **Phone no:** 01633 644397 **E-mail:** matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal:** Expand collaborative arrangements in place for the provision of technology services through the Shared Resource Service to include digital, data and information governance services, generating economies of scale enabling the authority to accelerate progress against delivery of priorities set in the Community and Corporate Plan and the Council's Digital and Data Strategy.
Name of Service area: Chief Executive's / Resources	**Date:** 6/5/2025

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

Protected Characteristics	**Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic**	**Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic**	**What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
Age *Consider the impact on our community in relation to age, e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	The proposal has the potential to have a positive impact on people of all ages by providing improved access to services via digital and technology solutions. Collaboration on data will also improve insight by enabling partners to increase understanding of the needs of different groups including younger and older people. This will ensure that they are better tailored to meet the needs of different age groups more effectively.	There may be challenges in addressing the specific requirements of younger and older populations, including digital inclusion, and these must be carefully considered to avoid any negative effects.	The proposal aims to create more efficient and accessible services, ultimately improving the quality of life for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. This approach will ensure that everyone can benefit from the advancements and improvements brought by the proposal, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability *Consider the impact and what issues there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this; producing information in alternative formats, employment issues etc.*	The proposal will improve our knowledge about different groups within Monmouthshire and the region providing greater insight into peoples' experiences and needs. It has the potential to improve delivery to groups with different protected characteristics to ensure equitable service delivery. This includes providing appropriate support for disabled people, enabling them to access services that meet their specific needs seamlessly.	The proposal acknowledges the necessity of addressing the diverse needs of disabled people. The integration of disability-friendly infrastructure and technology will play a pivotal role in facilitating an inclusive environment.	The proposal outlines structured strategies to cater to the needs of disabled people, ensuring they have equitable access to services. This involves integrating disability-friendly infrastructure and technology, thus facilitating an inclusive environment. The proposal seeks to ensure seamless service access, enhancing the overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.
Gender reassignment *Consider the provision of inclusive services for transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	The proposal aims to create a supportive environment where individuals can comfortably access services without facing any discrimination or prejudice. This commitment to inclusivity ensures that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their gender identity or expression.	The proposal also emphasises the importance of respecting and addressing the needs of individuals undergoing gender reassignment. It aims to create a supportive and non-discriminatory environment where these individuals can comfortably access relevant services. This commitment to gender inclusivity ensures everyone is treated with dignity and respect.	The proposal emphasizes the importance of community engagement and participation. It aims to foster a sense of ownership and involvement among community members, encouraging them to contribute to decision-making processes and community initiatives. By promoting active participation, the proposal seeks to strengthen community bonds and enhance the overall quality of life for all residents.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Marriage or civil partnership *Same-sex couples registered as civil partners have the same rights as married couples and must be provided with the same benefits, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. Consider the impact of your proposal on these rights.*	This commitment to inclusivity ensures that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.	The proposal reiterates its dedication to supporting individuals in marital or civil partnerships by offering tailored services that foster a sense of community and belonging.	The proposal is designed to maximize positive impacts across all protected characteristics while minimizing any potential negative effects. It seeks to promote equality and quality in service delivery, ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.
Pregnancy or maternity *A woman is protected from discrimination during her pregnancy, maternity leave and 26 weeks from the day she gives birth. Including the provision of services, goods and facilities and recreational or training facilities. Consider the impact of your proposal on these protections.*	Overall, the proposal is designed to maximize positive impacts across all protected characteristics while minimizing any potential negative effects. It seeks to promote equality and quality in service delivery, ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.	The proposal highlights the importance of addressing the needs of people across different age groups, ensuring that services are tailored appropriately for children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. By considering the diverse requirements of these age groups, the proposal aims to provide services that are relevant and accessible to individuals at different life stages.	

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Race *What will the proposal do to promote race equality with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different racial groups. Think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Possible issues include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy & Traveler, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.*	The proposal will improve our knowledge about different groups within Monmouthshire and south east Wales providing greater insight into peoples' experiences and needs. It has the potential to improve delivery to groups with different protected characteristics to ensure equitable service delivery. Greater knowledge and insight will enable more effective targeting of responses, including for instance, recognizing and supporting individuals who may identify with multiple protected characteristics. This intersectional approach ensures that the unique challenges faced by these individuals are adequately addressed, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.	The proposal also emphasizes the need for cultural competence, ensuring that services are sensitive to the unique experiences and traditions of different ethnic communities. By fostering respect for cultural differences, it aims to provide equitable access and build trust among service users. This approach is crucial in creating a truly inclusive service delivery framework that recognizes and values the diversity of the community.	The proposal recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds. By promoting inclusivity and respect for cultural differences, it aims to ensure that services are sensitive to the unique experiences and traditions of various communities.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief *Consider the impact e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	The proposal has the potential to improve delivery to groups with different protected characteristics to ensure equitable service delivery. This includes people with different religions and beliefs.	The proposal also emphasizes the necessity of fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diversity of religious beliefs and practices. It outlines measures to ensure that individuals from various faiths, as well as those without any religious affiliation, can access services without encountering bias or discrimination. This includes accommodating religious practices and observances, providing appropriate spaces for prayer or reflection, and offering dietary options that respect religious dietary laws.	The proposal strives to create a comprehensive service delivery framework that respects and values the diversity of the community. By promoting equality, addressing socio-economic factors, and ensuring accessibility for all, it aims to build a fairer and more cohesive society.
Sex *Consider what issues there are for men and women. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues.*	Better use of data, particularly disaggregated by gender, is crucial for promoting gender equality. It helps identify gaps, inform policies, and track progress towards equality, ultimately leading to more equitable outcomes for women and girls.	The proposal highlights the need for tailored support for vulnerable groups within the community.	Data can provide to inform policy development to enable design and implement interventions that effectively address gender inequalities

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation *Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbia, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.*	Additionally, the proposal emphasizes the need for gender equality, advocating for policies and practices that support all gender identities. This includes creating safe spaces for individuals to express their gender identity and access services without fear of discrimination or harassment.	In addition to considering the socio-economic status and various protected characteristics, the proposal also recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of individuals with diverse sexual orientations. By promoting inclusivity and respect for lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, and other sexual orientations, the proposal aims to create a supportive environment where everyone can access services without discrimination.	Furthermore, the proposal emphasizes collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders to ensure that these programs are effectively delivered and meet the real needs of the community. This collaborative approach is essential in creating a cohesive support network that can promptly respond to the evolving challenges faced by vulnerable groups.

2. The Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions.

Socio-economic disadvantage can be defined as living in less favorable social and economic circumstances than others in society. It also includes social justice, which is about reducing inequalities by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.

Consider how the proposal could affect the following vulnerable groups:

Armed Forces Community (including veterans)	*Students*	*People who have experienced the asylum system*
Single parents	*People living in the most deprived areas*	*People involved in the criminal justice system*
Vulnerable families	*Pensioners*	
Single adult households	*Homeless People*	
Carers	*People misusing substances*	

Socio-economic Duty	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering from socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage?
Think of what evidence you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this proposal. Will it impact disproportionately on certain groups? Can the proposals be improved to reduce inequalities of outcome?	By improving data collection and analysis the proposal can significantly promote socio-economic improvement by providing a deeper understanding of societal challenges, enabling more effective policy development, and facilitating targeted interventions on different groups, for example, by increasing our understanding of the inequalities that exist within and between different areas.	The development of digital solutions can lead to some people being excluded, for example if they do not have access to the latest operating systems on phones, tablets or computers.	Ensure that we continue to ensure access to key services through channels such as community hubs and the contact centre.

3. Policy making and the Welsh language

What are the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated? Explain how you believe the proposals could be improved so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making: *Consider what impact this policy decision will have on the Welsh Language. This includes opportunities for people to use the language, opportunities to promote the language and treating the language no less favourably that the English language. Include any data and evidence e.g. WESP, Census Data, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Strategy.*	Investing in data and digital has the potential to improve our delivery of services through the medium of Welsh, for example by bilingual apps and a better understanding of demand.	Some digital solutions can be optimized for use in the English language which could potentially lead to Welsh speakers choosing not to access solutions in Welsh.	Ensure that Welsh is considered at the initial design stage of any policies in this area of work.
Operational: **Recruitment & Training of workforce** *Carefully consider whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as a desirable or essential skill. This is especially pertinent with front line roles as more than 10 % of the population of Monmouthshire speak Welsh. Also, when assessing the need for Welsh language skills keep in mind the existing Welsh language skills within the workforce. In service areas where there is a current lack of Welsh language skills, posts should be advertised as Welsh language essential. Additionally, consider where further training may be needed to increase the number of staff who can speak Welsh and to enhance the skills of current Welsh speakers.*	Better use of digital and data may increase our ability to target job adverts to Welsh speakers to help us achieve our aspirations to grow the number of Welsh speakers employed which, in turn, will help us increase the range of services delivered through the language.	None identified at this stage	No additional actions identified at this stage
Service Delivery: **Use of Welsh language in service delivery** *When advertising our services you must promote the fact that people can deal with the council in Welsh by*	Designing Bilingual Services as one of the 12 digital public service standards which are embedded at the core of this proposal.	Some digital solutions can be optimized for use in the English language which could potentially lead to Welsh speakers choosing not to access solutions in Welsh	

phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.			

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

Well Being Goals	**Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.**	**Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.**	**What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
A prosperous Wales *An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises global limits and uses resources efficiently (including acting on climate change); a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides jobs.*	The proposal will create improved opportunities for those seeking careers in digital and data – both of which require a skilled workforce	None identified at this stage	Ensure that development opportunities are in place for employees of all organisations to improve their digital and data skills.
A resilient Wales *Maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).*	None identified at this stage.	None identified at this stage	
A healthier Wales *People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*	The proposal will increase collaborative use of data between partners who share a commitment to the Marmot Principles to reduce health inequalities and tackle the structural factors that are often the causes of these. By integrating digital services, the proposal aims to provide a seamless	None identified at this stage	Torfaen CBC has a Health Determinants Research Collaborations (HDRC) and partnering with them on data creates the potential to improve learning about why some people and communities have poor

Well Being Goals	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	experience for citizens accessing public services such as healthcare, education, and transportation. This integration can reduce the time and effort required to access multiple services.		mental and physical health, and what can be done to improve them.
A Wales of cohesive communities *Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected*	The collaborative approach outlined in the proposal not only optimises resources but also empowers citizens, creating more resilient and vibrant communities. Better use of data and technology improves our ability to work with and alongside our communities increasing community cohesion and a sense of connection and belonging to place.	None identified at this stage	
A globally responsible Wales *Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing*	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language *Promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and participation in the arts, and sports and recreation*	The proposal supports development of digital services that meet accessibility standards and support the Welsh language.	None identified at this stage	
A more equal Wales *People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. (This includes the protected characteristics listed in Section 1 above. You can add*	Using data to understand and address inequalities in access to services, and some of the underlying reasons for these, can lead to more targeted and effective	Digital and data have the potential to both exacerbate inequalities. While they offer tools to address issues like digital exclusion, they can also perpetuate	Ensuring that digital inclusion is a core focus.

Well Being Goals	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty)	interventions which can lead to greater equity	existing social and economic differences. Models using AI are often fed from existing and historic data which can have inherent biases or under-represent certain groups which can perpetuate inequalities.	Ensure that we understand what's 'in he box' when deploying AI solutions

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

Sustainable Development Principles	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future *We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (guidance says at least 10 years, but preferably 25)* Long Term	This proposal is focused on creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity with the SRS. This approach is designed to empower partners to work together effectively, leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies that will help partners authorities develop solutions which are future-focused.	None identified at this stage

Sustainable Development Principles	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	The proposal centered on creating increased collaboration and creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration, and user-centricity within the SRS. This approach is designed to empower partners to work together effectively, leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies. The proposal began with an examination of partners' strategies to understand the similarities in our current policy aspirations for digital and data	None identified at this stage.
Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views *Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?*	Consultation and engagement has been undertaken with a range of internal and external stakeholders. The evaluation process included assessing partner digital strategies which has a focus on user centered service design. Enhanced use of data will generate improved insight about communities which in turn will improve our ability to target involvement at groups which may currently be under-represented in consultation and engagement exercises while improved digital tools may also help to open up new ways to involve a diverse range of people	None identified at this stage.
Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The proposal emphasises the use of data analytics and methodologies to proactively address challenges and improve service efficiency. This approach can help prevent issues from occurring or worsening, contributing to better health outcomes.	The proposal will improve the ability of partners to develop predictive data models which have the potential to significantly enhance preventative approaches.

Sustainable Development Principles	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Integration Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies *Focus here on how you will better integrate the Wellbeing Goals impacts* on people, economy and environment described above and balance any competing impacts. Think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations	A shared digital, data and technology service promotes a holistic and integrated approach to public service delivery, making it more efficient, innovative, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of users. This new way of thinking about public services leverages the collective strengths of multiple organisations to provide higher-quality, more effective, and sustainable services to the public.	

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding *Safeguarding in this context applies to children (not yet reached 18th birthday) and adult at risk (identified as a person over the age of 18 and who (a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.) Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and adults at risk, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.*	Bringing these services together will enable a shift in how digital and data are used to improve our understanding of different groups and join up data held by different organisations to create a better understanding of need. This can improve responsiveness and decision-making by different agencies. It will create access to more granular and timely data and the potential to combine datasets improving insights that can be used to make better decisions. For example, this will enable the acceleration of work to put in place a single view of vulnerable individuals that can be shared by partners to improve safeguarding	There may be concerns from some about the extent of data sharing by public bodies.	Ensure data privacy impact assessments and undertaken and privacy notices are updated to reflect any change in how we collect and use data that may occur in future.

Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers and Care Experienced People *This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority either through voluntary arrangements with their parents or through a Court Order. The Council has a corporate duty to consider 'children who are looked after especially and to promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own). It also relates to care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old). The Council must consider how to help overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.*	Greater knowledge and insight will enable more effective targeting of responses and service delivery	None identified at this stage	

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

This will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Key strategies and documents that may help you include: Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: Enabling Strategies See Guidance for more examples.

The proposal was developed following engagement across all partners.

8. **SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**
This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee Report Template

Improving use of digital and data creates the opportunity to improve our understanding of inequalities within our communities by creating access to more granular and timely data and creating the potential to combine datasets improving insights that can be used to make better decisions. For example, this will enable the acceleration of work to put in place a single view of vulnerable individuals that can be shared by partners to improve safeguarding.

By aligning with the five ways of working, the proposal in the background paper demonstrates a commitment to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

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

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
No changes at this stage		

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

Version No.	Decision making stage *e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc.*	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

1.0	Cabinet		

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| SUBJECT: Y Prentis – Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme |
| MEETING: Cabinet |
| DATE: 21st May 2025 |
| DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL |

1.   **PURPOSE**

1.1   The purpose of this report is to consider the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme as a limited company by guarantee, to become a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Shared Apprentice Scheme – a limited company by guarantee with charitable status.

2.   **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Cabinet approves the following:

(i)   the cessation of Y Prentis joint shareholders Melin Homes/Hedyn and Monmouthshire County Council (MCC). Melin Homes provide support and management services for Y Prentis for an annual fee.

(ii) Y Prentis becomes a project within the Cyfle company and all undertakings to be transferred to Cyfle.

(iii) MCC Officer has a seat on the Cyfle Directors Board to provide future updates to Scrutiny committee and Cabinet.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1 **Background information**

3.1.1   In December 2016 Cabinet approved the dissolution of CMC2 and agreed to formally pass ownership of Y Prentis from CMC2 to Monmouthshire County Council in December 2016.

3.1.2   In April 2017 Economy and Development Select Committee was presented with the Y Prentis Business Plan 2016-2018. No further updates have been provided to Cabinet.

3.1.3   In December 2024, Council approved the appointment of County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader to the Board of Y Prentis.

3.1.4   Y Prentis is referenced in the MCC Corporate and Community Plan – *Promote career paths in shortage areas such as care and construction earlier and more consistently. Commit to specific activity in care apprenticeships and scale up delivery through Y Prentis and similar schemes.*

3.1.5   Y Prentis was setup in response due to the need for more socially procured goods, services and works associated within the construction industry across south east region. It's vision*' is to provide long term sustainable apprenticeships for those in communities we serve to help them maxmise their potential'.* Since the company has been established in 2012, the scheme has made a difference by helping to train more than 340 apprentices and securing more than £1.95 million in funding for training and employment. Apprentices gained level 3 qualifications in carpentry, brick laying, painting and decorating and groundworks.

3.1.6 The scheme is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Y Prentis staff team – (Assistant Programme Manager, Apprentice Coordinator and Administrator), currently headed up by the Assistant Programme Manager. The scheme is hosted by Melin Homes/Hedyn and Melin Homes/Hedyn provide support and management services for an annual fee. The Assistant Programme Manager reports to the Y Prentis management board of Directors which is the following:

- Executive Director Corporate Services Melin Homes
- Head of Economy, Employment and Skills Monmouthshire County Council
- Land Director for Candleston Homes (subsidiary to Melin Homes)
- Director of Property Bron Afon Community Housing
- Social Value Manager Linc Cymru
- Head of Service Communities and Renewal Torfaen County Borough Council
- Construction Industry Training Board [CITB] (Advisory)
- Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development (Advisory)

3.1.7 Y Prentis Business Plan 2020 -2023, (appendix two) priorities for a **fit for purpose** and **sustainable** shared apprenticeship programme over the next three years are:

- Recruit Quality Apprentices: *This has been a challenge in terms of supply of suitable recruits to satisfy apprenticeship opportunities created and enabling the apprentice to complete their qualification within the agreed timeframe.*
- Deployment of a fit for purpose shared apprenticeship scheme which meet needs and expectations of its stakeholders: *Insufficient employer host opportunities identified by the team to sustain scheme business model.*
- Support our stakeholders to achieve sustainable community benefit and social value outcomes. *This did not materialise.*
- Working with CITB, CCR, Colleges and training providers to ensure we deliver apprentices that meet the construction sectors requirements: *Changes to contracts and funding requirements proved a financial constraint and alternative funding sources could have been explored more fully.*
- Support businesses to improve their competitive edge, win new contracts and provide opportunities for social value through shared apprenticeship and community benefit deliver. *This has not materialised due to challenges in sources shared apprenticeship opportunities once contracts have been approved and not part of the consultation for social value benefits.*

3.1.8 There were 60 apprentices as of September 24, split across the 10 local authorities in south-east Wales.

- Blaenau Gwent – 3
- Bridgend – 6
- Caerphilly – 6
- Cardiff – 8
- Merthyr – 3

- **Monmouthshire -1**
- Newport – 10
- RCT – 10
- Torfaen – 7
- Vale of Glamorgan – 6

3.1.9 Completion rates have declined significantly during the past 3 years (the number of apprentices completing the qualification and securing employment):
- 2022: 19 of 42 apprentices (45%) completing with 29 non-completers
- 2023: 12 of 42 apprentices (17%) completing with 24 non-completers
- 2024: 3 of 69 apprentices (4%) completing with 19 non-completers

3.2.0 Y Prentis delivery model is not sustainable and financially viable. The company is running at a loss from 22/23 -£24,311.00 and in 23/24 - £75,123.00.

3.2   Financial status of Y Prentis

3.2.1 Table one – income and expenditure

Income & Expenditure	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Income	662,952	579,041	601,840	642,672	805,945	1,180,887
Expenditure	650,481	575,661	596,469	641,082	830,255	1,256,010
+/-	12,471	3,380	5,370	1,591	-24,311	-75,123

3.2.2 Y Prentis relies on income from two primary sources. These are contributions and grant income, including:
- contributions from host employers to the costs of each apprentice
- CITB grant income (regular)
- RSA (Regional Selective Assistance) grant income (regular)
- Other grant income (one-off/short-term)

Table two – grant income

Grant Income	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total Amount	280,708	268,841	252,964	307,275	311,983	342,249

3.2.3 It is estimated that Y Prentis will hold a surplus of £100,000 on closure. If after paying off all the creditors the Company holds a surplus of money, by virtue of Article 65 of the Company's Articles of Association, that money must be transferred to an organisation with similar objects to that of the Company. With

agreement from Melin Homes, Board Directors, Monmouthshire Scrutiny committee and Monmouthshire Cabinet all undertakings will be transferred to Cyfle.

3.3 Review of Y Prentis delivery model

3.3.1 The board in July 2024 approved a review of the delivery model of Y Prentis. This review was undertaken by MCC and Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC). Key Challenges from initial review:

- Model – delivery and financial: deficit budget with significant number of debtors, staff roles and responsibilities.
- Contractors' placements: contractors' relationships, non-payment of apprentice wages and lack of contractors' placements.
- Apprentices and colleges: qualifications (level 3) and lack of placements within reasonable distance.

3.3.2 The review initially provided 5 options, that the board considered from October to December 2024. The primary options considered by the board were to cease operations or continue with delivery model redesign.

3.4   Current position of Melin Homes/Hedyn and Board Director organisations

3.4.1   Melin Homes merged with Newport City Homes and became Hedyn from 1st April 2025 and no longer wish to provide support and management services for Y Prentis and be a joint shareholder of the company.

3.4.2   Board Director organisations were approached to become the joint shareholder of the company with MCC and all declined.

3.4.4   MCC and Melin Homes approached the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) on the current challenges facing Y Prentis. CCR offered £40K towards the ongoing mentoring from Y Prentis and a review of Y Prentis through a commercial lens. This was on the understanding that the governance arrangements for Y Prentis as a company would remain the same and therefore was not taken forward following Melin's withdrawal.

3.4.5   MCC was then approached by Cyfle with a proposal to bring Y Prentis under the Cyfle umbrella as a project to employ all apprentices with Y Prentis and staff.

3.5 Cyfle Building Skills Shared Apprenticeship Scheme

3.5.1   Cyfle is a south west Wales regional model overseen by the three Independent Construction Industry Training Groups which reside in the south west Wales Region: Carmarthenshire Construction Training Association Ltd "CCTAL", Swansea Bay Construction Support Group "SBCSG" and– Dyfed Training Group "DTG". In October 2016 Cyfle Building Skills was awarded Charitable Status.

3.5.2   Cyfle currently employs over 95 apprentices and has employed 780+ shared apprentices to date and is currently the largest Shared Apprenticeship Scheme in the UK.

3.5.3 Cyfle Building Skills Employs Shared Apprentices in the following trades: Bricklaying, Plastering, Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing, Painting & Decorating, Maintenance/Multi-Skilling, Technical. Currently, around 90% of apprentices who complete the three years have secured full time employment in their chosen trade.

Due Diligence check of Cyfle company:

3.5.5 Legal and financial governance arrangements have been checked by MCC Governance and Law and MCC internal audit. MCC Governance and Law has carried out a company search. The company are fully compliant with all the governance requirements of a limited company and discloses nothing which suggests they are likely to fail in the foreseeable future.

3.5.6 In terms of Cyfle's Articles of Association to develop and promote the provision of apprenticeship training for craft trades within the construction industry with the geographical boundaries of the training associations of CCTAL, SBCSG and DTG. The equivalent Objects in Y Prentis Articles refer to operating in south east Wales and the CCR Region. Cyfle will first need to alter their Objects so their defined areas of operation will also include south east Wales and the CCR Region, to enable the transfer of surplus funds from Y Prentis to Cyfle once Y Prentis ceases operations.

3.5.7 Cyfle's Articles of Association which prevents them making a distribution of money or property to their members so the criteria in Article 65 in respect of a prohibition against distributing funds to its members would be satisfied.

3.5.8 As this organisation is a registered charity, internal audit has checked the Charity Commission to ensure that there was compliance with any report requirements and if there were any concerns highlighted. All report were found to be up to date and no concerns were highlighted.

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

4.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix one, anticipates that the cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis becoming a project under Cyfle company detailed within this report.

5. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL:**

5.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken in table one below.

Table one – Options Appraisal

Options	Benefits	Risks
Cessation of Y Prentis	No further detriment to financial position	Apprentices not completing their qualification and unable

| | | to transition into sustainable employment.

Redeployment of staff

Risk of reputation |
|---|---|---|
| Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis transferred to MCC | Refocussed shared apprenticeship scheme for the region | Lack of knowledge and expertise in delivering shared apprenticeship schemes.

Lack of uptake for the scheme in Monmouthshire

Limitation on staff capacity for work needed.

Too broad an area but too narrow one sector for the future drive of apprentices in Monmouthshire |
| Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis as a project comes under Cyfle | Continued delivery of shard apprenticeship scheme – retaining all apprentices and staff

Coordination of approach across south east and south west region | Lack of local knowledge and partnerships in south east region

Capacity to ensure continued provision for existing and new apprentices and Y Prentis staff. |

5.2   Our preferred option is 'Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis as a project comes under Cyfle' and the transfer of all apprentices and staff to Cyfle and all remaining finances on the cessation of Y Prentis. This is subject to Cyfle altering its objects prior to the transfer of monies to include an additional area of operation being south east Wales.

6.   **REASONS:**

6.1   The preferred option' Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis as a project coming under Cyfle will enable apprentices to complete their qualifications and transition into sustainable employment.

6.2   Cyfle have vast years of experience, knowledge, and expertise operating a successfully Shared Building in Skills Apprenticeship Scheme since 2013.

6.3   Currently around 90% Cyfle apprentices who complete the three years have secured full time employment in their chosen trade.

6.4   Cyfle in retaining Y Prentis staff will build effective relationships with the apprentices, colleges and contractors enabling a smooth transition of Y Prentis into Cyfle.

6.5   MCC would be taking a substantial financial and management risk in becoming the sole shareholder for Y Prentis, a scheme with very low take up in Monmouthshire and broad delivery area across the whole of south east Wales.

7. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

7.1 Following the cessation of Y Prentis (the 'Company'), if there is any shortfall between the monies held by the Company and the total owed to the Company's creditors, the most MCC will have to contribute to that shortfall is £1, that being the sum they have guaranteed to meet.

7.2 With agreement from Melin Homes, Board Directors, Monmouthshire Scrutiny committee and Monmouthshire Cabinet all undertakings of Y Prentis will be transferred to Cyfle.

7.3 This will include the transfer of approximately £100,000 of surplus held by Y Prentis on closure, subject to Cyfle altering its objects to include an additional area of operation being south east Wales. This is not from local authority resources.

7.4 Cyfle will receive additional funding from Welsh Government to support the transition of existing apprentices to Cyfle

8. **CONSULTEES:**
   - Melin Homes/Hedyn
   - Y Prentis Directors Board
   - Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
   - Cardiff Capital Region/Corporate Joint Committee
   - DMT – Learning, Skills and Economy
   - Medr – Welsh Government
   - Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development
   - Strategic Leadership Team
   - MCC Governance and Law
   - MCC Internal Audit

People Scrutiny 30th April 2025

Chair's summary:

- The Committee thanks officers for a detailed report and presentation and highlighted key points discussed, including the challenges faced by the Y Prentis scheme, such as declining completion rates and the lack of a Level 2 qualification in Wales.
- Members acknowledge that the proposed transition of the Y Prentis scheme to become a project under Cyfle would offer potential benefits, including a seamless transition for staff and apprentices and the strategic leadership which would be provided by Cyfle.
- We have expressed our concern about the proximity to Monmouthshire, Cyfle being based in West Wales and therefore we feel there is a need for regular updates on the progress of the transition to ensure the scheme's success in Southeast Wales.
- Upon the vote, 8 were in favour with 1 abstention for the cessation of Y Prentis and its transfer to Cyfle.

MCC Law and Governance

- Since Scrutiny committee 30th April and initial date of the report MCC Legal Department have confirmed that Cyfle did on 11th July 2016, change the Objects clause within their Articles of Association so that their area of operation is all of Wales and England and therefore if the monies remaining in the Y Prentis account are transferred to Cyfle that would be in compliance with Article 65 of Y Prentis Articles of Association. Article 65 requires that any organisation to which monies belonging to Y Prentis are transferred as a result of Y Prentis ceasing operations, must have an Objects clause which is similar to or compatible with the objects of Y Prentis. The Objects clause of Cyfle does enable them to operate in South East Wales and is therefore similar to or compatible with the Objects of Y Prentis."

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

    • Appendix one – Integrated Impact Assessment
    • Appendix two – Y Prentis Business Plan 2020 -2023

10. **AUTHOR:**

    Will McLean, Chief Officer Learning Skills and Economy

    Lead officer
    Hannah Jones, Head of Economy Employment and Skills

11. **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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Appendix one

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Integrated Impact Assessment document

(Incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and

Socio-Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer Hannah Jones **Phone no**: 01633 748316 **E-mail: hannahjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk**	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal** This assessment will consider the impact of the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme and becoming a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Apprentice Scheme.
Name of Service area: Economy, Employment and Skills	**Date** 1st April 2025

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	This development will positively impact all young people with Y Prentis to complete qualifications and secure employment.	None identified	None identified

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Gender reassignment	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Marriage or civil partnership	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Pregnancy or maternity	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Race	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	young people who share the protected characteristic	impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Religion or Belief	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Sex	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Sexual Orientation	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socioeconomic Duty and Social Justice	Y Prentis is a supported shared apprenticeship schemes and enables young people all of backgrounds to engage in further education and a work placement. Y Prentis mentors' young people to breakdown any barriers to engagement and progression. This ethos and practice are the same for Cyfle and will continue with Y Prentis under the Cyfle company.	Not applicable	Not applicable

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	**Describe the positive impacts of this proposal**	**Describe the negative impacts of this proposal**	**What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts**
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	The use of the Welsh language has been taken into consideration in delivery of Y Prentis under the Cyfle company The promotion of Welsh language will be monitored through Cyfle. Cyfle will continue adhere to the Welsh Language Standards.	None identified	n/a

Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Cyfle will adhere to their recruitment process and any necessary training offered as needed through Welsh and English.	None identified	n/a
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Cyfle will promote the use of the Welsh language, and all advertising will be in Welsh and english through various media platforms.	None identified	n/a

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

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

| A prosperous Wales
Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs | Cyfle provides apprentice opportunities in a number of trades in West Wales, this will expand into south east Wales now with Y Prentis coming under the Cyfle umbrella. A positive impact for both regions of Wales enabling skilled, educated young people to enter employment and working with a number of contractors to source apprentice and employment opportunities. | The Cyfle Board of Directors will oversee the Cyfle management team supporting the monitoring and performance of the Y Prentis project measuring effectiveness and impact. |

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)	Apprentices through their learning in college and on placement can apply methods and practices that support climate change and enhance biodiversity.	The Cyfle Board of Directors will oversee the Cyfle management team supporting the monitoring and performance of the Y Prentis project measuring effectiveness and impact

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised, and health impacts are understood	Apprentices are supported by their Y Prentis mentors in terms of their physical and mental wellbeing this will continue under the Cyfle umbrella. All apprentices are provided with PPE and tools on placement and all contractors are risk assessed and have necessary health and safety procedures in place.	Apprentices will have a wider access to services and provisions that can improve physical and mental wellbeing.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe, and well connected	Y Prentis apprentices will be part of a wider network of support and connectivity across south east and west Wales and will continue to receive mentoring and coaching from the existing staff team.	Through a collaboration approach across the south east and south west region Cyfle will ensure, they maintain cohesive and positive relationships and address any concerns in a proactive and empathetic manner.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global wellbeing when considering local social, economic, and environmental wellbeing	Apprentices can connect across a wider geographical area, taking ownership for their future and contribute to economic growth and prosperity in Wales.	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage, and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art, and recreation	Apprentices will have the opportunity to encourage in team building activity and take part in activities and events that promote and protect the Welsh culture, heritage and language.	Welsh language and culture will actively be encouraged.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	All apprentices have the support and opportunity to achieve qualifications and work placements experiences regardless of background or circumstances.	Apprentices have regular progress reviews, to monitor attainment and progression.

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future **Long Term**	The short-term plan is to enable Y Prentis apprentices to complete their qualifications in a timely manner and secure sustainable employment. The long-term plan is for Cyfle to grow the Y Prentis element working with colleges and contractors identifying trade skills gaps and future skill gaps and diversifying the range of apprenticeship trade opportunities across south east Wales.	None identified

		Cyfle will build relationships and partnerships in south east Wales to sustain and develop the Y Prentis project. Working with the 5 colleges in south east Wales that deliver the qualifications.	None identified
Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives		
	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development has an advisory role on the Y Prentis board and involved in the options being considered for the future of Y Prentis. Preferred option taken to scrutiny to involve committee and seek their views.	The Cyfle team will continue to encourage and promote user feedback as an essential asset with project delivery, design and continuous improvement for Y Prentis.
Sustainable Development Principle		**Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.**	**Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
Putting	resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	Cyfle has been providing operational support over from the 1st of March to support the transition of Y Prentis under Cyfle, which is subject to scrutiny and Cabinet.	None identified

Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	The proposal recommends Y Prentis becomes a project within Cyfle company. A company with vast experience, knowledge and experience of effectively managing and delivering a shared construction apprenticeship scheme in south east Wales and anticipate will have a positive impact in south east Wales	None identified

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Y Prentis project will follow Cyfle's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding.	Non applicable	Non applicable
Corporate Parenting	Non applicable		

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

The development is informed by the evidence and data in the following strategies and plans.
- Y Prentis Business Plan 2020 -2023
- Community and Corporate Plan
- Monmouthshire Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy
- NEET Prevention Strategy

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

.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template

It is anticipated that the impact of the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme and becoming a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Apprentice Scheme will have a positive impact on Y Prentis apprentices: social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education, and skills across south east Wales.
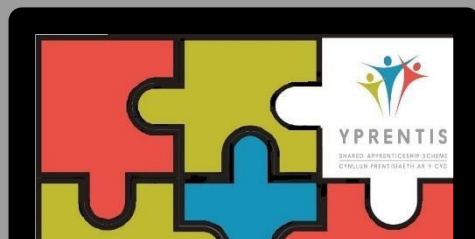
8. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
People Scrutiny	30th April 2025	Will McLean – Strategic Director Learning Skills and Economy
Cabinet	21st May 2025	Will McLean – Strategic Director Learning Skills and Economy

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Learning Skills and Economy DMT	17th March2025	
2	Senior Leadership Team	15th April 2025	

BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2023

Y PRENTIS

1 NOVEMBER 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2020-2023 Business Plan outlines how Y Prentis will continue to evolve, diversify and grow to meet the challenges ahead. The plan has been compiled during the economic uncertainty due to the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic and will consider how Y Prentis can play a supporting/fundamental role industries recovery in south east Wales. It is unsure how the financial support for projects will continue and with delay to both building and infrastructure projects "business as usual" will not be an option. This business plan will highlight two main areas of focus, the first being a solution to support displaced apprentices due to the pandemic and secondly, providing a cost effective and solution for companies who will not have the long-term confidence following the crisis to support full apprenticeships. These areas reinforce the Y Prentis core business and support our priorities for the next three years.

In early 2021 CITB must consult with the construction industry if it wants to continue raising Levy. It must gain the support of industry regarding the proposals for the next Levy Order. As CITB are the main funding source for the scheme, gaining the consensus and the subsequent funding for apprenticeships is fundamental to the future of Y Prentis. Therefore, alternative sources of funding will be a priority in the coming months.

The re-focused priorities will provide an opportunity for greater participation from private developers and Small Medium Enterprises (SME) through offering collaboration opportunities for apprenticeship delivery. By continuing to attract quality recruits, increasing our partner base and expanding the new routes we offer, we will be able to improve our offer sustainable opportunities in both medium and shorter-term contracts. This has wider benefits for apprentices who in turn will gain more extensive and diverse work experience and develop the skills for now and the future.

For the next three years focus centers around the core business of Y Prentis and are based on six interdependent priorities. They include attracting and delivering apprenticeships for talented people and creating sustainable opportunities from a strong partnership base which are embedded in social value ethos. This will be underpinned by supported priorities which determine how we will encourage and develop viable opportunities through community regeneration, whilst underpinning those principles through championing community benefits design and delivery. Consequently, maintaining collaborative relationships with our partners and stakeholders is a vital to our success. Page 173

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Y Prentis was founded by Melin Homes and Monmouthshire County Council, in partnership with CITB, as a not for profit company delivering a shared apprenticeship scheme to meet the increasing demands of socially procured goods, services and works associated with the construction industry in south-east Wales.

The scheme has become an established brand within the construction sector since being formed in 2012, delivering quality apprenticeship support to the south-east Wales region. In the eight years that the programme has been operating, Y Prentis has made a real difference by helping to train more than 300 apprentices, supporting more than 120 partners and helping to deliver in excess of 650 qualifications - making a positive contribution to the region.

> **The current business model**
>
> Shared apprenticeship support and delivery;
> Consultancy, community benefit and social value

Y Prentis is an evolving business effectively representing regional interests to inform a demand-led and sustainable apprenticeship programme. Ensuring that this is informed by strong industry engagement and considers the level of skills utilization, it has a robust governance structure and strong focus on partnership which enables the company to remain in line with industry trends in the region and both industry and Government priorities. It is the Construction Industry Training Board's (CITB) preferred supplier of shared apprenticeships in construction for south-east Wales and is ambitious in its direction. It currently supports the delivery of trade and technical apprenticeships.

Progressively Y Prentis will continue to diversify and tailor services to ensure we remain current and future ready. This will be achieved through a coordinated approach within the Valleys Taskforce area and the wider Cardiff Capital Region. In capturing and developing future skills opportunities within the construction and associated sectors, Y Prentis will fulfil the needs and ambitions of a wide variety of stakeholders.

This is essential for the scheme if it is to increase the range of apprenticeships being supported throughout the associated supply chains. Growing demand to maximise positive community benefit outcomes and social value through procurement has driven Y Prentis to create a suite of consultancy services for procuring clients and contractors to assist them in creating sustainable outcomes for the communities they service.

Y Prentis will capitalise on this innovative approach in the coming years and will place greater importance on ensuring that the mandate for community benefits and social value is reflected in all construction-based projects be satisfied by offering consultancy services that have been developed in support of this challenge. This is reflected within the priorities of this business plan over the next three years.

The current skills shortage has been further exacerbated by Brexit and the subsequent availability of migrant labour increasing pressure on the supply chains and businesses. This means the demand for skilled labour should drive an increase in apprenticeship opportunities.

We have been awarded an extension to the funding via CITB by Welsh Government to increase our apprentice numbers in the Valleys Taskforce area. The funding has enabled us to sustain the roles of Senior Marketing and Engagement Officer and an Engagement officer. These roles will continue ensure we have the suitable and enough resources to deliver sustainable apprenticeship opportunities in the area, fulfill our contracts and ensure the scheme meets the needs of the industry in the future.

Y Prentis success also requires a strong partner base. Our dedicated board of directors and the robust advisory panel has strengthened existing and developed new relationships with partners, clients and training providers. We will continue to strengthen our links with employer training groups and federations to grow SME participation in the scheme.

We are playing a strategic role within the Cardiff Capital Regional Region Skills Partnership for south-east Wales. As a key member of the Construction Cluster group Y Prentis will align with the future priorities of skills funding in line with regional employment and skills plan, industrial and economic plan along with Welsh Governments Policy on skills and their skills implementation plan.
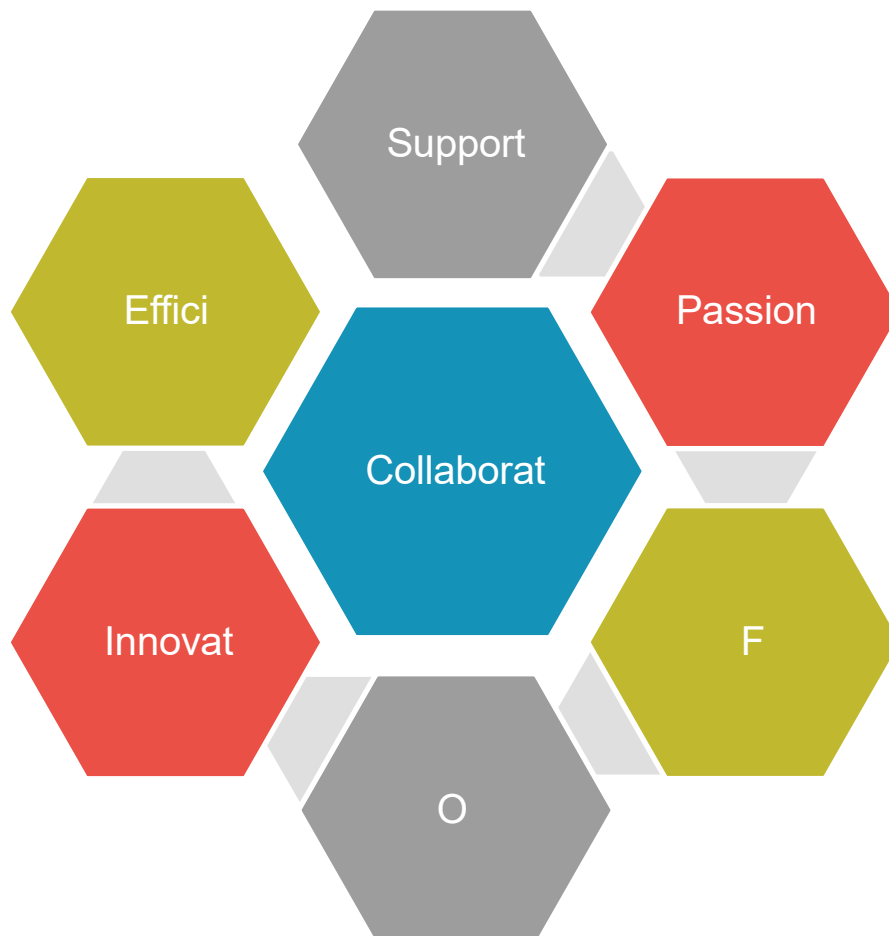
The sustainability of the Y Prentis scheme is underpinned through being specified as the preferred apprenticeship provider in the procurement of frameworks, contracts and subcontracts. Currently Y Prentis are stipulated as an apprenticeship solution in the Build for Wales (NHS) for SEWSCAP 3, SEWH, frameworks. We are linking with Transport for Wales Sustainable Transport Infrastructure contracts and the development and apprenticeships using the shared model. This ensures Y Prentis demonstrates and provides high quality services to the communities and companies it serves through innovative approaches to community benefits and social value design and delivery and the support and development of solutions. The model which is flexible in meeting the demands of the construction sector and its associated partners put Y Prentis in a unique position when creating apprenticeship opportunities to young people within the south-east Wales.

OUR VISION

"To provide long term sustainable apprenticeships for those in communities we serve to help them maximise their potential"

OUR VALUES

Support

Passion

Effici

Collaborat

F

Innovat

O

To support its vision and values, Y Prentis also has a list of aims and objectives:

Build our customer base

Impr ove our

F ocu

Targeted engagement activities

Develop Social Value solutions

Sustainable apprentices hips for the communitie

Increase number of quality apprentices

Im pr ov

Offer new and emerging trades
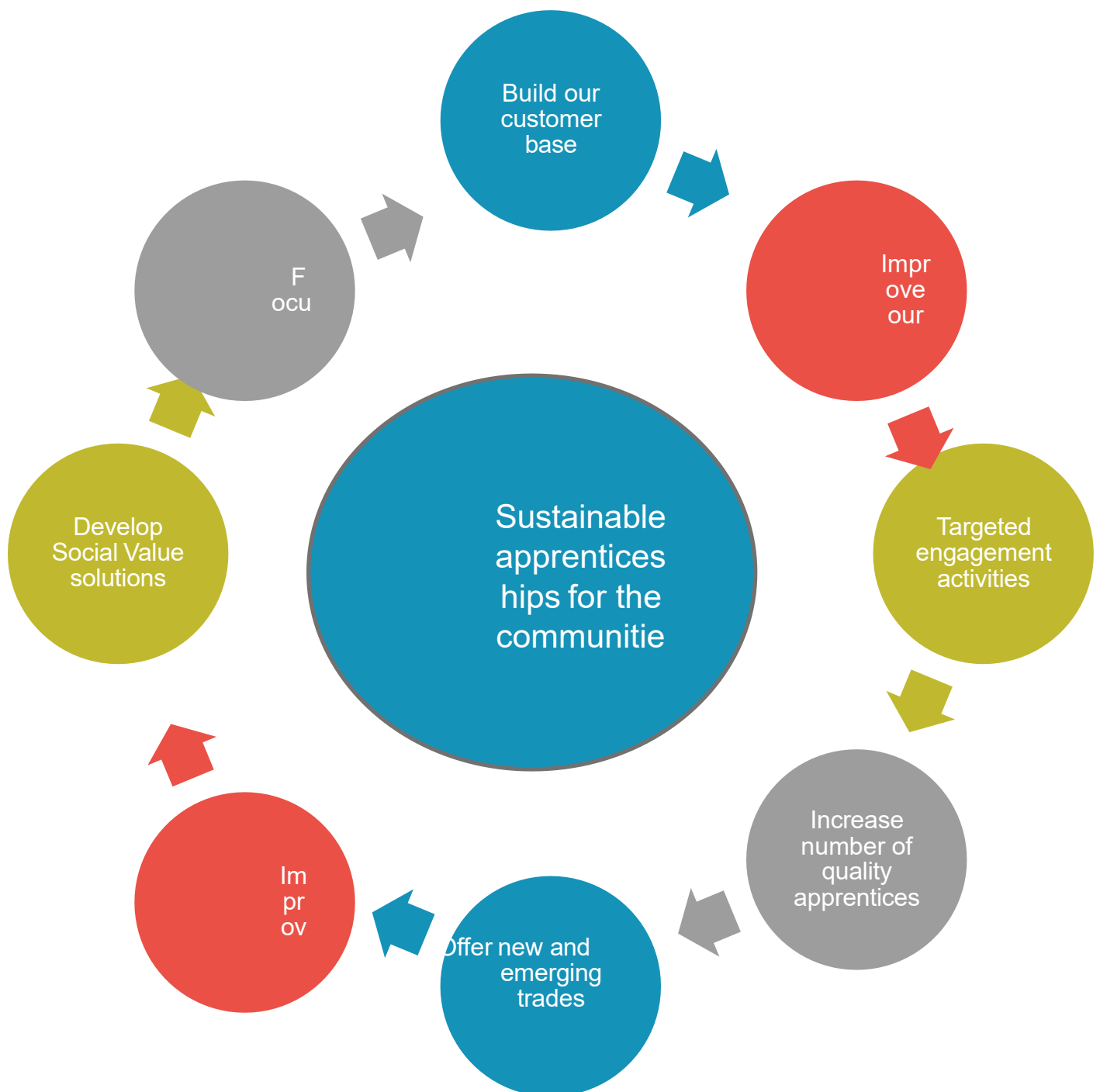
Y Prentis Objectives

- Attract, develop and retain the next generation of apprentices through demonstrating measured success, efficiency and sustainability

- Encourage confidence of learners through positive mentoring so they too can become future employers of apprentices.

- Maximise the earning capacity of our young people by ensuring they have the right skills and qualifications to enhance their future career and economic resilience.

- Promote a career offer and positive image of the sectors when engaging and marketing careers activities.

- Act as an ambassador organization, creating sustainable careers through a variety of trade and technical apprenticeships.

- Promote a career offer for the construction and the associated sectors as a route to

economic prosperity for people of all backgrounds.

- Expand the schemes parameters to include sectors where there are similar characteristics that have led to market failure.

- Introduce of a fee- based model through foundational economy and Cardiff Capital Region funding to compliment or replace CITB funding should there be changes in the funding during 2021.

- Provide direct social value support for businesses through collaborative partnering in the procurement process improving their competitive edge and maximizing impact.

- Grow the potential of our young people and communities by providing wide ranging employment support through collaborative partnerships and the delivery of community benefits.

CURRENT & NEW MARKETS

Our Current Market is where Y Prentis core business is founded. We currently work with our current partners on New School Build frameworks, including SEWSCAP 3, Local Health Board Builds and Maintenance with Build for Wales (NHS) and new home building projects that cover both the public and private sector through the Housing Association network. A recent addition to our range of apprenticeships which spans across these is quantity surveying. We will work with Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership to address the key themes from their employment and Skills Plan such as "*Broaden the apprenticeship offer at levels 3, 4, higher and degree by responding to government policy changes*"

There is a greater emphasis is being placed on the opportunities for social value through infrastructure projects. The sectors biggest pipeline projects in the south-east Wales region include the Dowlias to Hirwaun dueling on which work is likely to start in Spring 2021.

Y Prentis will be exploring new opportunities within and through variety of other sectors where the model can be adopted to enable all sizes of companies to participate in apprenticeships. These include timber frame, modular building/off site construction and retrofit. There are also potential opportunities in both the rail and creative sectors and Plumbing and electrical apprenticeships within the Valleys Taskforce area.

OUR PRIORITIES

The delivery of our priorities for a fit for purpose and sustainable shared apprenticeship programme over the next three years are:

1. Recruit Quality Apprentices.

2. Deployment of a fit for purpose shared apprenticeship scheme which meet needs and expectations of its stakeholders.

3. Support our stakeholders to achieve sustainable community benefit and social value outcomes.

4. Working with CITB, CCR, Colleges and training providers to ensure we deliver apprentices that meet the construction sectors requirements.

5. Support businesses to improve their competitive edge, win new contracts and provide opportunities for social value through shared apprenticeship and community benefit delivery.

1.   Recruit Quality Apprentices.

Strategy:

- Work collaboratively with colleges, into work agencies to promote opportunities and success of our high-quality apprenticeships across south east Wales
- Use work experience opportunities as selection tool for recruiting apprentices.
- Act on Y Prentis Apprentice Advisory Panel feedback to ensure exiting apprenticeships are fit for purpose

Actions:

- Attract applicants through our website, promotional materials and engagement activities that reflect our quality offer.
- Using quality recruitment process and criteria in the selection of apprentices
- Continuously review our engagement, recruitment and selection process

Results:

- Result driven engagement and recruitment resulting in increased quality of recruits.

- Increased retention and attainment rate of our apprentices

2.   Deployment of a fit for purpose shared apprenticeship scheme which meet needs and expectations its stakeholders.

Strategy:

- Increase our partner base through more effective communications and collaboration.
- Build credibility and strong relationships through our strategic board and employer forum.
- Identify market by need through industry research and insights to inform business cases for routes in routes to expand apprenticeships into other sectors.

Actions

- Effectively engage with key stakeholders such as local authorities through our alliance with Cardiff Capital Region.
- Expand the Y Prentis board with members that reflect the geographical area and diversity of the scheme.
- Utilize Welsh Government investment to increase to engage with a wider range of partners and potential talent in the Valleys Taskforce area
- Collaborate and undertake research and development to form business cases for funding existing and new routes.

Results:

- A flexible and diverse scheme tailored to industry needs, providing an increased range of opportunities for young people entering the sector

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3. Support our stakeholders to achieve sustainable community benefit and social value outcomes.

Strategy:

- Provide our stakeholders with an efficient cost-effective solution for the delivery of community benefit services and social value.
- Influence procuring clients and planning departments to deliver apprenticeships employment and work experience through project objectives.
- Embed Y Prentis as the preferred provider in the delivery of shared apprenticeships in south-east Wales.

Results:

- Increased opportunities for talented people to enter the construction sector through our community benefit services.

Actions:

- Work with our stakeholders with a view to include social value outcomes within the planning and procurement process and position Y Prentis delivery options to those being adopted.
- Expand our partner offer to include delivery community benefits outcomes as an extension of our support service when engaging apprentices.
- Offer a value based commercial community benefits delivery service to partners.

- Increased opportunities for talented people to enter the construction sector through our community benefit services.

4. Working with CITB, CCR, Colleges and training providers to ensure we deliver apprentices that meet the construction sectors requirements.

Strategy:

- Utilise our partners to inform and develop business cases and reports that inform the current and future skills needs in the region.
- Develop links with CCR, local authorities and providers and to tailor the training and learning provision to meet industry require-ments.
- Support Qualifications Wales in the development and implementation of qualification development.

Results:

- Progressive apprenticeships and effective collaboration with stakeholders which shape the future skills and qualifications for the sector.

Actions:

- Create diverse stakeholder intelligence within our board engagement groups which support collaboration and the development, knowledge and understanding of the construction sector requirements.
- Work in alliance with CCR to deliver it mission and priorities.

- Successful business case collaborations and the delivery and funding for future skills requirements.

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5. Support businesses to improve their competitive edge, win new contracts and provide opportunities for social value through shared apprenticeship and community benefit delivery.

Strategy:

- Provide cost effective solutions support to clients, contractors and SMEs in the creation and delivery of sustainable apprenticeships through projects and frameworks

- Offer a holistic social value delivery proposition to stakeholders which compliments creation of sustainable apprenticeships.

- Increase our measured impact on Valleys Task Force areas with increased resources.

Results:

- In company support to partners utilising Y Prentis' services when completing tenders, sub-contract bids and when delivering social value outcomes.

Actions

- Offer a consultancy delivery service that supports clients, main contractors and SMEs through the creation and demonstration of social value.

- Provide a link between partners, groups and forums to support local community initiatives and those who are economically inactive.

- Forge links with community engagement and third-sector groups to promote social value and corporate social responsibility.

- A collection of case studies and reports which demonstrates our impact in our partners social value outcomes.

GOVERNANCE - MEET THE TEAM

Y Prentis is fortunate to be supported and guided by a strong Board of Directors drawn from representatives from Y Prentis's founder companies. This enables service delivery via an innovative and energetic delivery team. The Board also benefits from the support and representation of CITB, industry, clients and colleges in an advisory capacity. The Board's make up ensures that industry, training providers and clients have a voice, enabling us to ensure that our services are flexible in meeting the demands of a range of partners. They are responsive to the needs of industry and as such have created a robust Advisory Panel, consisting of representatives from the construction sector who advise the Board on the requirements of the sector. Y Prentis is also pleased to benefit from support and guidance form Cardiff Council, Coleg Gwent and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA).

Adrian Huckin
Executive Director of Innovation, Culture and Improvement

Adrian is a graduate of the University of York and a fellow of the Institute of Housing. Adrian joined Melin Homes in September 2010 having previously worked in both the public and housing association sectors. His housing career spans a total of 35 yearsand includes senior management role with Newport and Torfaen Councils and Bron Afon Community Housing.

He is passionate about services excellence, equality of opportunity and making a difference to people's lives. He is also a company Director of Y Prentis

Hanna Jones
Youth Enterprise Manager at Monmouthshire County Council

Hannah started working with Monmouthshire County Council's Youth Service as a part-time coordinator for the young people's centre in Chepstow, the first of its kind in Monmouthshire. It was from here she became full-time, taking the lead in developing three more centres in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny and supporting a team of youth workers. She then went on to work with the Youth Service, leading post 16 projects.

Hanna is driving the skills and employability agenda forward for the local authority. She recently wrote the apprenticeship, graduate and internship strategy which focuses on working with people services and creating new employment opportunities for young people and adults throughout Monmouthshire.

Lyndon Griffiths
Land Director for Candleston

Lyndon is responsible for acquisition of new land opportunities, key client relationship management with both Private and Public Sector, networking with the wider professional development sector and co-ordination of landbids. He has been the lead officer on strategic developments such as Crick Road, Grove Farm and Coed Glas.

Lyndon has previously held senior positions in both the Housing Association sector and also with large private construction developers. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Candleston in relation to liaison with Welsh Government, Local Authorities and the construction industry for the delivery of both private and affordable housing across many counties of operation.

In his previous roles he has been responsible for co-ordinating new business opportunities, including land bids, securing S106 opportunities, package deals, PQQ/ITT bid submissions and marketing of the business.
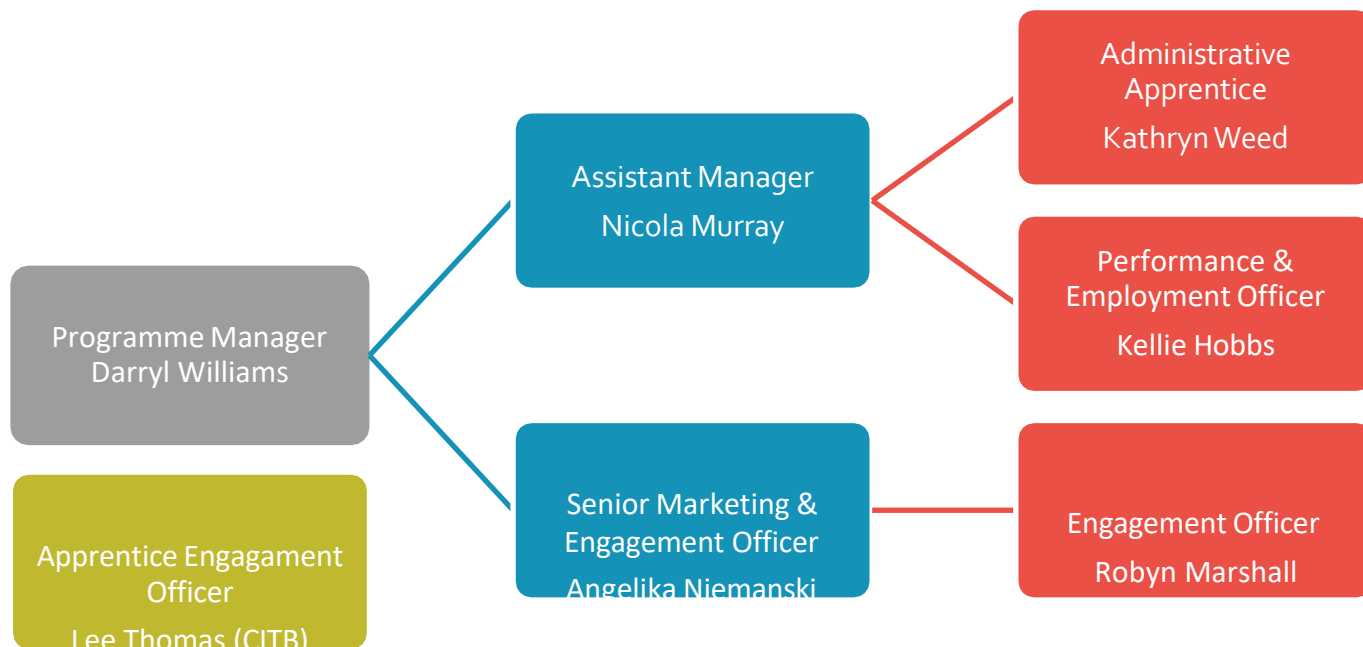
Robert O'Dwyer
Head of Infrastructure for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Rob has been a director of Y Prentis for the past five and is passionate about opportunities for young people and making a difference to people's lives in the region. Rob is the Head of Infrastructure for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal with responsibility for oversight of the Compound Semiconductor Cluster Engagement, Sites and Premises Fund and Regional Energy Strategy.

Rob graduated as a quantity surveyor from Bristol University. He has held senior positions within local government for over 20 years, as Head of Business Transformation and formerly Head of Property Services & Procurement. During this time he was responsible for delivering major capital investment projects and operational facilities management.

Outside of work Rob is a keen traveller, cyclists and tennis player. More recently he has purchased a VW camper van and is looking forward to touring around the UK.

Delivery Team

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Programme Manager
Darryl Williams
    │
    ├──── Assistant Manager
    │     Nicola Murray
    │         ├──── Administrative Apprentice
    │         │     Kathryn Weed
    │         └──── Performance & Employment Officer
    │               Kellie Hobbs
    │
    └──── Senior Marketing & Engagement Officer
          Angelika Niemanski ──── Engagement Officer
                                  Robyn Marshall

Apprentice Engagament Officer
Lee Thomas (CITB)
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Partner and Apprentice Advisory Panels

well-established Partner advisory panel helps guide they Prentis Board in identifying trends and opportunities within the construction sector. The panel meets quarterly and is comprised of representatives from construction companies, clients and support agencies. The panel is chaired by Tom Davies from Morgan Sindall and is an important vehicle in identifying the needs of industry and our partner companies that provide host placements for apprentices, advise about recruitment patterns help us to plan our future activity.

Apprentice panel was introduced to obtain feedback from our apprentices on their experiences with our host partners, their opinions of Y Prentis as an employer and the shared model. It has been and will continue to be an important vehicle for giving our apprentices a voice and acting as a continuous improvement conduit to views and opinions that shape our scheme.

THE BUSINESS MODEL

Y Prentis is supported by the Construction Industry Training Board CITB and Welsh Government. The scheme has been developed to offer the construction industry a flexible apprenticeship provision which assists in meeting corporate social responsibility targets within government contracts.

The business model is based on the requirement on commissioners to consider early on, not only economic and environmental issues, but also the social benefit of their approaches to procurement. Part of the requirements to secure new work will often include Apprenticeship recruitment as a requirement of the tendering process. Employers that support apprentices can generally expect to get more invitations to tender.

The Y Prentis Shared Apprenticeship business model allows employers to enjoy all the benefits of an apprentice, without the direct employment responsibility as this is taken up by the Y Prentis. The scheme aims to provide a solution to employers involved in the procurement process so they can make a commitment to a young person, even though their contract on site may only be for a short period.

Procurement is pooled within a region and the apprentice rotated from one contractor to another, until they have completed their full Apprenticeship framework at Level 2 or 3. This means that employers can still play an important part in training as the scheme allows them to take on an apprentice, for as short a duration as three months, with no commitment to the apprentice at the end.

BENEFITS TO THE EMPLOYER

- Hassle-free hiring
- Interview and selection taken care of
- Flexibility of short or long-term placements with no commitment to employ the apprentice at the end
- Saves a company HR, payroll and holiday pay from directly employing an apprentice
- All mandatory training and CSCS card taken undertaken
- A skilled apprentice ready to be taken on once qualified
- Additional support offered around community benefits and social value
- Wide ranging client knowledge of 'graduating' apprentices.

BENEFFITS TO THE EMPLOYEE

- A chance to complete a full framework and secure an apprenticeship
- A broad and diverse experience offered through movement between different contractors
- An opportunity to secure long term employment
- Experience with several companies giving apprentices 'long interview processes' with each for potential employment opportunities
- Job search support from the Y Prentis team
- All college fees and additional training paid
- A full range of trades covered
- Over 95% of our apprentices go onto permanent employment
- Employment support offered after completion of apprenticeship

FUNDING

the number of apprentices which can be supported by CITB through the shared model has been capped at 50 new starters per year. However, special funding has been secured from WG to increase the number of apprentices within the Valleys Taskforce area by 30, increasing our annual intake from 50 to 80.

Y Prentis benefits from funding from the following sources:

- CITB Attendance and Achievement Grants
- Young Recruits Programme Funding
- Hosting fees
- Welsh Government wage subsidy (Valleys Task Force Area)
- Community benefit delivery sales
- Consultancy sale

CHANGES TO FUNDING

In early 2021 CITB must consult with the construction industry for permission to continue raising Levy. It must gain the support of industry regarding the proposals for the next Levy Order. As CITB are the main funding source for the scheme, gaining the consensus and the subsequent funding for apprenticeships is fundamental to the future of Y Prentis. In addition, Welsh Government will cease Young Recruits payments in 2021 creating a further shortfall. And with the managing agency contact also out for tender in 2021 the future apprenticeship picture is an uncertain one. Therefore, alternative sources of funding will be a priority in the coming months.

Y Prentis is a regional programme and benefits from the special status of being CITB's partner of choice in the delivery of shared apprenticeships across south-east Wales. Y Prentis by its very nature supports the construction industry and key investment projects in south-east Wales. Working across the ten local authorities places Y Prentis in a position to attract funding through project based investment. Other potential funding streams includes:

- Cardiff Capital Region Funding
- National Lottery Funding
- Welsh Government Valleys Taskforce Funding
- Welfare to Work

INVESTMENT

We are conscious that our funding sources drive the types of activity that could be funded. At present, these would be restricted to capital or revenue-based projects that enhance the training facilities or provision to support the construction industry, particularly relating to up-skilling within companies. Y Prentis is developing a strategy to deal with surpluses. This will involve the following:

- An agreement of the principles around expenditure with the Y Prentis Board
- Development of projects and frameworks in consultation with construction. investment partners such as Cardiff Council who are leading on SEWSCAP3 and SEWH respectively.

Investment from the local authorities in south east Wales through Cardiff Capital Region alliance

Special Status and Competition

The Board is advised by Y Prentis Management and observed by CITB. It operates an open accounting procedure. It's terms of reference state that surpluses generated by the company will be reinvested to support further apprenticeship development or added value activities. The conditions of CITB grant require that a special purpose vehicle is established to run shared apprenticeships, the rationale being that the organisation's core purpose is to deliver shared apprenticeships and it will not be diverted to deliver other activities.

Our host employers are private sector construction companies who are within CITB 'scope'. They understand the operations of a small business and the importance of good cash flow. Our client organisations reinforce this principle through their procurement frameworks to protect small suppliers. As a 'small private sector supplier' of apprenticeships developed to support client's targeted recruitment and training, client's contracts support our cash flow. This gives Y Prentis weight that we would not have as a department of a larger organisation.

Sustainability of Y Prentis

Y Prentis is the only CITB approved deliverer of shared apprenticeships in south-east Wales and as such has special status without a competing scheme. Unlike project-based funding, Y Prentis is not time limited. The funding for the opportunities comes from several key sources, CITB grants, Welsh Government special funding, Young Recruits Programme funding, consultancy services and community benefit delivery which are funded by the construction companies themselves. CITB grants are paid from the levies they receive from in scope companies. This provides Y Prentis with sustainable, core funding, which provided we continue to perform well for CITB, will continue.

The Y Prentis Advisory Panel is made up of members of industry and clients offering contract opportunities and guides the future development of the company. In this way, Y Prentis will be driven and directed by the needs of the industry. CITB observe the Y Prentis Board and work closely with Y Prentis management, advising on trends and requirements for additional opportunities. We work closely with these two groups to develop an ongoing programme of work to inform our apprentice volume projections. This information also helps our discussions with training providers about our future and existing needs.

Equality & Diversity

Y Prentis is committed to the sharing of good practice in relation to equality and diversity as laid out in our policy. As well as engaging with traditional apprentices we will aim to encourage individuals who are underrepresented in construction trades, including females, BME groups and those with a disability.

Marketing Strategy

Y Prentis will we will support 80 apprentices per year, including 30 form the Valleys Taskforce area. To do this effectively a marketing strategy has been developed that will deliver a response to both recruitment of apprentices and support from suitable host contractors.

A Senior Marketing and Engagement Officer and Engagement Officer have been appointed who are continuing to develop and implement the marketing and business development strategy and take it forward in conjunction with this business plan.

Key Performance Indicators 2019/20

| KPI	Description	Measure Source	Yearly Target	Actual Q 1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Yearly Actual
1	Number of apprentices on scheme	Payroll report	80				
2	Number of apprentices from the Valleys Taskforce area	Cascade HR	60				
3	Percentage of apprentices who have Perfect Start	Audit report	100%				
4	Apprentice Retention rate	Tracking report	95%				
5	Percentage of Apprenticeship Framework completions	CITB report	85%				
6	Percentage of apprentices in full time employment after completion	Exit interview	95%				
7	Amount of revenue lost to YP leave	Monthly accounts	£8K				
8	Number of Riddor Reportable health and safety incidents	Database	0				

Management Information   and Systems

An information database and management system is in development which will capture all associated data in relation to apprentice tracking and progress. In addition to adding value to the apprenticeship programme it will enable the team to maximise the wrap around services and support available to apprentices. The system will be operated in line with current GDPR guidelines. Administrative staff check 100% of data gathered for quality and will provide SMART reporting.

Finance
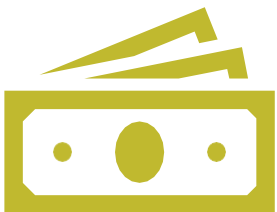
Y Prentis financial forecasting, monitoring and reporting is undertaken by the Melin Homes accounts team in consultation with the Programme Manager and is overseen by the Y Prentis board.

Risk Assessment Table

In relation to managing the risks identified, some risks factors are out of our control. Y Prentis rely upon CITB and Welsh Government as our key funders. Risk factors will be managed on a day-to- day basis by the Shared Apprenticeship Management Team with assistance where identified by the Board.

Risk	Impact	Mitigating Action
• Inadequate supply of suitable recruits to satisfy apprentice-ship opportunities created. • Standards	• Letting partners down. Failure to deliver business plan objectives. • Reputation and perception of scheme. • Loss of business as partners will look elsewhere. • Loss of income due to not fulfilling contracts.	• Positive marketing and promotion of Y Prentis in Colleges, careers and job fairs. • Improved offer and more effective support from the Y Prentis team. • Effective staff monitoring and reporting of scheme performance.

• Insufficient employer host opportunities identified by staff to sustain scheme business model.	• Lack of apprentice placements and failure of scheme. • Financial loss and poor reputation of scheme.	• Formation of strong advisory panel and development of an extensive partner database. • Introduction of partner memorandum of understanding. • Scheme embedded in major project and framework community benefit and targeted recruitment and training key performance indicators. • Extension and development of the route offered.
• Removal, cancellation or changes in CITB and/or Welsh Government contracts and funding. • Apprenticeship levy - bad debtors	• Deficiency in funding. Inability to fund apprenticeships. • Negative cash flow - scheme cannot self-sustain. • Scheme ends.	• Exploration of other sources of funding i.e. direct employer and client funding through framework and major project community benefits and social value funding.

People Scrutiny 7ᵗʰ April 2025

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting at

Attendees:

Councillors: Laura Wright, Jackie Strong, Jan Butler, Penny Jones, Maureen Powell, Peter Strong, Emma Bryn.

Officers: Hazel Ilett, Hannah Jones, Robert McGowan and Will Mclean.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   Apologies were received from Councillor Stevens, who was being substituted by Councillor Peter Strong, and apologies were also received from Councillor Simon Howarth. Four additional councillors attended the meeting: Councillor Tony Kear, Councillor John Crook, Councillor Jill Bond, and Councillor Sue McConnell.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

   None received.

3. **Public Open Forum**

   There was an attendance by "The Gathering Community", who had notified the Chair in advance that they would like to present some slides. The Committee had agreed to allow additional time to the Public Open Forum to enable members to also ask questions.

   Jenny Powell and Scott Price from the Gathering Community presented their work at Tudor Street in Abergavenny, focusing on providing accessible services for people with disabilities and mental health issues. They advised that the aim of the Gathering Community is to provide accessible services for people with disabilities and mental health issues at Tudor Street in Abergavenny.

   They explained that The Gathering Community had taken over a 12-month lease starting from January 15ᵗʰ 2025. Their presentation included before and after photos and statistics on the progress of their work. They highlighted the progress made since taking over the lease, including cleaning, repairs, and setting up various activity spaces. They also mentioned the increase in attendees and volunteers, as well as the grants and fundraising achieved.

They discussed the following key points:

- The Initial Condition of the building: The building had broken windows, an overgrown garden, random furniture, and a broken water pipe causing ceiling damage. Following extensive cleaning and redecoration, they also set up classroom spaces for craft activities, obtained an electrical safety certificate, and completed fire safety equipment tests.
- Attendees have increased by 50%, and volunteers tripled in number.
- In terms of grants and fundraising, they have achieved £5563 in grants and £2150 in fundraising over two events.
- A range of fundraising events and activities had helped raise funds and engage the community.
- Sensory and Music Spaces had been created together with garden and outdoor Space, including clearing overgrown areas, creating raised beds, and planting vegetables.
- Counselling Services had been introduced Emily Watson, a qualified counsellor and Well-being Manager for the Gathering Community, providing mental health support and well-being activities for attendees every Tuesday.
- Future plans include converting the back kitchen into a commercial kitchen for cooking lessons and working with local chefs. They advised that they would be seeking a longer lease to ensure the sustainability of the project and to secure additional funding to continue their work.

Members expressed their admiration and support for the Gathering Community's achievements and emphasised the importance of learning from their experience.

Councillors raised concerns about the lease terms, financial sustainability, and the need for accessible facilities. Jenny Powell and Scott Price addressed these concerns and highlighted the support they have received from local businesses and the community to help sustain the project.

The chair summarised by emphasising the success and community impact of The Gathering, recognising the hard work and dedication of Jenny, Scott, and the volunteers and she thanked them for attending and presenting to the Committee.

4. **Y Prentis – Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme**

Hannah Jones introduced the proposal to close the Apprentice shared construction apprenticeship scheme and transition it to a project under Cyfle, a similar scheme based in West Wales.

- The Apprentice scheme was established in 2012 by Monmouthshire County Council and Melin Homes to address the need for socially procured goods, services, and work in the construction industry across Southeast Wales.
- Hannah discussed the successes of the scheme, that has trained over 340 apprentices, secured more than £1.95 million in funding, and worked with five colleges and 149 contractors.
- She also advised that the scheme had faced challenges such as declining completion rates, difficulty sourcing placements, apprenticeship wage deficits, and financial losses over the past two years.
- A review had been undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council and Torfaen Borough Council, which presented two options: cease operations or redesign the delivery model. She explained that in January 2025, Melin Homes who was a shareholder had withdrawn, so the proposal was to transition the scheme to Cyfle.
- Cyfle is an established shared apprenticeship scheme in West Wales, which could take over the delivery of the scheme, ensuring a seamless transition for staff and apprentices.
- Monmouthshire County Council conducted due diligence checks on Cyfle, confirming its suitability to take over the scheme. The current company has a surplus of £100,000, which will be transferred to Cyfle to support the transition.
- In terms of future plans, Monmouthshire County Council aims to develop a skills centre to meet the needs of children, young people, businesses, and industry in the region.
- Cyfle will provide strategic leadership, to ensure the completion of apprenticeships and support the long-term sustainability of the scheme.

Key Points raised by Members:

- What guarantees do we have that the scheme will be high profile and not just a small part of a bigger beast? Is there any evidence to suggest that it being run by three organisations based in West Wales is the ideal way forward?

    Hannah expressed confidence in Cyfle's delivery model and business focus, noting their engagement with Welsh government and contractors, stating that she believes Cyfle's expansion into Southeast Wales will be effective.

- What are the historical figures of apprentices from Monmouthshire, and why is the current figure only one out of 60 apprentices?

    Hannah acknowledged the low number of apprentices from Monmouthshire and explained efforts to source more opportunities. She noted that the scheme is regional, and higher numbers are expected in other authorities.

- The report mentions a recommendation that the Council has a seat on the new Directors Board. Will this be a Cabinet Member or an officer? How often does the board meet, and what is the role of directors in taking the scheme's plans forward?

  Hannah suggested that an officer would be more suitable for the board seat, given the need for knowledge and regular updates.

- Why have completion rates declined significantly over the past three years, and what has been done to remedy this? What is the feedback from apprentices and employers?

  Hannah attributed the decline in completion rates to the challenges of the Level 3 qualification and other barriers. She mentioned ongoing conversations with Welsh government and contractors to address these issues.

- Is the figure of 340 apprentices and £1.95 million in funding specific to Monmouthshire or the entire region?

  Hannah clarified that the figures are for the entire region, with Monmouthshire having a proportionate number of apprentices.

- We have concerns about the geographical location of Cyfle being in West Wales and not having a base locally and whether this would create travel issues for apprenticeships and affect local business engagement. Also we are concerned there may be a lack of knowledge and connections to Southeast Wales. Why couldn't we find more businesses to support the existing provision, and what has Cyfle said about coming into the region? Have they done any research?

  Hannah acknowledged the concern and mentioned that Cyfle has engaged with colleges in the region and is having conversations with contractors. She expressed confidence in Cyfle's ability to build up knowledge and have ongoing conversations across the region.

- Will Cyfle retain the existing staff from YPrentis?

  Hannah confirmed that Cyfle would ensure a seamless transition for staff and apprentices, retaining the existing staff.

- Why can't we recruit quality apprentices, and what will we get back from the transition to Cyfle? Is there a need for this scheme?

Will explained that the scheme is no longer meeting the needs of Monmouthshire's young people and businesses. The transition to Cyfle will allow current apprentices to complete their qualifications and enable Monmouthshire to develop a more suitable vehicle for future apprenticeships.

- Why have some apprentices not been paid? Is it because they haven't completed or haven't been turning up? Who is supervising them?

Hannah acknowledged there had been challenges in completion rates and barriers faced by learners.

- What are the key successes of YPrentis, and how do they reflect the achievement of grants?

Hannah highlighted the training of over 340 apprentices and securing £1.95 million in funding as key successes. She acknowledged the challenges but emphasised the importance of these achievements.

- What are the risks of apprentices not completing, redeployment of staff, and the risk of reputation?

Hannah outlined the risks, including apprentices not completing their qualifications, redeployment of staff, and potential damage to reputation. She emphasised the importance of a seamless transition to mitigate these risks.

- Is the proposed project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Shared Apprenticeship Scheme the ideal way forward, considering it is run by organisations based in West Wales?

Hannah explained that they have been meeting regularly with Cyfle and are confident in their delivery model and business focus. They have engaged with Welsh Government and believe the match is fit for purpose going forward.

- What guarantees do we have that the scheme will be high profile and not just a small part of a bigger beast?

Hannah assured that Cyfle is keen to expand into Southeast Wales and has already engaged with colleges and contractors in the region. They are confident that Cyfle will build up the necessary knowledge and presence.

- What is the feedback from apprentices on the reasons for declining completion rates, and what has been done to remedy this over the last two years?

Hannah acknowledged the concerns around declining completion rates and explained that the lack of a Level 2 qualification in Wales has been a significant barrier. They have spoken to Welsh Government about this issue and are aware of the challenges.

- What is the feedback from employers, and how has this been constructively dealt with to improve the situation?

Hannah mentioned that they have been in discussions with employers and Welsh Government to address the challenges and improve the completion rates.

- In terms of the completion rates of apprentices, is there a record of completed apprentices having got permanent jobs?

Hannah responded that the scheme has trained over 340 apprentices, and those are the figures that would reflect sustainable employment. She mentioned that she could provide more detailed breakdowns if needed.

- In terms of the sustainability of the project, I'm concerned about the £1600 overspend, the reliance on grants, the negotiation of the next lease and the potential urgent costs. I don't feel I have enough information and have concerns about the proposal.

Hannah responded that they are aware of the overspend and have income coming in a number of grant funding streams and from contractors. There has been added costs over the past few years. She acknowledged the Member's concerns, but advised this is the best option moving forward.

Chair's Summary:

- The Committee thanks officers for a detailed report and presentation and highlighted key points discussed, including the challenges faced by the YPrentis scheme, such as declining completion rates and the lack of a Level 2 qualification in Wales.

- Members acknowledge that the proposed transition of the YPrentis scheme to become a project under Cyfle would offer potential benefits, including a seamless transition for staff and apprentices and the strategic leadership which would be provided by Cyfle.

- We have expressed our concern about the proximity to Monmouthshire, Cyfle being based in West Wales and therefore we feel there is a need for regular

updates on the progress of the transition to ensure the scheme's success in Southeast Wales.

- We have had a rounded debate and Members have expressed a range of views, however, there is consensus to support option 3, which is the cessation of YPrentis and its transfer to Cyfle.

Upon the vote, 8 were in favour for the cessation of Y Prentis and its transfer to Cyfle with 1 abstention.

5. Forward Work Programme and Action List

- The Chair advised that the next meeting would include the Audit Wales Report on hospital discharge and pre-decision scrutiny of the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

- Councillor Jackie Strong suggested reviewing Council policies on inclusion, diversity, and impact assessment. It was noted that the strategic equality plan will be discussed in the meeting on July 22nd, which could include discussion of these matters.

6. Cabinet and Council Forward Plan

Noted.

7. Minutes of the 18th February and 4th March 2025

The minutes of the meetings held on February 18th and March 4th 2025 were accepted as true and accurate records of the meetings held.

8. Next Meeting: 17th June 2025 at 10am.

Meeting Close.

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monmouthshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
sir fynwy

SUBJECT:	**Letting of the Former Abergavenny Library**
DIRECTORATE:	**Resources**
MEETING:	**Cabinet**
DATE:	**21st May 2025**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**All**

1. PURPOSE:

This report is to secure authority to grant a lease for the Former Abergavenny Library.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet agrees the following:

(i) To award the lease tender to Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association.

(ii) To delegate authority to the Chief Officer for Resources to negotiate the lease in accordance with the tender award.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

3.1 The Former Abergavenny Library was closed in 2014/15, with the library relocated following completion of the development of the new hub at the Abergavenny Town Hall. In the subsequent years, the former library has been utilised for a number of services including Adult Education and most recently MCC's Pupil Referral Service (PRS).

3.2 In late 2024, Cabinet declared the asset surplus and granted approval to transfer the asset to MCC's Landlord Services in order to commence marketing the property. The objective was to explore opportunities to maximise social benefit and generate a financial return from an otherwise vacant asset.

3.3 Following a period of marketing, a tender deadline was set for receipt of proposals including detailed business plans for the respective uses. A range of offers were received. Tenders were evaluated based on an established scoring matrix with weighting applied to:

- The proposed use and its suitability at a former *Carnegie* building – with due consideration for the property's planning status and restrictive covenant (prohibiting uses that may result in disturbance to neighbouring properties e.g. restaurants or bars).
- The evidence of demand for the proposed use – including adherence to the Council's Community and Corporate Plan.
- The proposed terms – inclusive of the lease term, rental offer and repair obligations.

- Due diligence undertaken and experience – acknowledging the age and condition of the property and potential investment required (subject to use), as well as the competency of the tenderer to manage the property.
- Financial sustainability – the business plan and financial standing of the tenderer, inclusive of their funding and medium-term financial outlook.

3.4 **Appendix A** contains an extract of the scoring matrix, with the names of the tenderers redacted to protect their existing commercial or accommodation arrangements. Following completion of the evaluation, it is recommended that the tender is awarded to the highest scoring applicant - the Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association (MMCA).

3.5 Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association are a not-for-profit group proposing to occupy the building for the creation of Monmouthshire's first Mosque and Community Centre. The proposal identifies the demand, need and subsequent gap in current provision for the rapidly growing Muslim population in Monmouthshire, serving people of diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. An extract from the Business Plan can be found in **Appendix B**.

3.6 The proposal aims to bring the former Abergavenny library into beneficial community use by providing a mosque and community centre to facilitate educational, social, economic and recreational value for Muslim residents of Monmouthshire and the wider community. The proposal outlines the intention to contribute to improving the health and well-being of all members of the community, encouraging economic growth by making Monmouthshire a more inclusive and attractive place to live, promoting interfaith dialogues and supporting the local community including refugees who have made their home in the area.

3.7 The Former Library is considered highly suitable for this purpose due to its central location, capacity and configuration. The proposed use falls within the properties existing Use Class (D1), therefore no planning consent is required for the occupation. Subject to the approval of the recommendations within the report, a Certificate of Lawfulness will be applied for to provide assurance that no material change of use is required.

3.8 The 2011 census showed that almost half (47%) of the Muslim population in Wales resided in Cardiff. The second highest was found in Newport (15%) followed by Swansea (12%). 74% of Muslims resided in these three local authorities. Abergavenny has the highest number of Muslims within Monmouthshire but not a single mosque in contrast Newport which has eight, Cardiff has 24 and Swansea has 7 mosques. The 2021 census showed 1.2% of Monmouthshire residents identified their ethnic group within the "mixed or Multiple" category, up from 0/7% in 2011. With no access to a place of worship within the County, residents are having to travel to mosques in other Local authority areas and this has proved challenging in terms of travel, arriving at specified prayer times and during Ramadhan. This also means that children do not have access to learning education facilities on a daily basis as is a norm for the religion in the rest of the world.

3.9 MMCA are currently located at St Michael's Centre where they have successfully operated alongside other uses and religious groups, with ongoing support from the trustees of the facility in Our Lady and St Michael's parish. This has evidenced an increase in the number of residents attending the Friday prayers who live and work in Abergavenny and surrounding areas. The Friday prayer provision is also accessed by local business owners, teachers and the hospital staff at Neville Hall Hospital. For Muslim people after the home and the workplace, the mosque is the most frequented place. In accordance with the Community and Corporate Plan's commitment for Monmouthshire to be a place of sanctuary, the letting of the property to MMCA will enable the county to build on its commitment to being a welcoming, safe and inclusive community.

3.10 Under the proposed terms of a lease to MMCA, the property will be let for 30 years. A rental will be paid for occupancy of the property, generating a financial return to MCC, and it is not proposed that a rental concessionary grant will be required. The property will be let on a fully repairing and insuring basis, transferring the obligations to maintain the asset to the tenant.

3.11 Within the group, there is a reasonable level of experience in property management and the business plan outlines an intention to invest in the property, inclusive of energy efficiency measures. Sustainability upgrades, whilst challenging on a building of this type and listed status, are being actively explored by the prospective tenant.

3.12 MCCA have outlined their proposed funding and financial strategy, which proposes utilisation of religious contributions, revenue through educational classes, crowd funding events and business partnerships. This business case has been informed by successful operating models in nearby counties such as Iqraa Mosque in Newport, Cardiff's New Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre, and Bristol's Central Mosque. The intention is to also apply for capital grants including the National Lottery Community Fund, Muslim Charitable Foundations Grants and Protective Security Funding Scheme.

3.13 MMCA's proposal directly correlates to the objectives of the Council's Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028, and the objectives of the Asset Management Strategy to utilise community assets to optimise social value. The Community and Corporate Plan's commitment to tackle inequality, create a fair and safe place to live are reflected in the recommendation to award the tender. MMCA's proposal will repurpose a community asset and facilitate educational, social, economic and recreational uses. The use will also encourage economic growth by attracting new residents by making Monmouthshire a more inclusive and attractive place to live. The principles of Monmouthshire's commitment as a county of sanctuary is reflected in MMCA's business plan.

3.14 Should this report's recommendations be approved, MCC's Estates Department will commence drafting of legal agreements and progress towards lease completion and handover of the property. It is proposed that the tenant would

commence a period of public engagement with neighbouring properties and local partners, such to aid the transition into the property and mobilisation of the scheme.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION:

4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken, attached as **Appendix 3**.

4.2 A summary from Section 8 of the Integrated Impact Assessment identifying the significant positive and negative impacts is detailed below.

Positive Impact
- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal to offer the site for community use will enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.
- This proposal will strengthen and widen the opportunities available by providing a mosque and community centre to facilitate educational, social, economic and recreational value for Muslim residents of Monmouthshire and the wider community.
- Developing the site as a community asset/opportunity will further extend the range of opportunities and activities within the community.
- Monmouthshire's commitment as a county of sanctuary is about improving outcomes by providing a welcoming environment, challenging discrimination and negative perceptions and ensuring equality of opportunity where possible. The proposal strives to promote good relations between groups ensuring vibrant and cohesive communities.

Negative Impacts
- The creation of an additional community facility in close proximity to a number of existing community assets may negatively impact the sustainability of other assets.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Recommendation
Do not award the tender – retain the property	• Whilst the property would be vacant, the property would be retained for the delivery of other council services should the need arise.	• That the property falls into disrepair and remains underutilized, in conflict with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy to maximise the use of property. • The property would continue to result in costs to MCC through utilities and business rates. • Reopening the property for an MCC service may introduce	

Option	Benefits	Risks	Recommendation
		additional revenue costs and budget pressures.	
Award the tender to MMCA and progress with granting of a lease	• The property is a well-known asset and is suitable for the community use proposed. • MCC would offset any ongoing running costs associated with the asset and generate a financial return. • Would enable policy objectives around community enablement and social value to be supported, in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy and Community & Corporate Plan.	• That the proposal is unsuccessful and other potential uses have failed to be achieved. • That MCC forgo an opportunity to repurpose or develop the site to meet other policy objectives. • That the asset fails to perform in accordance with the Business Plan and arrears created or the asset returns to MCC as a liability. • The duplication of services could detract from existing community assets and tenants, impacting their own viability and sustainability.	Recommended the tender is awarded to MMCA and the Estates Department progress draft legal agreements.
Award the tender to an alternative proposal	• Subject to negotiation, a potentially greater financial return could be derived from alternative commercial uses. • A shorter lease term could be entered, thereby protecting MCC's position should the proposal be unsuccessful and therefore isn't bound by a long lease commitment.	• Acceptance of an alternative offer would be contrary to the scoring matrix and established process by which tenderers are awarded. • The alternative offers may require planning consent, and uncertainty over whether change of use will be granted could delay progress of the letting. • Subject to negotiation, a potentially greater financial return could be derived from alternative commercial uses. • The duplication of services could detract from existing community assets and tenants, impacting their own viability and sustainability.	

6. EVALUATION CRITIERIA

6.1   Landlord Services, supported by MCC Legal, will be responsible for negotiating the draft lease agreement and ongoing management of landlord and tenant communication. The asset would be monitored and managed in accordance with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy.

7. REASONS:

7.1   The property is vacant and tenders have been received to purchase or lease the asset. A tender evaluation has taken place against a scoring matrix, which has recommended award of the tender to Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association. The scoring criteria and evaluation is made on balance, judgement and experience.

7.2   The property lends itself to a range of different uses and has potential to generate a financial return to MCC. Maximising the use of property that is under-utilised features in the principles of the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

7.3   Award of the tender to MMCA will enable the development of Monmouthshire's first Mosque and Community Centre, helping to address a longstanding desire for provision within the County. The proposed lease of the property will secure the provision of the new facilities for the benefit of the Muslim community and wider population, providing access to services not readily available locally.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1   The annual running costs (utilities and business rates) of the former library at the time of occupation was approximately £24,000 per annum. Whilst MCC will not be incurring these costs since the property has been vacated, MCC are continuing to incur holding costs (standing charges, business rates). Upon completion of the lease, this liability will be transferred to the tenant. Leasing of the property will also generate an annual rental of £6,000 pa.

8.2 By supporting these proposals, MCC would potentially be forgoing any alternative use and/or development of the property. The site has potential for different commercial uses that may generate a higher market rental, however the properties former use as a 'Carnegie building' may make sure uses unachievable or inappropriate. The property is also subject to a restrictive covenant.

8.3 MCC will not incur any capital costs under the proposal, with the cost of ongoing operation and running costs met by the tenant.

9.   CONSULTEES:

- Landlord Services
- Joanne Chase, MCC Legal Services
- Lucinda Boyland – Community Development and Delivery Manager
- Cllr Laura Wright – Ward Member

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Scoring Evaluation
Appendix 2 – Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association's Business Plan
Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 4 - Redline Plan

12. AUTHOR:

Nicholas Keyse, Acting Head of Landlord Services

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Monmouthshire County Council - Former Abergavenny Library

	Tenders are scored 1-5. = poor/insufficient information 2 = limited information provided 3 = acceptable level of information 4 = very good level of information provided 5 = detailed and comprehensive level of information provided						
Applicant	Tenure	Terms	Proposal and Suitability	Proposal and Suitability (score)	Due Diligence and Experience	Evidence of demand and Adherance to Community and Corporate Plan	Financial Sustainability	Quality Score (maximum of 20)
Tender A	Freehold offer to purchase and Leasehold	Unconditional freehold purchase or lease property 30 year lease	Community activities.	4	4	3	4	15
Tender B	Leasehold	3 year lease. 12 month break clause. Rent free of 6 months.	Community activities including pilates, meditation, yoga, selling 'local products', workshops for	3	1	3	3	10
Tender C	Leasehold	30 year lease.	Muslim Community Centre and Mosque. Place of worship, educational hub and social hub.	5	4	5	3	17
Tender D	Leasehold	10 years lease.	Private day care nursery with flying start provision	2	1	1	1	5

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Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association
MMCA

Business Case

Date: December 2024

Contents

1.0   Executive Summary

This business case proposes the utilisation of the old Abergavenny Library building located at Baker Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5BD as a Muslim Community Centre and Mosque. This proposal identifies demand, need, and subsequent gap in current provision for the rapidly growing Muslim population in Monmouthshire, serving people of diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

These past few years have remained challenging as health and social care systems face significant pressures exacerbated further by the impact of cost of living, workforce shortages and funding cutbacks. Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association (MMCA) acknowledges the pivotal role that our community plays in highlighting and informing necessary service improvement and change, through educating and promoting inclusion and diversity. The huge contribution of our community not only makes an invaluable difference to the people in Monmouthshire , MMCA is also an integral part of our society and conducive to vital partners, bridging the gap between services, strategies, and policies which has a direct impact on future generations . We acknowledge that with the increased pressures on health and social care, the role of the community has become even more crucial to help address the challenges and fill the gaps.

Mosques play a fundamental role in British society and are incredible places of hope, peace and unity. The Mosque is three distinct spaces rolled into one:

1. Place of worship; where devotees can practise and develop their spirituality, religion and prayer (Appendix A).

2. Educational hub; learning for young and old and not limited to religious understanding or sciences, but also for life skills, such as ethics, morality, numeracy, ICT and social skills.

3. Social hub; a public place for meeting, social interaction, and bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together to promote religious tolerance and understanding, along with sustaining integrated recreational activities, funerals, marriages and festivals.

In light of this, identifying a permanent centrally located mosque remains a key precedence and MMCA look forward to continuing to build and sustain productive and open relationships with community partners so that the core ethos of the mosque is apprehended.

We want to make Integrated communities everyone's' business. To do this a mosque should be a PART of the local neighbourhood, not APART from it.

2.0 Purpose and aims

The proposal aims to:

- Establish a community place of worship (Mosque) with space for religious, educational, and social functions for Muslim residents and the wider community of Monmouthshire.

- Bring the Old Abergavenny library into beneficial community use by providing a community mosque that facilitates educational, social, economic and recreational value for the Muslim residents of Monmouthshire and the wider community.

- Foster integrated, cohesive communities by offering programs for education, skills development, and personal growth.

- Contribute to improving the health and well-being of all members of the local community.

- Encourage economic growth and attract new residents by making Monmouthshire a more inclusive and attractive place to live, and which will contribute to economic growth placing Monmouthshire as a preferred place to live.

- Promote interfaith dialogues to encourage greater religious and cultural tolerance and thereby eradicating Islamophobia.

The proposal ensures that:

- It meets the needs and demands of the demographic population of Monmouthshire.

- It aligns with Monmouthshire County Councils Strategic priorities and values.

- The request is appropriate and proportionate to the demand.

- The infrastructure already exists and is well placed to deliver and develop this place of worship and community facility.

3.0 Background

The first mosque in Britain was Masjid-e-Abu Hurairah, which was set up in Cardiff in 1860. Until the 1950's mosques remained a very minor part of the British landscape and tended to be residential houses converted into places of worship for the small numbers of Muslims then living in Britain at that time. That changed when large numbers of Muslim migrants, mainly male work force, were attracted by the British

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Government to leave their homelands, comforts, families and familiar surroundings to help rebuild Britain and fill the labour shortage.

Muslims also gave their lives fighting for Britain as servicemen and support staff during the first and second World wars, with a number of Commonwealth War graves located in Abergavenny, and others in South Wales, which stand to remind us of the commitment, dedication and devotion of Muslims.

Many Muslims acquiesced to assist and arrived from the Indian sub-continent after the Second World War. As the Muslim community changed complexion and grew, so did the function of mosques: they began to assume a more central role, moving away from being a simple venue of prayer to being a social hub in the community with a role in helping Muslims integrate locally and build partnerships with rich, diverse communities of many cultures and backgrounds. Many of the larger cities in the UK, such as Cardiff, Swansea and Newport are prime examples of this growth in Muslim population and mosques.

Islamic society has assumed a multifunctional role for many centuries. The main role of the mosque is not only to provide a place for praying but also to serve as a centre of peace and tranquillity, where worshippers gather to strengthen a sense of community and solidarity. Although often known as places of worship, mosques also have significant educational and social extents in the development of society in strengthening community's educational, social, and spiritual dimensions, promoting interreligious dialogue and intercultural cooperation, supporting interfaith dialogue and reducing religious conflict by promoting tolerance and peace in diverse societies. Mosques also provide spiritual containment, support the purpose of living, nourishing mental health and wellbeing, a place that promotes care for one another, humbleness and gratitude.

The Muslim population is increasingly growing, and Monmouthshire has benefitted from the skills, value and resources this population brings. In 2021 the South Wales Argus and Monmouthshire County Council hailed the provision of a Friday prayer facility as a success.

Muslim community able to perform prayer at Abergavenny venue | South Wales Argus
New facility in Abergavenny welcomes Muslim community to practice faith in significant milestone for residents - Monmouthshire

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Although it is recognised that there is need to support communities, the gap in the provision for equal access to a sustained and permanent place of worship that caters for all the mandatory daily prayers still remains unmet.

There is currently no mosque in Monmouthshire County. This proposal will address the gap and be momentous in establishing the first mosque in the history of Monmouthshire.

In 2023, the council held their first Iftar event during Ramadan to celebrate the traditional community breaking of the fast practised in the Muslim faith. Members of the MMCA, MCC council members, leaders and officers, as well as guests from various faiths and backgrounds came together to understand and learn more about the Muslims of Monmouthshire.

It was here that the council were challenged publicly on its provision of services for the population in which it serves and asked to pledge and commit to cater for its growing Muslim population. This was declared as a priority commitment by the council leader and cabinet member leader. The Iftar event was also repeated for Ramadan 2024. Once again, the leaders and cabinet members were held to account on their action to progress with their commitment of 2023. The noble commitment was reaffirmed.

Monmouthshire councils' self-assessment covering the period 2022-23 stressed that their "absolute priorities are to tackle inequality" with:

- A fair place to live where *"Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire and we are working to help those who need support to live the life they want"*.

- A connected place where people care and Monmouthshire will be a place where people's contributions are valued, and feel part of a community and connected to others.

- A hub-based approach helping people connect with one another within their local community and which reduces the need to rely solely on formal services.

Key frameworks and documents which link to and influence the support for this proposal include:

- Monmouthshire County Councils' strategic equality objectives 2024-2028: *"Creating cohesive communities"*

- Monmouthshire's' Community and Corporate Plan that sets out a commitment to work with and alongside communities, empowering people to support each other and come up with long-term solutions.

- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015;

- Population Needs Assessments;

- Gwent Area plan;

- Welsh Government's long-term plan for health and social care "A Healthier Wales";

- Welsh Government Carers Strategy for Unpaid Carers 2021 and

- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

4.0   Local Context

There is a strong sense of community spirit in Monmouthshire, which is an important factor in people's well-being. Faith and religion also play an important role in mental health and well-being, and people benefit from feeling a sense of belonging.

On 21 March 2021, the size of the usual resident population in Wales was 3,107,500; this was the largest population ever recorded through a census in Wales and showed that the population of Wales has grown by 44,000 (1.4%) since the last census in 2011, when it was 3,063,456. Monmouthshire's population grew to 93,000. The table below shows the total population in the Gwent area.

LA name	Usual resident population, 2011	Usual resident population, 2021	Percentage change
Caerphilly	178,806	175,900	-1.6
Blaenau Gwent	69,814	66,900	-4.2
Torfaen	91,075	92,300	1.3
Monmouthshire	91,323	93,000	1.8
Newport	145,736	159,600	9.5

(Source: Office of National Statistics Census 2021)

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The Abergavenny area is also the most diverse in terms of ethnicity; although those of white ethnicity make up vast majority of the population, proportions of mixed race and Asian ethnicities are the highest in Monmouthshire (0.8% and 1.4%). 62.1% of the population in the area declare themselves as Christian.

Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Monmouthshire increased by 1.8%, from around 91,300 in 2011 to around 93,000 in 2021. This means Monmouthshire's population increased by a greater percentage than the overall population of Wales. The population of Wales increased by 1.4%, from 3,063,000 to 3,107,000.

In 2021, 48.7% of people in Monmouthshire described themselves as Christian (down from 62.5%), while 6.2% did not state their religion (down from 7.7% the decade before). There are many factors that may be contributing to the changing ethnic composition of England and Wales, such as differing patterns of ageing, fertility, mortality, and migration. Changes may also be caused by differences in the way individuals chose to self-identify between censuses. Also religious affiliation is the religion with which someone connects or identifies, rather than their beliefs or religious practice and the religion question in the census is a voluntary rather than mandatory one.

The 2021 census showed, 1.2% of Monmouthshire residents identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, up from 0.7% in 2011. The 0.5 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area. Across Wales, the percentage of people from "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups" increased from 1.0% to 1.6%.

96.9% of people in Monmouthshire identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 98.0% in 2011), while 1.3% identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category (compared with 1.0% the previous decade). The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Other" category ("Arab" or "Any other ethnic group") increased from 0.1% in 2011 to 0.3% in 2021.

In catering for the Muslim population, the nearest Mosque to Abergavenny is Berea Masjid located in Blaina - Blaenau Gwent.

Currently St. Michael's Community Centre located next to the Roman Catholic Church, Abergavenny is being hired for the weekly Friday prayer.

In addition, MMCA must locate other hiring facilities such as Llanfoist Village Hall for Ramadan weekly Iftars and evening prayers, Llanatilio Pertholy Hall for Eid prayers, and Wellafield Hall for other social gatherings; at times this is challenging as the need cannot be met at the dates and times required.

There is an overwhelming need for a mosque in Monmouthshire due to the growing Muslim population. This will be enjoyed by the whole community for many years to come but is also of historical significance.

5.0 Management and Implementation structure

Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association (MMCA) is a community organisation run by dedicated volunteering individuals that provide centralised essential support services to Monmouthshire in response to the demand and need that caters for the growing Muslim population. It was formally constitutionalised on 8th October 2021 (Appendix B).

The organisation is well established with multi-agency partnerships working across Health, social care and the third sector to deliver support and services to its community. With a robust implementation structure that ensures the monitoring, progress and delivery against agreed milestones and annual reports are prepared to reflect progress and achievements to date (Appendix C).

Its leadership underpins strategic decision making at a local level where the citizens voice is key to the planning and delivery of services and aligned to wider strategic and policy agendas.

MMCA committee meet on a regular basis and comprises of the following structure (Appendix D)

Honorary Chair – Mr. Mohammad Habboub

Hon Vice Chair – Dr. Waleed Akeel

Hon Treasurer – Mr. Adil Gatrad

Hon Vice Treasurer – Dr. Atif Nada

Hon Secretary – Mrs. Maddie Saraireh

Hon Volunteers – Dr. Mohammad Ghazi, Mrs. Nermin Zawi, Mrs. Duaa Zawi, Mr.Abdul Naser

MMCA has organised numerous activities and services aimed at creating a sense of belonging, fostering community spirit, and supporting vulnerable groups including refugees, asylum seekers and new immigrants.

Some key initiatives and activities include:

- **Weekly Friday Sermon & Prayers (Jumu'ah):** Our weekly obligatory gathering for Friday prayers has grown significantly, with over 50 male and female attendees on a regular basis. We have been holding these gatherings with the help of a local Roman Catholic church, but the increasing number of attendees means the space is becoming too small and require a permanent venue.

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- **Ramadan Community Events**: During the holy month of Ramadan, we host weekly iftars (breaking of the fast) dinners, which are open to the local community. These events are not only an opportunity for Muslims to come together but also serve as a bridge to the wider Monmouthshire community. We have regularly invited council members, local church, faith and non-faith representatives, and other community group leaders and key dignitaries to join us for these meals since 2023.

- **Tarawih Prayers**: This was offered for the last 10 days during the month of Ramadan 2023, and MMCA were able to successfully organise daily congregational Tarawih prayers (evening prayer) during Ramadan 2024, a key religious activity for Muslims during the holy month.

- **Monthly Gatherings**: MMCA hold monthly gatherings that include religious lectures, community dinners, and youth-focused activities.

- **Youth Activities for Ethnic minorities:** in collaboration with the Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) a weekly youth club runs to provide a positive environment for young people to engage in social, educational, and recreational activities. By holding interfaith and community events, mosques also allow for meaningful relationships to be built between people of all faiths and non-religious people, in a way that otherwise would not be possible

- **Educational Classes and Fitness Initiatives**: Our community offers Arabic language and Quran classes for children, as well as Zumba and fitness classes for women to promote health and well-being.

- **Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers**: MMCA regularly assists new families and individuals arriving in Monmouthshire, particularly refugees and unaccompanied asylum seekers, by offering financial support, advice, guidance, help with integration, and connecting them to essential services.

6.0   Challenges

The lack of provision of a permanent location has meant the community is faced with many challenges. For instance, Muslims have 5 mandatory prayers a day, currently MMCA can only cater for 1 out of the 35 weekly prayers. The stability and continuity is at risk with the existing arrangement, as it does not allow for increasing number of attendees, along with facing a challenge in finding temporary venues for our prayers, religious festivities and events.

A need for a permanent space is becoming essential, to fulfil the Muslim community teachings and understandings, we require a dedicated place to consistently provide and build trust, reassurance, life skills, morals and etiquette for all ages and genders of the community.

There are limitations on the ability to fully serve the community. Establishing a permanent Muslim Community Centre would enable us to reaffirm and enhance our activities, provide greater support to families, and strengthen relationships with the wider community in Monmouthshire.

The following highlights some of the challenges MMCA currently face:

Community Growing Demand:

- The present temporary facility is inadequate for the growing number of attendees.

- This situation adversely affects the communal ability to carry out its religious duties and provide regular religious development and learning opportunities.

Community Programs:

Without a permanent space, the community is unable to fully offer:
- Trust-building and interfaith events.

- Development of life and social skills for all ages and genders.

- Lessons in morals and etiquettes.

- Develop and maintain relations within the wider community of Monmouthshire.

Risks to Stability and Continuity:

- Inability to continue relying on temporary locations to conduct prayers, festivals, and events.

- The instability of temporary locations limits the community in planning consistent and sustainable programs.

Need for a Permanent Solution:

Having a permanent space for the Muslim community would achieve the following:

- Provide stability for daily prayers and religious events.

- Allow consistent educational, social, and outreach programs.

- Develop stronger links between the Muslim community and the wider population in Monmouthshire.

7.0 Service delivery

MMCA 5-year plan outlines some of the key milestones, strategies, and outcomes in delivering essential services and support to the Monmouthshire Muslim community. In addition, it highlights integrating digital communication strategies to enhance engagement with the Muslim community and the wider population while addressing spiritual, social, and economic needs, some of these are:

- Provide a Mosque (Masjid) for the 35 weekly prayers (5 prayers per day), Friday Sermon & prayers, Ramadan iftar and Taraweh prayers and Eid prayers.

- A permanent Imam, who will play a pivotal role in leading the prayers and guiding the sound teachings of Islam and provide support to the local Muslim community.

- Provide Quran lessons and religious halakat (lessons/ guidance) for both youth and adults.

- Halal shop.

- Activities within the local community to promote diversity and integration.

- Sustained funding for various community projects.

- Cater for the needs of the Muslim community in Abergavenny and surrounding areas.

- Provide support to Muslim refugees and unaccompanied asylum seekers.

We have been keen to deliver our services and priorities in proactive meaningful ways and our 5 year plan reflects this (Appendix E).

7.1 Value Based approach

The Mosque is more than a place of worship and has a critical and instrumental role in the cultural and political life of Muslims, with immediate social influences. Mosques are the hub of communities and the operational base for community development and capacity building. It is where Muslims can cooperate and support young and old people to build healthier lives and multi-faith societies. Mosques bring social value and act as a vehicle for social change with a real sense of community:

1. **A Sense of Belonging**: For many Muslims, particularly those who are refugees or new to the area, having a stable and supportive environment is essential for settling into a new community. The mosque would provide a familiar, friendly space where people from various backgrounds and cultures, with different

language and ethnicity can feel a sense of belonging and support. This creates strong social networks and a sense of community.

2. **Integration into the Wider Community**: Over the years, MMCA has made significant strides in building relationships with the wider community. Events like open iftars during Ramadan and collaboration with local churches for Friday prayers have allowed people of different faiths to come together. The centre would serve as a venue for further interfaith activities and cultural exchanges, promoting greater understanding and cooperation. It would also create a strong culture of volunteering.

3. **Provision of youth centred service**: Engaging more young people, our future generations, involved in governing, managing and contributing to mosques helps them balance their faith with the pressure of modern life, provide more activities for them to get involved, and play a wider role in community life and engagement.

4. **Conflict Resolution**: Mosques play a role in dealing with conflicts and differences within communities. When there is disagreement or tension, mosques can be a place for dialogue, deliberation, and finding solutions that advance the community's common interests. This is part of the mosque's role in nurturing social solidarity and nurturing positive relationships between diverse individuals.

5. **Educational Centres**: Teaching the values of tolerance, inclusivity and dialogue contribute to educating the community and youth, along with supporting local schools in RVE curriculum.

6. **Environmental**: Mosques allow for a better understanding and change of behaviour in adopting environmental practices and educating on issues such as green spaces, air and water quality and pollution, energy efficiency, climate change, waste and recycling. community grow initiatives that grow herbs familiar to cooking dishes from particular countries e.g. chillies, coriander etc.

7. **Social Value**: They create social solidarity and a deep sense of social responsibility.

8. **Support Mental health and wellbeing**: Mosques help tackle loneliness and social isolation which can impact physical and mental health. The lack of identity and belonging can place individuals at greater risk that can exacerbate the social isolation of older residents, leading to poor health, loss of independence and lower quality of life.

9. **Health**: Some MMCA members are consultants and the current facilities for Friday prayer are used by many health professionals from Nevill Hall hospital. MMCA are therefore well placed to organise health campaigns, such as vaccinations or free health checks as well as work with partners such as Muslim Doctors Cymru to address high risk health factors and comorbidities for communities.

10. **Engagement**: Celebrations of Islamic holidays, charity events, and social activities such as fundraising for humanitarian causes are pertinent to mosques.

11. **Economy**: Muslims represent a wealth of skills, ideas, energy and business acumen. The mosque can help with work skills empowerment of individuals and communities assisting individuals to become active members of society and contribute positively. This includes areas such as CV-writing workshops to help individuals build livelihoods and reduce unemployment. MMCA volunteers are role models that include successful businesspeople, teachers, young parents, IT experts and accountants, health consultants and architect. All have skill sets that can be employed in the community mosque facility. This crucial role in the economic empowerment of communities helps increase people's economic independence and allows them to achieve financial stability.

12. **Agents of social change**: The mosque is well placed to organise education programmes on various social issues, including family education, reproductive health, women's rights, mental health, drugs, or domestic violence tackling anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, cybercrime, knife crime etc, which can shape the behaviours and attitudes of Muslims and others and tackle social, political, and cultural issues.

13. **Promoting Equality and Diversity**: Mosques are prime movers in promoting equality, human rights, and peace. MMCA believes strongly in the values of equality and diversity. Our mosque would be a welcoming space for people of all backgrounds, and we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

14. **Skill Development**. Mosques can develop skills and behaviours such as communication, leadership, character development ethics, morality, tolerance, integrity, honest, caring towards others and social responsibility with the act or worship even representing this. By inclusive congregating five times daily, standing together positioned shoulder to shoulder in a row without any differences, divisions, distinctions of status and invoking to one God creates discipline, compassion, unity, equity, brotherhood and mercy. A believer sees prayer as a privilege to learn and develop a deeper connection to his creator.

15. **Emergencies and humanitarian crises**: The mosque is a central point for a rapid and effective humanitarian response. This was seen during the pandemic where mosques in Gwent were the first in the UK to introduce on site Covid vaccination programmes. Mosques provide support for refugees, asylum seekers and communities affected by natural disasters or conflicts. It creates a haven for those needing immediate protection and provides humanitarian assistance help reduce poverty and inequality in society e.g. food programmes, warm hubs food and clothing distribution.

16. **Support for Vulnerable Families**: With the mosque acting as a base, we would be better positioned to provide ongoing support in meaningful ways to families in need, especially refugees who require financial, emotional, mental health and social assistance.

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17. **Vacancy risk minimisation**: The turnaround time for occupation of the building would be minimal, if not immediate therefore mitigating risks associated with empty properties

8.0 Suitability of the Old Abergavenny Library Building

The identification of the old Abergavenny Library building as a location for the community mosque facility is a suitable location which addresses the needs, demands and gaps outlined in this proposal; further endorsed by a recent site visit on September 19, 2024.(Appendix F)

The key advantages of the site include:

1. **Location**: The building is located in the heart of Abergavenny, making it easily accessible to the vast majority of the Muslim community. Its central location also makes it convenient for the wider Monmouthshire population to attend events and activities held at the centre; it also falls in close proximity to public transport routes.

2. **Qibla Wall**: The building has a south-east wall which is oriented towards Mecca called the qibla wall, which faces the Kaaba, the sacred structure at the centre of Islam's holiest site.

3. **Layout**: The building's first-floor rooms are suitable for administrative purposes and small-group educational classes. There is also a small kitchen facility with hot water, which is sufficient for catering needs during community gatherings. Additionally, the ground floor is carpeted, making it suitable for prayer without the need for further renovations. It also meets the requirements in Islam for the segregation of prayer space for both male and female worshippers.

4. **Accessible Facilities**: The building includes ground-floor toilet facilities, which, with minor modifications, can be adapted to serve as ablution areas (wudu) for males and females. This facility is welcomed as cleanliness and washing is a requirement before prayer can be conducted. Additionally, the building has multiple access points, including a ramp for disabled individuals.

5. **Proximity to Parking**: There are several nearby paid and free car parks, which can accommodate the needs of attendees without causing any inconvenience to the surrounding area.

8.1 Minor Modifications

While the old Abergavenny Library building is a Grade II listed building, it is largely suitable. In observing the limitations there are a few minor adjustments that would be

required to ensure the building meets the specific requirements of a Muslim Community Centre:

1. **Bathroom Facilities**: Slight modifications to the existing toilets would be needed to create separate ablution area for men and women, allowing them to perform wudu before praying.

2. **Privacy**: The addition of curtains or partitions (which could be stand-alone) would be necessary to ensure privacy for women during prayers and certain community activities, such as fitness classes or religious gatherings.

3. **Prayer carpets**: The existing carpets may need to be replaced with new carpets that indicate Quibla/ prayer directions (The position towards Mecca in which all Muslims across the world face for prayers) along with showing the rows one would stand in to perform prayer as a group.

These modifications are minimal, and the building is already well-suited for the purpose intended, no major structural changes would be required, which makes this a cost-effective and practical solution for establishing a permanent Muslim Community Centre.

9.0 Monitoring

Processes through outputs will be regularly reviewed and analysed (Appendix G). Outcomes will be measured using both qualitative and quantitative factors and include

- Attendance at mosque male /female
- Participation in events
- Involvement in planning and developing services
- Community stories
- Identifying, developing or sourcing workshops /presentations / training
- Human factor outcome such as improved wellbeing, confidence etc
- Funding applications
- Innovation ideas using suggestion box
- Surveys
- Equal opportunities monitoring
- Partnership development

10.0 Marketing

Muslims in Monmouthshire already have connections with MMCA as this is the only place for direct support for this community. Wider than this the management have direct links with Muslim Doctors Cymru and a platform on Newport Community Muslim group (a group with more than 1000 members) and all the mosques in South Wales where announcements and marketing can be made, Muslim Council of Wales, Islamic Relief, and other charities.

MMCA currently uses WhatsApp groups to communicate, however when a permanent venue is found, MMCA will work on setting up a website, pages on social media platforms and a more sustained email service.

We intend to continue and build on these when we have secured a premises.

11.0 Governance

Mosques are owned by their community. They are genuine civic organisations where the local people who attend the mosque also finance its upkeep and running.

An establishment of a mosque would enable membership of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) that is representative of over 600 mosques in the UK. It is an independent self-regulatory body aspiring to build capacity in mosques, help deliver standards and ensure mosque personnel have a better understanding of British Muslims' needs so that it can address any concerns more effectively. It works with and represents all Muslim traditions and schools of thought and to apply principles of good governance. It also promotes best practice in British mosques.

MMCA also has its own governance in place through its constitution and annual reporting.

12.0 Partnership Working

Partnership working is critical to the success of implementing cohesive communities through a mosque facility. The public sector, third sector organisations and citizens are key in helping to embed a range of information, advice, support and services to align with 'what matters' . MMCA already has good working relationships with a wide range of people and communities and continues to develop and maintain links. This includes other mosques, Monmouthshire County Council, Gwent police, Health Board, Muslim Doctors Cymru, EYST, GAVO, local businesses, local schools, Abergavenny Town of Sanctuary, Hay, Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary of Refugees and other charities.

13.0 Funding Implications

Mosques are generally funded in a variety of ways. Funding through Zakat, alms and other donations. Each individual donates when attending Friday prayers as a norm at an amount they are able to reasonably afford.

The financial position for MMCA is provided (Appendix H).

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Most mosques have very limited resources and therefore if their vision for more improved facilities and capacity is to be realised, more resources would be needed. Therefore, the proposal is designed with a view to identify, apply for, secure and manage local government grants or bursaries or gifting to support activities and development in establishing and sustaining the community mosque facility.

Currently, MMCA has a bank account through which limited funds are received, primarily from community members and small businesses. Registering as a charity, will provide opportunities to secure a wide range of funding, both nationally and internationally and ensure the sustainability of the centre and expand outreach. However, registering as a charity to receive more funds and support the charity ideally would require a permanent place.

14.0 Way Forward

Mosques are not only places of worship but also cultural, education and spiritual centres that play a crucial role in shaping the understanding of religious, social, and cultural identity.

The establishment of a permanent centre would allow the MMCA to significantly expand its services and activities. The goal is for MMCA to register as a charity and enable

- Muslims in Monmouthshire to have an equal opportunity to the right of worship to perform their five daily mandatory prayers.

- 30 days of Fasting during Ramadan to be observed in congregation, the same as billions of Muslims across the world.

- Build and strengthen trust, community cohesion and integration.

- Enrich the cultural landscape of Monmouthshire and promote the values of equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

- Bring a range of value (point 7.1).

- Allow Monmouthshire to address the gap in equity and access of provision of services for the population it serves.

- Encourage Muslims, particularly those of skilled professions to choose Monmouthshire as their preferred place of residence.

- MMCA recognises that innovation and flexibility is required in striving towards supporting the Muslim population in Monmouthshire with a mosque facility and are well placed to ensure that this brings economic, cultural, social and public value to individuals, groups, organisations and communities at large.

Integrated Impact Assessment document
(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer; Nicholas Keyse	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal
Phone no: 01633 644773	This report is brought forward to award the tender and the letting of the Former Abergavenny Library to the Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association.
E-mail: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk	
Name of Service area Resources	Date: 21st May 2025

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

Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The re-purposing of the former library will enable a wider age group to access the property than had been the case under its more recent uses within the Education directorate. Older people will be able to access opportunities at the property to meet their needs, aspirations and wants. The proposed use will facilitate creation of multi-use space that's been focused around supporting the local community.	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.
Disability	Developing the site as an inclusive community asset will further extend the range of opportunities and activities within the community which people with a disability can access.	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.
Gender reassignment	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.

Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Pregnancy or maternity	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.
Race	The Abergavenny area is the most diverse location in Monmouthshire with regard to ethnicity, although those of white ethnicity make up the vast majority of the population. Proportions of mixed race and Asian ethnicities are the highest in Monmouthshire (0.8% and 1.4%). The 0.5% change in the 2021 census was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in Monmouthshire. The proposal will support this increase through the provision of Monmouthshire's first mosque and community facility.	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.

Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief	The proposals for the property will directly contribute to addressing a longstanding requirement for a Mosque provision within the County. Monmouthshire boasts a diverse community embracing all cultures and backgrounds. In particular, the Muslim population has seen a growth over the past 5 years. This has resulted in a Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association being set up and run by professionals and the community. Currently there is no mosque in the Monmouthshire area resulting in either no access to worship, having to travel to mosques in other Local authority areas such as Newport and this has proved challenging in terms of travel, arriving at specified prayer times and during Ramadhan. This also means that children do not have access to learning education facilities on a daily basis as is a norm for the religion in the rest of the world. The proposal intends to promote interfaith and trust-building events such to encourage greater religious and cultural tolerance, and promoting inclusivity, diversity and integration.	No impact identified at this stage	Regular engagement with the tenant will be undertaken to assess and evidence the efforts being made to support groups of people with protected characteristics.
Sex	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage

Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	**Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.**	**What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?**
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	The scheme, and desire to lease to a community group for management of the property, align with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015. Creation of a new facility that makes Monmouthshire more inclusive and accessible will result in socio-economic gains.	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	No impact identified at this stage .	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

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

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Positive: This proposal will enable us to re-purpose an underutilized asset and offer an opportunity that could enhance the availability of opportunities to the community. The proposal will encourage economic growth by making Monmouthshire a more inclusive and attractive place to live. Negative: it remains a risk that broader community uses or hire arrangements could negatively impact on existing provisions within Abergavenny. It is believed this use is bespoke and therefore such a risk is minimal.	The proposals are to improve and enhance the existing facilities through continued engagement with the local community.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Positive: the property benefits from a small garden which should feature in the proposals of any occupier, such that opportunities for growing or biodiversity are captured. Early engagement with Abergavenny Town Council is intended to explorer the means of working closely with the proposed occupier.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Positive: The proposal is consistent with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy, which includes maximizing the use of Council assets. The properties layout and location lend themselves to a range of uses.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Positive: The MMCA business plan outlines the aspiration to create cohesive communities. The proposed use would be supported by a local	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	charitable group and organization of local volunteers with the purpose of developing and maintaining the community hub.	
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The development will address the importance of the wellbeing of current and future residents (prescribed in the 2015 Wellbeing and Future Generations Act). The proposed tenant will commit to investing in the property including energy efficiency improvements.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The development will enable community use without prejudice, and support access to facilities for the benefit of all residents. The new facility will operate as a community 'hub', and venue in which community cohesion and support can be provided. Providing a place of worship and a community hub for both the young and older generations from the wider community is desperately needed in a central and accessible location such as Abergavenny. Since the formation of Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association (MMCA) there is clear evidence that a place of worship and an educational venue is needed to fulfil the community needs.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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

Sustainable Development Principle		Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Long Term	Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	The implementation of the proposal will enable the application of a proposal for short- and long-term use of the property, including in the asset itself. The property lends itself to meet a range of uses which can support people to access services or offers. The granting of a 30-year lease will allow MMCA to pursue other funding avenues in order to enhance the property.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	The proposal to lease the property ensures it is utilized as a community asset and for the benefit of partners operating in our communities.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Involvement	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	Community consultation and engagement is intended by the tenant in advance of occupation to strengthen knowledge and understanding of the proposed use, as well as promote activities for residents to access.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

Appendix 1

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Prevention — Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	Leasing of the property for this purpose will help to address the lack of facilities for the community within Monmouthshire. With no existing access to a place of worship within the County, residents are having to travel to mosques in other Local authority areas and this has proved challenging in terms of travel, arriving at specified prayer times and during Ramadhan. This also means that children do not have access to learning education facilities on a daily basis as is a norm for the religion in the rest of the world.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Integration — Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	The proposed use will continue to have a strong community focus, linking people to other organisations and resources in their local communities.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	None identified at this stage	.No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

Corporate Parenting	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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

In accordance with the requirements of the Asset Management Strategy, a vacant property has been marketed for receipt of proposals outlining the means by which the property can be repurposed and generate a financial and social return. The recommendations of this report are informed by a scoring matrix considering the proposed use and its suitability, demand and evidence for the proposal, terms including financial and repair obligations, experience of the applicant and due diligence accompanying the proposal, financial sustainability of the group. The business plan of the winning tenderer outlines the demand for the proposed use.

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

Positive Impact

- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal to offer the site for community use will enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.
- This proposal will strengthen and widen the opportunities available by providing a mosque and community centre to facilitate educational, social, economic and recreational value for Muslim residents of Monmouthshire and the wider community.
- Developing the site as a community asset/opportunity will further extend the range of opportunities and activities within the community.
- Monmouthshire's commitment as a county of sanctuary is about improving outcome's by providing a welcoming environment, challenging discrimination and negative perceptions and ensuring equality of opportunity where possible. The proposal strives to promote good relations between groups ensuring vibrant and cohesive communities.

Negative Impacts

- The creation of an additional community facility in close proximity to a number of existing community assets may negatively impact the sustainability of other assets.

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Landlord Services will progress lease negotiations and let the property.	June 2025	Landlord Services

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.	Internal SCH decision making	13.03.24	DMT asked for assurance that people within supported living arrangements who used to access Greenfingers are being appropriately supported with day time opportunities of their choice.
2.	Informal Cabinet	19.03.24	

EI

Sub

Sta

CE'S STREET

21

1b

PH

BAKER STREET

(Cinema)

13

3

1a

1

LEW

Library Square

VICTORIA STREET

Library

Old

2

5

Police

8

Hall

Station

Almshouses

1

Holy Trinity

Church

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Former Abergavenny Library
Redline Plan

Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk. NP15 1GA

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