

# Self-assessment Report 2022/23



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

## Version Control

<b>Title</b>	Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2022/23
<b>Purpose</b>	To self-assess the council's goals and arrangements as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
<b>Owner</b>	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships
<b>Approved by</b>	Not yet approved
<b>Date</b>	17 October 2023
<b>Version Number</b>	1.0
<b>Status</b>	Draft
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Next review date</b>	July 2024
<b>Consultation</b>	Cabinet Strategic Leadership Team Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Governance and Audit Committee

# Contents

Version Control.....	2
Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	8
Our Self-Assessment.....	9
Understanding our local place.....	10
Our Outcomes .....	11
Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Fair Place to Live.....	13
Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Green Place to Live.....	18
Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place .....	23
Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Safe Place to Live .....	27
Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Connected Place Where People Care.....	31
Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Learning Place .....	37
Using Our Resources .....	43
Our work with others .....	54
Our Actions.....	55
Progress with 2021/22 Actions?.....	55
What and how can we do better 2022/23? .....	58
Performance Measures .....	59
What we spent in 2022/23.....	63
What citizens said.....	64
What Regulators and Inspectors Said .....	67
Appendix 1 – Self-assessment process.....	68

## Summary

Our Community and Corporate Plan sets our ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire and the actions we will take to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. Our absolute priorities are to tackle inequality, to work hard to decarbonise our county and to work with our residents and in partnership with others to meet our objectives.

An annual self-evaluation is one of the ways in which we hold ourselves to account. We track the progress against our priorities, identify lessons and assess where improvements can be made so we can stay on track to achieve our ambitions. Every Council in Wales is required to do the same under the requirements of The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This report captures the conclusions of our self-assessment covering the period 2022-23

Following the local elections in May 2022, a new administration was elected to lead the council. The Cabinet endorsed a new set of objectives in October with members approving the more detailed Community and Corporate Plan in April 2023, after the annual assessment period. We have structured the report around the six objectives of that plan but as the full plan was not endorsed until the end of the year, the assessment looks primarily at the areas for development identified in the previous self-assessment not the specific actions in the Community and Corporate Plan.



### How well do we understand our local context and place?

We have a good understanding of our place informed by a well-being assessment, population needs assessment, feedback from residents and information gathered by elected members. Our data has informed our policy development and priorities including the work on a Replacement Local Development Plan. In some areas of our work, such as inequality and poverty, we've begun to develop more localised data, but we do not yet fully understand the lived experiences of all residents. There has been active participation in decision-making. We have listened and adjusted some of our plans on the evidence presented at pre-decision scrutiny. 33% of residents currently feel able to influence decisions in their local area compared to a Wales average of 30%. We want this figure to be much higher. We recognise there is more to be done to achieve our ambition to work with and alongside residents, enabling them to shape their futures.

### How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?

We've assessed our progress against the six objectives of our Community and Corporate Plan using a six-point scale that rates each one from 1 (unsatisfactory) through to 6 (excellent). Many of the things we've set out to do, such as improving river health and achieving net zero are complex societal challenges and will take time to deliver. As a result, some of the activities we will be reporting on now are the building blocks and milestones on the way to achieving our intended outcomes rather than outcomes themselves.

### ***A fair place to live – Our Rating: Level 4 (Good)***

Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire and we are working to help those who need support to live the life they want. The cost-of-living crisis has made the income inequalities in our county more evident. Many residents are finding it more and more difficult to cope. In response, we've provided a range of support to those affected, including distributing half a million pounds through a discretionary scheme and working with schools and community groups. In partnership with Citizen's Advice and Mind Cymru we ran 15 support sessions to provide advice to help people who are struggling. We are also looking to the long term and have delivered programmes to increase employment and skills which in turn will enable people to increase their income. As mentioned below, last year we supported a 142 people back to work. We also provide a range of training courses to help residents upskill and increase their earning potential. Our MonLife teams provided over 10,000 hours of play activities through school holidays, and we've overseen the roll out of universal free school meals in primary schools to benefit families with young children. We're also committed to increasing the involvement of residents in the decision-making processes, for example we made £60,000 available through participatory budgeting where residents decide directly how to spend money.

### ***A green place to live – Our Rating: Level 3 (Adequate)***

We are custodians of our county. We recognise that we are facing a climate and nature emergency and must work to protect and preserve our place for future generations. We now have a clear understanding of the carbon we emit as an organisation and are actively reducing this. Thanks to the efforts of residents, we recycled 69.9% of waste – well ahead of our 64% target for 22-23 and on the way to longer term target of 72%. Whilst this shows good progress over the past year, we have set ourselves a big challenge and recognise that we have a long way to go to in the fight against climate change. At our current rate of progress, we are unlikely to achieve our ambition of becoming a net zero organisation by 2030. Phosphates levels in rivers remain a major problem, with 88% of the Usk and 67% of the Wye failing the phosphate targets. As a local authority, we are limited in the things we can do to address this. We are working with a range of partners including Dŵr Cymru to improve river health and are integrating nature recovery into our work on decarbonisation. Within the council, we've installed 6.5MW of renewable energy on our buildings and have replaced more of our diesel vehicles with electric ones. A lot of carbon is accounted for by the things we buy from suppliers and we're implementing a socially responsible procurement strategy to reduce this year-on-year, for example by developing more local supply chains, including offering £10,000 grants to community groups and businesses who can help achieve this.

### ***A thriving and ambitious place - Our Rating: Level 4 (Good)***

We aim to create the conditions in which businesses and workers can thrive and succeed. One constraint on business is that over 99% of currently available commercial sites are occupied. 19 new employment sites have been given planning permission in the last year to tackle this problem. We also provided advice and support to 55 pre-start and existing businesses. This was below our target. To improve support for local businesses we have secured UK government funding for skills and business development. Looking to a more sustainable future we are producing a Replacement Local Development Plan which will result in more employment sites being identified. In partnership with residents, we worked on the development of town centre masterplans for ensuring that these are vibrant places that continue to draw people in for a wide range of uses. The digital deprivation rate in the county decreased significantly from 5.1% in 2019 to 2.5% in 2022. Our work with partners to increase access to high-speed broadband has played its part in improving connectivity in our county.

### ***A safe place to live – Our Rating: Level 3 (Adequate)***

Increasing homelessness is a challenge for our County. High property prices, a shortage of affordable private rented accommodation and the rising cost of living have all contributed to a rising homeless problem. We've introduced a housing first approach which provides long term housing solutions for

people who have been unable to sustain accommodation in the past because of their complex and/or multiple needs. We've also developed a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to support anyone experiencing homelessness to move into a settled home as quickly as possible. Finding suitable homeless accommodation provision in the county remains a challenge. The use of bed and breakfast accommodation increased marginally from 90 to 92 households in the past year. On average it takes 10.2 months to move a homeless household into settled/permanent accommodation. Our intention is to get this below 6 months by 2027. 35 affordable homes were completed in our last Local Development Plan monitoring period, this was below the target of 96 and was the result of a shortage of development land and phosphate levels in rivers. In total the development of 308 dwellings has been affected by phosphates, of which 149 are affordable dwellings which clearly makes it harder for families to find somewhere to live.

***A connected place where people care – Our Rating: Level 3 (Adequate)***

We want Monmouthshire will be a place where people's contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. Our social services teams are facing increased demand and more complex cases. This is not unique to Monmouthshire and is taking a larger and larger share of our budgets. We recognise the need to do things differently to support our most vulnerable citizens. We've developed more place-based approaches helping people connect to others in their local community which reduces the need for them to rely solely on formal services. We also launched a micro-carers project to meet demand through small-scale local enterprise. These carers are delivering 161 hours of care each week. We've been able to achieve a reduction in the weekly hours of un-met from nearly 1,200 to 804 per week.

There remains a high level of demand and continued complexity for children requiring support from social services. At the end of 2022/23 there were 211 children being looked after by the local authority. Our teams have focused on working with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes. Of the children with a care and support plan, 61% are supported to remain at home where safe to do so. We continue to take steps to prevent children coming into care and reduce the numbers of children in care. However, we sometimes need to use specialist placements to deal with complex cases and these are costly and in short supply which puts pressure on our stretched resources. In the past year we've worked with partners to commission specialised provision for young people with complex needs. We've also developed a recruitment and retention strategy for our social care workforce. We continue to face a number of challenges in being able to respond to people's care and support needs as quickly as we would want. 83.5% of adult service users are happy with their care, down from 86.9% in the previous year.

***A learning place – Our Rating: Level 4 (Good)***

Monmouthshire should be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential.

The pandemic affected learners' academic progress, particularly in relation to disadvantaged learners. It also affected the wellbeing of pupils and staff. School leaders are faced with a range of challenges. Some, such as lower school attendance, are linked to the tail of the pandemic while others, such as industrial action are more recent developments. The council has strengthened its team to provide support to learners and schools. We have developed the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing. 43% of schools are currently engaged with this. We have increased the number of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, with 70 across our schools making a daily impact on the lives of pupils. Attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels, with secondary schools (88.4%) showing much slower improvement than primary (91.8%). We've increased funding for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and broadened our provision with the implementation of the ALN strategy. There remains increased demand for specialist provision places which we provide through specialist bases in our mainstream schools.

We continue to address the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and other learners. The action plan to address the recommendations from our Estyn inspection is being implemented. Recent Estyn reports indicate that learners eligible for free school meals are making good progress in their learning. The new Curriculum for Wales has been adopted in all primary schools in line with national timescales and is now being rolled out in all secondary schools.

Development of the new King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny is progressing at pace. The school will have the capacity for 1,200 secondary and 420 primary age pupils and 200 places for post-16 education. Welsh medium school provision has continued to expand, including the refurbishment of Ysgol Gymraeg y Ffin to increase the capacity of the school to 210 places.

### **How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities?**

We have sound arrangements in place to enable and support service delivery. These include finance, workforce management, digital, asset management, performance and risk management. Nevertheless, the impact of an extended period of austerity on service delivery coupled with the cost-of-living crisis and high levels of inflation has taken its toll.

We have faced increased demand for services, such as social care and homelessness, while inflation has contributed to rising costs in areas such as home to school transport. As a consequence, the council has needed to draw on reserves to balance the budget for the first time in more than a decade. We are now revising our enabling strategies to respond to challenges and opportunities and align them with the Community and Corporate Plan.

### **How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes?**

Partnership is core to how we work. The council has effective relationships in place with a multiplicity of stakeholders that help us achieve our purpose. These range from large scale strategic partnerships like the Cardiff Capital Region and the Gwent Public Services Board to bi-lateral shared services with other councils for services such as youth offending, procurement and revenues and benefits. We have strengthened how we work with Welsh Government and recognise that we can and must do more to develop and build on our relationship with community and town councils.

### **Areas for Development**

Through the self-assessment, we've identified how well we are doing and what we can do better. This is our starting point. We will look to build on and learn from the things we are doing and seek to improve areas where we can do better. You can see the areas for development that we've identified at the end of each section in the full assessment. They include accelerating delivery of our Decarbonisation Strategy; using new economic analysis to inform the development of an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy and strengthening our capacity to work with our residents and communities through implementing our Participation Strategy.

### **Measuring Progress**

We use a wide range of performance measures to track our progress against our priorities. These are found throughout the assessment. We did not have targets in place for these measures during 2022-23. This assessment uses the targets set for 2026-27, the end of the current Community and Corporate Plan period. We also track progress against a range of metrics that track outcomes at a population level. Key measures will be presented regularly to Cabinet and the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee so that we can track progress and adjust delivery where we're falling short of our expectations.

### **What do you think?**

We've included some of the feedback we've received from other organisations and would be delighted to hear your views to help us inform future assessments.

Please e-mail us: [improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

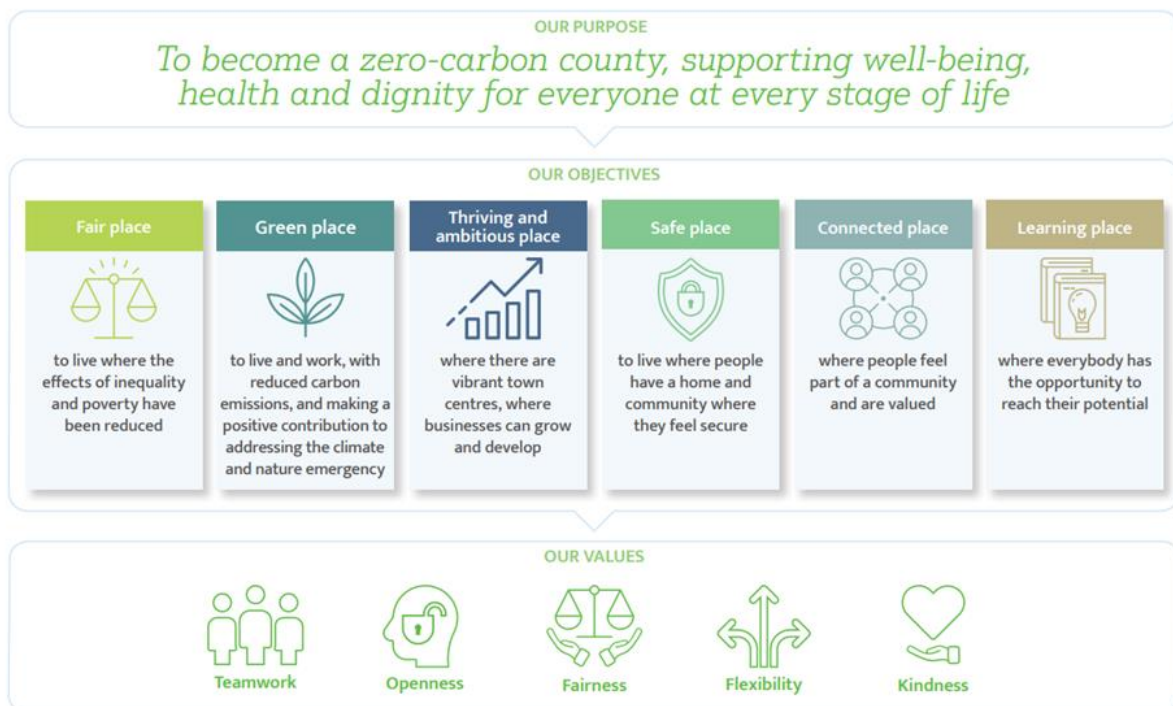
# Introduction

Over the last twelve months the council has re-set its well-being objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028. The plan sets our ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire. We are facing challenging financial circumstances and rising demand. This does not diminish our ambition or the hope we have for this place. It's important that we track the progress we are making. This report evaluates what we have done during 2022/23 and how we have done it as well as identifying future areas for development.

Following the elections in May 2022, the new Cabinet began to articulate the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the county. High-level political ambition has been converted into a whole authority strategic [Community and Corporate Plan](#), approved in April 2023, that sets the direction for the organisation for the period 2022-28 and marks a departure from the direction set by the previous administration. We set high standards and aspirations for the council.

The plan has been produced against the backdrop of economic uncertainty with the council facing rising costs alongside increased demands. The ambition outlined in the document looks to the long term and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations. A clear purpose has been set to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. This is supported by six well-being objectives shown in the diagram.

## Our Community and Corporate Plan - at a glance



The self-assessment process is about the council being self-aware, understanding whether it is delivering the right outcomes and challenging itself to continuously improve. Usually this would be done by focusing on the activity described in the Community and Corporate Plan. However, the plan was not approved until April 2022, after the year being evaluated concluded. As a result, this report evaluates the council's performance on the areas for development identified in our 2021/22 assessment under each of the six new well-being objectives. This enables the learning to be applied against the future delivery of the objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. The 2021/22 assessment is available [here](#).



## Our Self-Assessment

New legislation in Wales, the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, requires councils to keep their performance under review through self-assessment, with the need to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once every financial year. This is the second self-assessment report of Monmouthshire County Council and looks back over the past financial year 2022-23.

Effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and to achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. This is focused on three questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What and how can we do better


This is integrated with our annual reporting arrangements on the progress and impact we have made in meeting our well-being objectives, which is a requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Self-assessment allows us to evaluate our performance and use this to inform the direction we will chart, and the way we will work over the next five years.

Further details on the process of the self-assessment are shown in Appendix 2.

We welcome your views on this assessment along with any areas of our work that you think should be considered by the scrutiny committees that hold decision-makers to account, please get in touch:

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

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 @MonmouthshireCC

## Understanding our local place

Public Services face a range of complex challenges including climate change, income and health inequalities, access to housing and transport. A clear and current understanding of the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being in Monmouthshire is essential for the council to inform its purpose and priorities.

### Local place

	<b>How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
Keep an up-to-date understanding of well-being, including participation of residents and service users	<p>The council has a good understanding of the well-being of residents. We have benefitted from an extensive engagement process run across Gwent to inform priorities for public services beyond the council in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We have also benefitted from work to highlight health inequalities, carried out with partners including the Institute of Health Equity.</p> <p>Alongside this the Population Needs Assessment, approved by Council in March 2022, identifies the care and support needs of the people in the area and their carers in line with the requirements of The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.</p> <p>Councillors held conversations with citizens on the doorstep through the build up to the elections in May 2022. We are also able to draw on a wide range of quantitative data such outputs from the 2021 census, the National Survey for Wales and local surveys of service users in areas such as social care and libraries.</p>	<p>Population Needs Assessment</p> <p>Gwent Well-being Assessment</p> <p>National Survey for Wales</p>
Develop thinking and ideas to plan longer term alongside Monmouthshire residents, community groups and public service partners	<p>The Community and Corporate Plan sets out a commitment to work with and alongside communities, empowering people to support each other and come up with long-term solutions.</p> <p>We have engaged extensively in areas such as the production of the replacement Local Development Plan and will work in partnership on the production of town centre masterplans.</p> <p>The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) was formed in 2021 and has overseen the development and publication of the well-being assessment and plan for the area.</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan</p> <p>Replacement Local Development Plan</p> <p>Town centre masterplans</p> <p>Gwent PSB well-being assessment and plan</p>

## Our Outcomes

The Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 contains six well-being objectives which focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act.

In assessing each of the areas for development from our previous assessment under the 6 objectives, we have considered the extent to which:

- Our goals contribute to the achievement of the seven well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- We are taking all reasonable steps to meet them.
- They remain consistent with the sustainable development principle the five ways of working. More detail on the how the five ways of working are applied is provided in the progress on each goal later in this report.

It is important that outcomes are not considered in isolation since they can affect each other and need to be considered in an integrated way. How they integrate with each other is shown in Appendix 1.

We have included the following icons to illustrate each objectives contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals:



The long-term nature of some objectives means that the effects of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will have an impact over the longer term. The targets included in this assessment are longer-term targets set for 2026/27 and are not reflective of where we aspire to be in 2022/23. Informed by the evidence gathered, we have assessed each of our objectives on a scale of 1-6 based on the following principles:

Level	Definition	Description
6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding – all performance measures have achieved the target set and all actions have been delivered
5	Very Good	Major strengths – a significant majority of actions and measures are on track. No more than one or two falling short
4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – the majority of measures and actions have not been achieved
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weakness – in most areas, performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction and the vast majority of actions have not been delivered

**Objective template explained.**

**WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?**

Why we are focusing on this objective to improve well-being in Monmouthshire.

**How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?**

**How do we know?**

This sets 'What we want to achieve' from the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28

Column 1 - Areas for development from previous Self-Assessment 2021-22

Column 2 - This provides the self-assessment of our performance during 2022/23 against the areas for development.

Column 3 - The evidence sources we have used to inform our assessment.

**Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment**

These are specific conclusions from the self-assessment that inform our action plan.

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

This provides an explanation of how our activity contributes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act well-being goals and ways of working. It also identifies the Council's well-being objective(s) that were in place during 2022/23, revised well-being objectives in the community and corporate plan were subsequently set in April 2023.

**Measures of progress**

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2026/27	Comment
This provides the latest update of measures set in the performance measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan. The target shows the 5-year targets which are being reviewed and disaggregated to annual targets for 23/24 based on the latest performance	Previous data is 21/22 unless otherwise stated	Latest data is 22/23 unless otherwise stated	This is what we want to be achieving in the final full year of the community and corporate plan	It's important to remember that we do not have targets in place for 2022-23. This table shows what we expect to be achieving by the end of the plan period.

**Evaluation Score**

This provides our assessment of performance against the objective using the evaluation scoring mechanism

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Fair Place to Live

Evaluation Score	
Level 4 (Good)	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved

### WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire or feel their voice does not count. Many of our residents are prosperous and very capable of looking after themselves and their loved ones. However, this is not the case for all and in a rural county inequality is often more hidden than in urban places. We will increase the intensity of our work to help those who need support to live the lives they want.

Area for development	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
<b>IMPROVED LIFE CHANCES FOR PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF INCOME OR BACKGROUND</b>		
The rising cost-of-living and impact on residents	The council has provided a range of support in response to the cost-of-living crisis, including establishing a discretionary cost of living support scheme to distribute almost half a million pounds worth of funding to support those most affected. We also delivered the Money Matters campaign which signposts people to help. We also delivered the campaign to staff in schools which included other projects related to the costs of the school day. 15 cost of living support drop-in sessions were held in partnership with Mind Monmouthshire and Citizens Advice, which provided advice to ensure that people get the maximum benefits they are entitled to, making money go further and guidance on managing energy bills. These sessions had variable engagement, with an average of seven people at each session. We know from our partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau that more people are requiring cost-of-living support, however effectively reaching and providing our communities with cost-of-living advice has proven a challenge. A larger, weekend event is planned to increase engagement.	Engagement at cost-of-living support sessions
Develop interventions (for poverty & inequality) based on what our analysis is telling us and track the impact of these programmes of work	<p>We recognised that we needed a better understanding of poverty at the local level. We developed a poverty data dashboard to help us analyse deprivation in the county. This has informed the work that we have done in response to the cost-of-living crisis and has allowed us to target help where it is needed.</p> <p>This problem will not be addressed overnight. We have programmes to increase employment and last year we supported 142 people back to work. We also play an enabling role, provide a range of training courses, to help people into work and assist those already in employment to increase their earning potential. All of this takes time and we recognise that many people are struggling now. We work with and facilitate voluntary groups who operate community fridges across the county, taking surplus food from local</p>	<p>Poverty data dashboard</p> <p>Number of people visiting community fridges</p>

supermarkets and other providers and redistributing to local people, saving food from going to landfill but also helping those struggling with food insecurity as an incidental impact. There are now community fridges in all our main towns, with multiple in some towns. On average, around 480 people visit a community fridge each week, with each one saving around 2 tonnes of food going to landfill per month. However, with more people using on community fridges rather than using food banks, those in need may miss the opportunity to be signposted to additional sources of support.

**RESIDENTS HAVE BETTER ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES AND SUPPORT NEEDED TO LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE**

Use and participation in leisure facilities.	The council has made significant investment to improve the offer in our four leisure centres. Successful marketing campaigns have seen record numbers of members at the centres. On 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023 there were 703 annual members and 6,825 Direct Debit members exceeding the target of 550 and 6,500, respectively. This is helping to support the health and well-being of users and generated £165,920 in income.	Mon Life leisure services memberships
Promotion of the outdoor education service, and its benefits for young people	The service has had a successful recovery post-pandemic, and has now been redesigned, with three main elements. The first is the outdoor learning offer which includes residential stays. The second is the re-engage project, which is alternative education using the outdoor service. The third is specifically for children with additional learning needs or disabilities. Engagement has been successful across the county, with all Monmouthshire secondary schools engaged with the service. The number of primary schools engaged increased from 13 to 22 over the course of the year. Plans to engage the remaining primary schools include providing a low-cost offer, attending training on how to effectively promote the centre and working with schools to explore alternative options such as orienteering sessions on school grounds.	Numbers of schools engaged with the outdoor education service
Integrated approach to sport development, youth service and play to ensure a coordinated offer and support for children and young people’s well-being.	<p>We have provided a range of inclusive sporting and play activities throughout the year, including MonGames, Open Access Play Provision and Food and Fun. Summer provision saw over 10,000 hours of activities and over 11,500 engagements, October half-term and Christmas break saw a total of 689 attendees and Easter and May bank holiday sessions which saw a total of 5,234 engagements. These sessions have multiple benefits including helping low-income families and carers through the cost-of-living crisis and getting more children active. Action for Children are commissioned to provide fully inclusive playschemes, and through key holiday activities such as Mon Games, we aim to make facilities and provision as inclusive as possible to everyone, including children with disabilities.</p> <p>A new Caldicot sports delivery team was formed enabling the delivery of Positive Futures sessions to combat anti-social behaviour in the local area and promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity to young</p>	Attendance at events and activities

people. Funding was used to run Safer Streets which provides two free access to sports sessions each week. The Bronze Young Ambassador Conference held in October 2022 saw 61 Bronze Young Ambassadors in attendance, with 93% of Monmouthshire Primary Schools involved. Three external partners (Disability Sport Wales, Hockey Wales and County in the Community) were also engaged across the event. MonLife Sports Development Cross Country brought together local community parkrun groups and sports development provision, engaging 1,020 pupils and 90% of all primary schools in Monmouthshire over four days.

There has been a transition from separate funding streams for each project to a single point of financing available for Children and Young People Services within MonLife. This has helped to integrate MonLife services and has resulted in a £15k saving because of better collaboration.

Improve self-service capabilities and reduce telephony reliance by customers

A review of customer service is underway. This is identifying and acting on changes needed to improve end-to-end processes in service areas with the highest number of customer transactions. This should improve responsiveness for self-service, face-to-face and telephone customers; measures are in place to track progress, however we have not yet seen any measurable effect on the number of people self-serving.

Customer service transactions

**CITIZENS ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING AND TAKE ACTIONS WHICH ENABLE THEM TO SHAPE THEIR OWN FUTURES**

Continue to work with volunteers to ensure social capital supports community well-being.

MonLife actively engaged with 301 volunteers throughout this year, exceeding the target of 216. This supplements a wealth of grass-roots volunteering that takes place throughout the county with 39% of the Monmouthshire population indicating that they undertake some volunteering. Kinetic, the volunteer Monmouthshire website, continues to be used as a resource tool to promote volunteering opportunities, recruit volunteers, and as a database and communication platform to report on volunteering activity. This has allowed safe recruitment and oversight of volunteers within the county. However, there has been limited support in recent years following changes to legislation.

Number of volunteers engaged with MonLife

Be Community provision and funding

The Be Community Programme has continued to operate throughout this year. This piloted mentorship, small purchases and the creation of a digital training resource to develop resilience and sustainable growth in community volunteering across Monmouthshire. This resulted in additional funding being leveraged into community groups, upscaling of numerous community projects, increased volunteering numbers, improved project sustainability and created of 17 online training modules on subjects ranging from compliance, technical, leadership to community development. Throughout this year, Be Community provided 1,275 training places to volunteers, delivered 9 mentorship programs, and leveraged an additional £206,000 of funding into community groups.

Public participation in scrutiny and decision-making

The council’s scrutiny arrangements were revised in May 2022 following a decision by Council earlier in the year. This enables the People and Place committees to improve their focus on engaging the public in policy development and pre-decision scrutiny through debating key topics affecting residents. Delays in approval of the authority’s five-year Community and Corporate Plan mean it was not possible to produce a medium-term forward work planner for scrutiny committees necessary to achieve this. However, there has been improved attendance at public open forums.

Attendance and public open forum participation at Scrutiny

Draft public participation strategy

The Democratic Services Committee has received a draft public participation strategy, as required by the Local Government and Elections Act. Alongside this, the Community and Corporate Plan has made explicit the desire of the administration to improve participation in decision-making although the capacity and expertise necessary to undertake extensive and inclusive public engagement is not yet in place.

Involving Monmouthshire residents, community groups and public service partners in longer term planning

We have developed a participatory budgeting programme to increase community participation in decisions affecting their lives and enable spending decisions that better reflect local needs and address inequity. Our programme consists of several strands, including direct small grant giving (e.g., You Decide), targeting of communities of interest (Youth, Care Leavers, Young Carers), work with micro-geographies (hyper local engagement), and public allocation/prioritisation of funds to be delivered through local community organisations. During this year, *You Decide* events were held across 6 towns, resulting in 85 applications, of which 75 were allocated funding. In total, £60,000 has been made available for distribution through You Decide grants and around 7,000 citizens were involved in the overall process. This shows progress towards our desire to increase participation.

Participatory budget programme monitoring

**Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment**

Ensure interventions to achieve a fair place to live objectives are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact.

**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
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**Monmouthshire Council Well-being Objective in 2022/23 - Lifelong well-being & Future Focused Council**



Adopting community-focused approaches promotes **collaboration** which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, empowering people and ensuring they can access support we hope to **prevent** problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county, so it is vital that everyone can be **involved** to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a **long-term** benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an **integrated** benefit for many aspects of the act, they will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales.

**Measures of progress**

Measure	Previous <sup>1</sup>	Latest <sup>2</sup>	Target for 2026/27	Comment
Number of children receiving universal free school meals <sup>i</sup>	New scheme	2,583	6,250	The target is the number of children we expect to be in receipt of universal free school meals by March 2027.
Percentage of people successfully completing the exercise referral scheme at week 16 <sup>ii</sup>	43	48	50	
Percentage of people who feel they are able to influence decisions in their local area <sup>iii</sup>	20	33	40	Latest figure is for 2021/22, and the previous figure is for 2018/19 – This was not measured as part of the National Survey for Wales 2019/20 or 2022/23.
Number of young people who take part in the national Make Your Mark survey and Monmouthshire-specific ballot <sup>iv</sup>	1,262	2,306	2,400	The increase reflects a significant achievement and evidences our commitment to get people of all ages more involved.
Percentage of people who volunteer <sup>v</sup>	32	39	35	Work is currently underway to assess appropriateness of targets and adjust where needed.
Number of local employers who make disability confident employer pledge <sup>vi</sup>	24	35	40	
Percentage of the population who can speak Welsh <sup>vii</sup>	16.4	18.4	16.6	Work is currently underway to assess appropriateness of targets and adjust where needed.
Number of Welsh speakers employed by the council	308	278	500	The take-up of Welsh courses aimed at staff declined during the pandemic which contributed to this decline.

<sup>1</sup> Previous data is 2021/22 unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> Latest data is 2022/23 unless otherwise stated.

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Green Place to Live

Evaluation Score	
Level 3 (Adequate)	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets

### WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. We will work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding and promote the circular economy. We also recognise that these are complex issues and it will take decades rather than years to see the full impact of the changes we are making.

Area for development	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
<b>COUNCIL OPERATIONS ARE NET ZERO BY 2030 AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE SUPPORTED TO REDUCE THEIR OWN CARBON FOOTPRINT</b>		
Understanding carbon emission and focus of resources.	<p>We have implemented various decarbonisation programmes in the year. These include a county-wide initiative, in partnership with SSE energy, to identify how schools and leisure centres can run at optimum efficiency. We are exploring expanding this to more buildings and widening our scope of decarbonisation measures including the introduction of electric and hydrogen powered vehicles. Refit Phase 2 is nearing completion. We have also commissioned consultants to help us to produce the data for a new decarbonisation strategy and the development of an electric vehicle infrastructure charging strategy.</p> <p>We have a clear understanding of the carbon emissions that we produce as a council. We report this annually to Welsh Government although work is needed to ensure this is standardised across Wales. We need to ensure we are using this data locally to inform decision-making. Our carbon emissions increased post-pandemic, following a rapid downturn during it. We have seen a sustained change in people’s working habits with staff more regularly working from home, where they are able to do so, but our offices remain open and usage has increased since the pandemic with staff feedback valuing the flexibility.</p>	Net Zero Carbon Reporting.

We continue to focus on reducing community carbon emissions. Including through facilitating the Community Climate Champions network, development of active travel, increasing our recycling provision and promoting the reduction of waste and developing green infrastructure.

We recommend to businesses that they create a carbon reduction plan, but there is limited support available to create these. We know from our data that the highest single area of emissions comes from the manufacture of the things we buy, however, we have limited ability to influence the emissions of the private sector.

There is currently a limit to the progress we can make on decarbonisation due to the costs and our own limited capacity. Though work done during this year sets us up well for next year, if we continue at this rate, we will not achieve our target of net zero by 2030. There is also a limit on the actions we can take to reduce emissions in the county, for example, one of the biggest sources of emissions are from transport and domestic energy use where we have limited influence.

Decrease amount of waste being generated in the county and move to net zero waste.

We have continued to promote recycling, and due to continued participation of residents 69.9% of waste was reused, recycled or composted in 2022/23. This exceeds the current 64% target and we have almost reached the target that Welsh Government is setting for 24/25. The amount of waste produced per person in the county has also continued to decrease, falling from 143.3kg in 21/22 to 125.5kg in 22/23. Black bag sorting was continued during this year which has helped to reduce black bag waste. Reusable polypropy bags have also been rolled out, which will continue.

Waste and recycling data

Incorporation of climate and decarbonisation into strategic procurement collaborations.

A Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-27 has been produced and is now being implemented. This includes the steps the council will take to understand the carbon footprint of our purchased goods and services to ensure that our carbon reduction activity is targeted, how we will work with partners, elected members, staff and contractors to ensure that carbon is considered throughout the procurement cycle, and how we will collaborate with, and learn from, organisations across the public and private sector.

Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-27

**NATURE RECOVERY, IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL AND RIVER HEALTH**

Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the rivers Usk and Wye that are

We have worked with partners, including Welsh Water, to provide a phosphate stripping facility at Llanfoist to improve water quality and facilitate new development in the Usk catchment. Officers and Cabinet Members are working with stakeholders to identify and deliver solutions to water quality issues affecting the upper Wye and upper Usk river catchments.

Work with Welsh Water and stakeholders

A motion for rivers and oceans was passed by Council in March 2022, and an action plan has been published detailing how the council will work with partners to identify and implement solutions to

Motion For the Rivers and Ocean

<p>currently preventing development.</p> <p>Better understanding of the sources and solution to river pollution, and how the council can contribute to addressing the river phosphate levels. also need to understand the impact on development plans.</p>	<p>the phosphate issues in rivers. The amended Preferred Strategy also responds to, and considers, the challenges of phosphates, and has been endorsed by Welsh Government. Other public bodies are conducting work that will benefit Monmouthshire such as Dŵr Cymru, who have announced large investments in this space. We have actively engaged with and contributed to working groups with various organisations, including Dŵr Cymru, the development industry and other local planning authorities, to discuss Replacement Local Development Plan progress and phosphate issues.</p> <p>88% of the Usk and 67% of the Wye fail the phosphate targets in the Special Area of Conservation river catchment waterbodies. One of the challenges in tackling this issue has been learning our role. The principle causes of the phosphate issues are largely out of the council’s direct control and arise outside the county, around 66-70% of the problem is as a result of agriculture located upstream from Monmouthshire, where we have no control. Given the council’s limited control of the issue, we have focused on working with partner organisations such as Welsh Government, National Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru to influence and collaborate on finding effective solutions.</p>	<p>RLDP Preferred Strategy</p> <p>Special Area of Conservation phosphate targets</p>
<p>Explore public perception of the plans underway to enhance the local environment.</p>	<p>We regularly and actively engage with residents on our plans to enhance the local environment and use this to inform our planning. For example, a Nature Isn’t Neat survey was undertaken this year across Gwent to understand what residents value about green spaces. The survey had almost 500 respondents from Monmouthshire, making up 30% of total respondents. The results were consistently positive across all areas and age groups, allowing us to be confident that the majority of the public are happy with how we manage our grasslands, which has led us to expand the areas we manage for wildflowers. The survey also gave us scope to convince other local authorities across Gwent to expand the amount of land they were managing for nature.</p>	<p>Nature Isn’t Neat survey</p>
<p>Integrate nature recovery and decarbonisation programmes for maximum impact.</p>	<p>The climate emergency action plan was amended and updated in November 2021 to strengthen the emphasis on nature recovery, strengthen the importance of working with communities on carbon reduction and include actions on climate adaptation. A Climate and Nature Emergency Working Group has already been established. This group is overseeing the development of a revised strategy that will shape the next stage of this vital policy area ensuring that work to address nature recovery is integrated with our work on decarbonisation.</p>	<p>Climate Emergency Action Plan</p>
<p><b>SUSTAINABLE LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND FARMING PRACTICES WITH PUBLIC SERVICES AND RESIDENTS CONSUMING MORE LOCAL AND SEASONAL PRODUCE</b></p>		
<p>Broaden the organisational understanding of the power of the local pound, and how it can benefit local businesses</p>	<p>We have developed a Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy and delivery plan, which sets out how the council will work to ensure procurement is more accessible to small and local businesses.</p> <p>We have completed an analysis of our data showing where and how the council spends its money.</p>	<p>Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy &amp; Delivery Plan 2023-2028</p>

Further analysis is needed to inform the delivery of our strategy and explore developing a Localism Strategy.

We have supported and promoted local food businesses. This includes the Community Renewal Fund project Food4Growth, which worked in collaboration with Caerphilly and Torfaen Councils to develop a whole system approach to developing local food supply chains, and space for local food production to improve the sustainability and viability of the local agriculture sector. We are committed to continuing this work through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Food Resilience Programme.

We've promoted local food and drink businesses through a community Cook & Share event hosted in March through Monmouthshire Food Partnership, where local produce was served and the producers attended to eat with their customers and talk about their operating models. We are also participating in supply chain innovation and pilots to increase the amount of local produce served on the public plate. Community growing has been promoted through grassroots engagement. We've mapped supply and demand. Small grants have been provided to help community groups start or continue sustainable food growing projects where there is greatest interest and we are facilitating access to land and funding.

Space for Local Production Evaluation Report

Food4Growth Evaluation Report

Training will be provided to inform technical officers of their role in understanding local markets and, where possible, promote more local spend

The Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy & Delivery Plan 2023-2028 outlines how the council will make procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and the third sector. This includes a focus on ensuring legal compliance and robust and transparent governance in the procurement process, with training for council officers involved in the procurement process. Work continues to develop shorter, more localised, supply chains.

Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy & Delivery Plan 2023-2028

Procuring for Public Value Strategy 2018-2022

**FURTHER AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED THROUGH OUR 2022/23 SELF-ASSESSMENT**

To accelerate the delivery of the council's Decarbonisation Strategy

**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



**Well-being Objective: Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment**

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. Creating a 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	Latest	Target for 2026/27	Comment
Carbon emissions (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e) from the council's assets and operations <sup>viii</sup>	48,145	49,119	30,000	Latest figure is 2021/22, previous is for 2019/20. 2022/23 data will be included when available.
Capacity (MW) of renewable energy equipment installed on the council's estate	6.224	6.522	6.750	Latest figure is 2021/22, previous is for 2019/20. 2022/23 data will be included when available.
Number of active travel routes in development <sup>ix</sup>	13	16	20	
Number of active travel routes created or enhanced	14	11	18	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Percentage of municipal waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting <sup>x</sup>	69.53	69.97	72	
Number of people on the waiting list for allotments	43	74	Reduce by 50%	

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place

Evaluation Score	
Level 4 (Good)	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved

### WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Our starting point is a comparatively strong one. Monmouthshire has a strong local economy and is well placed for growth in Welsh terms. There is strength in a number of key sectors which are highlighted and supported at a national level. Employment rates are high, as are qualification levels. But more can be done. Monmouthshire can be more vibrant. The conditions exist to achieve this. We will work with national, regional and local partners to increase investment, improve connectivity and continue the development of an economy which is thriving, ambitious and enterprising.

Area for development	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
<b>VIBRANT TOWN CENTRES WHICH BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND ATTRACT INVESTMENT</b>		
Address the relationship between a shortage of business sites and low business start-up rates in the county.	Good progress has been made in the last year. 19 planning permissions have been issued for employment uses comprising the development of allocated employment sites as well as rural diversification and rural enterprise schemes providing employment opportunities in a range of sectors. Over 99% of employment sites are occupied and despite having 40 hectares of employment land remaining in the adopted Local Development Plan, businesses tell us that the lack of sites is a major constraint on their development within the county. Work on the refreshed Economy, Employment & Skills paper will inform the emerging Replacement Local Development Plan to ensure planning policies and site allocations of appropriate size, quality and location meet the needs of both businesses within the county and the wider Cardiff Capital Region.	Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report  Issues, Visions and Objectives Paper
Longer-term planning and improved feedback loops to understand what visitors want	We use surveys to engage with visitors and stakeholders to gather views and feedback on services and experiences. A visitor survey at Caldicot Castle was carried out in the Summer of 2022. This has assisted in understanding what visitors want and has helped us to prioritise these things. Staff observation and feedback schemes are in place to record the impact of play at our museums and attractions; we also have face-to-face conversations and the use of the UCL Wellbeing Umbrella evaluation tool to measure the impact relating to work with people living with dementia and their carers.	Feedback from visitors and staff observations  Nature isn't Neat survey

**PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND BACKGROUNDS HAVE THE SKILLS TO DO WELL IN WORK OR START THEIR OWN BUSINESS**

<p>Build on the strong network and engagement platform to create a new business engagement model</p>	<p>We are in the final stages of configuring a new system, CRM, that will act as the database of Monmouthshire businesses and a tool to market the team’s advice and guidance services to pre-starts and existing businesses. A Business Data and Communications Officer has been appointed who will facilitate the implementation of this system.</p>	<p>CRM system</p>
<p>Enhance economic development services for businesses and build on the success of the Business Resilience forum</p>	<p>The Monmouthshire Business Growth &amp; Enterprise Strategy continues to be delivered, covering a range of business engagement, including engaging with local businesses around support being provided by UK and Welsh Governments and other public bodies. Land and property searches were also conducted to identify potential funding for start-ups and existing businesses, as well as contacts made with property developers/owners regarding availability of commercial property. Despite this work, the number of businesses assisted was 55, below our annual target of 75. There has been an investment into growing the team, funded by the UK Government’s Shared Prosperity Fund, with two new members of staff joining, which will enable increased engagement with businesses.</p> <p>In March 2023, external consultants were commissioned to undertake updated economic analysis to inform the development of a new Economy, Employment &amp; Skills Strategy.</p>	<p>Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy</p>
<p>Improve communication on the benefit and impact of the CCR city deal, and other regional governance structures.</p>	<p>The council is committed to developing strong networks across the region and sharing the benefits of these relationships. During this year, the Leader was appointed Vice Chair of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Regional Cabinet and Portfolio Lead for Research and Innovation which includes a seat at the table of the Challenge Fund Strategic Board. This action remains an area for development for the team as limited work has been done in this area.</p>	

**SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

<p>Use updated digital deprivation data to target solutions to areas suffering poor connectivity.</p>	<p>A progress report on rural broadband was published this year outlining how those in rural parts of the county often don’t have access to sufficient broadband, with some areas of Monmouthshire experiencing some of the worst connectivity in the UK.</p> <p>A funded programme in collaboration with an internet service provider was started. While that supplier entered administration we have worked hard to identify others to fill that gap and we continue to work with partners who can have a direct effect on improving this issue to ensure better connectivity for residents. The percentage of premises in the county that do not have access to broadband at over 30 Mbps (the digital deprivation rate) decreased from 5.1% in 2019 to 2.5% in 2022. This compares favourably to the digital deprivation rate for Wales which was 5.1% in 2022.</p>	<p>Rural Broadband Update Report to Place Scrutiny Committee</p>
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Communication with residents on the benefits of the 20mph scheme.

We were the first council in Wales to introduce the new 20mph changes. We engaged with residents in pilot areas and have taken action where feedback has identified things that could improve road safety and user experience with a reversion to 30mph on the B4245 and Caldicot Road and on the B4293 at Devauden. Work will continue to communicate the benefits of this scheme to residents as we roll out the scheme throughout the county.

Proposed changes to speed limits on the B4245 and Caldicot Road, Caldicot and on the B4293 at Devauden paper

Monitor active travel usage to determine who uses it to make targeted improvements.

Active travel is being monitored through an internal live data dashboard which provides real time updates broken down by various modes of active travel including cycling and walking. We currently have seven locations across the authority from which data is sent back to our central base. Through capturing baseline data in this way, it is possible to evidence progress and increased modal shift in our future reporting and annual reports to Welsh Government. This data has shown that 87.28% of users of active travel routes are pedestrians, with cyclists making up 9.35% of users.

Central dashboard data

New monitoring and evaluation counters have been installed. A recently constructed route at Overmonnow Primary School has seen a 50% increase in active travel. A pilot active travel school tracker has been launched with Osbaston Primary has been able to show a 5% reduction since this roll out and the team will continue to work with the school to continue this decrease in car usage.

Implement the highways infrastructure plan.

Limited funding and capacity have meant that the plan has not progressed. We have identified what the challenges are and how to approach shortfalls. Work is needed to secure funding. The financial shortfall is a risk that needs to be managed.

### FURTHER AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED THROUGH OUR 2022/23 SELF-ASSESSMENT

Use economic analysis commissioned to inform the development of an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy

#### 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
✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

**Well-being Objective: Thriving and well-connected county**



This goal is aimed at the **long-term** viability of Monmouthshire as a thriving place to live, work and visit. The location of Monmouthshire as the gateway to South East Wales means we must embrace working with neighbouring areas to maximise opportunities. Keeping Monmouthshire thriving and well-connected promotes **integration** and impacts on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the county. This requires **collaboration** with local businesses and other organisations, and **involvement** from the local community to maximise opportunities. Considering the global well-being of Wales is also important and this goal focuses on ensuring decisions are made with future generations in mind and takes a **preventative** approach to enable the retention of young people.

**Measures of progress**

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2026/27	Comment
Annual economic impact of tourism (£) <sup>xi</sup>	182.79m	285.08m	220.26m	Work is currently underway to assess appropriateness of targets and adjust where needed.
Number of start-up businesses assisted during the year by the local authority and its partners	88	55	90	
Number of working age people supported into employment during the year through action by the local authority	100	142	100	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Percentage of school leavers not in education, employment or training <sup>xii</sup>	2	1.8	1	
Percentage of care experienced young people who have completed at least three months in education, training or employment by the age of 19	Not available	72.7	80	
Percentage of local authority vehicle fleet which is ultra-low emission	Not available	8.4	36	

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Safe Place to Live

Evaluation Score	
<b>Level 3 (Adequate)</b>	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets

### WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

For most people, Monmouthshire is a really good place to live, but not for everyone. This needs to change. We will work with partners to create a safe place that people are proud to call home, increase the availability of good quality affordable housing, reduce homelessness and promote approaches to help homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Area for development	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? <b>REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO BECOME HOMELESS</b>	How do we know?
The requirement for suitable accommodation for homeless people, including specialist provision for those with additional needs	<p>A rapid rehousing transition plan was approved by Cabinet this year. This includes a detailed action plan setting out how the council will address the challenges it faces around homelessness and homeless accommodation. A young person’s homeless panel has been established and work has been ongoing for six months. Attendees include the housing and housing support teams, the economy, employment and skills teams as well as colleagues from Compass – the youth homelessness project. The findings of this work will influence work moving forward and will help refocus resources where they can have the greatest impact.</p> <p>We have moved households from bed and breakfast accommodation throughout the year. Increasing demand and complexity means we’ve needed to continue to use B&amp;B accommodation as more people have become homeless. The use of temporary leased accommodation has also fluctuated throughout the year. It is challenging to find suitable B&amp;B provision in the county, which results in higher costs. The wider economic climate has also resulted in added pressure with increasing interest rates making investment more expensive which can deter landlords.</p> <p>There has been continued investment into additional staffing, homeless prevention and identifying both additional accommodation and resources. More targeted interventions will be brought forward as well as data modelling to better understand the challenges we face. The additional</p>	<p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan</p> <p>Young Person’s Homeless Panel</p>

staffing capacity has been important from an operational perspective. The strategic interventions being implemented are bedding in and additional time is needed to understand their full impact.

The introduction of a Housing First approach and remodelling of young person’s accommodation have been achieved. In a tight property market and against a backdrop of constricting budgets, identifying appropriate accommodation and revenue funding for specialist supported housing continues to be challenging. Welsh Government acknowledges that the available Housing Support Grant funding isn’t sufficient for Monmouthshire, but as the annual allocation remains static the supported housing gaps remain in local provision.

**INCREASED SUPPLY OF GOOD QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING & A MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING STOCK WITH A LOWER CARBON FOOTPRINT**

Address the need for affordable housing and the need to rebalance our demography to retain and attract an economically active population to support and attract business investment

The most recent Local Development Plan (LDP) Annual Monitoring Report has shown that this action is not progressing as intended against the legacy LDP. Thirty-five affordable homes were completed during the monitoring period, accounting for 9.7% of total completions recorded. This is well below the target of 96 affordable homes per year. In the period 2011-2021, 658 affordable homes were delivered, 302 short of the target of 960.

The number of homes granted planning permission in recent years has reduced significantly, from 540 in 2011/12 to 39 in 2021/22. This is partly due to the lifecycle of the adopted Local Development Plan, with most allocated sites now having received planning permission. Phosphates have been the major contributor to this very sharp recent decrease. As of May 2022, planning applications for the development of 308 dwellings could not be determined due to phosphates. Of these 149 are affordable homes. The submission of other development proposals has been postponed pending the identification of a solution to the phosphate problem. However, action has ensured the commencement of site delivering 100% affordable housing in the south of the county.

Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report

Housing delivery records

**COMMUNITIES IN WHICH EVERYONE FEELS SAFE AND RESPECTS EACH OTHER**

There were 6,085 recorded crimes in Monmouthshire in the year to March 2023 compared with 5,439 in the previous year. There were 789 recorded anti-social behaviour incidents. Comparable data is not available for the previous year. The percentage of adults reporting that they feel safe was 75% in 21-22, the last year for which data was available compared to 81% in 2018-19. We have committed to providing additional funding for this area so that we can use data and CCTV footage more effectively to target preventative actions.

Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area

National Survey for Wales

**FURTHER AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED THROUGH OUR 2022/23 SELF-ASSESSMENT**

## 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
	✓		✓	✓		✓



### Well-being Objective: Lifelong well-being & Thriving and well-connected county

It is important the council **collaborates** with partners and **integrates** with their plans to reduce homelessness and ensure people can stay in their own homes and communities wherever possible. **Involving** and working with partners and community members is essential to develop communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other. The Replacement Local Development Plan has a focus on **long term** and has affordable housing and a well-connected net zero carbon development at its heart. A focus on **preventing** problems occurring is essential to creating a safe place that people are proud to call home.

### Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2026/27	Comment
Number of affordable homes granted planning permission in year	0	51	350	This is an annual target with the latest figure reflecting land availability in the legacy LDP and limitations resulting from phosphates. This target is currently under review to ensure alignment with the RLDP.
Number of additional units of affordable housing delivered in the year <sup>xiii</sup>	91	72	200	This target is currently under review to ensure alignment with the RLDP.
Average time (months) homeless households spend in Band 1 with a homeless duty before moving on to settled/permanent accommodation	8.6	10.2	<6 months	

Percentage of homeless applications who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless	50	50	68	
Number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation	90	92	25	Data as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March.
Number of 16 and 17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation	New measure	0	0	Data as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March.
Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation	186	117	146	Data as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March. Work is currently underway to assess appropriateness of targets and adjust where needed.

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Connected Place Where People Care

Evaluation Score	
Level 3 (Adequate)	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets

### WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Monmouthshire will be a place where people’s contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. The health and social care system is facing significant challenges, and statutory services across the UK are struggling to cope with the volume and complexity of demand. Monmouthshire has a track record of delivering innovative approaches and rich partnership working. We recognise that well-being is about far more than treating people when they get sick. There are many factors that can affect our health including the environment, housing, what we do for work, how much we earn, our lifestyles, transport and community cohesion. These wider determinants of health, sometimes called the social determinants, can affect physical and mental health in either a positive or negative way.

Area for development	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
<b>HIGH QUALITY SOCIAL CARE WHICH ENABLES PEOPLE TO LIVE THEIR LIVES ON THEIR TERMS &amp; A PROFESSIONAL AND PASSIONATE SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE</b>		
Meeting demand and increased complexity of support required from children’s services.	<p>We are supporting 211 children who are looked after (March 2023), of which 10 are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are part of the UK wide National Transfer Scheme. The number has risen substantially in recent years but has recently stabilised, although it remains higher than the average rate of children who are looked after across Wales last year. At the end of 2022/23, 542 children had a care and support plan which detailed how their support was to be provided, which has increased from 518 in 2021/22. Children’s Services have focused on working with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes. Of the children with a care and support plan, 61% are supported to remain at home where safe to do so.</p> <p>There remains a high level of demand and continued complexity for children requiring support from social services. There is a need to increase resilience within child protection services as we continue to work with increased levels of risk and vulnerability within the community.</p>	<p>Director of Social Services Annual Report</p> <p>Rate of children who are looked after</p>
Suitable and safe placements to support children requiring them	We are developing placement opportunities for children who are looked after at a local and regional level to ensure that children are looked after in safe and appropriate settings. This includes increasing the numbers of in-house carers, and through the expansion of residential and supported accommodation options within the county. We have a commissioning strategy in place to help us	<p>Director of Social Services Annual Report</p> <p>Commissioning strategy</p>

understand our placement requirements moving forward. This is aligned with Welsh Government’s ambition to eliminate profit from children’s care.

Two children’s homes have been commissioned this year through partnership models, one of which was a specialised provision for young people with very complex needs. More opportunities to develop residential and supported accommodation placements are in the pipeline. There are huge challenges with this work particularly around workforce, resources and the time it takes to develop provision.

We continue to take steps to prevent children coming into care and reduce the numbers of children in care. The demand for appropriate placements remains high in a low supply environment. There is also a shortage of placements for children who are looked after at a local, regional and national level, particularly for those with complex needs or disabilities. Because of this, there is a risk that we may need to place children in non-regulated provision in emergency situations. This is not unique with over 6,000 such placements in the UK. However, it creates an on-going risk for the council that is difficult to fully mitigate at present.

<p>Foster carer recruitment</p>	<p>We are working with Foster Wales to run active campaigns to increase the numbers of in-house foster carers to provide placements for children requiring them. The team is ensuring that prospective foster carers are responded to and supported from the point of enquiry, through the rigorous assessment process and onto approval and first placement. To encourage existing foster carers to continue in their valuable roles, we are working at a local and regional level to ensure that our on-going offer, both financial and practical, is as good as it can be.</p> <p>The number of generic/short breaks foster carers has remained broadly unchanged, with some carers being recruited and some leaving; there were 38 in 20/21, 40 in 21/22 and 39 in 22/23. There is an established cohort of stable long-term foster carers in Monmouthshire. However, there are not enough in-house carers in the county, particularly those able to provide more specialist care or look after sibling groups. This creates an over-reliance on private and independent providers.</p>	<p>Number of generic/short breaks foster carers</p> <p>Director of Social Services Annual Report</p>
<p>Develop a sustainable care sector to meet ongoing demand and achieve people's personal outcomes.</p>	<p>We have focused on addressing a number of issues in this area, some of which are sector-wide problems. This includes reviewing caseloads, triaging referrals to ensure that those most in need are prioritised for assessment and intervention, working with care providers and partners and focusing on recruitment and retention of our workforce in the care sector. The number of hours of unmet care needs reached nearly 1,200 hours per week earlier in the year; this has subsequently been reduced to 804 hours at the end of March 2023.</p>	<p>Director of Social Services Annual Report</p> <p>Adult social care service user questionnaire</p> <p>Social care workforce strategy</p>



We have developed a recruitment and retention strategy for our social care workforce, with a particular focus on addressing areas where there is high demand. On 31 March 2023 there were the 56 vacancies across the social care sector.

On-going pressure across the social care and health system has meant that we continue cannot respond to people’s care and support needs as in as timely a manner as we would want. The number of contacts to adults social care (6,437) and the number of assessments completed (2,205) have remained high during 2022/23. As demand has increased, along with complexity, we are experiencing delays in provision and there remain a number of risks and challenges in adult social care that we are addressing. We have completed fewer packages of reablement, there has been reduction in the number of adults with a care and support plan from 1,728 to 1,651 and there remain challenges at the interface of health and social care where there are delays in provision. Our Adult Social Care service user questionnaire shows that 83.5%, of services users are happy with their care and support. This has decreased from 86.9% the previous year and is below levels seen in preceding years. We will track this measure to establish if this is a significant long-term trend.

Build on the ‘turning the world upside down’ model to increase place-based/locality approaches to care provision.

We have developed place-based approaches to support people’s well-being. We work with partners across the health and voluntary sectors and through the Integrated Wellbeing Network. This helps people to connect with groups and activities in their local community maintaining their well-being, reducing the likelihood of them requiring formal services.

Micro-carer pilot

An example of this is the micro-care pilot launched in April 2022. A micro carer is a self-employed care worker that provides flexible, personalised support and care to citizens who live in their local area. The project supports the self-employed carers to develop their businesses as well as providing the opportunity for greater oversight and governance of self-employed care workers operating within Monmouthshire. In the first year 9 carers have been entered on to the micro care directory and are now delivering care and support. There are currently 21 people being supported by micro-carers in their local community, delivering 161 hours of care and support in total each week.

The key risk on the fragility of the social care sector and the availability of care remains and we remain committed to progressing a place-based approach to address this.

**A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE MONMOUTHSHIRE WHERE LONELINESS AND ISOLATION ARE REDUCED, WELL-BEING IS PROMOTED, AND PEOPLE ARE SAFEGUARDED**

Capacity and arrangements to meet increased demands for early help and preventive services.

There is a coherent approach to early help and prevention to support children and families. This allows families to receive support to enable parents to provide their children with the safety, nurture and care they need. Services are in place to support the rehabilitation of children following periods of being looked after (Building Stronger Families); to provide medium-term holistic support

Director of Social Service Annual Report

to families making sustainable change (Achieving Change Together Team); and to provide a therapeutic response to parents and carers in supporting children with trauma presentations (MyST).

Building Stronger Families feedback

Evaluation and feedback of family support services indicate clear and positive outcomes for families. During 2022/23, out of 80 families, 87.5% reported a positive outcome from the early help intervention.

There remains high demand for family support services at both pre- and post-statutory levels. Over the next year our preventative family support will be strengthened through the expansion of the family time team to provide intensive community supervision and support to children. The focus remains on practice development and the importance of relationships: how we work with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes, reducing the need for children to be looked after.

Meet demand for mental health and emotional well-being support.

Services have developed that have increased the support available for children, young people and their families following the pandemic, including within the school setting. This has provided additional support for well-being and mental health at a time of great uncertainty. Support includes school-based counselling, which has seen a 9% increase in referrals over the last two years. There was 50% decrease in the number of referrals that are being taken from one academic year into the next. The SPACE wellbeing referral pathway has received 1,345 referrals between April 2022 and March 2023 and 159 progressed to a full panel discussion and were allocated support, other referrals were considered outside of panel and allocated accordingly.

Director of Social Service Annual Report

School-Based Counselling data

SPACE wellbeing panel data

This increased provision has contributed to dealing with the growing demand. However, there remains a significant need for mental health and emotional well-being support.

**FURTHER AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED THROUGH OUR 2022/23 SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Clearly articulate and evaluate plans to deliver high quality adults and children’s social care.

**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
		✓	✓	✓		



**Well-being Objective: Lifelong well-being**

Adopting community-focused approaches promotes **collaboration** which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, we hope to **prevent** problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county, so it is vital that everyone can be **involved** to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a **long-term** benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an **integrated** benefit for many aspects of promoting a healthier Wales. They will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales. There is also strong integration with our responsibilities under the Social Services & Well-being Act.

**Measures of progress**

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2026/27	Comment
Percentage of adult service users who have had the right information or advice when they needed it <sup>xiv</sup>	77.4	75	85	
Percentage of child assessments completed within statutory timescales	91.2	92.3	92	Work is currently underway to assess appropriateness of targets and adjust where needed.
Percentage of families reporting a positive outcome following a Building Stronger Families team intervention	84	87.5	90	
Number of generic/short break foster carers	40	39	Recruit 8 foster carers per year	
Percentage of placements of children who are looked after by the local authority made with in-house foster carers	41.3	42.2	45	
Number of patients waiting for discharge from hospital for social care reasons (measured on an agreed census date each month)	8	15	12	As at Census date

Number of attendances at MonGames <sup>xv</sup>	4,131	4,070	4,200	
Number of attendances at Food and Fun <sup>xvi</sup>	3,620	2,005	3,840	This decrease was a result of a reduction in spaces available due to low occupancy rates. The number of spaces has since been increased for 23/24.
Number of attendances at Active Play <sup>xvii</sup>	Not available	249	500	
Percentage of adult service users who are happy with the care and support received <sup>xviii</sup>	86.9	83.5	90	
The percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year that mitigated the need for support / achieved a positive outcome	50.8	57.6	55	Work is currently underway to assess appropriateness of targets and adjust where needed.

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Learning Place

Evaluation Score	
Level: 4 (Good)	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved

### WHY WE FOCUSED ON THIS?

Monmouthshire will be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential. The pandemic has had a substantial effect on schools and pupils. The two years of uncertainty and significant disruption to learning have inevitably left a legacy. Before the pandemic we knew that our disadvantaged learners did not achieve the outcomes we would wish. The pandemic has worsened the learning experiences of many vulnerable students such as those eligible for free school meals. The emotional and mental well-being of pupils was often affected, with many experiencing increased uncertainty, anxiety and loneliness. In line with our guiding principles, it is vital that we develop more opportunities to listen and learn from our pupils and students. Since schools have reopened the education system in Wales has continued to evolve with reforms and developments including the new curriculum for Wales and the introduction of a new additional learning needs act.

Area for development	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
<b>THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW CURRICULUM IN WALES ARE MAXIMISED THROUGH EXCELLENT TEACHING AND LEARNING A TRULY INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT RECOGNISES LEARNERS STARTING POINTS, STRENGTHS AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>		
Deliver improvements identified by Estyn	<p>The action plan to address the recommendations from the Estyn inspection is being implemented. Recent Estyn reports indicate that learners eligible for free school meals are making good progress in their learning. The restructure and creation of a broader inclusion team has meant that the articulation of an ALN strategy will now form part of a broader umbrella suite of interconnected strategies and related toolkits/resources/policies. The inclusion team is developing this currently. Evaluation sits at the heart of understanding how well our service works and the impact that we are having on our learners' progress and the effectiveness of the services we run. The recently adopted Community and Corporate Plan now provides a clear framework for action and evaluation of services to ensure that we are working most effectively in the areas of need.</p> <p>It is harder to form an overall view against our Estyn recommendations due to their areas of focus. Progression of FSM learners and excellent standards require more extensive access to schools to understand and evidence their progress.</p>	Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

Respond to the longer-term effects of the pandemic on education and well-being of children and young people

The pandemic affected learners' academic progress, particularly in relation to disadvantaged learners, and even more significant was its impact on pupil and staff wellbeing. Traditionally, the proxy measure for those learners who we understand to be disadvantaged has been those eligible for free school meals, however the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis has forced us to reconsider our understanding of disadvantage and the effect this has on learners.

We have a range of approaches in place to reduce barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils. The whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing is a structured approach for schools which helps them to understand how they are best placed to promote wellbeing. This has a hugely significant effect on children's attendance and achievement in school. The phased engagement of our schools has been positive: we currently have 43% of schools working with the team.

47 new Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) were trained between 2020 and 2022. All schools and settings are engaged with ELSAs and we currently have 70 operating across all bar one school in the county, making a daily impact on the lives of numerous pupils. Further training is planned which will be available to all schools.

Over 220 staff across our schools, as well as a range of service areas, have completed Trauma Informed Support training. The approach focuses on understanding children/young people presenting with behaviours of concern and raising the awareness and capacity of adults supporting vulnerable pupils. 100% of those completing the course agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident in supporting children and young people, including those who have experienced trauma or mental health difficulties.

There is a risk that our schooling system struggles to adjust to the new patterns of need amongst our children and young people in the post-pandemic period. If children and young people do not feel able to attend school, we cannot provide the support and care that our schools and support services do with such compassion and expertise. The role of the Community Focused Schools lead is crucial in working with schools and all our partners to develop these activities and relationships for the benefit of the whole school community. We are working alongside the Education Achievement Service (EAS) on Tackling All Aspects of Poverty and developing a whole authority strategy on supporting disadvantaged learners.

Community Focused Schools

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

Evaluation of progress and achievement in Monmouthshire schools

The Curriculum for Wales has been adopted in all primary schools and is being rolled out in all our secondary schools. This process will continue until the teaching of the first of the new GCSEs in 2025 and their first award in 2027. The EAS provide a comprehensive package of professional learning as part of a Learning Network Schools model to support schools and settings to realise the Curriculum

Estyn Inspection Outcomes

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

for Wales within their context. Estyn inspections of nine primary and two secondary schools indicate that most schools have a clear vision for the curriculum.

We have not been able to attain the level of assurance on the progress of our schools because our ability (and that of the EAS) to see first-hand evidence has been restricted by the pandemic and more recently by the action short of strike. We have been reliant upon Estyn inspections to provide evidence of the standards in our schools. The feedback from the eleven inspections across Monmouthshire since their return in 2022 shows a developing picture of strengths in provision. In the extremely challenging environment that everyone is working in, school leaders are faced with a range of challenges that are both different and intensified since the pandemic. The council has sought to strengthen its team to provide support to learners and schools.

Development and support for school leadership

All schools within Monmouthshire have access to a wide range of Professional Learning in the areas of Leadership and Pedagogy, Well-being and Curriculum. The EAS Professional Learning offer includes an extensive range of leadership programmes for school leaders, at all levels including aspiring headteachers, middle leaders, NQTs and teaching assistants. Many of these have been well-attended over the last 18 months.

EAS professional learning offer

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

Professional Learning for Well-being includes training on whole-school approaches to mental health, Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters and support for well-being leads. Well-being networks and training have not been well attended over the past eighteen months.

The EAS package includes provision of leadership briefings and curriculum networks to strengthen leadership and teaching across the whole workforce to support the effective learning environment across the county and facilitating events to share good practice across all areas of learning and leadership. Since Autumn 2021, an average of 50.6 teachers from Monmouthshire schools have attended EAS professional learning, compared to an average of 53.5 teachers across all schools in the region.

**IMPROVED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND REDUCED LEVELS OF EXCLUSION WHICH REMOVE BARRIERS TO LEARNING FOR VULNERABLE PUPILS**

Implementation of ALN strategy and meeting increasing demands for support

The new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy identifies four distinct and ambitious work streams, all of which aim to build sustainable and resilient provision. We have undertaken a restructure and created a broader Inclusion Team that has meant that delivery of the ALN strategy is embedded as part of interconnected strategies and related toolkits, resources and policies for ALN, Relationships, Children Looked After, Reducing Exclusions.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

The ALN Service has worked collaboratively with regional partners, schools, settings and families to effectively implement the new procedures identified in the Additional Learning Needs and

Education Tribunal Act. The Local Authority ALN Statutory Service provided comprehensive support advice and training to schools and governing bodies to ensure a smooth transition to the new ALN system. All schools and Early Years settings were prepared for their new responsibilities under the Act through targeted training and regular online Q&A sessions.

Our model of specialist provision places specialist resource bases (SRBs) at the heart of identified mainstream schools. There is a need to ensure the quality of ALN provision in SRBs is consistent across the county. We are prioritising the development of a framework for the management of SRB provisions which ensures a consistent, equitable approach across all settings. There remains increased demand for specialist provision places. We are developing our forecasting of complex ALN needs to help inform provision required to meet need.

### CONTINUE OUR PROGRAMME OF SCHOOL MODERNISATION

Work has continued on the new King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny. This school will replace Deri View Primary School and King Henry VIII Comprehensive School and will have the capacity for 1,200 secondary school age pupils, 420 primary age pupils and 200 places for post 16 education. There will also be suitable accommodation for 71 pupils with complex neurodevelopmental and learning needs within the school. It is anticipated that the development of this school will reduce the number of pupils attending an out of county secondary school. The school is scheduled to open in September 2024.

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

Catchment area reviews

Secondary school catchment areas have been reviewed and are in place for the current admission round. This means that young people in Usk now have improved access to be able to attend a secondary within the county. Primary catchment areas are currently being reviewed with a member workshop to take place in June 2023. Consultation on proposed changes will then take place in the autumn term alongside our school admission arrangements for September 2025.

School catchment area reviews

Review of primary and secondary education estate in Chepstow

A cluster review is underway to establish the most appropriate way to develop education in the Chepstow area. The review will look at all education aspects as well as the education estate in the area. Proposals will be shared and discussed with members in the Autumn term.

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report

Provide further Welsh medium school provision

We are implementing the first year of our ten-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). We have submitted a five-year plan to Welsh Ministers outlining our detailed targets for the year. Despite the short timescale, progress has been made in many areas. This includes the expansion of provision of Welsh medium education. The refurbishment of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin to increase the capacity of the school to 210 places from Reception to year 6 is complete.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

Chief Officer: Children and Young People Annual Report



We have secured additional Welsh Government funding for three years to continue the Immersion class in Y Ffin and extend this provision in other areas of the county. We are consulting on a seedling school in Monmouth town, with the plan for it and Cylch Meithrin opening in Monmouth town in September 2024. Progress in other areas of the plan is limited and, in a few, work is to commence during the next financial year.

**FURTHER AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED THROUGH OUR 2022/23 SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Ensure the delivery of the action plan which aims to address recommendations identified by Estyn

**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
✓		✓	✓		✓	



**Well-being Objective: Best possible start in life**

The **long-term** nature of this goal is intrinsic to its success. Working with and **involving** children and young people, as early as possible, to identify their needs will give them the best chance of achieving their maximum potential. **Preventing** problems before they start will provide our young people with the best chance to develop. Using a **collaborative** approach and aligning services provides a rounded resource that works in harmony for the young person. Overall, this approach **integrates** the needs of our young people, ensuring they have the best opportunity to achieve their goals.

**Measures of progress**

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2026/27	Comment
Percentage pupil attendance at primary level (figure for those eligible for free school meals shown in brackets)	Not available	91.8 (88.1)	94 (fsm cohort to be within 2%)	Data measures in academic years.

Percentage pupil attendance at secondary level (figure those eligible for free school meals shown in brackets)	Not available	88.4 (80.9)	94 (fsm cohort to be within 2%)	Data measured in academic years.
Number of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools	5	5	<5	
Total number of enrolments by adult learns on community education courses including Coleg Gwent franchise courses	663	560	1192	

## Using Our Resources

The council needs to remain relevant and viable for the next generation, while continuing to meet the needs of residents, visitors and businesses in the here-and-now. To support the delivery of our goals, we must make sure that all aspects of the council are working efficiently, effectively and in line with the sustainable development principle set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Act specifies core areas in an organisation that need to adapt to meet the changing demands on our services and ensure their longevity and sustainability. We have evaluated our arrangements for these areas and included digital and data as another important enabler of how we deliver the council's services. The areas we have assessed are:

- Corporate planning, performance and risk management
- Financial planning
- Workforce planning (people)
- Procurement
- Assets
- Digital
- Data
- Democracy & Scrutiny

### **Annual Governance Statement**

The council has a governance framework, our Code of Corporate Governance, for the year end March 2023. The framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

We have produced an Annual Governance Statement for the year 2022/23 that demonstrates that we have appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. The draft statement was presented to Governance & Audit Committee in July 2023. This self-assessment of our resources integrates with the findings from the Annual Governance Statement and will also contain further actions and recommendations related to these arrangements.

### Corporate Planning, Performance and Risk Management

	How effectively are resources being used?	How do we know?
<p>Ensure strategic plans evolve to address challenges and opportunities in the county</p>	<p>A Gwent wide Well-being Plan has been developed. This was informed by the Well-being Assessment in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p> <p>The application of the Marmot principles to the PSB well-being plan provides a framework to focus on reducing inequality in Gwent. The plan requires further development to maximise the ambition of the PSB to improve well-being in Gwent.</p> <p>The new Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 was developed alongside a measurement framework which tracks both measures that can be directly affected by the council and those outcome measures requiring action by a range of partners. The measurement framework has been used to create a Community and Corporate Plan dashboard which will be updated on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The objectives were endorsed by Cabinet in October 2022 and formally agreed by Council in April 2023. This means the council did not have agreed revised well-being objectives during this period. This impacted on our ability to provide clarity of policy direction to inform the development of other plans that align to deliver the objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. These include the high-level enabling strategies that form the council's policy framework and the strategic plans, including service business plans, that deliver the detailed commitments in the plan.</p>	<p>Gwent Well-being Plan</p> <p>Community &amp; Corporate Plan 2022-2028</p> <p>Self-assessment of performance management arrangements report to Governance &amp; Audit Committee</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement</p>
<p>Quality and completeness of service business plans</p>	<p>There is insufficient consistency in the quality and timeliness of completion of service business plans. A quality assurance process and template was designed and completed in September 2022. A traffic light system was used to assess plans which were shared with service managers to improve service plans. The outcome of the quality assurance showed that some sections were consistently of inadequate quality. This limits the ability of services to use their service business plans to robustly plan, manage, and evaluate their performance and their role in delivering and informing the council strategic objectives and risks.</p> <p>The service planning principles and supporting information were updated and revised in accordance with the new Community and Corporate Plan. A self-assessment good practice guide was also published as well as performance measure guidance. These updated guides will support managers in completing their service plans and planning for the year ahead.</p>	<p>Business plan completion status</p> <p>Quality assurance assessments</p> <p>Self-assessment of performance management arrangements report to Governance &amp; Audit Committee</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement</p>

<p>Develop self-assessment arrangements and embed an evaluative mindset</p>	<p>The self-assessment process and report provided a clear assessment of the council’s performance. This has informed the council’s ongoing planning as part of the performance management framework and the development of the draft Community and Corporate Plan.</p> <p>There was effective scrutiny and oversight of the draft report. The report was presented to Governance and Audit Committee and Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee to review, scrutinise and make any recommendations for changes. The committee found it was comfortable with the contents of the report and recommended its consideration by Council. The committee also stated its desire to be more involved in design of the council’s annual self-assessment exercise.</p> <p>The process also identified that an evaluative mindset based on clear evidence is not consistently applied in the council’s performance management arrangements to facilitate ongoing improvement. To ensure that self-assessment is embedded in practice, there is a need to further develop challenge and embed a more evaluative mindset. A review of the 2022/23 process will be conducted, including a workshop with key contributors and reviewers to the process.</p>	<p>Self-assessment 2021/22</p> <p>Self-assessment of performance management arrangements report to Governance &amp; Audit Committee</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement</p>
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**Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment**

Embed the delivery of the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 within the council’s performance framework

**Financial Planning**

	<b>How effectively are resources being used?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
<p>Financial planning and budget control arrangements by responsibility holders in service areas</p>	<p>The 22/23 revenue &amp; capital budget outturn report reported a net revenue budget deficit at outturn of just over £3.5m that required a contribution from earmarked reserves to fund the additional expenditure incurred. Due to significant budget recovery actions this deficit was a significant improvement on the month 9 forecast, with over £2.5m less needing to be contributed from reserves, mainly as a result of grant funding and budget recovery. This is not sustainable in the longer term.</p> <p>The primary reasons for this deficit were overspends in Adult and Children’s social care of over £4.5m, homelessness pressures and pay awards. With the cost-of-living crisis having a significant impact on our communities, there has been a growing demand for additional council services, a reduced call on income generating services, and impacts upon debt recovery. The wider-economic environment is also having a continued significant impact,</p>	<p>2022/23 Revenue &amp; Capital Budget Outturn Report</p> <p>Annual Governance statement</p> <p>Audit Wales finance reports</p> <p>Financial process and assurance reporting to Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</p>

with record price rises on goods and services, supply chain disruption, soaring energy costs, increased interest rates, and recruitment challenges placing unprecedented pressures upon the demand and cost of service delivery.

Service savings totalling £2.129m were required as part of the original revenue budget for 22/23 and these have been met in full during the year. The budget also saw £10.1m of pressures being accommodated. Despite accommodating these pressures, significant further in year service pressures have materialised during the year, with many developing in the same key service areas that were provided additional support in the budget.

There is variability in financial planning and budget controls by responsible budget holders in service areas. There are continuing budget pressures and recurring annual overspends in specific service areas, including homelessness, children's services, adult social care and additional learning needs. Financial planning needs to be strengthened, as well as training provided to all relevant officers, to ensure robust financial management arrangements are consistently applied across services and that we are reacting quickly to put plans in place to recover when overspend occurs.

Budget monitoring reports are reported regularly to Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee. Governance and Audit Committee has sought to clarify its role in reviewing and scrutinising the authority's financial affairs. In assessing the extent to which it discharged its responsibilities during the year, the committee believes that it has not always had sufficient information for it to review matters pertaining to contract procedure rules and financial regulations.

<p>Ensure that the medium-term Financial Plan reflects realistic future cost pressures as accurately as possible, based on known information and informed by up-to-date and accurate service-based data, and facilitates a budget setting process over the medium term to allow a balanced budget to be set that delivers on agreed corporate priorities</p>	<p>The Medium-Term Financial Plan was revised and updated in line with the 2023/24 budget. This reflected the financial pressures facing the authority including: rising interest rates and the wider economic climate; historically high inflation which is putting pressure on costs; higher forecasts for pay settlements and the Welsh Government funding settlement where Monmouthshire was provided with a funding increase of 9.3%.</p> <p>The revised MTFP model shows a growing budget gap over the next five years, with a shortfall of £23m needing to be addressed in the 2026/27 financial year. Based on past experience, the MTFP model includes £7.5m contingency for pressures likely to arise but not yet identified or quantified in each of the remaining years of the MTFP. The financial year 2023/24 is already seeing a level of net pressures presenting in excess of this provision reflecting the importance of keeping these assumptions under continual review.</p> <p>An updated financial strategy is being developed which will provide the framework in which the MTFP works. This will be accompanied by a revised MTFP which will reflect up-to-date funding requirements to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term. This will enable remedial action to be taken to ensure that future service provision can be re-modelled in line with the available finances while continuing to deliver the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.</p>	<p>Cabinet &amp; Council budget reports 2022/23 &amp; 2023/24</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement</p>
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**Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment**

Develop a financial strategy and robust Medium Term Financial Plan which identifies how we will address the budget shortfall of £23m by 2026/27

### Workforce Planning

	How effectively are resources being used?	How do we know?
E-recruitment system and the recruitment process	This is an improving picture. We have purchased an e-recruitment system which will go live in the Autumn 2023. The People team has put arrangements in place to strengthen recruitment procedures, such as adapting the recruitment process, whilst still maintaining safeguarding and safety requirements, promotion of opportunities and recruitment of graduates, apprentices, and work experience. This has led to successful recruitment campaigns in some service areas. New jobs are promoted in a variety of ways to reach a broader audience, using drives such as 'Job of the Week'. The software will have the ability to generate analytics to better evidence the effectiveness of these approaches so that we can do more of the things proven to deliver results.	E-recruitment system procurement  Communications Team promotions
Learning management system and subsequent wholesale training and development needs analysis and provision	A learning management system has been purchased and has been piloted in social care. Issues identified through the pilot are being addressed before a wider role out across the authority for example a single sign-on will be critical, as it will make access to the system simpler. There are resource issues to be addressed to ensure there is capacity in service areas to facilitate the role out across the organisation.	Learning Management System procurement
Enable the improvement of workforce planning and develop workforce planning arrangements	<p>This area of work has been underdeveloped but is now showing signs of improvement. A team with a specific focus on workforce planning and development has been established, incorporating recruitment, retention, training and growing apprenticeships. The team is working with service areas to strengthen workforce planning arrangements: a learning management system has been procured and is in the early stages of implementation.</p> <p>The Apprentice Graduate and Intern Strategy (AGI) has been introduced to support and increase the number of opportunities across the council. Work continues on this as an integral part of strategic workforce planning. At present there are 14 apprentices, graduates and internships across the council, with several more opportunities being developed.</p> <p>150 existing staff are currently working toward a qualification on the apprenticeship framework. Work continues to promote and encourage staff to consider their continuing professional development.</p> <p>The people services team has already put arrangements in place to strengthen recruitment procedures. The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning: the organisation's training offer needs development to meet the</p>	<p>Learning Management System procurement</p> <p>Systems and data updates on AGI's</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement</p>



	current and future skills required, with capacity identified as a barrier to staff attending training. There is also a need to develop better workforce planning and people-led policies that enable late-stage career transitions.	
Support staff well-being	<p>The digital and in-person 'cwtch' continues, along with a weekly people leaders' session. The 'digital cwtch' is now less frequent reflecting the post-lockdown return to the office. A people leaders support intranet site has been developed enabling live discussion/news feed, direct support and a shared learning platform for managers and head-teachers. The use of networks and digital communication, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce.</p> <p>This has also created the conditions for a wider system of self-supportive networks sharing practice, ideas and support, with the core feedback loop/forum through the People Working Group. A report was presented to Cabinet in September 2022 requesting the release of £219,824 from reserves to help mitigate the workforce impact of the rising cost-of-living.</p>	<p>Digital Cwtch</p> <p>People Leaders Q&amp;A session</p> <p>People Leaders Support Site</p> <p>Workforce Cost of Living Impact report</p>
Meaningful staff/line manager engagement and communication by right	We are unable to systematically evidence the effectiveness of our employee review scheme. Anecdotal evidence shows the scheme is satisfactory, although the application is mixed and there is room for improvement. We are also unable to evidence that all managers are receiving the necessary training and development opportunities to support their staff. Implementing the new learning management system will help achieve this. There is also a need to ensure clear alignment with other enabling arrangements such as Service Business Plans, and staff training and training.	<p>Engagement via Peoples Q&amp;A</p> <p>Leaders Q&amp;A</p> <p>Digital Cwtch</p>

**Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment**

Develop a people strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28

## Procurement

	How effectively are resources being used?	How do we know?
Ownership of the procurement strategy by all officers who have a role to play in delivery of the strategic objectives	A Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 has been developed. As part of the delivery of this strategy, all officers involved in the procurement process will be provided with training and education. Collective ownership across all council services for the delivery of the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 and action plan will create the right enabling platform for the development of progressive policies that will achieve greater and more targeted social, economic and environmental gains through working with our supply chains.	Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy & Delivery Plan 2023-28
Understanding how carbon emissions are produced, measured and ultimately reduced as part of the council's third party spend	The Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-2028 has the objective to contribute to reducing the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. We will do this by understanding the carbon footprint of the council's purchased goods and services and work to ensure our carbon reduction activity is targeted where it can have the biggest impact; working with our elected members, staff, partners contractors and government agencies to ensure that carbon reduction is fully considered throughout the procurement cycle; and collaborating with and learning from organisations across the public, private and third sector. Work continues to develop shorter, more localised supply chains. We will demonstrate our delivery by reporting on procurement's contribution to carbon reduction through the council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan.	Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy & Delivery Plan 2023-28  Procuring for Public Value Strategy 2018-2022
Processes to ensure all tendered third party spend has a level of oversight and challenge	We are developing a robust procurement process, and are doing this through numerous ways, including updating the council's Contract Procedure Rules, which will provide more opportunity for local procurement spend, whilst ensuring that ethical procurement and value for money are ongoing features. We have also invested in the council's electronic procurement software to increase transparency and effective contract management and have adopted the Welsh Government's 'Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains' to drive the right behaviours across our supply networks. We are currently in the process of redeveloping and resourcing a council-wide Contract Forward Plan and Contract Register which will provide far greater oversight of our existing contracts and the ability to better plan delivery of contract renewals and new requirements. These will be regularly published on the council's website from August 2023.	Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy & Delivery Plan 2023-28  Procuring for Public Value Strategy 2018-2022

**Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment**

<b>Assets</b>		
	<b>How effectively are resources being used?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
Revise and update the Asset Management strategy taking into account the council's priorities	The strategic asset management plan has been updated to reflect the ongoing 2022/23 commitments, and there has been positive development in its delivery. The delay of the new Community and Corporate Plan has meant that the Asset Management strategy has not yet been finalised as the two need to align. It is currently being updated, the delay to the has not had an impact at an operational level, however it has had an impact at a strategic level.	Asset Management Plan
Review and assess asset management risks	<p>There are a considerable number of capital pressures, including property and highways infrastructure and public rights of way, that sit outside any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP. This carries significant risks, these are being assessed to determine whether further funding is needed to address immediate risks.</p> <p>A review of the pressures and associated risks is being undertaken to inform the capital budget process. A previous review in 20/21 had concluded that further feasibility studies and technical assessments needed to be undertaken on specific infrastructure assets, funded from existing highways infrastructure capital budgets. The results of these studies will be reviewed by the Capital and Asset Management Working Group and the assessments will inform the capital MTFP and pressures that will need to be funded in future years.</p> <p>A programme of property condition surveys are currently being undertaken by external consultants. These will inform prioritisation of capital maintenance spend. A programme of health and safety surveys is currently being commissioned. Independent condition assessments of key highways infrastructure are completed as required depending on condition. These inform prioritisation of available capital budget.</p>	<p>Capital budget strategy and capital budget proposal</p> <p>The Capital and Asset Management Working Group</p> <p>Condition surveys</p> <p>Strategic risk register</p>
Understand property services and facilities management needs, strengthen collaboration and strengthen coordination across council service areas	The property and facilities management needs of organisation are diverse and have evolved over many years. Work is needed to clearly understand needs and recognise and fully utilise the capacity and capabilities available within the property function if further work is needed. There are capacity and recruitment challenges when trying to meet project management demands elsewhere in the organisation, and these are not always being considered when projects are planned and undertaken. The knowledge and skills within service areas to manage assets effectively also need development and potential review. Collaboration between departments and property services needs to be strengthened, and expectations managed to coordinate property and facilities management across council service areas.	Property and facilities management service business plan
<b>Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment</b>		
Develop an updated asset management strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28		

<b>Digital</b>		
	<b>How effectively are resources being used?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
Prioritise digital initiatives that align with corporate and directorate priorities ensuring that we develop and/or procure modern, secure and interoperable systems which in turn deliver better services and outcomes for our residents	<p>A range of digital initiatives have been delivered during the year. Including the roll-out of Microsoft Teams calling that has reduced the cost of our telephony system. Work has continued to prioritise system replacements and encourage service areas to invest in system admin/project management resource to maximise the potential of new technology.</p> <p>A procurement tracker is being designed in collaboration with the joint procurement team to provide more efficient and effective purchasing process. An Internal Audit recommendations tracker is also being trialled, which will provide a more automated solution for colleagues to provide their updates on audit recommendations.</p> <p>As an organisation cannot modernise and become technology-enabled without transforming its skill set. A prototype for Digital Basics training within the Communities &amp; Place Directorate has been completed. Work with Monmouthshire Housing Association continues to encourage the use of the Digital Lending Libraries by residents following a low uptake when this was sat within council libraries.</p>	<p>Power BI dashboards</p> <p>Procurement Tracker</p> <p>Internal Audit Recommendations tracker</p> <p>Teams Calling telephony.</p> <p>Digital Basics training prototype</p>
Cyber security and data management arrangements	<p>We have established an Information Security &amp; Technology Team to ensure that information held by the council remains confidential, maintains its integrity and is available to those who need to access it as part of our work. The team actively supports, advises and trains our workforce. The same team provides key activities to maintain security including the cyber audit function of our ICT infrastructure and governance arrangements. A report on the council's cyber security arrangements was presented to Governance and Audit Committee in January 2023. The authority has achieved accreditation status with all five national boards as well as a number of voluntary assessments.</p> <p>Mandatory training is provided for GDPR and Cyber Security, alongside comprehensive guidance and policies for all aspects of data management.</p>	<p>Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>Governance and Audit Committee report</p>
<b>Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment</b>		
Develop a digital strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28		

## Data

	<b>How effectively are resources being used?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
Use of data to generate insight	<p>A data capacity and capability roadmap has been developed to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity. The initial focus has been on growing data capability across the organisation through training and development opportunities for existing staff in all teams. Training sessions have been procured and the 'data hub' pages updated to include data related information and training opportunities.</p> <p>The second focus has been on generating better insight from existing datasets. The 'data hub', the council's performance measurement area hosted on the council's intranet site has been refreshed and updated. A new interactive dashboard has been developed that can be used track progress of the measures set in the Community and Corporate Plan. Further dashboards have been developed to provide data insights to inform planning and decisions making, for example using the Census 2021 data.</p> <p>Work is needed to advance the council's data maturity and the use of data to generate insight to inform decision making.</p>	<p>Data Hub dashboards</p> <p>Self-assessment of performance management arrangements report to Governance &amp; Audit Committee</p> <p>Annual Governance statement</p>

### Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment

Develop a data strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28

## Democracy & Scrutiny

	<b>How effectively are resources being used?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
Democracy and scrutiny arrangements	<p>The use of remote attendance at Council, Cabinet and committee meetings is fully embedded. This brings positive benefits for those with work or family commitments who are able to participate in meetings they would otherwise not be able to attend. Attendance at meetings was 94% in the 22-23 civic year compared in 86% in the previous year and 86% during the first year of the previous council term.</p> <p>Revisions to the changes of scrutiny committees have reduced duplication, for example budget and performance reports are now presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee rather than having the same report presented to four separate meetings.</p>	<p>Attendance Figures</p> <p>Annual Governance statement</p>

### Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment

## Our work with others

To deliver the outcome required for the county we need to work together with a range of partners, stakeholders and our communities. The council will not have all the answers and we will not be able to deliver the outcomes required on our own. Working efficiently and effectively collaboratively enables us to plan and provide the solutions required.

### Stakeholders and partnership working

	How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
Delivery and governance arrangements of the Public Service Board and local partnership arrangements	The Gwent Public Services Board was formed in September 2021 and has overseen the development and publication of the well-being assessment and plan for the area. An Internal Audit review identified a reasonable level of assurance was in place for the authority's governance arrangements. However, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of delivery arrangements as work to date has focused on assessment and planning.	Internal Audit Report of Partnerships
Develop thinking and ideas to plan longer-term alongside Monmouthshire residents, community groups and public service partners	Cabinet engaged local people and other stakeholders of the development of the priorities and actions in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28. New scrutiny arrangements, aimed at improving public involvement in decision making were introduced in May 2023 while a new Public Participation Strategy is being developed and overseen by the Democratic Services Committee.	Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28
Effective governance arrangements through Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)	From 30 June 2022, the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) was given the legal responsibility for preparing Regional Strategic Development Plans, Regional Transport Plans and for doing whatever is deemed necessary to enhance or promote the economic well-being of the area. The committee is made up of the leaders of the ten local authorities in south east Wales. All governance papers are published on the Cardiff Capital Region website. The arrangements are overseen by a joint committee comprising representatives from the ten local authorities with additional regulatory activity undertaken by Audit Wales.	Cardiff Capital Region Governance papers

### Further areas for development identified through our 2022/23 self-assessment

Strengthen how we work with and alongside communities in line with the commitment in the Community and Corporate Plan.

## Our Actions

Through the self-assessment, we have identified how well we are doing and what we can do better. Identifying these is not the end of the self-assessment process. We will look to build on and learn from the areas that are going well and address areas that we can do better.

The action plan focuses specifically on what and how we can do better for the significant conclusions of the assessment. All of the findings will inform the development of the council’s well-being objectives and delivery plans and inform how internal processes and procedures should change to support more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes, and innovative ways to better deliver the council’s functions. These also integrate with further actions identified in the council’s Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

The actions will be monitored through the year as part of the council’s performance management arrangements. The next self-assessment report will also include an assessment of the progress made on these actions.

### Progress with 2021/22 Actions?

We have provided an update on progress against the actions we identified in the 2021/22 self-assessment report. A more detailed assessment of these arrangements is provided in the relevant section of the report.

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
Place	Understand current well-being, including the impacts of the last few years, on people and our communities to keep an up-to-date understanding of well-being.	Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users	<p>The development of the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 was informed by a range of collaborative workshops, utilising a wide range of evidence.</p> <p>A range of projects have facilitated the involvement of residents including participatory budgeting.</p> <p>There have been some challenges to decisions being progressed by the council in the last year and the council is committed to further strengthening engagement with residents and service users.</p>
Outcomes	Address areas for development, including rising cost-of- living, health inequalities and transition towards net-zero carbon, identified through the assessment of our outcomes.	Use the areas for development identified in the self-assessment to inform new corporate plan and service plans	Following the elections in May 2022, the new Cabinet began to articulate the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the county. A series of collaborative workshops, and drawing on a wide range of evidence, including the self-assessment report, has informed the development of the council’s

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
Resources	Develop self-assessment arrangements and embed an evaluative mindset	Review self-assessment process to inform service plans and the next self-assessment report	<p>Community and Corporate Plan, that sets the direction for the organisation for the period 2022-28.</p> <p>The plan was agreed in April 2023, which impacted on the council's ability to provide clarity of policy direction in 2022/23 to inform the development of other plans that align to deliver the objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. These include the high-level enabling strategies that form the council's policy framework and the strategic plans, including service business plans, that deliver the detailed commitments in the plan</p>
Resources	Develop self-assessment arrangements and embed an evaluative mindset	Review self-assessment process to inform service plans and the next self-assessment report	<p>The process to inform this self-assessment report was reviewed and applied as set out in appendix 2. This report assesses progress against the areas for development from the previous report that have been progressed through service plans.</p> <p>To ensure that self-assessment is embedded in practice, there is a need to further develop challenge and embed a more evaluative mindset through the council's performance framework. A review of the 2022/23 process will be conducted, including a workshop with key contributors and reviewers to the process.</p>
Resources	Evaluate and consider medium-term finances of the council, including the impact of the pandemic and rising cost-of-living, including the direct impact on council services and the impacts on residents and businesses in the county.	Develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan that is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios, to guide our budget setting in line with agreed strategic objectives	<p>A well-established budget setting process has enabled Council to agree a budget for 2023/24, although there remain significant budget pressures and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) models a growing budget gap over the next five years, with a budget shortfall of £23m to be addressed in the 2026/27 financial year.</p> <p>The MTFP needs to be developed, reflecting as up to date funding requirements as possible, to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term, in line with Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 priorities.</p>



Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
Resources	Robust workforce planning arrangements to ensure we can develop, attract, and retain the workforce with the skills and experience we need to deliver services and achieve our outcomes.	Develop a robust workforce planning culture that is able to cope with the changing demands of the council and embed a recruitment ethos that works locally and independently to meet the needs of different service areas.	The financial challenges pose a risk to the ability to deliver some of the commitments in the Community and Corporate plan 2022-28.  A team with a specific focus on workforce planning and development has been established, incorporating recruitment, retention, apprenticeships and training. Training on workforce planning has been delivered. There is further development needed to ensure the organisation to the workforce it needs to meet current and future demands.
Resources	Data is one of the most important resources when planning services and we currently do not have the infrastructure and skills to maximise its use.	Develop the platforms and skills to enable the use of data as an essential planning and performance tool throughout the organisation.	The 'data hub', the performance measurement area hosted on the council's intranet site has been refreshed and updated. A new interactive dashboard has been developed that can be used track progress of the measures set in the Community and Corporate Plan. Further dashboards have been developed providing data insights to inform the council's planning and decisions making, for example using the Census 2021 data.  Further development is needed to improve data maturity and the use of data to generate insight to inform decision making.
Stakeholder and Partnership	We work well with partner organisations, we need to extend this to include better community engagement to find out what matters most to our residents, businesses and visitors and plan longer term, learning from best practice, alongside residents, community groups and public service partners.	Improve the partnership working between the council, residents, businesses, community groups and other public sector organisations, including the Welsh Government, to maximise the impact of everyone's abilities when applied together.	Our Community and Corporate Plan has set a clear intention to work with and alongside communities. There are good examples of partnership working in areas like health and social care and the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees. However, more needs to be done to embed this commitment in all aspects of our work.
All	Address areas for development and actions, identified through the self-assessment report.	Embed actions in service plans and assess as part of next self-assessment report.	This self-assessment report assesses progress against the areas for development from the previous report that have been progressed through the year in service plans.

What and how can we do better 2022/23?

Section	What can we do better	How	Who	When
<b>Outcomes</b>	Ensure interventions to achieve a Fair Place to Live objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact	Develop clear plans to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Chief Officer Communities & Place	March 2024
<b>Outcomes</b>	To accelerate the delivery of the council's Decarbonisation Strategy	Revise the council's plans to deliver its commitment to be net-zero by 2030.	Chief Officer Communities & Place	December 2023
<b>Outcomes</b>	Use economic analysis commissioned to inform the development of an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy	Develop an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Chief Officer Communities & Place	October 2023
<b>Outcomes</b>	Clearly articulate and evaluate plans to deliver high quality Adults and Children's social care	Develop clear plans to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Chief Officer Social Care & Safeguarding	March 2024
<b>Outcomes</b>	Ensure the delivery of the action plan which aims to address recommendations identified by Estyn	Deliver and assess progress on the Estyn recommendation Action Plan	Chief Officer Children & Young People	As per action plan
<b>Resources</b>	Clear enabling strategies aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Develop Enabling strategies aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Enabling strategy leads	November 2023
<b>Resources</b>	Embed the delivery of the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 within the council's performance framework	Embed actions within service business plans. Review the self-assessment process to inform the development of service business plans and the next self-assessment report	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	October 2023
<b>Stakeholder and Partnership</b>	Strengthen how we work with and alongside communities in line with the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan.	Develop a clear plan for involvement aligned to the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	March 2024







## Performance Measures



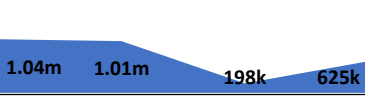
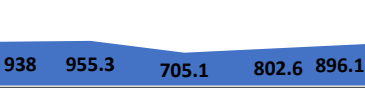


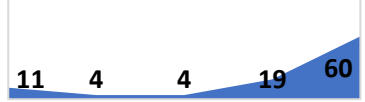
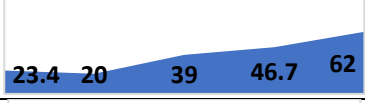


The use of performance measures is one of the important mechanisms we use to assess our performance. Each of our goals has specific performance measures set to monitor progress. Some further relevant performance indicators we use to assess our services' performance are set out in this section.

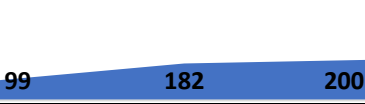



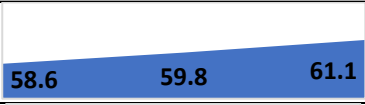


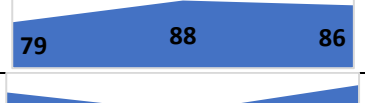



National indicators have been set as part of the Future Generations Act for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals in Wales as a whole. While the national indicators will not measure the performance of individual public bodies or public services boards, it is important that they are considered to track the progress being made to improve well-being in Monmouthshire. Some of the national indicators that are relevant to the objectives we have set, where an update is available at a county level, are included in the table below.





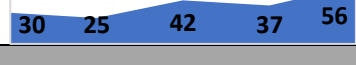

### Longer term measures in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28

Alongside the specific measures included under each objective The Community and Corporate Plan also includes measures for each objective that we want to track because they will inform our work. We want to see positive movement in these measures, but they are things where our input is only part of a much bigger picture. The latest update of the measures can be seen below.

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Trend	Latest
<b>A Fair place to live</b>		
Percentage of children living in relative low-income families <sup>xxix</sup>		17.4
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation <sup>xx</sup>		8
Difference in average pay between men and women working in the county		85.4
<b>A Green place to live</b>		
Food waste captured from the waste stream and sent to Anaerobic Digestion (tonnes)		5,062
Average annual residual waste produced per person (kilograms) <sup>xxi</sup>		125.39
Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), measured at Air Quality Management Areas in Monmouthshire <sup>xxii</sup>		6

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Trend	Latest
Number of properties at medium or high risk of flooding <sup>xxiii</sup>	Trend data not available	1825
Percentage of the Special Area of Conservation river catchment waterbodies that fail the phosphorus targets <sup>xxiv</sup>	Trend data not available	88 for Usk 67 for Wye
<b>A Thriving and Ambitious place</b>		
Average hourly town centre footfall <sup>xxv</sup>		288
Percentage of vacant town centre premises <sup>xxvi</sup>		8.8
Number of rail passengers using Monmouthshire train stations <sup>xxvii</sup>		625,374
Motor vehicle traffic by local authority (million miles) <sup>xxviii</sup>		896.1
Gross disposable household income per head (£) <sup>xxix</sup>		22,321
<b>A Safe Place to Live</b>		
Median house prices compared to median workplace-based earnings <sup>xxx</sup>		9.24
Rate of households unintentionally homeless and in priority need per 10,000 households		60
Percentage of social housing allocated to homeless households		62
Average carbon emissions per capita in Monmouthshire (tonnes) <sup>xxxi</sup>		9.1
Rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population		10.56

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Trend	Latest
Number of rapes and sexual offences committed <sup>xxxii</sup>	 <p>99 182 200</p>	200
Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling <sup>xxxiii</sup>	 <p>81 57 75</p>	75
Percentage of homes that have an energy efficiency rating of C or above <sup>xxxiv</sup>	 <p>43.4 49.2</p>	49.2
The percentage of those referred to the youth offending service who subsequently re-offend	 <p>35.9 15.8 18.6 12.5</p>	12.5
<b>A Connected Place Where People Care</b>		
Percentage of children supported to remain living with their family (not including children looked after)	 <p>58.6 59.8 61.1</p>	61.1
Number of children who are rehabilitated after a period of being looked after	 <p>18 19</p>	19
Percentage of people who are lonely <sup>xxxv</sup>	 <p>17 11 13 12</p>	12
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need <sup>xxxvi</sup>	 <p>79 88 86</p>	86
Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live <sup>xxxvii</sup>	 <p>92 84 95</p>	95
Healthy life expectancy at birth (women) <sup>xxxviii</sup>	 <p>66.1 69.3</p>	69.3
Healthy life expectancy at birth (men) <sup>xxxix</sup>	 <p>66.4 68.7</p>	68.7

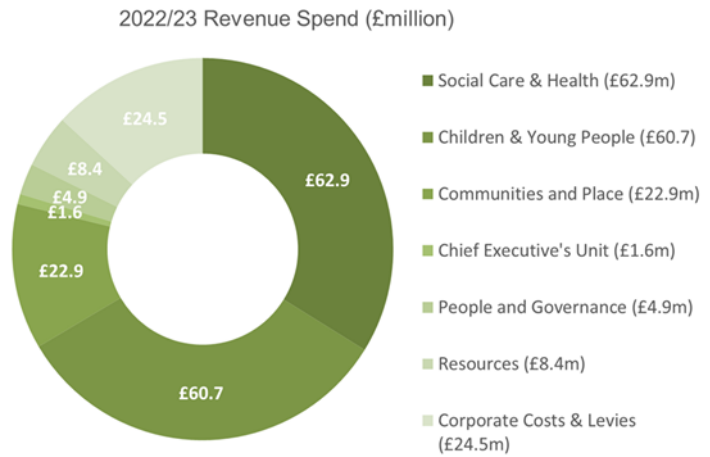
Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Trend	Latest
Life expectancy at birth (women) <sup>xi</sup>		84.6
Life expectancy at birth (men) <sup>xli</sup>		81.6
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week <sup>xlii</sup>		43
Percentage of people who attend or participate in arts culture or heritage activities three or more times a year <sup>xliii</sup>	Trend data not available	71
Number of carers and young carers supported by the carers team		168
Number of job vacancies in social care workforce		56
<b>A Learning place</b>		
Rate of fixed term exclusions of less than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Primary Pupils <sup>xliv</sup>	Trend data not available	All - 16 eFSM – 37.2
Rate of fixed term exclusions of less than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Secondary Pupils		All – 123.7 eFSM – 369
Rate of fixed term exclusions of more than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Primary Pupils	Trend data not available	All – 0.6 eFSM – 1.0
Rate of fixed term exclusions of more than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Secondary Pupils		All – 2.2 eFSM – 4.5
Percentage of adults with qualifications at Level 4 and above of the National Qualifications Framework		52.6

The use of mechanisms such as the Office of National Statistics’ Measuring National Well-being programme (diagram 7 in What Citizens Said section below) are ways in which we are trying to broaden our understanding of well-being in Monmouthshire, in addition to service specific performance measurement.

## What we spent in 2022/23

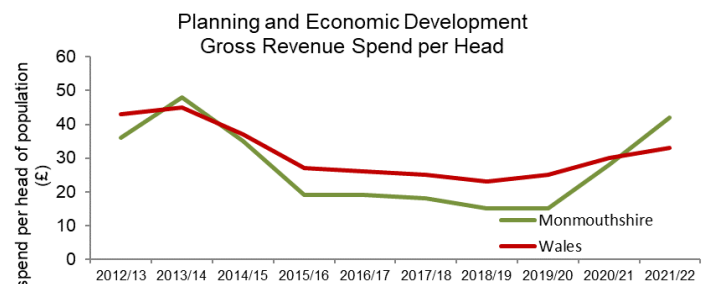
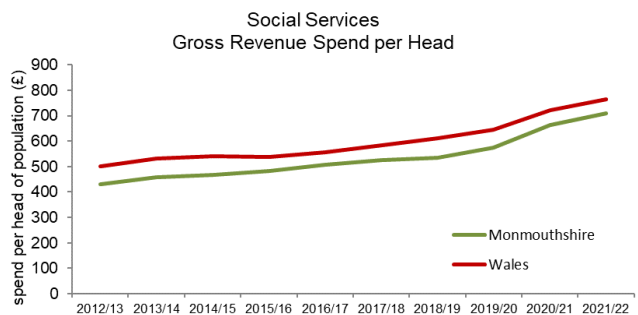
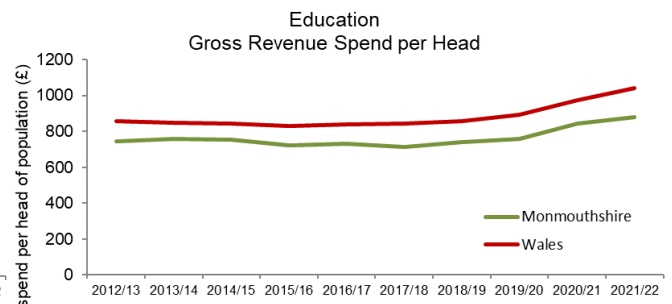
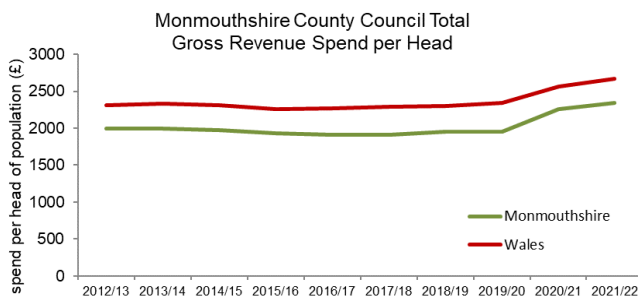
In 2022/23, the council spent £190.3 million providing services for Monmouthshire residents.

The proportion of our spending on different services in 2022/23 is shown in the diagram. These services are paid for by a combination of central government grants, council tax, non-domestic rates and a contribution from the council Fund.



## How our revenue spend compares with other areas

The graphs below show how much we spend per head of population in some of our priority areas. In 2021/22, we spent less on services per head of population than the average for local authorities in Wales and had the lowest gross revenue spend per head of all councils in Wales. However, we also work hard to make sure this money goes where it matters. For 2023/24 we received an increase in core funding, however our budget settlement from Welsh Government continues to be the lowest per head of population of councils in Wales.



## What citizens said

Involvement and working together with residents and communities in Monmouthshire is essential to develop and deliver solutions to achieve outcomes and ensure residents are involved in the decisions that affect them.

Through our self-assessment we have used the views of service users and residents to inform our assessment. Some of the specific engagement exercises we undertaken to involve citizens this year include:

**Budget engagement:** Monmouthshire County Council launched its draft budget proposals for 2023-2024 in January 2023. Monmouthshire's communities were invited to share their views on these possible changes in an open consultation process. A range of information on the proposals and their potential impacts was shared. Face-to-face budget consultation events took place across Monmouthshire. Two online budget sessions were held and a specific session for Monmouthshire's youth forum. For those unable to join the livestream, the session was uploaded to the website to watch after the event. As part of the consultation process, residents were also asked to share their thoughts via a feedback survey on the budget proposals. Residents were also asked to share their views on whether Monmouthshire County Council should charge a council tax premium to people who own long-term empty properties and second homes in the county.



**Regeneration Proposals:** The latest improvement plans for Monnow Street in Monmouth were unveiled and a consultation held. A public consultation was also held for residents and businesses in and around Chepstow to gather feedback on ideas being proposed within the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan. For both consultations a number of face-to-face engagement opportunities were available for residents locally, displays were held in the local area on plans and designs and a link to a survey for people to complete placed on the website.

**Replacement Local development Plan:** We published our new Preferred Strategy for the Replacement Local development Plan: for public consultation and engagement. The strategy sets out provision for new homes and site allocations in the County. Comments were invited on the Candidate Sites Register, which lists all the sites put forward by landowners, developers and other groups for potential inclusion in the RLDP.

**Changes to 20mph speed limits:** The Welsh Government passed legislation on 12th July 2022 that will see the speed limit in built-up areas reduced from 30mph to 20mph throughout Wales. In the lead-up to this legislative change, the Welsh Government funded pilot 20mph zones one of which was in Severnside. Although there has been clear support for the 20mph on residential side streets, concerns were received regarding the speed limit on the B4245. Following a review of available information, changes were



proposed to seek to address some of the community concerns raised while balancing this with the benefits of reducing speed limits, that were subject to a statutory consultation process for 28 days and following a review of responses approved.

**Customer Complaints and Compliments:** We monitor and learn from feedback received from customers. These are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee. Issues included the length of time we can take to respond to people. Not only is it important to deal with complaints effectively, investigating and putting things right for the complainant where necessary, it is also vital to learn from them to minimise the chances of the same problem occurring twice. Twenty complaints were referred to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales in 2021-22, the last year for which data is available. Monmouthshire has one of the lowest levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.21 per 1,000 residents. This ranges from 0.20 to 0.72 with an average of 0.36.

### Measuring Individual well-being

The Office of National Statistics’s Measuring National Well-being programme also assesses personal well-being as part of the Annual Population Survey. The survey asks the questions:

- **Life Satisfaction** – overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- **Worthwhile** – overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
- **Happiness** – overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
- **Anxiety** – on a scale where 0 is ‘not at all anxious’ and 10 is ‘completely anxious’, overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

The latest full annual results for Monmouthshire (from 2021/22) for these questions are shown in diagram below alongside the UK and Wales averages. This shows that the responses from Monmouthshire residents score slightly better than both the UK and Wales for all measures.



## **Staff engagement**

As part of our process to collate the self-assessment, we held directorate and enabling-service workshops to provide an opportunity for staff to directly feed into the self-assessment via identification of their own strengths and areas for development. Workshop attendees were presented with evidence packs, collated from existing information sources such as scrutiny reports, external regulator feedback, and service business plans, and were facilitated to self-assess their performance. A range of evidence was gathered from the workshops, both in terms of successes and areas for development associated with our strategic goals and our enabling functions, but also on how to strengthen the self-assessment process.

We have also used evidence gathered from a range of staff events and groups. These include the Digital and in-person 'Cwtch' staff engagement sessions, along with fortnightly People Leaders Q&A session and the People Working group. The use of networks and digital communication, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce.

## **Businesses**

We have established stronger engagement networks with businesses in our area since the pandemic and are working to maintain and improve these connections. We have a better understanding of the types of businesses in our area. We are in the final stages of configuring a new system that will act as the database of Monmouthshire businesses and a tool to promote the advice and guidance services we can provide to pre-starts and existing businesses. A Business Data & Communications Officer has been appointed who will facilitate the implementation of this system and help improve the feedback we receive from business to make sure we are capitalising on the conversations that are taking place and can improve our service to businesses as a result. This feedback will continue to inform our self-assessment.

## **Trade Unions**

We engage well with Trade Unions to achieve our outcomes. We have briefed them on the process we undertake to complete our self-assessment and will share our findings with them as part of our self-assessment process.

## What Regulators and Inspectors Said

We work closely with our regulators and inspectors to quality-assure our activities as this is vital to ensuring improvement. Their feedback is valued, and we use their assessments to help us focus on the things we need to improve across the council.

Each year, Audit Wales publishes an Audit Plan setting out the work they plan to undertake at the council. As part of the plan Audit Wales have undertaken more detailed Assurance and Risk Assessment work in the council during 2022/23. This focused on the council's financial position, Implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and Carbon reduction plan.

Reports produced by Audit Wales are available to download on their website ([www.audit.wales/publications](http://www.audit.wales/publications)). This includes local government national reports.

We underwent an Estyn Inspection into Local Government Education Services in February 2020. The inspection recognised the clear vision and strong focus on ensuring 'the best possible start in life' and also identified the commitment to partnership working that has resulted in a good track record of improvement. It also identified areas for development, such as the performance of children eligible for free school meals, and a lack of clarity in how services for learners with special educational needs will be strengthened. Work is underway address the recommendations. The report can be found on [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

Care Inspectorate Wales carried out a Performance review evaluation inspection of adults services in the council in July 2022. The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers. The findings recognise strengths and areas for improvement which the council is addressing. Inspection reports about social services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) can be found on [www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

### **Equality and Diversity**

The council has a long-standing commitment to equality and diversity. Our third Strategic Equality Plan, produced under the Equality Act 2010 sets the council's objectives to ensure we deliver better outcomes for people with protected characteristics. This is clearly aligned with the evidence provided by the Well-being Assessment, and evidence provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report "Is Wales Fairer 2018".

As well as this, it is important to us as it is the right thing to do. We produce annual monitoring reports that provide updates on progress on the action plan in the Strategic Equality Plan and evidence good practice being carried out across the council departments. These can be found [here](#).

### **The Welsh Language**

The Welsh language is central to the goals introduced as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, particularly for our contribution to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It also makes an important contribution to the Welsh Government goal of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and accompanying Welsh Language standards, place a legal duty on councils to treat Welsh and English equally, to promote the Welsh Language and provide services to the public through the medium of Welsh. There are 176 standards that apply to the Council. This is a significant challenge, but systems have been put in place to comply with these. We have a Welsh Language Strategy for 2022-2027, which identifies a vision of how the language will look in Monmouthshire in five years and is accompanied by targets to help achieve it. Our annual monitoring report 2022/23 reflect our progress against our Welsh language commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards. The report can be found [here](#).

## Appendix 1 – Self-assessment process

### Legislation

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”) provides for a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. The Act replaces the previous improvement duty for councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the ‘performance requirements’, that is the extent to which it is exercising its functions effectively; it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; its governance is effective for securing these.

The performance and governance provisions in the Act are framed within the context of the well-being duty in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which sets out a legally binding common purpose for public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. Self-assessment will be complemented by a panel performance assessment once in an electoral cycle, providing an opportunity to seek external insights (other than from auditors, regulators or inspectors) on how the council is meeting the performance requirements.

### Why?

Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It is about the council being self-aware, understanding whether it is delivering the right outcomes, and challenging itself to continuously improve. It needs to be embedded as effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce.

The WLGA have identified draft principles for self-assessment for councils to ensure that they have arrangements in place that:

- demonstrate self-awareness derived from evidence-based analysis that focuses on outcomes;
- are owned and led at a strategic level and are not an exercise in compliance;
- further develop a culture of challenge to facilitate improvement as part of an ongoing process;
- are integrated as part of the council’s corporate planning, performance and governance processes; and
- enable an organisation-wide assessment rather than an assessment of individual services.

Further developing this culture and embedding an evaluative mindset will be a key development point through the first few iterations of the self- assessment report.

### Process

The council has developed a process to undertake its second self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2022/23 financial year. The main component parts of the process and timeline are:

<b>Feb – April</b>	<b>April - June</b>	<b>Jul – August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>
Desk-based evidence gathering	Directorate self-assessment Workshops	Council self-assessment report drafted	Draft report to Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee	Self-assessment agreed in line with council process.

This timeline ensures that the self-assessment can inform and be informed by the policy direction of the council and how it uses its resources efficiently and effectively, particularly the budget setting process.

Evaluative evidence to inform the assessment has been compiled at a directorate level. Most of the evidence has been collated by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way; this includes, for example, the Annual Governance Statement, audit and inspection reports, and service level business plans.



The evidence gathered has been explored further, and challenged where necessary, at directorate and enabling function based self-assessment workshops, to determine if the objectives (outcomes) of the council are being achieved.

**Self-assessment workshops**

Directorate workshops	Enabling functions workshops
Children & Young People	Policy & Governance – Workforce planning
Social Care & Health	Resources – Financial planning, Assets and Digital
Communities & Place	Communities & Place – Procurement
MonLife	Policy Performance & Scrutiny – Performance, Data and scrutiny

The workshops were facilitated through the following questions:

- How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? (The self-assessment areas for development & Community & Corporate Plan objectives)
- How do we know? (Evidence)
- How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities? (Enablers)
- How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes? (Partnership working)
- What could we do better? (Actions – including a review of actions from the previous report)

The full evidence and conclusions from workshops have been collated and will be used by directorates and enabling functions to inform their services business plans.

Following the workshops, the evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. This has been integrated with the council’s requirement to report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year (2022/23) under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report is structured under these headings:

- Understanding our local place
- Outcomes (progress against objective areas for development):
  - How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?
  - How do we know?
  - Areas for development
- Enabling functions
  - Corporate planning, performance and risk management
  - Financial planning
  - Workforce planning
  - Procurement
  - Assets
  - Digital
  - Data
  - Democracy & Scrutiny
- Our work with partners
- Our Actions (including progress against previous actions)

The self-assessment report was scrutinised by the council's Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. A draft of the self-assessment report was made available to Governance and Audit Committee, who reviewed the draft report, in line with the requirements of the legislation. They made some suggestions to improve the presentation of the report but did not make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take. The self-assessment will be presented for approval at a meeting of full Council.



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<sup>i</sup> This measures primary school pupils who receive Universal Free Primary Schools rather than the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals

<sup>ii</sup> The National Exercise Referral Scheme is an evidence-based health intervention incorporating physical and behavioural change to support clients to make a lifestyle change to improve both health and wellbeing

<sup>iii</sup> National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>iv</sup> Make Your Mark: Monmouthshire's Local Ballot is an annual consultation for young people ages 11-25. See <https://www.monlife.co.uk/connect/youth-service/make-your-mark/make-your-mark-monmouthshire/> for more details

<sup>v</sup> National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>vi</sup> Disability Confident is a UK Government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

<sup>vii</sup> Measured by the Annual Population Survey for Wales. While this is not considered as accurate as the Census, it has the benefit of being updated more frequently allowing the authority to track progress.

<sup>viii</sup> This includes both emissions from the council's operations and land-based and supply chain operations

<sup>ix</sup> Active travel means getting about in a way that makes you physically active, like walking or cycling. It usually means short journeys, like walking to the shops or school or cycling to work.

<sup>x</sup> Amount of municipal, or 'everyday' waste, set to be recycled, reused or composted as a percentage of total waste generated. [Annual reuse/recycling/composting rates by local authority \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>xi</sup> Measured using the STEAM which is a tourism economic impact modelling process

<sup>xii</sup> Percentage of Year 11 school leavers who are NEET. [Pupil destinations | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>xiii</sup> This includes new leased accommodation, conversion of existing properties, acquisition of existing properties for this purpose and those brought back into use and funded through the social housing grant. It differs from planning data which is focused on new builds and those granted planning permission

<sup>xiv</sup> Adult Social Care Service User Questionnaire

<sup>xv</sup> MonGames is a skills and sports activity programme, usually run in the school holidays, aimed at children aged between 5-11

<sup>xvi</sup> This is externally grant funded so risk that this model could change or stop

<sup>xvii</sup> Active Play is a two-hour programme designed for children aged between 5-11 where they are able to take part in a range of physical activities and also arts and crafts

<sup>xviii</sup> Adult Social Care Service User Questionnaire

<sup>xix</sup> Relative low income refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year

<sup>xx</sup> Material deprivation is a measure of living standards. A person is considered to be living in material deprivation if they are unable to access a certain number of goods or services. Further information can be found here: [Material deprivation and low income | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>xxi</sup> [Annual residual household waste produced per person \(kilograms\) by local authority \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>xxii</sup> [Air Quality Indicators, by Local Authority \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>xxiii</sup> Measures combined numbers at risk from rivers, tidal and surface water. Source:

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Flooding> High Risk; Greater than or equal to 1 in 30 (3.3%) chance in any given year. Data in baseline is for 2019.

Medium Risk; Less than 1 in 30 (3.3%) but greater than or equal to 1 in 100 (1%) chance in any given year for rivers and surface water flooding and less than 1 in 30 (3.3 per cent) but greater than or equal to 1 in 200 (0.5 per cent) for the sea.

Low Risk; Less than 1 in 100 (1%) for rivers and surface water flooding and 1 in 200 (0.5 per cent) for the sea but greater than or equal to 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) chance in any given year.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Compliance Assessment of Welsh River SACs against Phosphorus Targets Report No: 489.

<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/water-reports/compliance-assessment-of-welsh-river-sacs-against-phosphorus-targets/?lang=en>

<sup>xxv</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/annual-monitoring/retail/>

<sup>xxvi</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/annual-monitoring/retail/>

<sup>xxvii</sup> Measure of entries and exits. Source: <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>

<sup>xxviii</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1144656/tra8902.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1144656/tra8902.ods)

<sup>xxix</sup> Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) is the amount of money individuals or households have for spending or saving. [Gross Disposable Household Income by area and measure \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>xxx</sup> [House price to workplace-based earnings ratio - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)



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<sup>xxx</sup>i Includes territorial emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O). Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

<sup>xxx</sup>ii Source: Gwent Police

<sup>xxx</sup>iii National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>xxx</sup>iv [Energy efficiency of Housing, England and Wales, local authority districts - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

<sup>xxx</sup>v National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>xxx</sup>vi [Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access facilities and services they need \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales)

<sup>xxx</sup>vii National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>xxx</sup>viii Healthy Life Expectancy is the number of years lived in self-assessed good health

<sup>xxx</sup>ix Healthy Life Expectancy is the number of years lived in self-assessed good health

<sup>x</sup>i Source:

<https://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/healthandsocialcare/generalhealth/tabular?viewId=47&geold=1&subsetId=>

<sup>x</sup>i

<https://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/healthandsocialcare/generalhealth/tabular?viewId=47&geold=1&subsetId=>

<sup>x</sup>ii National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>x</sup>iii National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

<sup>x</sup>iv Exclusions are split by the length/type of exclusion, into 3 categories: i) Fixed term exclusions: 5 days or less; ii) Fixed term exclusions: over 5 days iii) Permanent exclusions. These are measured for all pupils and those eligible for free school meals. Further detail can be found at <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2022/10/4/1666254621/permanent-and-fixed-term-exclusions-schools-september-2020-august-2021.pdf>