

Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 3 June 2025

Notice of meeting:

Special Meeting - Place Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 11th June, 2025 at 5.30 pm

The Council Chamber, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA with remote attendance

Watch the meeting here: <https://youtube.com/live/Jh8GQJFV0Qc?feature=share>

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Public Open Forum. Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council website. If you would like to speak under the Public Open Forum at an upcoming meeting you will need to give three working days' notice in advance of the meeting by contacting Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the Chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes. Alternatively, if you would like to submit a written, audio or video representation, please contact the team via the same email address to arrange this. The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three clear working days in advance of the meeting. If combined representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting.	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Call-in of the decision by Cabinet on the 21 May 2025 in relation to the letting of the former Abergavenny Library.</p> <p>Appendix 5 of the agenda pack contains information that cannot be publicly disclosed and is deemed exempt under the Local Government Act. Any discussion during the Committee Meeting that relates to any information relating to a particular individual or family or which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual or information relating to any consultation or negotiations which relate to the financial or business affairs of any particular person will be exempt in line with the Local Government Act, Schedule 12A part 4 and will require the Committee to move into a closed session and the press and public will be asked to leave the meeting.</p>	<p>1 - 182</p>
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Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY**

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Emma Bryn	Wyesham;	Independent Group
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Lisa Dymock	Portskewett;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jane Lucas	Osbaston;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jackie Strong	Caldicot Cross;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tudor Thomas	Park;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor John Crook	Magor East with Undy;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

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

Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

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

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

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

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Question Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
 2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
 3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
 - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

Questions for the Meeting

Scrutinising Performance

1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?
2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?
3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?
4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?
5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?
6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?
7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?
8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?

Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?
6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
7. Does this policy align to our corporate

	<p>objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards?</p> <p>8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications</p> <p>9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?</p> <p>12.</p> <p>13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated</p>
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General Questions:

Empowering Communities

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?
- Is the service working with citizens to explain the role of different partners in delivering the service, and managing expectations?
- Is there a framework and proportionate process in place for collective performance assessment, including from a citizen's perspective, and do you have accountability arrangements to support this?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? If so, can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers provide members with copies and a detailed explanation of the EQIA conducted in respect of these proposals?
- Can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers assure members that these proposals comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation? Do the proposals comply with the Local Authority's Strategic Equality Plan?

Service Demands

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?
- Have you identified and considered the long-term trends that might affect your service area, what impact these trends could have on your service/your service could have on these trends, and what is being done in response?

Financial Planning

- Do we have robust medium and long-term financial plans in place?
- Are we linking budgets to plans and outcomes and reporting effectively on these?

Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?
- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

- Were the intended outcomes of the proposal achieved or were there other results?
- Were the impacts confined to the group you initially thought would be affected i.e. older people, or were others affected e.g. people with disabilities, parents with young children?
- Is the decision still the right decision or do adjustments need to be made?

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...



CALL-IN MECHANISM

Call-in

(a) When a decision is made by the executive, an individual member of the executive or a committee of the executive or an area committee or under joint arrangements, the decision shall be published, including where possible by electronic means, and shall be available at the main offices of the Council normally within two days of being made. All members will be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.

(b) That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of five clear working days after the publication of the decision, unless a select committee objects to it and calls it in.

(c) During that period, the proper officer shall call-in a decision for scrutiny by the committee if so requested by the chairman or any three non-executive members and shall then notify the decision-taker of the call-in. He/she shall call a meeting of the committee on such date as he/she may determine, where possible after consultation with the chairman of the committee, and in any case within fifteen working days of the publication of the decision.

(d) If, having considered the decision, the select committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision-making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or refer the matter to full Council. If referred to the decision maker they shall then reconsider, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

(e) If following an objection to the decision, the select committee does not meet in the period set out above, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body, the decision shall take effect on the date of the select meeting, or the expiry of fifteen working days, from the publication of the decision, whichever is the earlier.

(f) If the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary, and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision-making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the executive as a whole or a committee of it, a meeting will be convened to reconsider within ten clear working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within ten clear working days of the Council request.

(g) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision-making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

EXCEPTIONS

(h) In order to ensure that call-in is not abused, nor causes unreasonable delay, certain limitations are to be placed on its use. These are:

- i) three members of the council are needed for a decision to be called in;

CALL-IN AND URGENCY

(i) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision-making person or body, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The Head of Paid Service or his/her nominee must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

(j) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

CALL IN REQUEST

1. SUBJECT: LETTING OF THE FORMER ABERGAVENNY LIBRARY

2. DATE OF CABINET MEETING: 21st of May 2025

3. CABINET DECISION:

Agenda Item - RESOLVED 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

4. REASON(S) FOR CALL- IN:

CALL-IN REQUEST: Decision by Cabinet on Lease of The Carnegie Library, Abergavenny

Subject: Cabinet decision to grant a 30-year lease of the Carnegie Library, Abergavenny to the Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association (MMCA)

Grounds for Call-In:

1. Lack of Proper Scrutiny/Due Process and Community Consultation:

- This decision was made without being presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee(s) prior to Cabinet approval. Given the sensitivity, scale, and length of the lease, this represents a significant failure of democratic oversight.
- Public interest decisions of this magnitude should go through full scrutiny to ensure community consultation and transparency.
- Democratic community engagement is necessary in view of the lack of public scrutiny due to no planning approval being needed so that residents/businesses/faiths and the general public do not have the usual opportunity to comment on issues such as traffic congestion, parking, noise and restrictions on hours of operation.
- The Council and Forward Plan was amended on the 21st of October 2024 on the Future of the Abergavenny Library for a report to Cabinet on the 6th of November 2024, It was not on the Place Committee agenda of the 21st of

October 2024 and the next meeting was on the 7th of November 2024 after the Cabinet report of the 6th of November 2024.

- The Cabinet report of the 6th of November 2024 details the positive Impact which was not reflected in the invitation to tender with the proposal to offer the site for community or commercial use to enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.
- In addition the item has not been kept on the Council and forward planner for the period it should have been and not even included in the Place Committee agenda of the 22nd of May when other Cabinet reports of the 21st of May were included.
- The Invitation to Tender underlined the Planning Status with its current D1 use class (as a library) but did not fully detail commercial options on change of use including retail and wholesale use, despite the covenant on the land allowing for such use.

2. Questionable Timing and Limited Market Exposure:

- The property was marketed for only four weeks in December 2024, during a well-known period of reduced public and business engagement due to the festive season.
- This limited window may have inhibited fair market exposure, potentially impacting the breadth and quality of submissions.

3. Best Value and Financial Sustainability Concerns:

- A lease of 30 years for £500 per month (£6,000 per annum) on a prominent, centrally located historic building raises serious Best Value concerns under the Local Government Act 1999, which places a duty on local authorities to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."
- Although a tender offered the same rental figure, it is unclear whether this reflects true market value. There has been no independent valuation, and a 30-year commitment without such due diligence is premature.
- Lack of Certainty over the need for a council building over such a long period.

5. DATE RECEIVED: 30/5/25

6. MEMBERS CALLING-IN:

(The Chair of a Scrutiny Committee or any three non-executive members)

Name:

Ward:

Cllr Louise Brown

Shirenewton Ward

Cllr Rachel Buckler

Devauden Ward

Cllr Simon Howarth

Llanelly Hill

The Scrutiny Committee that will hear the call- in:

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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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the property would be vacant, the property would be retained for the delivery of other council services should the need arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 CRITERIA

- 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

<p>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</p>								
Applicant	Tenure	Terms	Proposal and Suitability	Proposal and Suitability (score)	Due Diligence and Experience	Evidence of demand and Adherence 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

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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

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*

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)

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.

- **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.

- 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, aims 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).

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.



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Integrated Impact Assessment document

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

<p>Name of the Officer; Nicholas Keyse</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644773</p> <p>E-mail: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>This report is brought forward to award the tender and the letting of the Former Abergavenny Library to the Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Resources</p>	<p>Date: 21st May 2025</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	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.

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.

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	<p>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.</p>	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

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	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 explore 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?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The proposal to lease the property ensures it is utilized as a community asset and for the benefit of partners operating in our communities.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>The proposed use will continue to have a strong community focus, linking people to other organisations and resources in their local communities.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>

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
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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.

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	



Former Abergavenny Library

Redline Plan

Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk. NP15 1GA

Scale:1:500

Printed on:2024-10-17 14:44:13 by NicholasKeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Grid Ref:329674,214329



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INVITING PROPOSALS

FORMER LIBRARY, ABERGAVENNY, NP7 5BD



TENDER DEADLINE – 12:00 (noon) 20th DECEMBER



Gross Internal Area 2,992 sq ft



Central town location with parking nearby



Community building suitable for multiple
uses

01633 644417 | Estates@monmouthshire.gov.uk | www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/available-property

THE OPPORTUNITY

Monmouthshire County Council's Estates Team are inviting proposals to purchase or lease the Former Abergavenny Library building, situated on Baker Street in Abergavenny Town Centre.



SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The Former Abergavenny Library building is Grade II listed and was built in 1905 by the Carnegie Foundation. The building was erected to benefit and serve the local community for educational purposes.

The former library has a gross internal area measuring approximately 2,992 sq ft and is located on the corner of Baker Street and Victoria Street. The ground floor consists of two large reception rooms, a foyer, a toilet and storage room. Upstairs benefits from several offices, a toilet and small kitchen.

Trinity Terrace Car Park is located directly opposite providing parking for users.

TENURE

The site is available freehold with vacant possession.

VAT

Monmouthshire County Council is not to charge VAT on this property.

PLANNING STATUS

Its current Use Class (as a library) is D1 but if interested parties are seeking a change of use they should contact the Estates Team in the first instance – 01633 644417.

METHOD OF DISPOSAL

Proposals are being accepted to either purchase and/or lease the property (multiple submissions accepted). Interested parties are being asked to submit a tender form to the MCC Estates Team using the tender forms provided, no later than **12:00 pm on the 20th of December 2024**. Submissions will be assessed against a scoring matrix including financial offer, due diligence, experience and funding capability. Parties are also encouraged to detail additional benefits, including any proposals to utilise local employment/labour and maximise local benefit.

TERMS

Monmouthshire County Council will consider alternative transaction structures including unconditional and conditional offers.





Monmouthshire County Council give notice that: These particulars are set out as general outline online for the guidance of intending purchasers or lessees and do not constitute, nor constitute part of, an offer or contract. All descriptions, references to condition and necessary permission for use and occupation and other details are given in good faith and are themselves by inspection or otherwise as to the correctness of each of them. All dimensions are approximate. No persons in the employment of Monmouthshire County Council has any authority to make or give any representation or warranty whatsoever in relation to this property. All correspondence regarding this offer is subject to contract. In the event of inconsistency between these Particulars and Conditions of Sale the latter shall prevail



Informal Tender for the Former Library Building, Abergavenny, NP7 5BD

Please return this tender form in a sealed envelope, without any distinguishing marks or features, either by post or hand delivered to:

**Estates Team
Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
Usk
NP15 1GA**

I/we	
Of (address)	
Telephone no:	
Email address:	

Hereby offer to <u>purchase</u> the building for the sum of £	
(offer in words)	
Hereby offer to <u>lease</u> the building for the sum of £	
per annum.	
(offer in words)	
For a term (length of time):	
Proposed trading name:	
Proposed use:	

Please provide further information about you/your business plans for the business:

Dated the: _____ (Day) of _____ (Month) 2024

Signed: _____

Name of Signatory: _____ (Capital Letters)

Position: _____ (Capital Letters)

By completing this form you are agreeing that Monmouthshire Council can hold and use the details provided for purposes reasonably associated with the letting of this property (for additional information as to policies as to how we store and use such information please see our web-site: [Privacy Notice - Monmouthshire](#))

Is my report exempt?

In some instances it may be necessary to submit a report to a committee but withhold the whole report, or part of that report, due to the sensitive nature of information contained within it.

There are specific circumstances in which a report may be considered exempt which are set in legislation. When writing your report bear in mind the following circumstances to consider whether your report should be exempt;

Local Government Act, Schedule 12A, Part 4;

12. Information relating to a particular individual
13. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
14. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
15. Information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
16. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
17. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - a. To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - b. To make an order or direction under any enactment
18. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

If you are unsure if the report should be exempt or not you should contact Democratic Services or the Monitoring Officer for further advice and guidance. The principal to bear in mind however is that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

If your report is to be exempt you should let Democratic Services know as soon as possible if you have not already done so when adding the item to the forward plan of the relevant committee.

When submitting your report to Democratic Services for publication with the agenda you must also include an exemption certificate which give details as to why the report is exempt and not for publication. This certificate will be publicly available with the agenda in place of the report so the reasoning for the exemption should be made clear on this form. The exemption certificate is available overleaf.

Further information on definitions and exemptions is available within the Local Government Act at the following link; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/schedule/12A>



SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS

Meeting and Date of Meeting: Wednesday 11th June – Place Scrutiny Committee

Report: Letting of the Former Abergavenny Library

Author: Nicholas Keyse

I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the background paper for the report referred to above and make the following recommendation to the Proper Officer:-

Exemptions applying to the report:

Local Government Act, Schedule 12A, Part 4;

- 12. Information relating to a particular individual
- 14. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Factors in favour of disclosure:

Openness & transparency in matters concerned with the public

Prejudice which would result if the information were disclosed:

Disclosure of this information could compromise the commercial position of Monmouthshire County Council, as the matter relates to a lease award and negotiation on a Council asset. The documentation contains commercially sensitive information regarding the financial status of third parties, including those who have requested that such proposals are held confidentially such as to not compromise their existing accommodation and legal commitments.

My view on the public interest test is as follows:

Factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by those against.

Recommended decision on exemption from disclosure:

Maintain exemption from publication in relation to report

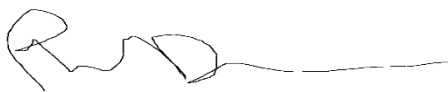
Date: 04/06/2025

Signed:

Post: Acting Head of Landlord Services

I accept/I do not accept the recommendation made above

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Date: 5th June 2025

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