

**SUBJECT: Performance Report 2020/21 – Corporate Plan Goals**

**MEETING: Strong Communities Select Committee**

**DATE: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To present 2020/21 performance information under the remit of Strong Communities Select Committee (Corporate Plan Goal C and E); this includes:
- Progress made in 2020/21 to deliver the commitments set out in the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022 (appendix 2)

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are invited to scrutinise how well the authority performed in 2020/21 against the goals set in the Corporate Plan.

## **3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan sets an ambitious five-year programme aligned to a clear purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities, and identifies five priority goals, which also serve as the council's well-being objectives. Each of the goals includes a number of commitments to action, 22 in total, which the organisation is committed to delivering between now and 2022.
- 3.2 Due to the impact of the pandemic, some of the aims within the plan have been paused or progressed at a slower pace than intended. This has enabled us to divert staff and resources into core services to focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. To ensure accountability through this period, Cabinet developed a Coronavirus Strategy, also known as the *Plan on a Page*. This was approved in May 2020, and subsequently updated in July, December and more recently, in June, in response to the changing nature of the response. It contains a purpose, strategic aims and associated actions, and has been monitored by Cabinet throughout the pandemic.
- 3.3 The council has an established performance framework, which is the way in which we translate our vision of '*building sustainable and resilient communities*' into action, and ensures that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes; this is shown at appendix 1. Further information on the council's performance framework is available on the intranet Hub.
- 3.4 Appendix 2 provides an update of progress in 2020/21 for the goals in the Corporate Plan that fall under the remit of the committee, Goal C: Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment, and Goal E: Future-focused Council. An evaluation of activity and progress made is provided, with a progress rating included for each commitment. The parameters for the ratings are below:

Progressing well: most actions are underway and making good progress; improvements are becoming evident; most activity has been on schedule

Taking steps: actions have been started and are making progress, whilst some are not progressing or are yet to begin; some improvement is evident; activity has been on schedule but some are behind schedule

Attention needed: most actions are not making progress; few improvements are evident; most activity has been behind schedule.  
No activity: no actions, improvement or activities are evident

The progress on the goals have also been given an indicative overall score based on the council's self-evaluation framework, level 1 – unsatisfactory to level 6 – excellent. These ratings reflect progress against the long term strategic commitments in the Corporate Plan. However, they do not illustrate the significant activities undertaken during 2020/21 to support the pandemic response. The update also includes the performance measures that are being used to track progress, and the contribution of each goal to the national well-being goals and ways of working set out within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

- 3.5 The performance indicators provide quantitative information to support the analysis of performance and consist of both local and national measures. The council usually undergoes a benchmarking exercise of the national indicators to provide an indication of performance against other local authorities in Wales, however due to the impact of the pandemic, this information is limited for 2020/21 so does not provide adequate detail to support the analysis of performance. Data has been gathered internally, where available, and is presented with additional information where figures do not align with previous performance to provide a wider context and explanation.
- 3.6 The Corporate Plan is an ambitious five year programme; some commitments focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act. This will need to be considered when assessing progress made as the impact of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will be in the early stages or not yet started.
- 3.7 The purpose of bringing the information together is to allow Select Committee to understand performance in the context of the commitments made in the Corporate Plan. Committee members are encouraged to utilise their time appropriately and consider the scrutiny already undertaken in service areas, and as prescribed on the committee's work programme. The report may identify further areas of scrutiny that committee may want to consider for inclusion on the forward work programme. As some of the activity detailed cross cuts select committee remits, it is suggested that members particularly focus their scrutiny on the activity relevant to the committee with consideration of its contribution to the objective as a whole.
- 3.8 The council's annual performance report will be presented to Council on 23 September 2021 and published by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, in line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure. As well as being presented to select committee, the goals detailed here will be included in this report, and will provide a detailed evaluation of performance in 2020/21 against the Corporate Plan and wider arrangements.

#### **4. REASONS:**

- 4.1 To ensure that members have an understanding of council performance in 2020/21 and can scrutinise how well the authority has performed.

#### **5. AUTHOR:**

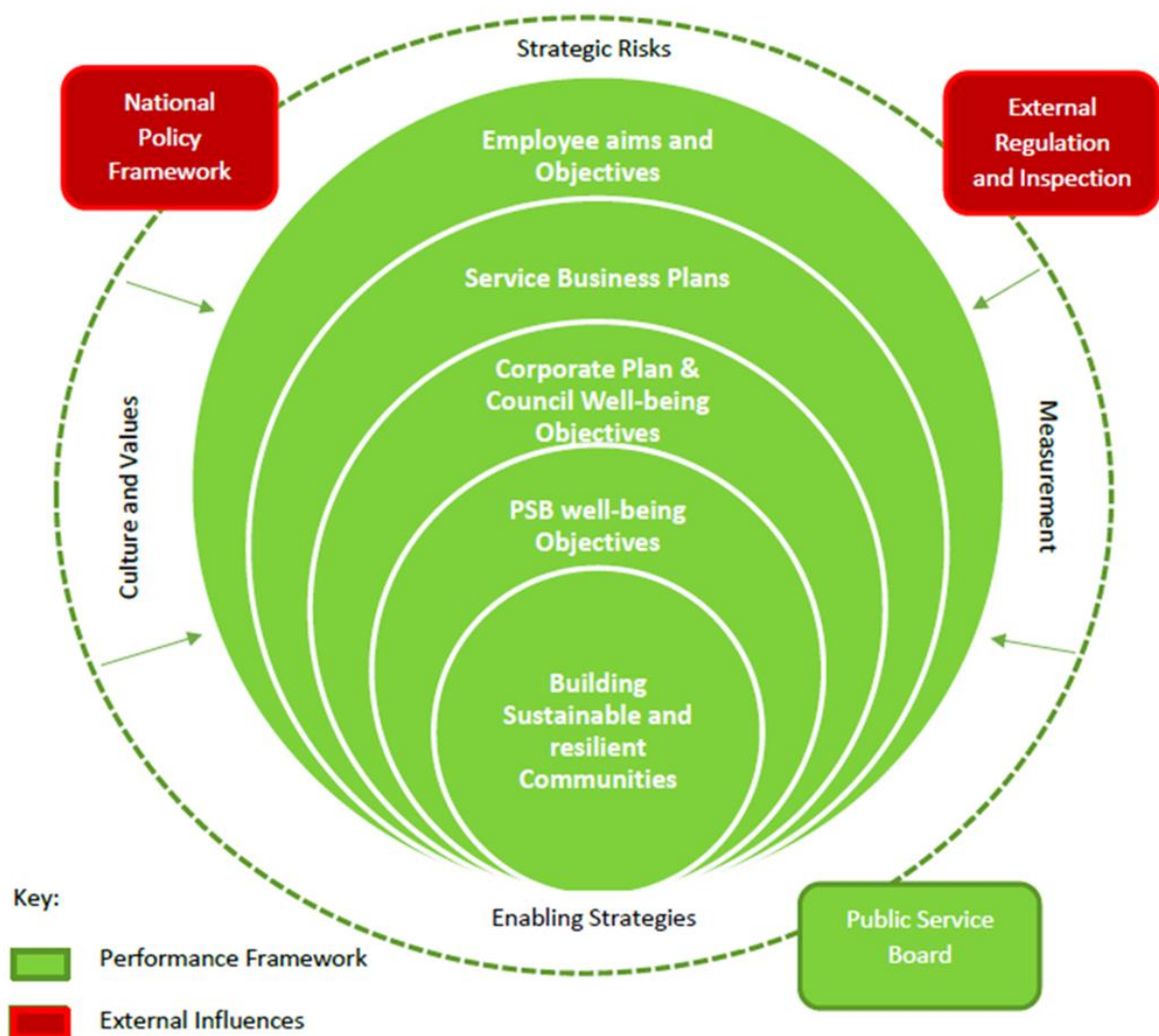
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## Appendix 1 – Monmouthshire County Council Performance Management Framework


Our performance management framework ensures everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes. Building sustainable and resilient communities is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The council's own well-being objectives are set by the Council based on the same well-being assessment as the PSB objectives and forms the backbone of our five organisational goals in the Corporate Plan. Each of our teams has a business plan that aligns to these objectives and we have a range of performance measures that are used to track progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to delivery of our goals, and the employee aims and objectives show the contribution that individuals make to these objectives and to delivering our vision in accordance with our values.



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


Monmouthshire County Council Goal: C. Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment	
Why we are focusing on this	Summary – Progress 2020/21
<p>Monmouthshire has a spectacular natural environment, a unique heritage value and a culturally rich identity. We believe that necessary growth, development, and expansion of our place, need not compromise our distinctive offer – indeed it should complement and enhance it. As an agricultural and food producing county, we recognise the moral and economic impetus around reducing food waste and the impact on greenhouse gases. We support the principles of the ‘circular economy’ and the recycling &amp; restoration of goods and want to work with businesses and organizations that subscribe to these too.</p> <p>We have declared a Climate Emergency and are committed to delivering the strategy and action plan to reduce the council’s carbon emissions. We will maintain the internal corporate systems, policies and asset management plans that emphasis carbon reduction, energy resilience and a green council culture. Connected to this, we will safeguard the wider environmental interests of our rural communities through developing multi-agency approaches to road safety.</p> <p>We will continue to recognise the value of our culture and heritage in enhancing the livability of our county. We will work with partners and communities to enhance our high quality recreational and cultural facilities to provide opportunities for people to learn develop and enjoy themselves and help attract the talent so key to driving a strong economy.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation – 3: Adequate</p> <p>Household Waste Recycling Centres were closed at the start of the first lockdown to ensure resident safety, but waste and recycling collection services continued throughout. The recycling rate for 2020/21 was 68.88%, an increase from 65.57% in 2019/20. A new re-use shop has opened at Five Lanes Household Waste Recycling Centre, and four Benthylg Libraries of Things have been established in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, with associated Repair Cafes and other repair and reuse projects.</p> <p>Considerable grant funding has been obtained for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Active Travel improvements, and 24 sites of nature conservation importance were designated, contributing to a total of more than 700 sites. Numerous projects have been supported in Monmouth and Caldicot to improve the active travel offer, and a total investment of £1.4m has been achieved this financial year, the biggest investment into Active Travel in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>Progress against the Climate Emergency strategy and action plan has faced delays as a result of the pandemic, but good progress has been made against almost half of the actions in the plan. Electric vehicle charging points have been installed at two primary schools, and more are currently being installed for operational vehicles across the county.</p> <p>The Museum Service has successfully completed a feasibility study for the creation of a new cultural offer at Shire Hall, incorporating the current Monmouth museum, and a review of future museum storage requirements has also been completed.</p>

## Detailed Progress Update

Commitment to action	Progress rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
<p>THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS &amp; DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE PLAN FOR ENHANCING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Work with community groups to reduce litter and fly tipping while using technology to improve our own processes.</p>	<p>Fly tipping can now be reported using the My Monmouthshire App, which has seen a significant improvement in accuracy following some technical issues last year. There has been an increase in the number of incidences this year but this is reflected nationally. The average clearance time of incidents of fly tipping for which the council is responsible was 5.55 days, and monitoring will continue based on the improved accuracy of recording.</p>
		<p>Ensure that we reduce the amount of waste, achieving recycling targets and not exceeding national limits for the amount we can send to landfill</p>	<p>Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) closed at the start of the first lockdown to ensure resident safety, and green waste collections were stopped for a period of time to divert resources to the pandemic response. However, the Waste and Recycling Team worked hard to maintain waste and recycling collection services and weekly/fortnightly routes continued throughout. The recycling rate for 2020/21 was 68.88%, an increase from 65.57% in 2019/20. Data is being analysed to determine if any learning can be taken from recent months to improve recycling figures going forward.</p> <p>There have been a number of changes to the HWRC services, aimed at continuing the upward trend in residents' recycling activity. These include the continuation of the booking system at all sites, first introduced to ensure social distancing, the closure of Usk HWRC, and revised opening hours at the remaining sites. In addition, the green waste collection service has been updated, including changes to the container for garden waste, the frequency of collection, and an increase in the annual charge for customers. Again, these changes are aimed at continuing the positive change in behaviour towards recycling activities.</p>
		<p>Work towards becoming a plastic free county, reducing single use and unnecessary plastics to an absolute minimum.</p>	<p>A successful Circular Economy bid for £626,000 was announced in January 2021. From this, a new re-use shop at Five Lanes has been opened, along with four Benthg Libraries of Things in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, with associated Repair Cafes and other repair and reuse projects.</p>



			<p>A period dignity grant has been used to purchase eco-friendly and reusable products, and work is underway with Sustainable You, Sustainable Me and the Working Families project to run workshops for residents, promoting sustainable period products. A trial of re-usable recycling bags began last year with around 3,500 properties, but further roll out was restricted at the start of the pandemic. The roll out of reusable bags will restart in the autumn, when provision of single use plastic bags will cease.</p>
		<p>Deliver Green Infrastructure Policy to ensure people have access to green spaces</p>	<p>£580,000 of grant funded projects were delivered across Monmouthshire during the year for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Active Travel improvements and opportunities. A further £2,912,000 worth of funding was also secured to deliver biodiversity, G.I. and Active Travel projects for 2021 and beyond, with further funding bids for £445k in the pipeline.</p> <p>Biodiversity advice was provided for over 500 planning applications, and 24 sites of nature conservation importance were designated, contributing to a total of more than 700 sites for targeted conservation action, i.e. woodland, orchards, grasslands &amp; brown-fields. Lockdown offered the opportunity to extend sustainable management practices and as a result, over three million square metres of grassland have seen a reduction in mowing. Since then, reduced mowing to public open spaces has continued, and where it is taking place, engagement is underway with allotment associations to take cut grass for use as compost. Work is ongoing to understand the learning from the changes to grounds maintenance services to inform how biodiversity can be enhanced, whilst still maintaining the standards of green spaces expected by residents.</p>
		<p>Secure and deliver funds for projects including Living Levels, Agri-urban and Air Quality</p>	<p>Partnerships, projects and community grants schemes have maintained protected landscapes, Wye Valley AONB and Blaenavon Industrial World Heritage Site during 2020/21. The Living Levels Partnership projects have been delivered, including six new information hubs promoting the area, and the installation of 21 new route signs improving access across the Levels. Other programmes include a sustainable communities project, community nature spaces and educational delivery, and a</p>

			<p>further £88k has been secured for 2021/22 from the Local Places for Nature fund to continue this activity.</p>
		<p>Install real time air quality monitoring equipment in four schools</p>	<p>Air quality monitoring sensors have been installed in St Mary's Primary School, Usk Primary School, and Monmouth and Chepstow Comprehensive Schools. They were also incorporated as part of the Church Road scheme, funded through the Transforming Towns and Active Travel Welsh Government Grants.</p>
		<p>Deliver more opportunities for active travel and improved connectivity <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>Lockdown saw a considerable reduction in driving and increased walking within areas local to home. Numerous projects have been supported in Monmouth and Caldicot to improve the active travel offer in the county. Two of these have moved to construction, with significant development work undertaken on the others. A total investment of £1.4m has been achieved this financial year, the biggest investment into Active Travel in Monmouthshire. In addition to this, increased cycling capacity has been provided in town centres for 163 bikes, 12 public bike pumps have been installed, e-bikes are being piloted with community groups, and a contraflow cycle lane was introduced in Abergavenny through COVID-19 response funding. A clear strategic focus is now set, primary routes identified and a vision established to develop future routes in order to encourage modal shift.</p> <p>Over 2,700 responses were received to the Active Travel Network Map engagement phase in the summer of 2020, and the consultation has been praised for the level of detail and reach, with some of the subsequent work being used on a national level in the new Active Travel Guidance. The consultation is ongoing, with clear input from children, young people and adults across Monmouthshire.</p>
		<p>Maintain the diversity of plants and wildlife in the county while taking measures to make them more resilient to external threats like flooding and rising temperatures. <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>A tree planting programme has begun throughout the county, and despite the pandemic, 7790 trees have been planted this year. Schools have been provided with raised beds to plant seeds, which will then be regrown on sites when more mature. The GI action plans, funded via Natural Resources Wales PSB grant, are also identifying tree planting opportunities in settlements as part of the identification of GI corridors. Other projects include the WG funded 'Neglected Grassland' and 'Resilient Grassland' projects, whereby overgrown and unsuitable areas are cleared</p>

			<p>to encourage more indigenous species to develop, and to become more sustainable and resilient areas.</p> <p>A Behaviour Change for Wellbeing Officer has been appointed through the Resilient Greater Gwent project to engage with communities and schools. They have been delivering social media features and videos, building bug hotels, installing wildlife cameras, and have delivered 150 pollinator packs to schools for wildflower planting.</p> <p>As Joint Coordinator for the Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership, considerable work has been undertaken to develop and grow the partnership. It has carried out 12 nature learning events and activities, and via grants to community groups, five nature projects have been delivered, including barn owl nest boxes, help for hedgehogs, bat activity monitoring and orchard biodiversity enhancement. 'Nature Isn't Neat' workshops across the county have supported habitat restoration programmes and positive management for pollinators, and guidance has been provided on the management of grasslands, verges and public open spaces.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CLEAR PLANS TO REDUCE ITS CARBON EMISSIONS TO NET ZERO BY 2030 AND WORK WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS ACROSS THE COUNTY AS A WHOLE</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Develop and enable more local renewable energy schemes</p> <hr/> <p>Develop an investment programme to help our services transition to a low carbon future</p>	<p>A climate emergency was declared by Council in May 2019, followed by a strategy and action plan in October 2019, and a member-led Climate Emergency working group has been established to take responsibility for ensuring the action plan continues to progress. Of the 66 actions in the plan, there is good progress being made on almost half of them, but delays have occurred as a result of the pandemic, caused by competing pressures, closure of venues or services, postponed consultation or engagement, or delayed external funding.</p> <p>Although good progress is being made, not enough detailed information is available on the council's baseline carbon emissions. A proposal has been made to source additional expertise and capacity to help establish emissions data, and gain a better understanding of the carbon savings included in the plan. This will assist in identifying the most effective use of resources to generate the maximum carbon savings.</p> <p>Work to reduce carbon emissions at a regional level continues through the work of Climate Ready Gwent, on areas such as electric vehicle charging, hydrogen feasibility and training. A successful bid to Natural Resources Wales funded the delivery of</p>



			<p>Carbon Literacy training during February and March 2021 to 56 officers and members, in addition to 57 members of public and third sector colleagues, including South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Gwent Police and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. This work will be strengthened through the proposed development of a Gwent PSB, a Wellbeing Assessment and Wellbeing Plan. Further regional collaboration on decarbonisation is also taking place with Cardiff Capital Region partners.</p>
		Trial and test hydrogen vehicles through partnerships with organisations such as River Simple	<p>With the support of the council, Riversimple are preparing to run a 12 month trial of 20 Riversimple Rasa hydrogen fuel cell cars in Monmouthshire, initially with the Registrars Team. The aim is to then trial the vehicle in other sections of the organisation.</p>
		Install battery charge points for electric vehicles in all towns using funding opportunities such as grants from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles	<p>Electric vehicle charging points are currently being installed for operational vehicles in the One Planet Centre Llanfoist, Troy Depot, Caldicot Waste Depot and Raglan Depot. They have already been installed in Kymin View and Deri View School for the two new school catering vehicles, but they are also available for use by anyone visiting the school. Grant funding has been awarded to develop an EV charging strategy, and work started on this in April 2021. Seven fully electric vehicles have been delivered and three more are on order. Six Hybrid cars are also in operation, currently being used by Social services, Planning and Property Services.</p> <p>Work is underway with the Regional Transport Authority on charging points for taxis and, utilising Cardiff Capital Region funding, two electric taxis will be piloted, with a charging point being installed at Abergavenny Bus Station. Conversion of the council's bus fleet is not currently feasible due to the lack of energy capacity at the depots, but a project has begun to identify alternative premises in the south of the county, which would enable the installation of charging points. A fully electric 17 seater, low floor wheelchair accessible minibus has been ordered, which will be used on the Grass Routes Service, but will also be trialled on several school runs, which will help to understand the vehicle's range and inform decision making in the future.</p>
THE COUNCIL KEEPS ROADS AND AREAS SAFE	Taking steps	Work with town and community councils and	<p>20mph schemes have been implemented in Raglan, Caldicot, and Tintern as part of the COVID-19 response to make town centres safer; it is anticipated that these will</p>

		<p>local people to identify where speed reduction measures are needed including 20 mph zones where appropriate</p>	<p>be maintained on a permanent basis, and further 20mph zones will be implemented during 2021/22. Monmouthshire has been selected to pilot Welsh Government's settlement-wide 20mph zones during 2021/22, which will help inform WG's proposals to make the urban speed limit 20mph in 2023. These 20mph zones will significantly improve community safety, as well as support active travel.</p>
		<p>Support for Community Speed Watch and community-led speed safety initiatives</p>	<p>Other road safety initiatives include pilot school street closures, during drop off and pick up times, and the Green Cone Scheme, which is a Welsh Government initiative to help keep school children safe as they arrive and leave the school grounds at the beginning and end of each school day. A range of educational programmes are being offered, built around safer routes to school and active travel, and where possible, these have been delivered virtually during the pandemic.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL ENHANCES LOCAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Support a resilient and sustainable cross-county museum offer whilst identifying opportunities for arts and cultural development-(New)</p>	<p>A feasibility study for the creation of a new cultural offer at Shire Hall, incorporating the current Monmouth museum, and a review of future museum storage requirements has been completed. The collection review process, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has continued throughout the year.</p>
		<p>Protect and enhance our built heritage including the submission of bids to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, where appropriate</p>	<p>The MonLife Heritage Strategy, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is progressing well, with baseline assessments of sites carried out and consultation completed with staff, stakeholders and customers. Following the analysis stage, action plans will be developed and shared with members this autumn. Alongside this, the council has engaged an experienced trainer to work with staff to develop a Monmouthshire Storybook, which will be a resource that staff can use to tell the key Monmouthshire Heritage stories.</p>
		<p>Pursue opportunities to improve the facilities at the Borough Theatre (New)</p>	<p>Detailed and comprehensive plans have been developed for the refurbishment of the Borough Theatre, and a principal contractor has been identified. The improvements will make the theatre fit for purpose, more accessible, and will allow a more robust and sustainable programme. In the meantime, the theatre is acting as a driver and promoter for performing arts activities including developing events in spaces beyond the theatre, a drama project for young people with experience of the care system, and development of a 'folk arts' festival in Abergavenny.</p>

## Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

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

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

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

### Measures of progress


Measure	Previous	Current	Target	Comment
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	65.57%	68.88%	64.0%	
Average number of days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	Not available	5.55	<5	Accuracy cannot be guaranteed for 2019/20 data
Percentage of streets that are clean	98.2%	Not available	97.5%	No surveys completed due to COVID-19 restrictions and capacity. No data has been provided by Keep Wales Tidy for the year.
Percentage reduction of council carbon dioxide emissions	Not available	Not available	3%	
Capacity of renewable energy in the county driven by the council	Not available	Not available	Increase	
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) pollution in the air (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) <sup>i</sup>	8	8	Decrease	Current is data from 2018


Number of trees planted	356	7790	10,000 (by 2022)	
Number of new active travel routes	0	13	New:2 Improved:4	
Number of rural communities in which speed safety initiatives are supported	4	6	Increase	
Percentage of roads in poor condition:				
A roads	3.3%	2.7%	<3%	
B roads	5.1%	5.2%	<5%	
C roads	7.6%	7.7%	<8%	
Total amount of Rural Development Plan funds committed to projects in Monmouthshire	£197,170	£98,256	£1,674,000 (Dec 2021)	

## Goal E: Future-focused Council

Monmouthshire County Council Goal: E. Future-focused Council	
<p>Why we are focusing on this</p>	<p>Summary – Progress 2020/21</p>
<p>Our operating environment is a changing and challenging one. Demographic shifts, increasing demand, our exit from the EU and fiscal uncertainty – all require an understanding that ‘business as usual’ is no more. We will continue to rapidly adapt, develop foresight capability and enable the service changes and countywide transformations that best meet the aspirations of our communities. This outward facing approach will mean reducing the reliance on traditional public services and having more genuinely collaborative local relationships. Digital will feature strongly in this, allowing ‘fit for future’ service models and enabling the sharing of approaches and resources to addressing crosscutting problems.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation – 3: Adequate</p> <p>The customer service offer has been enhanced this year through the refurbishment of Abergavenny Town Hall, which has increased accessibility for members of the public. The digital offer has also been developed, through rapid improvements in digital capabilities, both internally and externally. Business events have been hosted online, and social media presence has proven successful in promoting campaigns and sharing up-to-date information with the public.</p> <p>The council’s decision-making processes were disrupted for a short time at the start of the first lockdown, but were quickly reinstated through digital meetings. These have proven successful, and the technology is being explored to develop the changes that have worked particularly well.</p>
<p>Our goal is to continue to build an engaged, responsive and adaptive council, able to provide effective leadership, in collaboration with other local partners. We will develop and sustain a dynamic, healthy and rewarding work environment that attracts and retains top talent and enables them to perform at their best.</p>	<p>The council achieved a balanced net revenue budget position at outturn for 2020/21, primarily as a result of Welsh Government COVID-19 hardship funding. There have also been significant underspends across many service areas as a result of the pandemic, where services have been reduced or stopped, travel requirements have reduced, office and buildings have remained closed and substantial staff vacancies have remained unfilled.</p>
<p>Good governance will be at the heart of what we do and we will ensure the right information gets to the right people to inform decision-making. We will integrate a service focus into all dealings with customers and ensure they are well informed and engaged in decision-making. We understand the best public servants see themselves as not working for the council – but for the county.</p>	<p>The council’s medium term financial planning has been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Council’s finances. The Authority presented a balanced budget for 2021/22 but the medium term prognosis is still of concern.</p> <p>Staff have adopted new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe and have been provided with a range of support to ensure their wellbeing is maintained during a difficult time. Despite early concerns around supply availability, approximately 5.3 million items of PPE have been distributed for the safe provision of social care in the county.</p>

Detailed Progress Update

Commitment to action	Progress rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
<p>COUNCIL ENABLES AND PROVIDES GOOD SUSTAINABLE LOCAL SERVICES WHILST DELIVERING AN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACROSS ALL CHANNELS</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Develop new business model for Community Hubs and Customer Care to increase access and provide a greater choice of channels for customers to engage with us (online, via the My Monmouthshire app, over the phone or face-to-face)</p>	<p>The refurbishment of Abergavenny Town Hall was completed in September 2020, and now houses the One Stop Shop and library together in a Hub. The Hub has a new lift installed, so is accessible from all floors, and has an accessible toilet and baby changing facility. The library area offers more space, making it an easy access space, and Shopmobility have provided a mobility aid for any member of the public who requires it. The Hub is being used for a variety of community-focused provisions, such as literacy courses and a weekly job club that supports people back into work. Hubs and libraries were required to close during lockdown so a Request and Collect service was introduced to allow members of the public to loan books. Almost 1200 appointments have been booked for people to access reading materials.</p> <p>Ways of communicating with the public have been adjusted to ensure people are informed of changes to services and of the help available to them. Monty the ChatBot and the My Monmouthshire app have been updated to reflect these changes, and public Teams livestreams have engaged with local people in a socially distanced world, including online events that attracted 176 local businesses. Targeted Facebook and Instagram campaigns proved effective in delivering key messages throughout the year, such as Fostering and Home Care recruitment campaigns. The council's Twitter followers increased from 17,000 in March 2020 to 18,300 by July 2021, and Facebook followers have increased by 30% over the same period.</p>
		<p>Increase the publication and use of open data to increase accountability and enable others to develop apps that have a civic benefit</p>	<p>Cabinet recently announced investment into a new data capacity and capability roadmap to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity. This includes further developing the open data offer to build on existing information that is already published on the council website, such as spend data and existing data dashboards.</p>
		<p>Introduce Digital Service Standard</p>	<p>Work is underway to sign up to the digital standard, and a new Digital Design and Innovation team has been established to review the five principles of the Local Digital Declaration. This will ensure that when Monmouthshire does sign up, it is with a true</p>

<p>COUNCIL OPENS UP DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT &amp; COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Re-shape our governance arrangements including more detailed options appraisals</p>	<p>commitment, and evidences the projects being undertaken to align council ambitions with the standard.</p> <p>Lockdown had a considerable impact on the workings of the council and as such, democratic and decision making arrangements were quickly adapted. All decision-making and committee meetings are being held remotely via the Microsoft Teams app, which is proving successful.</p> <p>A self-evaluation of the scrutiny function was undertaken during 2019, which highlighted areas for improvement and suggested a review of select committees' working arrangements be undertaken. Duties to increase public participation in local democracy need to be accommodated within any arrangements proposed and a new Policy and Scrutiny Officer was appointed to assist in creating capacity to implement new working arrangements. These are currently being consulted upon and will be implemented in the new administration.</p>
		<p>Identify ways to get more people involved in local democracy and scrutiny to enhance local decision-making</p>	<p>Considerable engagement has been carried out over the past twelve months to seek the views of local people. Subjects such as town centre reopening, financial arrangements and active travel routes have been subject to engagement and consultation, and work will continue to increase the interactions and decision making input from local residents and businesses. A new Public Open Forum process has been established, to enable more effective public engagement in the scrutiny of decisions and the formulation of policy, via video, audio or written submissions in advance of meetings. It is intended to embed this process within new scrutiny working arrangements to improve accessibility for the public.</p>
		<p>Develop remote access and attendance at meetings to maximize participation</p>	<p>In order to ensure timely decision making during the pandemic, arrangements were adapted to allow all council meetings to operate remotely, and support has been provided to members to assist in utilising digital meeting technology. The system is proving successful and work continues to review the learning from the new arrangements; some changes will remain or be built on where they are working well. Work is currently underway to develop the technical ability to deliver hybrid meetings from September 2021, which will accommodate both remote and physical attendance at meetings, in line with any ongoing restrictions. The potential financial cost of changes to the council chamber to reflect the</p>

			<p>impact of boundary changes and updates to equipment to sustain live streaming have been recognised in the capital budget.</p>
		<p>Revise all enabling strategies and plans – People, Digital and Customers, Assets and Economy and Enterprise <i>(Completed)</i></p>	<p>The council’s key delivery strategies to enable the delivery of the Corporate Plan have been revised. The revised strategies continue to be implemented and activity has been embedded in the relevant service business plans. Some activity will be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and strategies will need to be reconsidered in light of the pandemic response.</p> <p>A review of working groups and their arrangements have been undertaken and these have been consolidated.</p>
		<p>Review and consolidate working groups and arrangements</p>	<p>To provide clarity and ensure accountability during the Coronavirus pandemic, a set of strategic aims were set by Cabinet in May 2020, and were updated throughout the year in line with the changing situation. The focus was lessened on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan to re-direct capacity towards dealing with the pandemic response.</p>
		<p>Revise performance and improvement plans and replace with ‘real-time’ data dashboards</p>	<p>The council’s service business plans have adopted a ‘plan on a page’ approach to provide clarity, to develop greater self-assessment, and to allow more regular updates to service planning. There has been an increased focus in 2020/21 on the council’s use of data in its response to the Coronavirus pandemic, which has included the production of Monmouthshire-specific COVID-19 case maps, and regular Coronavirus data analysis using a range of data sources relevant to Monmouthshire.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION AND RELEVANT, VIABLE AND VALUED PUBLIC SERVICES</p>	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Explore and embed new ways of working – Artificial Intelligence, automation and collaborative technology</p>	<p>Monty the Chatbot has been developed to use data analytics within leisure services to improve the automation of customer access. Work is progressing to understand how to analyse customer responses and prioritise work to improve the customer experience. Work is also underway to explore the use of automation technology to replace manual processes, making systems more efficient and providing the customer with a faster service.</p>
		<p>Develop a commercial strategy and approach</p>	<p>As part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan, a Commercial Strategy has been developed, which seeks to enhance income generation, develop an approach to commercialising assets and create a commercial culture and ethos. The strategy has a short-, medium- and long-</p>





Establish and deliver a sustainable and viable Medium Term Financial Plan to meet the significant financial challenges faced by the council.

term view and aims to provide a framework, with defined objectives, for new commercial projects and for the delivery of future commercial activity.

In 2020/21, the investment properties at Newport Leisure Park and Castlegate Business Park generated a combined profit of £159,018, which has been transferred to reserves, as detailed in the Council’s Investment Strategy. In common with the leisure and retail sector, commercial investments have been badly affected by the impacts of COVID-19 but continue to be supported by the Welsh Government’s COVID Hardship fund. Whilst the position may improve in light of changes to the legal requirements on social distancing, this is as yet unproven as it will depend on consumers’ behaviour and their appetite to return to leisure venues without restrictions in place. As with all investments, this is being actively monitored with discussions are ongoing with tenants.

The council has continually assessed its commercial risk appetite and exposure, and the updates are issued to the Investment Committee on investment performance and mitigating action being taken. The commercial risk appetite has been adjusted in light of the current pandemic and uncertainties in the investment and property markets at this time.

The council achieved a balanced net revenue budget position at outturn for 2020/21, after accounting for transfers to earmarked reserves, which represented a significant improvement of £5.15m from the overall deficit reported at month 9. This was primarily as a result of £5.29m of Welsh Government COVID-19 Hardship Funding since month 9 to support the increased costs of service delivery and loss of income as a direct result of the pandemic. There have also been significant underspends across many service areas, where services have been reduced or stopped, travel requirements have reduced, office and buildings have remained closed and substantial staff vacancies have remained unfilled.

The council’s medium term financial planning has been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on council finances. The authority presented a balanced budget for 2021/22 to Cabinet and Council in March 2021, which incorporated service pressures of some £10.3m alongside savings proposals of £4.73m. Welsh Government has provided a

			<p>significant level of funding through its COVID-19 Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>The medium term prognosis is still of concern; there are no indicative settlement figures published, which significantly impedes and impacts on forward planning of budgets over the medium term. At this stage, and with uncertainties remaining as to future levels of local government funding, the MTFP for 2022/23 onwards factors in no cash increase in funding (0.0%), so that planning can be undertaken on a prudent basis.</p> <p>There is still a need to think differently about the even greater challenges of the medium term, and this work and engagement will continue in the coming months, particularly with other local authorities, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association, where funding distribution and projections are concerned. Internally, closer alignment between services' business planning arrangements and financial planning arrangements continues to be developed to improve the quality of service planning and financial planning, which also aligns to the delivery of the Corporate Plan to ensure its aspirations are sustainable.</p> <p>An updated Capital Budget strategy was approved by Council, alongside the treasury strategy, in March 2021. The Capital MTFP and Capital Strategy seek to work towards a financially sustainable core capital programme, whilst balancing the need to deliver capital investment plans in line with policy commitment and need.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL PUTS PEOPLE AT HEART OF ALL IT DOES AND INSPIRES EXCELLENCE IN WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES</p>	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Strengthen decision making and accountability through revisions to the constitution</p>	<p>A thorough review of the constitution has been undertaken to ensure it reflects the latest legislation and council's governance structures. This was presented to Council in March 2021 for debate, and received full Council approval. The changes to select committee working arrangements will be taken through the decision-making process and embedded within the constitution prior to the new administration.</p>
		<p>Prioritise Health, Safety and workplace Well-being</p>	<p>Staff have embraced new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe while delivering the many services our communities rely on. Staff have had a range of support on wellbeing, can receive a test if they display symptoms and have access to the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Approximately 5.3 million items of PPE have been distributed for the provision of social care in the county. The number of days per full-</p>

			<p>time equivalent employee lost due to sickness during the year averaged 11.0, which is lower than the figure seen last year.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Group was established to address issues across the workforce, and a weekly online 'CWTCH' meeting was set up to allow all colleagues to ask questions and receive updates from senior managers. The SUPPORTALL Hub portal was launched, which allows colleagues and schools to access information from any device, including mobiles, on a range of subjects, such as health and wellbeing tips, testing, and support whilst remote working.</p>
	Promote diversity and inclusion including a focus on socio-economic factors		<p>A Recruitment and Selection policy has been developed, which prompts managers to think about apprenticeships, forward thinking and future planning, three to five years ahead. The People Service HUB holds workforce planning guidance, and workforce planning support, and challenge is provided at Directorate Management Teams (DMT). The Leaders Induction includes information for managers on knowing their people, understanding performance and identifying future plans.</p>
	Engage employees through personal development training and learning		<p>The Check In-Check Out process has been in place for a number of years, and it is clear that the process does not apply to all teams and structures. The focus has therefore moved away from ensuring all staff adhere to one process, to adopting a mechanism for recording professional discussions between managers and their staff. This will be reviewed in line with the review of the business planning process for 2021/22.</p>

**Well-being of Future Generations Act impact**

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

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

#### Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Over/underspend of council revenue budget (£)	£1.8 million under-spend	£0	£0	A sizeable underspend at outturn against services as a result of late and significant WG grants were utilised to replenish earmarked reserves.
Percentage of targeted budget reductions achieved	84%	85%	95%	2020/21 outturn data on mandated saving performance. This increases to 93% when taking into account savings attributable to increasing financing streams.
Income generation from commercial investments (£)	£620,184	£159,018	£609,355	
Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area <sup>ii</sup>	Not available	Not available	Increase	National Survey for Wales and National well-being indicator under the well-being of Future generations Act. Latest data not published.
Number of open data sets published	9	9	10	
Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees	Baseline to be established	Not available	Baseline	
Average days lost to sickness absence per FTE employee	12.2	11.0	10.5	
Percentage of staff turnover	9.43%	10.02	Track	Any significant variation in turnover will indicate a need to further review potential reasons

<sup>i</sup> Stats Wales, Air quality <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Air-Quality>

<sup>ii</sup> Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales, <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales>