

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CORONAVIRUS STRATEGY: PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> December 2021</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of progress on the strategic aims set by Cabinet in the latest *plan on a page* and to endorse an updated whole authority strategy that will be in place until May 2022 when a longer-term plan will be produced by the incoming administration to replace the Corporate Plan 2017-22.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Cabinet assure themselves of the progress made against the purpose and strategic aims that have been in place in the *Re-Emergence* strategy and use this to inform future activity.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the latest interim strategy and accompanying actions which is attached as appendix 2

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 Over the past eighteen months Cabinet has established a series of interim strategies to provide clarity and ensure accountability through the changing and challenging circumstances of the pandemic. The fourth and latest of these, often referred to as the 'plan on a page' was approved in June 2021. This paper presents an opportunity to evaluate progress against those aims and approve the fifth of these documents, which will steer the organisation through the winter months and into the summer of 2022.
- 3.2 The virus is still with us, and we are increasingly viewing it as something we have to live with, at least for the foreseeable future. The fourth plan on a page had a focus on bringing people back together safely to improve well-being, encouraging people to be active and involved and helping local businesses to trade safely and successfully. Appendix 1 outlines some of the activity that has been delivered over the last few months:
- Improving our active travel offer through a £1.4 million investment to improve walking and cycling routes;
  - Working alongside our Gwent partners to coordinate the delivery of the Test, Trace and Protect system, identifying residents who have been in contact with the virus to provide advice and request they self-isolate to minimise the spread of the virus.
  - More than 90% of the Monmouthshire population have now been double-jabbed and 25% have received their third, or booster dose.
  - Protecting care home residents from COVID-19 outbreaks, whilst considering their well-being and the importance of time spent with their families and loved ones;
  - Providing a summer full of outdoor activities for our children and young people, including the Monmouthshire Games, the School Holiday Enrichment Programme and outdoor theatre events at Abergavenny Castle grounds;

- Launching a new re-use shop at Five Lanes Recycling Centre, establishing four Libraries of Things in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, and planting over 8,000 trees with the help of our children and young people.
- Securing investment of over £2 million in projects relating to climate change, economic growth, leisure and tourism following a number of successful bids to the Community Renewal Fund, a successor to European funding
- Launching our 'Shop Local at Christmas' campaign to encourage people to shop at independent retailers on Monmouthshire's high streets

3.4 The world is grappling with some very complex challenges. Over the next few months, we will be developing our thinking and ideas to address these longer-term challenges, working closely with community groups and others to understand what matters and ensure that we have bold and ambitious programmes of activity in areas including:

- Addressing income inequalities and developing solutions to mitigate some of the impacts felt by families in poverty;
- Transitioning our organisation and our county towards a low carbon future;
- Reforming social care and health working closely with colleagues in Welsh Government and the NHS to ensure we have the right resources in the right places for the health and social care systems to work in equilibrium

3.5 In the immediacy we have established a new purpose. We want Monmouthshire to be:

- an ambitious place full of hope and enterprise;
- a fair place where your family is safe;
- a sustainable place where people care about each other;
- a place you are proud to call home.

This is supported by a series of actions which can be seen in more detail in the full document at appendix 2.

3.6 This latest strategy will be kept under review, and adjusted, if necessary, based on the latest evidence. We have the structures and mechanisms in place to track progress and ensure we remain focused on our purpose. The council's established performance framework continues to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management to ensure that we are focused on what needs to happen and can demonstrate progress in a robust and transparent way.

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

4.1 A completed integrated impact assessment accompanies this report. The strategic aims have been informed by the latest available evidence and government guidance. The detailed proposals that follow the strategic aims will all consider the impact and mitigating actions required to minimise the adverse consequences for those with protected characteristics.

4.2 The proposed strategic aims have taken equality and the components of well-being into account. The legislation and the council's responsibilities in all these areas will remain an important part of the Council's work as it continues to develop.

#### **5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL:**

The strategic aims are informed by the latest available evidence and government guidance, to inform the council's ongoing activity. While a number of arrangements have continued to be developed and implemented to support these aims, the council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and delivery of each aim is not without challenges and risks. The delivery will continue to be monitored and programmes will need to be flexible in timescale and content as circumstances and guidance changes.

## **6 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- 6.1 Where available, measures or milestones will be used to track and help evaluate progress on the actions that underpin the strategic aims with regular reports being presented to Cabinet. In a changing external environment, it is likely that actions, and therefore the corresponding measures of progress, will need to be continuously reviewed.
- 6.2 The council's established performance framework will continue to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management across Council services.

## **7 REASONS:**

- 7.1 To ensure that the council sets a clear direction and is accountable for the services it delivers during the pandemic alongside the longer-term strategy set within its Corporate Plan.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 Delivery of the strategic aims will continue to have resource implications, including increased costs to maintain current service delivery and demands in setting up new or amended services. Close financial and budget monitoring will continue.

## **9 CONSULTEES:**

Strategic Leadership Team  
Cabinet

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Monmouthshire Re-Emergence Summer Strategy  
Monmouthshire Corporate Plan 2017/22

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## Appendix 1 – Overview of progress on the Monmouthshire County Council Re-Emergence Summer Strategy

<b>Aim: Provide clear and purposeful civic leadership</b>	
<b>What we said we would do</b>	<b>What we have done</b>
<b>Ensuring our democratic process is fully operational</b>	To ensure timely decision making, arrangements were adapted to allow all council meetings to operate remotely via the Microsoft Teams app. The system is proving successful and attendance at all meetings is now possible via remote means. Work continues to review the learning from the new arrangements, and some changes will remain or will be built on where they are working well. To sustain live streaming capabilities, updates to the equipment in the council chamber are underway and work will be completely shortly.
<b>Communicating clearly with you and always representing your interests to others</b>	We have continued to provide timely and relevant service updates to residents across our communication platforms throughout the pandemic. Since the first lockdown began, the Chatbot and Contact Centre staff have dealt with over 148,000 wide-ranging customer service enquiries. The council has been a trusted source of information. Twitter followers have increased from 17,000 in March 2020 to 18,500 in November 2021, and Facebook followers have increased from 11,200 to 15,200 over the same period.
<b>Aim: Promote Monmouthshire as a beautiful destination for visits and staycations</b>	
<b>What we said we would do</b>	<b>What we have done</b>
<b>Promoting and protecting our natural environment to encourage walking and outdoor sports</b>	<p>Lockdown saw a considerable reduction in driving and increased walking within areas local to home. We have supported projects in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny to improve the active travel offer in the county; cycling capacity has been increased in town centres, public bike pumps have been installed, and a contraflow cycle lane has been introduced in Abergavenny through COVID-19 response funding. A clear strategic focus is now set, primary routes identified, to encourage a change in transport mode for our citizens.</p> <p>We have provided biodiversity advice for over 500 planning applications, and 24 sites of nature conservation importance have been designated, contributing to a total of more than 700 sites for targeted conservation action. Lockdown offered the opportunity to extend sustainable management practices and as a result, have reduced mowing of over three million square metres of grassland. 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>
<b>Aim: Champion the interests of local businesses</b>	
<b>Aim: Market our town centres as wonderful places to shop or spend time with friends</b>	
<b>What we said we would do</b>	<b>What we have done</b>
<b>Helping local businesses trade successfully and safely</b>	<p>We have administered several grant schemes during the pandemic, to support businesses during lockdowns and restrictions. Emergency COVID-19 grants have now ceased, and we are working with Welsh Government to create a Local Authority Grant Fund for Business Development, which will continue to support businesses through their growth and emergence from the pandemic.</p> <p>We made adjustments to town centres after lockdown to allow them to reopen safely, and many of these measures will remain in place for up to a further 18 months while long-term options are designed and consulted upon. Looking to</p>

<p><b>Improving infrastructure by fixing roads, investing in active travel, 20mph zones and high-speed broadband</b></p>	<p>the longer-term development of town centres, Cabinet has agreed to a series of regeneration activities to take place throughout the county following a Placemaking Grant submission for 2021/22 of £791,429 made under the Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding.</p> <p>Full communication and marketing plans are also underway across all media channels to deliver the ‘Shop Local at Christmas’ campaign, which will encourage people to shop locally at independent retailers on Monmouthshire’s high streets. Influencers have booked to visit our high streets and tell our story, and street entertainers will be creating magical experiences in different locations from November.</p> <p>Active travel projects have been supported in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny to improve the offer in the county, and a total investment of £1.4m has been made in the last financial year, the biggest investment into Active Travel in Monmouthshire.</p> <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 be maintained on a permanent basis, and further 20mph zones will be implemented during 2021/22.</p> <p>We have continued to work with Welsh Government and Openreach to support the delivery of the Superfast Cymru successor programme. The most recent data shows that over 2,000 premises in Monmouthshire should be provided with fibre by the time of its completion in June 2022. As of September 2021, Broadway Partners’ network covered around 8,000 white premises in the county and had around 600 active wireless and fibre customers.</p> <p>We recently submitted two successful applications to the Welsh Government’s Local Broadband Fund, which supports local authorities and social enterprises to deliver broadband projects locally.</p>
<p><b>Aim: Encourage people to be active and improve their health, fitness and general well-being</b></p>	
<p><b>What we said we would do</b></p>	<p><b>What we have done</b></p>
<p><b>Prioritising our excellent Test, Trace and Protect system</b></p> <p><b>Improving our leisure centres in Abergavenny, Caldicot and Chepstow</b></p>	<p>Alongside our Gwent partners, we are coordinating the delivery of the Test, Trace and Protect system to identify residents who have been in contact with the virus to provide advice and request they self-isolate to minimise the spread of the virus.</p> <p>The vaccination strategy, being delivered by Aneurin Bevan UHB, has successfully administered over 1,001,000 vaccinations in the health board area, and we continue to support and add value where required. By 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 92.2% (73,109) of Monmouthshire residents aged 18 years and older had received one dose of the vaccination, 90.1% (71,467) had received two doses, and 25.2% (19,966) had received the booster jab.</p> <p>The development of a new Abergavenny school has been agreed, subject to consultation, and this will provide a new sports hall as part of the new build. Prior to the start of the school building work, a proposed £1.7m re-development of the fitness offer in Abergavenny Leisure Centre has been agreed. This interim plan will seek to convert the first floor to a health and fitness hub, to include a fitness suite, spin studio, fitness studio, viewing area to the ground floor pool, and two new changing rooms.</p>

<p><b>Having a summer full of outdoor activities for children and young people</b></p>	<p>A bid to attract Levelling Up funding to refurbish Caldicot Centre was unsuccessful. Other options will now be explored, including meeting with government ministers to obtain feedback in order to strengthen our bid for funding in the next round of investment.</p> <p>Work continues to identify the best solution and outcomes for customers of Chepstow Leisure Centre. A proposed refurbishment will see upgrades to fitness equipment with an outdoor rig, improvements to lighting, boiler upgrades, combined heat and power system, and showers upgrade.</p> <p>We held a summer full of outdoor activities for our children and young people, starting with the Monmouthshire Games, which provided outdoor play schemes for 899 children throughout the summer holidays. The School Holiday Enrichment Programme was also delivered, helping disadvantaged children with specific needs, and saw 423 children taking part. The scheme also employed 75 individuals to help run events, the majority of which were young people from within the county. Other events included activity packs at Caldicot Castle and Old Station Tintern, and outdoor theatre events at Abergavenny Castle grounds for children through August, including the Horrible Histories open air show.</p>
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**Aim: Provide direct support to those suffering from loneliness, hardship and loss**

<p><b>What we said we would do</b></p>	<p><b>What we have done</b></p>
<p><b>Providing support and creating opportunities for volunteers making a difference in their community</b></p>	<p>Place based working is being developed across Monmouthshire, to build a network of community support to help people remain connected to things that matter to them, supporting their health and well-being. By bringing a range of agencies together with a shared purpose of supporting people's well-being, there is the opportunity to share skills, expertise and time, and increase the opportunities for people to access support in the community without needing formal services. Work is underway to maximise the place-based opportunities of working across social services, primary and community health services and third sector so that there is a fully integrated approach based on working with communities and for the people in those communities.</p> <p>Monmouthshire Connect provides the digital tools for active citizens to support each other in their communities, creating connections around purpose with the provision of a safe person-to-person time banking function. To develop and grow this platform and offer the active members more opportunity to actively exchange skills, it is being relaunched. Since being created for Monmouthshire County Council, this has been adopted by authorities throughout Wales and elsewhere in the UK, creating far more opportunity for collaboration, promotion and sharing of resources, and improved cost effectiveness.</p> <p>We have experienced unprecedented housing demand from some of the most vulnerable citizens in our county, at a time when identifying suitable and safe premises has been challenging. We are currently supporting 169 households in temporary accommodation. Welsh Government guidance issued in 2020 expands our duties with regards to our homelessness offer, and the need to provide suitable long-term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing. This, alongside the increasing demand, has placed considerable pressure on our services and a plan has been developed to facilitate more rapid rehousing and to provide long-term accommodation with support, if needed.</p> <p>To support those suffering from hardship, we are leading on a multi-agency signposting campaign aimed at encouraging residents to seek support with financial strain at an early stage and to raise awareness of the support that is</p>

available. We are using circular economy activities to help reduce essential household outgoings in non-stigmatised ways, for those who need it, such as the community fridges, clothes and school uniform recycling schemes, and the libraries of things and repair cafes.

**Aim: Ensure all vulnerable young people and adults are safeguarded**

What we said we would do	What we have done
<p><b>Maintaining social care services including child protection, support at home and residential care</b></p>	<p>Front-door services in social care a priority and have remained fully operational throughout the pandemic. The process for receiving and responding to referrals has not changed; arrangements have been adjusted, and where required, solutions have been identified to deal with situations.</p> <p>As pressure on care at home services and reablement services has increased, all referrals have been triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Staff shortages are causing significant pressures on service provision, and hospital discharge times are being affected due to the lack of home care packages available for those who need them. This is a problem that is being reflected nationally, and local authorities in Gwent have established a strategic coordination group to formulate a strategy to address this going forward.</p> <p>The volume, type and source of referrals to Children’s social services has been monitored continually to identify any changes as Coronavirus restrictions have changed. Risk assessments have been undertaken where any direct working/home visiting was required to follow up on protection concerns, or to provide interim safeguards as part of a care and support plan.</p> <p>A robust procedure is in place to help protect care homes from COVID-19 outbreaks, and the Environmental Health team are working closely with the local health board to administer this. Protecting residents from infection is paramount, but consideration is also given to their well-being when placing a home in incident and restricting visitor access. The Environmental Health Team work closely with care home staff to determine the source of the infection and, in conjunction with the Multi-Disciplinary Team, determine the best course of action.</p>

**Aim: Ensure quality teaching and learning is available for all learners**

What we said we would do	What we have done
<p><b>Ensuring learners are prepared for the assessment processes that replace GCSE, AS Level or A Level examinations in 2021</b></p> <p><b>Preparing schools for the new curriculum that will be launched in 2022</b></p>	<p>Following the announcement that there would be no GCSE, AS and A Level examinations in Summer 2021, schools were provided with a range of support to prepare them for the new process for determining students’ grade. Teaching the core content and aspects of each course remained a focus for exam students. The Education Achievement Service (EAS) continue to provide ongoing challenge, monitoring and evaluation work in schools, with a continued focus on vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Preparation is underway to implement the new curriculum from September 2022, and staff are receiving training. The position of schools in implementing the new curriculum is varied; some are in a strong position as they had undertaken a lot of work prior to the pandemic; others are less so and are receiving additional support to bring them up to speed.</p> <p>Changes have taken place since schools started back in September; much of the restrictions seen before the summer holidays have been removed, such as the wearing of masks and pupil bubbles. Pupils aged 12 – 15 are now eligible to</p>

<p><b>Creating employment/ apprenticeships for local people</b></p>	<p>receive one vaccination, and this has started at the mass vaccination centres in Cwmbran and Newport. Cases of COVID-19 are increasing in schools and Education Officers are working closely with TTP and Environmental Health colleagues to monitor this, and a range of information has been shared with parents. COVID-19 remains a significant challenge in the running of schools and staff have met with all Head Teachers to ensure they are supported and are aware of the ongoing response.</p> <p>Attendance is still an issue in schools and Education Welfare Officers are working with vulnerable pupils to bring them back into the educational setting, where possible. There are varying reasons for pupil absence, so a different approach is being adopted for different cohorts, and the Education team are working with multiple agencies to ensure these children and young people return to school.</p> <p>The pandemic itself has left schools in significantly different places, with some experiencing higher impacts than others. For those schools that need additional support, there are bespoke programmes available, and a framework around them to allow schools to progress at their own pace.</p> <p>The Communities for Work+ programme has received additional funding due to the impact of COVID-19, which has been used to upskill clients to meet local employment opportunities. It has enabled the team to provide better support for disabled people, and those with work limiting health conditions. It has also increased resources to overcome employment barriers, such as transport costs and interview clothing, and to provide training opportunities.</p> <p>To improve the sustainability of the workforce, and create succession planning opportunities, numerous apprentice schemes have been introduced. This includes the 'Apprentice in Care Scheme', which successfully appointed six apprentices within Health and Social Care, and the 'Kickstart' Scheme, which will provide 89 six-month work placements. In addition to this, there are roughly 168 existing staff members who have signed up to undertake apprenticeships for professional development.</p>
<p><b>Aim: Decarbonise our own operations and help communities take positive action on climate change</b></p>	
<p><b>What we said we would do</b></p>	<p><b>What we have done</b></p>
<p><b>Introducing Repair Cafes and Library of Things to increase sharing and re-use of everyday items</b></p> <p><b>Protecting/promoting our environment and ecology through investment and carbon reduction activity</b></p>	<p>A new re-use shop at Five Lanes Recycling Centre has been opened, and four Libraries of Things are being established in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, with associated Repair Cafes.</p> <p>Over 8,000 trees have been planted this year, and schools have been provided with raised beds to plant seeds, which will then be regrown on sites when more mature. The Green Infrastructure action plans are also identifying tree planting opportunities in settlements as part of the identification of green corridors. We are liaising with 'Stump Up for Trees', a community organisation with aspirations to plant one million trees across the Brecon Beacons, about how we may be able to support this initiative. Other projects include 'Neglected Grasslands' and 'Resilient Grasslands' schemes, aimed at regenerating green areas and promoting biodiversity.</p> <p>A Behaviour Change for Well-being Officer has been appointed and has 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>

The Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership has carried out nature learning events and activities and given grants to community groups to run nature projects, 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.

An update of the climate strategy and action plan was approved by Council in November 2021, including more emphasis on education and the council's role in enabling individuals and communities to take climate action, and a commitment to work with partners to get a better understanding of what our current emissions are, and how much different actions will reduce our carbon emissions. 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. Electric vehicle charging points are being installed for operational vehicles in the One Planet Centre Llanfoist, Troy Depot, Caldicot Waste Depot and Raglan Depot, and they have already been installed in Kymin View and Deri View School. 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.

**Aim: Maintain a competent, motivated organisation with the capability and capacity to deliver**

What we said we would do	What we have done
<p><b>Taking care of our workforce so they can support you</b></p>	<p>Throughout the pandemic, staff have embraced new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe while delivering the many services our communities rely on. We have ensured staff have a range of support on wellbeing, have access to the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing, if they display symptoms.</p> <p>Where required, we have maintained cleaning services in buildings that have remained open, ensuring safe distances and cleanliness for the safety of our staff. The directive remains that working from home is the safest mechanism for staff where possible and working in council buildings should only be undertaken where essential to do so. For those wishing to work from County Hall, a desk booking system is in place to ensure the numbers attending remain safe, and social distancing can always be assured.</p> <p>Balancing different needs and supporting the blend of work life and home life is core to our Changing Spaces activity. How we use technology, and our existing locations of work is crucial and fundamental to the consideration of the next steps in our progress into the future of work at the Council. Over the coming months, we will see the space in our buildings change to reflect our new ways of working and to prioritise the needs of staff, as the work on our buildings is mapped out and evolves.</p> <p>During this difficult time, we have provided a range of support services to all colleagues to support their wellbeing via the Health, Welfare &amp; Information group. Communication and engagement with staff has continued throughout, and the SupportAll portal was developed, which allows staff to access information on a range of subjects, such as testing, protecting homeworkers and bereavement. The weekly staff Digital 'Cwtch' continues and averages more than a hundred viewers each week, and a weekly Managers Q&amp;A continues to answer any questions or discuss general workplace issues.</p>

	<p>We are also developing a programme of support for our employees, which includes a direct link to the housing gateway for financial first aid support, Christians Against Poverty delivering 'Budget. Save. Spend' course, and promotion of the Gateway Credit Union financial products.</p>
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monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

## Looking Ahead, Delivering Now – Our Strategy to Summer 2022

### Introduction and Context

We have been asking ourselves some very big questions. Where now and where next for our county?

We need Monmouthshire to be a place where every community is full of opportunity. We want to be a kind county where we do well by doing good things. We are invested in our place, your family and your future. You have a right to receive good services from us and we won't let you down but the expectations we have of ourselves go further. The contemporary policy challenges that we need to meet together are centred on Net Zero, taking on the determinants of health inequality, making sure our children do well and ensuring that nobody is left behind. We are turning our attention to these things between now and the summer of 2022 when a new Council Administration will be ready to introduce its own direction. We cannot lose time, we have to move forward. We do so with your best interests at heart. We do so blessed with incredible communities and people that care about their place and each other.

We have set out our purpose, our priorities, our values and we ask that you join with us in achieving them. Without you we are just a Council, together we are a force to be reckoned with. Everything starts with your health and well-being and that of your family and friends - without that, everything else is pretty meaningless.

### Our Purpose

We want Monmouthshire to be:

- an ambitious place full of hope and enterprise
- a fair place where your family is safe
- a sustainable place where people care about each other
- a place you are proud to call home

### Our Values

Our purpose is underpinned by a clear sense of who we are as an organisation. We expect people who work with us to share a strong value set and expect that these are evident in the ways in which we work and engage with our communities.

- Teamwork - We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved. We will make the best of the ideas, and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.
- Openness - We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.
- Flexibility - We are flexible, enabling delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

- Fairness - We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.
- 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.

## Our Principles

We are advocates of The Well-being of Future Generations Act and apply the principles that underpin it to our decision-making:

- Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
- Taking an integrated approach so that we maximise the impact of all of our objectives;
- Involving people in the decisions that affect them;
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions;
- Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.

## Our Actions

### **An ambitious place full of hope and enterprise**

- Begin to build a new, carbon neutral, school in Abergavenny and commission a detailed feasibility study for the future of Chepstow School;
- Invest more than £2 million to upgrade and redevelop the leisure centres in Chepstow and Abergavenny;
- Work with technology companies to ensure more households and businesses can benefit from high speed broadband, using fibre to the premises and speeds of up to one gigabit per second;
- Make a substantial investment in maintaining and repairing the highways network;
- Improve connectivity and create more sustainable transport through projects such as the redevelopment of Severn Tunnel Junction station and push for the development of Magor Walkway station;
- Act on the findings of the recent Chepstow transport study report to improve traffic and travel movements in and around Chepstow and the surrounding area;
- Begin significant improvements to the active travel networks in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny to make it easier for people to walk and cycle in and around our towns.

### **A fair place where your family is safe**

- Recruit and retain more in-house foster carers to ensure that children who are looked after can grow up in a stable and supportive home;

- Identify solutions to prevent homelessness and providing support for those who find themselves without a roof over their head;
- Progress the development of a new dementia friendly care home at Crick Road;
- Work with partners to manage the additional health and social care pressures that winter can bring including recruiting and retaining the vital key workers who deliver front-line care.

### **A sustainable place where people care about each other**

- Work with community groups to deliver the Magor with Undy Community Hub project; creating a new space for social, culture, leisure, sporting and other community activities;
- Ensure that more of our money is spent locally and ethically;
- Enable people to get more involved in shaping what happens in their area by making it easier to participate in local decision-making.

### **A place you are proud to call home**

- Refurbish the Borough Theatre in Abergavenny ahead of a re-opening;
- Promote and support local food growing, reducing food miles, promoting sustainable land management and agricultural practices and reducing food waste;
- Work with all partners to improve the health of our rivers while also taking action to minimise the impact of flooding on communities;
- Make community learning more accessible to improve skill levels and create opportunities for people to try new things and form new friendships in a supportive and welcoming environment;

As we deliver these we will ensure that we do not do anything that will conflict with our emerging thinking on the long-term challenges we face.

## **Our Longer Term Challenges**

Covid-19 has brought into a sharp focus the complex challenges that communities and public service organisations face. We will develop our thinking and ideas as we plan for the longer term. We want to do this alongside Monmouthshire's myriad of community groups and our public service partners to understand what matters and ensure that we have bold and ambitious programmes. We are focusing on:

- **Transition towards Net Zero** – We need to increase the pace with which we are decarbonising our operations while developing guidance and support to help individuals and businesses reduce their emissions. We updated our decarbonisation action plan in November 2021 and will be working on a more ambitious programme which will be published in 2022.
- **Health Inequalities** – We need to narrow the differences in life expectancy in, and between communities. These gaps sometimes exist because of non-medical factors like early childhood development; the availability of local amenities and places where people can build connections; their diet and job security. These are sometimes called the social determinants of health.

- Social Care Reform – Services for children and adults are experiencing acute pressures from a combination of factors. We need to work closely with colleagues in Welsh Government and the NHS to ensure we have the right resources in the right places for the health and social care systems to work in equilibrium with vulnerable people supported in the most appropriate setting.
- Well-being of Children and Young People – We need to ensure that children whose learning has been disrupted by the pandemic are able to make up for lost time, are not at a disadvantage in the long-term and ensuring that support is available to support their well-being.
- Mental Health – With one in four adults and one in ten children experiencing mental health problems in any given year this is a significant challenge and public services must work together to ensure the availability of information and resources so that people can protect and manage their own mental health and well-being.

In the meantime, we will continue to focus on deliver in key areas, ensuring that we do not do anything that will conflict with our emerging thinking on the above challenges: