

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>MARCHES FORWARD PARTNERSHIP</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish a collaborative “Marches Forward Partnership” with neighbouring local authorities, Herefordshire Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Councils.
- 1.2 The Partnership will provide a flexible umbrella framework for joint working which supports local service delivery, based around how people and places function, rather than being confined within organisational or geographical boundaries. It also enables the Council to harness the unique value of Monmouthshire’s cross border location.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet approves:

- 2.1 The establishment of a ‘Marches Forward Partnership’ with neighbouring local authorities.
- 2.2 The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the local authorities to reflect the spirit of cooperation and joint working between them. **Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding.**
- 2.3 Support for the development of the ‘Marches Forward Partnership’ through representation on a joint local authority Leaders Group.
- 2.4 Delegation to the Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Communities and Place to proceed with development of a work programme to meet the objectives within the MOU, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Council’s Community and Corporate Plan sets the ambition for the Council and county of Monmouthshire. This partnership provides an opportunity to work towards these objectives in a complementary manner.
- 3.2 In addition, the Well-being of Future Generations Act is the fundamental legislation in Wales that requires the Council to carry out sustainable development, this should ensure that present needs are met, without compromising future generations in meeting their own needs. In planning services and taking action to meet its well-being objectives, the Council must consider, but also demonstrate that it has applied sustainable governance principles in its decision-making, which includes working in collaboration with others, which can be seen within every goal.
- 3.3 The Council also recognises the need to ensure it takes a financially responsible approach to its use of resources, to ensure that it meets the needs of its citizens in the most cost-effective way, this includes continuing to bid for funding programmes that have been introduced following the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, sharing best

practices and supporting the financial resilience of services through joint working initiatives.

- 3.4 The Council has been working collaboratively with Herefordshire, Powys County and Shropshire Councils to develop a common understanding of each other's organisations. The aim has been to establish areas where there is mutual benefit and added value in working together, supporting each other's strategic aims and leveraging combined knowledge, resources and activities.
- 3.5 Geographically, the neighbouring local authorities cover a contiguous area which straddles over 80% of the English and Welsh border. Commuting patterns and access to retail, education, business support and healthcare services all reflect the functional profile of the area.
- 3.6 The local authorities are bound together by common purpose based on a high-quality rural environment, but with the consequent of more expensive access to services, changing service demands from an ageing population and low levels of productivity and employment growth. Given this profile, the local authorities are keen to explore a shared ambition for rural based growth, identifying opportunities for strategic collaboration on agreed projects and initiatives. This approach is aimed at ensuring effective local joint working and provides a basis, using the power of the collective area, to develop investment propositions for UK Government and partners.
- 3.7 Whilst the local authorities have interacted with one another as neighbouring areas on many levels for a long time, these activities have not previously been fully coordinated. There is now an opportunity and willingness to align respective strategic visions, plans and resources for the maximum benefit for the Marches and cross border area.
- 3.8 This emphasis on greater cross border understanding has intensified for many local authorities over recent years, with a shared focus on collaborative working. This is supported by greater flexibility and an emphasis on strategic collaboration from Government, recently illustrated by the Wales and Cornwall Celtic-Heritage Collaboration Agreement.
- 3.9 Covering the gateway between England and Wales, a 'Marches Forward Partnership' provides opportunity for the border local authorities to coordinate future joint working under a flexible umbrella framework. It is aimed at supporting a shared understanding of 'life on the borders' as a focus for strategic joint working and to unlock additional investment into the area.
- 3.10 The Partnership will focus its collaboration only where it adds the greatest value. All participating councils will maintain independent decision making and local delivery within each local authority area, where this continues to be most appropriate, including involvement in other beneficial partnership arrangements.

#### **Activity to Date**

- 3.11 This is the first-time neighbouring authorities in England and Wales have proposed to work together in a planned cross border collaboration which covers a population of more than 737,000 residents and an area of approximately 1,140,000 hectares.
- 3.12 A strategic cross border partnership provides opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving joined up thinking between England and Wales, helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects.

- 3.13 Early scoping work has highlighted the potential to innovate and look at creative solutions which are not bound by statutory delivery timescales or regulatory frameworks. The Partnership offers a flexible framework to explore how local services, community and corporate priorities, can be delivered differently using shared skill sets and an unusual level of freedom. It provides a unique opportunity to focus on the added value of working as a collective whole, whilst not seeking to duplicate or impact on individual partner relationships or partnerships explored in the future by constituent partners.
- 3.14 Whilst initially focused on short term opportunities for more efficient and effective service delivery, the Partnership also provides opportunity for constituent partners to seek and gain greater recognition of the need for joint working across borders with respective Governments. As such, it provides a platform to raise the profile of the area and seek greater investment for delivery.
- 3.15 Functionally the area is already united, with significant flows of people between the Mid Wales-English border in all areas including healthcare, education, skill development, jobs and service provision. This cross-border movement is attributable to several interrelated factors including geographic convenience, specialities in sector and service provision and infrastructure availability.
- 3.16 Cross border partnership working has been a focal point for some time. Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire already operate as a collective economic geography under the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and whilst there is not a similar LEP structure for Wales, cross border joint working is a focus of activity between Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire on a local service delivery basis. The Marches has also been progressing conversations, for some time, on the potential for a cross border Growth Deal with Powys. This is based on recognition of the importance of the cross-border relationship between Mid Wales and the Marches.
- 3.17 Between Summer 2022 and January 2023, Local Authority Leaders within the Marches discussed, with the Marches LEP, options for securing more freedoms to make decisions at a local level. Such discussions were also driven by consideration of the types of means available in the future to unlock greater investment into the area as an enabler of growth.
- 3.18 At the same time, local authority Leaders across Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire started to explore areas of collective interest and ambitions to bring together both Welsh and English Governments to support, in principle, joint working across borders. It was agreed that joint scoping should take place across the local authorities to understand shared priorities and opportunities that are worthy of further investigation. This was aimed at identifying those key focal points where strategic thinking and joint work at the collective scale provides the most benefit.
- 3.19 Alongside this early scoping work, ongoing conversations are taking place with both Wrexham Council and Telford and Wrekin Council as the two other local authorities with a shared interest in this functional geography. An open invitation has been established for these partners to join the Partnership, as the development work progresses, and more information is known and shared on priority areas and joint working opportunities.

## **Key Areas of Shared Interest**

- 3.20 From the early scoping work, key areas of shared interest have been identified around nature and climate adaptation, energy, transport and connectivity, housing, digital, economic regeneration, skills and innovation. In June 2023, a draft MOU was developed to reflect some of the outputs from the early scoping work. This is summarised within the following six objectives:
- **Objective 1:** Data, Evidence and Research: Leveraging joint intelligence and research expertise to improve the quality of life for our rural, cross border communities through sharing information and carrying out research.
  - **Objective 2:** Nature, Energy and Climate Adaptation: Working together to identify and collaborate on strategic scale opportunities based around our high-quality natural environment, addressing current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery.
  - **Objective 3:** Transport and Digital Transformation: Working together to improve rural connectivity, to level up access to jobs, education and opportunity and bring mutual benefits for our neighbouring areas.
  - **Objective 4:** Sustainable Communities: Working together on the development of sustainable communities, creating a social infrastructure offer which realises the growth and sustainability of the rural economy and supports our residents, employers and users of our geography.
  - **Objective 5:** Food, Rural Development and Visitor Economy: Working together to identify opportunities for closer collaboration which encourages the economic growth of our rural economy, developing and promoting our unique offer.
  - **Objective 6:** Government and Strategic Relations: Working together on strategic communications to raise the regional, national and international profile of our area.
- 3.21 These objectives now provide a starting point, to be built on through the 'Cross Border Marches Partnership'.

## **The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

- 3.22 In supporting the MOU, Cabinet is asked to agree that:
- Support is given to the Leader and Chief Executive to respond and progress work within the MOU, with each partner Local Authority in the Partnership taking individual responsibility for relevant Cabinet and Council briefings, as needed, to update on progress and ensure widespread support for this work.
  - The MOU will run for an 18-month term before review;
  - The broader activity of the Partnership may evolve and expand during implementation and will be reflected in subsequent reviews;
  - Nothing in the MOU will be interpreted as a commitment of funds from each local authority; and
  - The MOU does not restrict, in any way, other arrangements that a local authority may wish to develop independently.

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

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

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

4.2 There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

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

5.2. The Partnership is not intended to be a legal entity. There will be no formal governing structure and no elements of the MOU will be legally binding. As a result, there are no legal risks to the Council since the Partnership will operate on an informal basis, based around joint working on areas of common purpose.

5.3. Mapping has been undertaken to understand existing strategic partnership arrangements across the area. As a result, the development of the Partnership and its intended work programme do not pose a risk in terms of duplicating existing arrangements. Instead, the Partnership will only focus on areas of added value, addressing an existing gap in strategic cross border working between England and Wales.

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

5.5. The risks and opportunities relating to this report are predominately focused on Monmouthshire's role in developing an informal partnership and the associated working arrangements. Whilst this poses resource implications, the proposed management structure for the Partnership is focused on joint resourcing. Each local authority will share skills, data and learning as well as the provision of an Officer lead for thematic working groups. There are significant opportunities for greater efficiency

and effectiveness through joint working initiatives as well as the potential to use the 'Cross Border Marches Partnership' as a platform to secure wider investment support.

## **6. REASONS**

- 6.1 The 'Marches Forward Partnership' offers opportunity to establish a collaboration framework for neighbouring local authority areas with shared needs and interests. It provides a flexible basis for joint working without the need for formal governing structures and without impacting existing strategic partnerships or individual local authority working arrangements.
- 6.2. It offers the ability to consider where strategic joint working across borders between England and Wales provides the most significant value and can bring together shared resources and skill sets to maximise delivery and opportunity for the area.
- 6.3. Across the partner local authorities, the 'Marches Forward Partnership' is seen as an opportunity to:
  - Focus on the shared geography and maximising the potential of the area.
  - Provide the right tools for effective service delivery within each local authority.
  - Understand and work together to attract the right investment, for example for critical infrastructure.
  - Understand and innovate to address the needs of rural communities.
  - Harness the value of shared rural assets.
  - Align policy and investment drivers to obtain the best from cross border political ambitions.
  - Understand future trends and service demands across a functional area.
  - Focus on where collaboration adds the greatest value.
  - Share learning and best practice.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The MOU makes clear that nothing in the agreement involves a commitment of funds from the partner local authorities. Work to date has used existing local authority resources, focused on shared staff time and skills. It has not involved any other financial implications.
- 7.2. The Partnership provides opportunity for continued sharing of staff resources to support development of cross border joint working. Through the development of the Partnership work programme, partners may decide to commission work on particular topics to progress key areas of activity. Future work by the Partnership may therefore involve an ask for partner investment. However, the Partnership framework provides a basis to prioritise, agree and divide such costs across the collective partners, thereby providing benefit and reducing the financial implications to each individual organisation.
- 7.3. Given the informal working relationship under the strategic collaboration, the MOU does make clear that each local authority will have individual responsibility for relevant Cabinet and Council briefings. This will include ensuring all the necessary financial agreements are in place within each partner local authority for any future key areas of work associated with the Partnership. Political leadership and oversight through a Leaders Group will ensure regular updates on progress and future work programmes.

7.4. As a strategic collaboration, the Partnership provides opportunity as a means of unlocking new funding into the area. Using the additional value of the unique cross border location and collective approach, the Partnership provides a platform to attract investment for effective service delivery and critical infrastructure across the area.

**8. CONSULTEES**

Cabinet

Strategic Leadership Team

Local MPs and AMs

UK Government and Welsh Government colleagues

WLGA

CCR City and Deal and Western Gateway colleagues

Communities and Place Leadership Team

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix Two – Integrated Impact Assessment

**10. AUTHORS:**

Frances O'Brien – Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Cath Fallon – Head of Enterprise and Community Animation

**12. CONTACT DETAILS:**

[FrancesOBrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:FrancesOBrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

[Cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:Cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix One – Memorandum of Understanding



Draft MOU Marches  
Forward Partnership-



Appendix Two



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

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

<p><b>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</b> Cath Fallon</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 07557 190969 <b>Email:</b> cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b> To seek approval for the Council to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Councils for collaboration as a 'Marches Forward Partnership'.</p>
<p><b>Name of Service area</b> Communities and Place</p>	<p><b>Date</b> 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023</p>

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

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

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

## 2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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

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

### **3. Policy making and the Welsh language.**

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

Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language			members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.
--	--	--	--

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

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



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?
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p><b>Negative:</b> None identified</p> <p><b>Positive:</b> Early scoping work for the Partnership identified key areas of service alignment and priority across the neighbouring authorities. As a grouping with a shared, high quality, rural environment, a key thematic focus has already emerged around nature, energy and climate adaptation.</p> <p>This is reflected in the MOU which highlights opportunity to work together on strategic scale projects to address current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery.</p> <p>The Partnership could also support rural resilience through work around land management and exploring common local authority aspirations around net zero and renewable energy solutions.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified</p>	<p>The Partnership provides a significant opportunity for the partner local authorities to support one another on climate and net zero plans and local delivery.</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b> Partners will be working together to identify opportunities for understanding cross border movements to access health provision and the infrastructure needed to support this.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified</p>	<p>N/A</p>



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




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

**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><b>Long Term</b> future</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>Whilst initially focused on short term opportunities for more efficient and effective service delivery, the Partnership also provides opportunity for constituent partners to seek and gain greater recognition of the need for joint working across borders with respective Governments.</p> <p>As such, it provides a platform to raise the profile of the area and seek greater investment for delivery in the future.</p>	
 <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The 'Marches Forward Partnership' brings together strategic joint working between Shropshire, Herefordshire, Powys and Monmouthshire local authorities.</p> <p>Its purpose is to work together to tackle cross border shared interests and boost investment into the region.</p>	N/A

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p><b>Involvement</b></p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The Council is engaging with existing partners to make them aware of the opportunity and keep them informed of progress as the Partnership evolves.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The proposal is about strengthening and improving existing services, providing opportunities to explore areas of collective interest and ambitions to bring together both Welsh and English Governments to support, in principle, joint working across borders and enable efficiencies.</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 data-bbox="237 555 376 587"><b>Integration</b></p> <p data-bbox="203 608 524 742">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p data-bbox="591 314 1312 564">This strategic cross border Partnership will provide opportunity to support government ambitions around Union Connectivity, improving join up between England and Wales and helping to increase investment and accelerate delivery of key infrastructure projects which will aid sustainable development opportunities.</p>	<p data-bbox="1332 314 1391 339">N/A</p>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Positive -**

The positive impacts of this proposal are:

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

**Negative**

None identified.

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

<b>What are you going to do</b>	<b>When are you going to do it?</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>
Progress the proposal	On-going.	Chief Officer for Communities and Place
Consider and plan next steps and responsibilities.	On going	Chief Officer for Communities and Place

--	--	--

**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.

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Decision making stage</b>	<b>Date considered</b>	<b>Brief description of any amendments made following consideration</b>
1.	SLT/Cabinet Members	July 2023	Give more consideration to understanding the cross-border movements to access health provision and the infrastructure needed to support this.
2.	Cabinet Report	September 2023	